AMA> | AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION

2024
AMA Winter
Academic Conference

Unlocking Our Potential

> February 20 • Virtual
> February 23-25 • St. Pete Beach, FL

PROCEEDINGS

Volume 35

Co-Chairs:

Samantha Cross
Iowa State University

Alok Saboo
Georgia State University

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Editors
Samantha Cross, Iowa State University
Alok Saboo, Georgia State University

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Foreword

A huge welcome to the 2024 AMA Winter Academic Conference in St. Pete's Beach, Florida! This conference aims to broaden our perspective and explore ways to unlock our collective potential to make a greater impact, foster inclusivity, and embrace the richness of diverse thoughts, ideas, and approaches. Our community of marketing researchers is well placed to provide key insights to help build solutions to address challenges around social inequality, inclusion, climate change, and generative AI. We received an amazing 665 submissions, showcasing research with a broader societal focus while embracing innovative methodological approaches. Presentations will include research on interfirm dynamics and marketing strategies in today's changing landscapes; developments in artificial intelligence and machine learning applications; and the impact of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) initiatives on firm stakeholders, encompassing consumers, supply chain partners, employees, investors, and the wider society.

We continue to be inclusive and welcoming of all attendees to this year's conference and have included prior successes with a few notable additions. First, we are delighted to hold a reviewer workshop co-hosted by two of our top AMA journals, the *Journal of Marketing* and the *Journal of Marketing Research*. Second, we will showcase a Joint Special Session on Sustainability co-hosted by our new Sustainability Special Interest Group (SIG) and the Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) community as we continue to partner with other academic organizations. Third, we launch our inaugural AMA Administrators' Panel, with a Plenary Deans' Panel discussing the challenges facing our academy today. We continue our successful Mentor-Mentee Networking Lunch for doctoral students and junior faculty, launched in 2023. We will also feature two pre-conferences: our ongoing Organizational Frontlines Research Pre-Conference, emphasizing resilience in organizational frontlines, and our new pre-conference, Drive for Marketplace Inclusion: An Opportunity for Marketing Innovation, showcasing dialogue on marketplace inclusion and innovation between industry and research thought leaders. With our Friday poster and dinner reception and SIG receptions, including our Sales SIG reception at the first craft brewery in St. Pete's Beach, our social events foster new connections and facilitate re-connections with old friends.

We are grateful for the combined efforts of our 27 track chairs, our AMA Academic Council President, Karen Winterich, and our unflappable AMA team, including Riley Fickett and Marilyn Stone. Thank you all for making this conference possible!

We look forward to seeing you virtually or in person in St. Pete's Beach at Winter AMA 2024.

Sincerely,

Samantha and Alok
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Best Paper in Conference

2024 AMA Winter Academic Conference Best Paper in Conference + Best Paper in Advertising, Promotions, and IMC Track

"Bias from Voluntary Disclosure of Advertising Spending: Consequences and Remedies"

Yi Yin, Northeastern University
Ashwin Malshe, University of Texas at San Antonio
Koen Pauwels, Northeastern University

Best Papers in Tracks

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Christopher Kanitz, University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, Campus Steyr
Maik Dulle, University of Bremen
Jan Wiezorrek, University of Bremen
Stephan Buttgereit, University of Bremen
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Advertising, Promotions, and IMC

A FRAMEWORK OF DILEMMAS OF CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS, THEIR RESOLUTION AND ADVERTISING OUTCOMES

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Keywords: Advertising, Creativity, Creative Dilemmas, Theories-in-use approach

Description: The paper proposes a framework that sheds light on the potential outcomes from the conflict that creative professionals in advertising face between creative desires and demands.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

While the advertising literature is very rich on the definition of creativity, importance and role of creativity, process of creativity, theories of creativity, drivers, and measures of creativity; there is limited understanding of the impact of contradictory factors (both internal and external) that a creative person faces in the creative development process. Further, most of the researches on individual creativity in business context examine organizational factors that influence individual creativity (for example, Amabile, 1988a; Amabile, 1988b; and Amabile et al., 1996 in general and Verbeke et.al., 2008; Sasser and Koslow, 2012 in ad agency context), no study specifically focuses on understanding the internal dilemmas that a creative professional is faced with and how that influences creative output.

Using a theories-in-use (TIU) approach, this study tries to understand the dilemmas that creative professionals in advertising face, the impact that such dilemmas have on the creative output and the factors that determine the kind of outcome we can expect from a creative person.

Method And Data

We relied on theories-in-use method to collect data from creative professionals. A TIU approach works at studying a person's mental model of how things work in a particular context (Zeithmal, et al., 2020). In line with the focus of our study, the methodology was centered around conversations with creative professionals with 20+ years of experience as they would have their mental models on the subject with their years of experience. Keeping in mind the theoretical sampling , we attempted to include Creative Heads based on 3 factors – agency size (large, medium, and small), agency type (Indian or MNC) and agency culture (strategy driven or creativity driven). To avoid any effects of agency culture, creative professionals at different agencies representing different creative cultures were approached. In line with the recommended process for using the TIU approach, our research was led by semi-structured long interviews with Creative Heads that were conducted online. As interviews progressed, we evolved the interview guide to factor the developments of ongoing analysis (Myers, 2008). In terms of the numbers, we started with an initial plan of 5 units to be increased till we reached theoretical sampling.

Summary of Findings

Through our analysis, 6 unique creative dilemmas emerged. (1) New & radical Vs. tried & tested. (2) Focus on the concept & story Vs. Focus on the product & brand. (3) Creative-sell Vs. hard-sell. (4) Clever & lateral Vs. simple & straightforward. (5) Good for creative reputation Vs. good for brand performance. (6) Led by creative instinct Vs. supported by consumer research.

Given that each dilemma revolved around what a creative person wished to do and what he was expected to do, we aggregated the conflicting forces of each dilemma under two concepts – Creative Desires and Creative Demands.

We propose that Creative Demands and Creative Desires act as opposing forces on the mind of any creative person. Based on the relative intensity of the creative demand vs. creative desire (high/high, high/low, low/high, low/low), we propose 'The Creative Dilemma Framework' with 4 distinct outcomes – Classic Creative, Award-Working Creative, Hard-Working Creative, Compromised Creative.

Finally, we identify a set of personal (Creative Temperament, Idea of Creativity and Creative Ability) and organisational factors (Cultural Orientation of the Agency, Strength of the Client Relationship and Size of the Account) that would lead different creative people to different outcomes of the proposed framework.

Statement of Key Contributions

This paper makes contribution to both theory and practice in many ways. Firstly, it fills the literature gap of identifying the internal dilemmas a creative person faces when working on a brief. Secondly, it proposes Creative Dilemma Framework around the creative outcomes that we can expect based on the relative intensity of the dilemmas. Thirdly, it identifies the factors that would determine how different creative people would react to these dilemmas.

Using a TIU approach, our study is an attempt to develop grounded theory that addresses the issue of internal dilemmas faced by creative professionals in advertising and rooted in marketing practice rather than borrowed from other disciplines.

The findings can benefit all stakeholders involved in advertising practice – client, account executive, strategist and creative and professionals in other creative industries. For the

stakeholders evaluating creative work (brand managers), it becomes a useful theory to understand and therefore have more empathy with the perspective that the creative person is bringing to the table. For the stakeholders facilitating creative work (account executives and strategists), it helps them navigate the creative mind better to ensure they can get the best out of him. For the stakeholders creating the work (creative), it helps them be more conscious and manage the dilemmas appropriately given their organizational and personal factors.

References are available upon request.

CREATIVITY IS IN THE MIND OF THE BEHOLDER: HAIL THE ANALYTIC THINKER

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Keywords: Thinking Styles, Analytic Thinking, Creativity, Advertising Effectiveness

Description: Across four studies, we support our hypothesis that analytic thinking leads to higher ad creativity perceptions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

While the extant literature establishes that creativity in advertisements enhances ad effectiveness, developing creative advertisements is costly and creativity perceptions are subjective varying from person to person. Therefore, this paper answers the important research question of what factors influence the creativity assessments of consumers. Specifically, this paper investigates the impact of thinking style on creativity assessments of advertisements.

Method and Data

Four studies demonstrate that individuals with higher levels of analytic thinking style perceive creative advertisements as more creative. This result holds for a self-reported thinking style scale

(Studies 1 and 2) as well as for primed thinking styles (Studies 3 and 4), and for different product categories/ads (coffee in Study 1, and juice in Studies 2, 3 and 4).

Study 1 measured thinking style as an individual characteristic and used a (creative vs. uncreative) coffee advertisement as the stimulus. In this experiment with students, we found that analytic thinkers assess the creative ad as more creative than holistic thinkers, while for uncreative ad, thinking style did not influence the creativity assessment.

In Study 2, we used a different self-reported analytic thinking measure (applied analytic thinking), a different product category/advertisement (juice), and a different sample (MTurk). It also included willingness to pay as a consumer outcome. We found support for the mediation of creativity assessment between analytic thinking and willingness to pay.

Studies 3 and 4 were experiments with students that evaluated the juice ad from Study 2; and used two different incidental priming tasks to manipulate thinking style. They again supported that analytic (vs. holistic) thinking enhances creativity perceptions.

Summary of Findings

Our findings show that analytic thinkers perceive the same creative advertisement as more creative than holistic thinkers. In addition, the advanced creativity perception due to analytic thinking reflects positively on managerially important variables (willingness to pay a premium: Study 1, attitude toward brand: Study 3 post-test).

Key Contributions

Despite a large literature examining the creativity construct's definition, creativity's positive outcomes and factors influencing creativity generation (e.g., creative thoughts, creative products), little research has examined the impact of factors, which are external to the definition

of creativity, on creativity perceptions. This research is the first research to investigate an individual difference, namely thinking style, that impacts creativity judgments, which in turn enhances advertising effectiveness.

This research extends the literatures on thinking styles, creativity and advertising effectiveness by presenting a new individual factor (thinking style) that influences the perception/assessment of creativity which improves positive consumer responses in return. These findings also have implications for practice. Our research suggests that while segmenting their consumers, marketers should use thinking style as a psychographic segmentation variable, and identify the segment that are analytic thinkers. Therefore, they can direct their creative efforts toward that segment. Alternatively, marketers can prime analytic thinking in their advertisements by highlighting the utilitarian features of their products in their creative ads, and/or using negative mood to trigger consumers to think more analytically.

DIVERSE ETHNIC MODELS AND VIEWER WOKENESS: RESPONSES TO FEMALE MODELS IN ADVERTISEMENTS

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Description: This study explores how pride cues exhibited by ethnically diverse female models in ads affect viewer responses, focusing on the type of pride, model ethnicity, and viewer wokeness, revealing that these factors significantly influence viewer envy and attitudes towards the models and brands.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This study explores the complex interaction between pride displays by ethnically diverse female models in advertisements and viewer responses. The central research question explores how different forms of pride (hubristic vs. authentic) portrayed by models, coupled with their ethnicity (Black vs. White), influence viewers' emotional responses, specifically envy, and their consequent attitudes towards the models and the brands they represent. This inquiry is pivotal in understanding the nuanced dynamics of emotional appeal in advertising, especially in a culturally diverse landscape. The study aims to dissect the subtle yet significant impact of these factors on shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors in the context of advertising.

Method and Data

This research is structured into two studies to thoroughly investigate the proposed questions. In Study 1, the focus is on female viewers' evaluations of advertisements showcasing Black and White female models exhibiting hubristic and authentic pride cues. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the direct effects of pride type and model ethnicity on viewer attitudes. Study 2 expands this investigation by incorporating the element of viewer wokeness, examining how it interacts with pride cues and model ethnicity.

Summary of Findings

The results from the first study indicate a significant influence of both pride type and model ethnicity on viewer attitudes, with a notable preference for Black models. These findings suggest

an interplay between viewers' perceptions of pride and their attitudes towards ethnic representation in advertising. The second study builds on these insights, highlighting the ways in which viewer wokeness, combined with the model's ethnicity and the type of pride displayed, shapes viewer perceptions. The findings underscore the heightened impact of viewer wokeness on attitudes towards models, especially in the context of ethnicity and pride type. These results contribute to a deeper understanding of the ways in which pride, envy, ethnicity, and viewer awareness intersect in advertising.

Key Contributions

This study makes significant theoretical and practical contributions by extending the understanding of pride and envy in consumer behavior, a domain traditionally limited to interpersonal relationships. It shows the reception of pride cues in advertising, shedding light on how different pride types influence viewer attitudes and behavior. This research also investigates the critical role of model ethnicity in shaping viewer perceptions of pride, offering valuable insights for the creation of more inclusive and effective advertising campaigns. Furthermore, by exploring the influence of viewer wokeness, the study provides a contemporary perspective on consumer attitudes and values, guiding marketers in navigating the evolving landscape of consumer behavior. These insights are particularly relevant for developing culturally sensitive marketing strategies and understanding the complex dynamics of consumer psychology in a diverse and rapidly changing world.

DRIVERS OF TIKTOK-ADVERTISING ATTITUDE

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Keywords: Advertising Attitude, Social Media Marketing, Advertising Value Model, Uses &
Gratification Theory, Personality Traits

Description: This research transfers the advertising value model to the TikTok context and
analyses drivers and moderators of TikTok advertising attitude.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The short-video platform TikTok (incl. Douyin) is considered the fastest-growing social network system (SNS) (Barta et al. 2023), with a notable share of advertising expenditure (Statista 2023b). Despite TikTok's popularity among users and advertisers, academic research on TikTok's advertising value is limited. The authors address this void by employing an adapted version of Ducoffe's (1995, 1996) advertising value model based on the uses and gratification theory. Utilizing survey data from young German TikTok users, this study focuses on the following research question:

RQ1: Which value factors drive attitudes toward TikTok advertising?

RQ2: Which personality traits and usage types moderate the relationships between the drivers and TikTok advertising attitude?

Based on the advertising model, this study assumes positive effects of information and entertainment as well as credibility on TikTok advertising attitudes, while irritation is expected to have a negative influence. Following extant research, we subsume the first two drivers under "infotainment". Additionally, this research analyzes potential moderation effects of personality traits and usage behavior on the relationships between infotainment and credibility on advertising attitudes.

Method and Data

We adapted existing scales to the TikTok context and used 5-point Likert-scales for this survey. Pre-test results helped to improve the wording of the questionnaire. The Qualtrics based link to the online survey was distributed through Prolific. A sample of 447 participants was extracted. Data cleansing prior to analysis in SPSS 28 and AMOS 28 followed standard rules resulting in a final sample of 376 participants (59.6% females; average age 24.8 years). Measurement values exceeded the thresholds for first (SPSS-based) and second-generation (AMOS-based) criteria for the eight constructs. Confirmatory factor analysis showed acceptable model fit (CFI=.925, RMSEA=.054, SRMR=.0538). Furthermore, we tested for potential biases. Harman's (1976) single-factor test yielded 26.9% of variance explained. The inclusion of a common latent factor (Podsakoff et al. 2003) resulted in a shared variance of less than 1% suggesting that *common method bias* does not pose an issue. To control for potential *social desirability bias,* we integrated a short, Likert-type version of the Crowne and Marlowe (1960) Social Desirability Scale (SDS). Correlation analysis indicates no risk of data being contaminated by social desirability. Three of the SDS items were summarized as SDS factor and added as control variable to the model.

Summary of Findings

Results of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) clearly support the central role of infotainment in shaping TikTok advertising attitude. Irritation only showed a marginally significant negative effect on advertising attitude, while the positive effect of credibility was clearly supported, though the effect was weaker than that of infotainment. Moderation analysis (Hayes-Process Model 1) shows that conscientiousness significantly strengthens infotainment's positive effect. Moreover,

extraversion, openness, and emotional stability intensify the effect of credibility on advertising attitude. Behavioral moderators reveal that content production and consumption increase the effect of infotainment, whereas only consumption intensifies credibility's impact on advertising attitude. We don't find this moderation effect for content production. By creating and posting their own content on TikTok, users could become more aware of the manipulative and deceptive editing capabilities offered by the app. Given the potential drawbacks of social media, users are urged to be cautious, while policy and education should encourage young users to use social media wisely. Motivating young adults' content production is suggested as a means of improving critical thinking skills, emphasizing the importance of authenticity. Companies could benefit from involving content producers rather than influencers to promote genuine and credible brand-related content.

Key Contributions

This research transfers Ducoffe's classical advertising value model to the fastest growing SNS. Results favor the combination of informativeness and entertainment into one driver (infotainment) for SNS research. Findings further underscore the importance of incorporating credibility into research on advertising attitude and thereby suggest extending media uses and gratification theory by adding the need for trust to the sender/producer. In addition, this research enables future comparisons among different SNS as well as comparisons between classical and social media research.

We further contribute to the theory by unraveling the effects of psychographic and behavioral moderators. Personality traits especially strengthen the effect of credibility on TikTok advertising attitude. Consumption-specific moderation findings (effects of production and consumption

intensity) can be tested in other media environments, whereas production-specific findings are limited to user-generated content environments.

This research allows testing results in other online and offline environments to see if these moderation effects are media(-group) specific or if they generally apply. In the latter case, this would indicate that advertising effects of infotainment are influenced by the characteristics of the media user, i.e. his/her personality traits. Media(-group)-specific results would hold essential implications for media management, especially in the area of psychological targeting.

Embracing Green: Luxury Brands' Advertising for Electric Vehicles

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Description: This paper examines whether a luxury automotive brand has a higher cause-brand fit, leading to consumers' purchase likelihood of its green advertising practices by analyzing data obtained from 378 participants in the US.

Extended Abstract

Research Questions

Electric vehicles produce no carbon and are widely regarded as environmentally friendly cars. Managers in the automobile industry agree that electric vehicles are the future direction of the industry and widely promote green practices. In *US News*'s list of the top 10 companies in hybrid/electric cars known to produce low or zero carbon, some brands are strongly associated with a luxury brand (e.g., Lexus) while others are less associated with a luxury (e.g., Toyota). This difference raises the following research questions: Is producing a zero-carbon car an effective advertising message by a luxury brand in the automobile industry? What can be an underlying mechanism?

Literature suggests diverging views on luxury brands' prosocial behaviors. On the one hand, a premium luxury image can be undermined and even harmed when engaging in morally responsible actions (Torelli et al., 2012). On the other hand, others expect luxury brands to show morally responsible actions and even impose a stricter ethical bar toward "responsible luxury" (Janssen et al., 2014). These diverging views add uncertainty to our current understandings of luxury automobile brands' green advertising practices.

Against that backgrounds, the purpose of this paper is to compare the effects of green ad messages between high and low luxury automobile brands. Our theoretical account is

grounded on the cause-brand fit (Nan & Heo, 2007). Socially responsible actions must match with brand images because consumers respond to brands more favorably when there is a greater fit (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006). Otherwise, consumers are likely to have doubts and suspicions about the motives underlying the socially responsible behaviors. This is especially true for luxury brands, which are often criticized for the hypocrisy of their green engagement. In sum, this paper argues that the advertising messages for a zero-carbon car induce consumers' cause-brand fit evaluations, which affects perceived sincerity and ultimately influences their purchase likelihood.

Method and Data

To validate our arguments, this study designed a one-factor between-subjects experiment (luxury vs. non-luxury brand). A total of 378 participants (female: 54.8%) were recruited using Amazon Mechanical Turk. Ages ranged from 20 to 70 years old. About 41.5% of participants were in their 30s and about 26.2% were in their 40s. A screening question about participants' past purchasing behavior of luxury brands was asked: if participants answered that they had made no such purchases, then the questionnaire was terminated.

About half of the participants were randomly assigned to a luxury condition (n = 188; 49.7%), and the other half were randomly assigned to a non-luxury condition (n = 190; 50.3%). For generalizability of our findings, two real brands were used: Lexus for the high-luxury and Toyota for the low-luxury brand. Participants were presented with a scenario of an ad in which each brand is promoting its electric cars, highlighting their low carbon emissions. Next, we asked a manipulation check item regarding participants' perceptions of the brand's luxury level. Participants also indicated their perceptions of the cause-brand fit (Nan & Heo, 2007), perceived sincerity (Tuk et al., 2009), and their purchase likelihood (Tsiros & Irmak, 2020). Lastly, their demographic profiles were collected. After completing the questionnaire, they were compensated (USD 1.50) and thanked for participating in the experiment.

Summary of Findings

Results indicate that our manipulation was successful. As theorized, Lexus (M = 5.867, SD = 0.883) was perceived to be more of a luxury brand than Toyota (M = 5.583, SD = 1.189; t (379) = 2.635, $p < .01$). To test the sequential mediation effect, we used a Model 6 in PROCESS SPSS Macro (Hayes, 2017) by using 5,000 bootstrap samples with a 95% confidence interval. Specifically, the two-brand condition was treated as an independent variable, and purchase likelihood was used as our dependent variable. We used two mediators: perceived fit and sincerity levels. Consistent with our theory, the results show a significant indirect effect (− .15 to − .04). Additionally, the direct effect of brand condition on purchase likelihood became no longer significant (− .29 to .04), suggesting a full mediation.

In conclusion, our findings indicate that the cause-brand fit elicits a greater perception of sincerity and ultimately increases consumers' purchase likelihood. This study contributes to

relevant literature by showing the underlying mechanism of brands' green advertising practices. Our findings also yield practical implications for brand managers, suggesting that responsible business practices should increase consumers' perceived sincerity in order to drive future sales while doing good.

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GENERATIVE AI HURTS BRANDS? EXPLORING CONSUMER RESPONSES TO AI-GENERATED CSR MESSAGES

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Keywords: Generative AI, ChatGPT, CSR Messaging, Brand Innovativeness, Brand Attitude

Description: This study examines consumers response to brands using AI generated messages for CSR communication.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

1. Research Questions

Brands have started to experiment with generative AI for marketing communications (O'Brien & Hadero, 2023; Olavsrud, 2023; Wright, 2023). However, this also poses the risk of potential negative brand effects. Indeed, consumers have been shown to hold negative attitudes when AI is used in creative markets or emotion-oriented tasks (Bakpayev et al. 2020; Castelo et al., 2019; Weingarten et al., 2020). Hence, is a need to examine the effect of AI-generated communication in different contexts. In this respect, there have been increasing discussions on how to adopt generative AI in the public relations (PR) industry (AIContentfy Team, 2023; Gomez, 2023; Guarneri, 2023; Yan, 2023; Maldonado, 2020). PR departments, either internal or external to the organization, are tasked with creating corporate social responsibility (CSR) messages that portrays the brand in the most positive light. However, little is known about how the use of AI as a source of CSR messages can affect consumer attitudes towards the brand.

Against this background, the current study addresses the following two research questions:

i)   How does AI (versus Human) generated CSR messages influence brand attitudes from consumers?

ii)   What is the role perceived brand innovativeness in mitigating the effect of AI-generated messages on attitudes?

2. Method and data

a. Study 1

N=254 participants were recruited from Prolific Academic and randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions: AI vs. human generated CSR message. Participants read a brief description of a fictional international brand in the financial services industry followed by its CSR

message posted on their official X (formerly Twitter) account. The CSR message communicated how this fictional brand stands against racial injustice and advocates for a world in which equality matters. After reading the message they were informed whether the message was created with a human employee or AI.

b. *Study 2*

N=501 respondents were recruited from Prolific Academic and randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions: 2 (AI vs. human generated CSR message) X 2 (innovative vs, neutral brand). Participants first read a brief brand description of a fictional brand in the food and beverage industry. Brand innovativeness was manipulated by priming the respondents to a brand positioned as innovative versus neutral. They were shown two tweets posted by the fictional brand on its X account. One tweet was about how the brand is committed to sustainability and eco-friendly practices to protect the well-being of the planet, and the second tweet was about its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Participants were informed whether the messages were created by an employee (human author) or AI on behalf of the fictional brand.

3. Summary of findings

Study 1: A one-way ANOVA showed a significant main effect of CSR message source (human vs AI) on consumers' brand attitudes (M_{Human} = 5. 35, M_{AI} = 4.83, $F_{(1,206)}$ = 7.383, $p < 0.01$), thus supporting that consumers prefer humans over AI as the source of CSR messages.

Study 2: A two-way ANOVA showed no significant interaction effect of CSR message source (human vs. AI) and brand innovativeness ($F_{(1, 429)}$ = 0.50, $p = 0.48$) on brand attitude. Pair wise comparison showed a significant main effect of CSR message source (human vs. AI) on brand attitude (M_{Human} = 5. 16, M_{AI} = 4.76, $F_{(1,431)}$ = 8.631, $p < 0.01$), reinforcing findings from study 1.

Overall, the results of the two experiments indicate that AI (vs, Human) generated CSR messages lead to lower brand attitudes. This effect is same for both innovative and non-innovative brands, as suggested by study 2.

4. Key contributions

This research adds to our understanding of the current capabilities of AI because the findings suggest that generative AI is suitable for tasks involving intuitive intelligence and not emotional intelligence. Consumers have shown to have AI (algorithm) aversion, which can affect their attitudes towards this technology and the suitable use-cases for it (Burton et al., 2020; Longoni et al., 2019).

The findings illustrate that brands must be mindful of AI aversion. We recommend that managers analyze if tasks that they are using AI for are ones in which hedonic attributes and human emotions are important to effectively completing it. Secondly, brands, excited about generative AI, have been actively advertising to consumers that they are using it in new and unconventional ways. The findings of this paper suggest that oversharing in the wrong context can result in the risk of lower brand attitudes. Thirdly, marketers should be aware of the risks of generating social media messages with AI as these platforms are known for hedonic attribute. Thus, managers creating social media content strategies should be cautious when using it to generate messages such as tweets since it can have harmful brand effects, as illustrated in this paper.

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Available upon request

HOW DOES WORD OF MOUTH DRIVE CONSUMER SEARCH? EVIDENCE FROM AUTOMOBILE MARKET

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Keywords: online search, multidimensional rating system, user-level WOM variance, attribute-level WOM variance, product positioning strategy

Description: This paper examines whether and how online WOM affects consumer search in the context of multidimensional rating system, and provide potential mechanistic explanations for the effects.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

1) Does online WOM (i.e., WOM valence and variance) affect consumer search?

2) In a common multidimensional rating system that consumers use to post online WOM, what elements of the WOM variance (i.e., user-level WOM variance and attribute-level WOM variance) matter more?

Then, we investigate some moderators to explore the potential mechanism underlying the WOM effects:

3) Do WOM variance effects vary with different product positioning strategies (i.e., high vs. low price or quality, broad vs. narrow price range)?

4) How does advertising interact with online WOM to drive search?

Method and Data

We carry out our empirical analysis in the context of the automobile market. The data include the top 50 popular vehicle models sold in the Chinese market between October 2012 and March 2018. Online WOM was collected for these vehicle models from China's largest automobile information website (www.autohome.com). We estimate a linear model that relates online WOM to online search volume at the vehicle model level while controlling for various observed and unobserved vehicle- and market-level characteristics. As advertising can be correlated with time-varying unobserved vehicle characteristics, we explicitly control for endogeneity in advertising using instrumental variables.

Summary of Findings

The results show that online searches for the product will become more active when consumers talk about a product more positively and when there is a higher degree of variance

in WOM. Although both user- and attribute-level WOM variance can generate consumer uncertainty about product quality and lead to consumer search, the former is more impactful. This finding is particularly applied to high-end products (i.e., high price or high quality). Moreover, broader product positioning (larger price range within a product line) can strengthen user- and attribute-level WOM variance effects. Finally, we find that WOM and advertising substitute each other in generating online searches.

Key Contributions

First, to the best of our knowledge, our paper is the first that examines how online WOM valence and variance may impact online searches.

Second, we decompose WOM variance into user- and attribute-level to study the heterogeneity in WOM variance effects. Most prior research on online WOM has focused on a single-dimensional rating system in which consumers give only one overall evaluation of the products. We extend previous research and emphasis on multidimensional rating systems, which enable us to grab the more nuanced features of WOM variance. Furthermore, we explore how user- and attribute-level WOM variance effects vary under different product positioning strategies (e.g., price, quality, and price range) to explore the potential mechanism underlying these WOM effects.

Third, we examine how online WOM interacts with firm advertising to affect consumer online searches. Online consumer WOM and advertising are two key marketing measures that firms constantly monitor and extensively use for marketing decision optimization, our results can inform firms on how to optimize advertising spending to increase online searches

when considering the effects of online consumer WOM.

CREATIVITY IS IN THE MIND OF THE BEHOLDER: HAIL THE ANALYTIC THINKER

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Keywords: Thinking Styles, Analytic Thinking, Creativity, Advertising Effectiveness

Description: We support our hypothesis that mindfulness leads to higher ad creativity perceptions for creative ads.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Advertisement creativity enhances advertisement effectiveness. Yet, producing creative advertisements require more budget and time, and noticing creativity in the ads requires consumers' attention. Hence it is important for marketers to know what factors influence creativity perception, which is creativity assessment, of creative advertisements. In this paper, we expect that mindful individuals will have awareness and curiosity about the novelty in the creative ad. They will pay attention to the ad stimulus and notice the creativity in it, hence will assess it as more creative than individuals who are not as mindful.

Method and Data

We tested the hypothesis using an Australian/unfamiliar creative juice advertisement, and asked student respondents to answer both a single-item holistic creativity question (1 = Not at all

creative, 7 = Very creative) and a multi-item creativity scale (Originality sub-dimension: predictable/novel, expected/unexpected, conventional/original; appropriateness sub-dimension: irrelevant/relevant, inappropriate/appropriate, inadequate/adequate; execution sub-dimension: botched/well-made, bungling/skillful) since some creativity researchers support the use of one over the other. Finally, respondents answered 7-item mindfulness scale (e.g., "When I notice an absence of mind, I gently return to the experience of the here and now," "I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present" (reverse coded), "I feel connected to my experience in the here-and-now," "In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting") (1 = Almost never, 4 = Sometimes, 7 = Almost always). As expected people who rated higher on the mindfulness scale assessed the advertisement as more creative (for both single-item creativity scale and multi-item creativity scale).

Summary of Findings

Our findings shows that despite that an advertisement is produced to be creative, the creativity perceptions of consumers can differ. However, being in the present moment and paying attention to the current environment/experience (i.e., creative ad), mindful individuals assess the creative advertisements as more creative than other individuals.

Key Contributions

This research expands the advertisement creativity literature by showing that creativity assessments can depend on mindfulness. In addition, while mindfulness research has been gaining traction in recent years due to its many positive outcomes (Pereira and Coelho 2019), to our knowledge, no research has looked at its impact on advertisement perceptions. Hence, this is the first research that shows that mindfulness enhances the creativity perceptions of creative ads. Our finding suggests that since creative advertisements call for more investment (time, human,

and money resources) compared to uncreative advertisements, marketers can use mindfulness as a psychographic segmentation variable, and gear their creativity efforts towards the segment that are mindful by nature or engage in mindfulness practices. Marketers can also place their advertisements where mindfulness is practiced or encouraged such as vacation resorts and studios that offer mindfulness classes.

PATHWAYS FOR VIRALITY: TRACING THE EVOLUTION AND SETTING THE FUTURE AGENDA FOR VIRAL MARKETING

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Keywords: virality, viral marketing, user engagement, chronological review, TCCM

Description: A chronological review embedded in the TCCM framework to identify common threads, shifts and turning points in viral marketing research against evolving technological and socio-cultural developments.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

At a time when digital marketing has become a *sine qua non*, viral marketing (VM) has become its "holy grail" (Akpinar and Berger, 2017). While VM has been put to various conceptualisations, it is essentially a marketing strategy that causes exponential diffusion of content in little time and at a marginal cost through peer-to-peer transmission of content (Reichstein and Brusch, 2019). Despite ample literature on the topic, there has been a lack of reviews in the domain causing VM research to scatter in various directions. Moreover, existing reviews have been limited in scope and are unstructured (Lindgreen and Vanhamme, 2005; Swanepoel, Lye and Rugimbana, 2009; Petrescu and Korgaonkar, 2011; Reichstein and Brusch, 2019), which has prevented a holistic and systematic assessment of the literature. Also in a rapidly evolving field like VM, a longitudinal review offers valuable insights into how the field has evolved and what could be the pathways for future scholars to tide over current inconsistencies in the literature (Paul and Criado, 2020). By adopting a TCCM framework, we lend theoretical robustness to the review and ensure comprehensiveness through the coverage of all research constituents (Paul and Serranado, 2018). In this pursuit, the authors seek to answer the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1. What have been the different chronological phases of viral marketing research?

RQ2. How has the field evolved during these phases in terms of the Theories, Contexts, Characteristics and Methods (TCCM) explored during them?

RQ3. What are the prevailing gaps and future research directions in the viral marketing domain?

Summary of Findings

There were limited studies in the first phase (2004-08; n = 10) as researchers endeavoured to empirically ground the VM phenomenon. The emergence of social media led to growing scholarly interest in VM in the following period (2009-13; n = 30). The third phase (2014-2018), was marked by a surge in VM studies (n = 49) stimulated by developments in content-generation features and prioritisation of multimedia content by platforms like Facebook. The trajectory of VM research diversified due to the disruption caused by COVID-19, resulting in a heightened dependence on technology and concern for sustainability. This phase (2019-23; n = 54) was thus characterised by new research contexts such as virality for non-profits, novel theories like the consumer culture theory, new technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and a plethora of other novel constructs.

The gap analysis has revealed several directions for future research. There is theoretical skewness in literature as some theories have been overused and other important ones have only been applied in singular contexts. The authors therefore feel the need to endow both theoretical diversity and depth to VM research. In terms of context, there is a dearth of research on popular marketing platforms such as WhatsApp, which warrant investigation. Given engagement behaviours vary geo-culturally, there is need to explore virality in emerging market contexts such as Latin America and Africa. Despite cause-directed virality being an emerging area much needs to be known regarding this, given user motivations vary in cause contexts. The skewed emphasis on content drivers also needs to pave way for a more diversified antecedent portfolio to unravel user engagement behaviour. Methodologically, quantitative studies have dominated and authors feel the need for more qualitative studies to reveal deeper insights into viral behaviours.

Key Contributions

The current study synthesises over 20 years of VM research and organises it chronologically to bring out dominant themes and patterns during each phase. Current reviews are limited in scope and are unstructured, which makes ours a pioneer study in the VM domain that undertakes a longitudinal review through the TCCM framework. The paper groups the antecedents of user engagement behaviour into meaningful dimensions, which were hitherto scattered across studies. This is the first study that gleans contextual gaps in VM research and provides directions for expanding VM contexts. The authors analyse and reveal the theoretical inconsistencies in current VM research, and make appropriate suggestions regarding the same. In terms of the methodology, the authors bring out gaps in current approaches and make proposals for future research. The study offers strategic directions for marketing practitioners as well. The synthesis of literature gives an overview of the drivers of virality that may serve as a handy reference for practitioners to build effective strategies and tactics for digital campaigns. The study consolidates findings across various industrial contexts, which may serve as a compendium of knowledge for practitioners. The paper therefore serves as a beacon for both academe and practitioners and charts the pathways for VM research in the coming years.

(References are available upon request)

RHETORICAL FIGURES IN ADVERTISING: A PROPOSAL OF CROSS-CULTURAL CONTENT ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND SOUTH KOREA

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Jung Min Jang, Brunel University London, UK

Description: We propose a comparison study between the U.S. and South Korea to find differences in usage of various rhetorical figures in ads.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Hypotheses

We offer an investigation in print ads of magazines (i.e., Newsweek American edition versus Korean edition published between 2000 and 2023) to test our hypotheses below.

> **H1:** Rhetorical figures (including schemes and tropes) appear less frequently in Korean magazine ads than American magazine ads.
>
> **H2:** Simple substitution tropes (e.g., hyperbole, ellipsis, epanorthosis, rhetorical questions, and/or metonym) appear more frequently in Korean magazine ads than American magazine ads.
>
> **H3:** Destabilization tropes (e.g., metaphor, pun, irony, and/or paradox) appear less frequently in Korean magazine ads than American magazine ads.

H4: Layering ad pattern appears less frequently in Korean magazine ads than American magazine ads.

H5: Verbal anchoring ad pattern appears more frequently in Korean magazine ads than American magazine ads.

References are available upon request.

SELF-REGULATION OF ADVERTISING IN THE U.S.: KEEPING UP WITH THE CHANGING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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Keywords: Self-regulation, ASRC, NAD, NPBBB, CARU, NARB, digital advertising

ABSTRACT

Advertising attracts significant attention from various stakeholder groups. It is a powerful tool and impacts all. Recent technological developments have introduced new opportunities, platforms, and tools to communicate with consumers individually and also made it difficult to monitor every communication for truthfulness. This paper examines how the advertising industry in U.S. regulates itself in these changing circumstances and how effective these measures are.

Description Changing landscape of advertising self-regulation.

INTRODUCTION

Advertising is important for creating awareness, providing information, improving brand connections and attitudes and engaging customers beyond a sale and purchase relationship. It faces increasing scrutiny from the government, consumers, consumer advocacy organizations

and other stakeholders who proactively recommend government regulation of advertising. However, the internet has complicated the control, delivery and impact of customized messages.

Advertising is regulated through a two-pronged strategy: by the industry itself (self-regulation) and through laws and regulations set up by the government (regulatory framework). Controlling advertising through legal regulations alone imposes costs on firms to achieve compliance. Self-regulation, decreases risks to consumers, increases public trust, and combats negative public perceptions about an industry (Boddewyn, 1985; Poortvliet & Lokhorts, 2016). It complements existing laws and helps businesses reduce compliance costs and costs of litigation.

Advertisers use strategies, like, inserting protective clauses in agency client contracts; creating review boards/panels for evaluating content and execution of campaigns; and retaining attorneys who review the ads before they are released in the media to prevent expensive litigation and paying legal compensation or fines in matters of controversy to help reduce the need for governmental intervention (Pinotti, 2012). The digital platforms are interactive (Stewart, 2019) and provide an inexpensive method of consumer advertising and customer relationship management. New challenges emerge due to the use of Artificial Intelligence Additionally, advertising fraud has increased due to fake advertisements, impression laundering, and fake users (Stewart, 2019). Digital technology has increased mistrust amongst consumers and may indicate a need for even greater regulation (Pinotti, 2012).

Advertisements are self-regulated in the U.S. by the National Advertising Review Board (NARB), advertisers and advertising agencies, business associations, and the media. Since 1912, the Better Business Bureau has been in long-term self-regulation of advertising through a strong oversight of business practices building on truth in advertising laws (Balleisen, 2017).

Objectives of the paper

This research focuses on issues related to self-regulation of advertising that require renewed attention due to changing technology and resultant changed business practices in the advertising field. Compared to the existing research that focused on industries complying with self-regulatory codes and advertising regulations, this paper takes a comprehensive view on the effectiveness of self-regulation as judged by the number of misleading advertising complaints received by two major agencies involved in consumer protection; the changes in the self-regulatory framework as seen by institutional set up; and new provisions or codes to encourage truthful advertising.

Methodology

The research used qualitative methods and relied on using secondary data to achieve research objectives. The following three measures were used:

I. Literature review on self-regulation to assess whether researchers conclude that self-regulation is effective,

II. Number and nature of complaints received by two databases-: complaints of misleading advertising of financial services using received by Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and other misleading advertising and marketing complaints received by the Better Business Bureau (BBB) to assess whether they were increasing or decreasing.

III. Examining the role of institutions engaged in self-regulation of advertising; their area of focus; and the recent developments in the field in U.S.

Review of existing literature on self-regulation of advertising

The search for existing literature on self-regulation turned up 205 results of research

conducted between 1994-2022. The key words used in the search were misleading advertising, misleading claims, false claims, fraudulent advertising, and fraudulent claims. The existing studies on self-regulating advertising were mostly industry, sector, or product specific.

Pollay (1994) observed that every time the tobacco industry responded with seemingly sincere promises to set up self-regulation codes of conduct and procedures, their efforts were more cosmetic than effective managerial controls. The legislation to stop broadcast advertisements was passed but this legislation also simultaneously eliminated free airtime provided for pro-health public service announcements which were being telecasted previously. Further, the cigarette industry's sponsorship of sport events and teams began instantly, creating television promotional exposure, but now with no health warnings, resulting in actions that caused more harm than good to the consumers. The author recommended that other countries should not rely exclusively on industry self-regulation, as its "promise" is likely to far exceed its "performance".

Soh et al. (2007) found that in the healthcare industry, direct to consumer advertisements were more credible than information presented over the internet and that use of technology increased the credibility of the message and negated the effectiveness of self-regulation.

Sharma et al. (2010) observed that threatened by government regulation and critical public opinion, industries often undertake self-regulatory actions, issue statements of concern for public welfare, and assert that self-regulation is sufficient to protect the public. The highly visible pledges of the food industry to curtail children's food marketing, sell fewer unhealthy products in schools, and label foods in responsible ways, were empty promises; concluding that ceding regulation to industry carries opportunities but is highly risky. In some industries (e.g., tobacco), self-regulation has been an abject failure, but in a few others (e.g., forestry and marine

fisheries), it has been more successful; therefore, self-regulation may not work effectively for all industries- especially those that rely on digital communications.

The research by Elizabeth et al. (2011) supported these conclusions and found that despite voluntary adherence by companies to self-defined guidelines, there may actually be few changes in their activities and there is very limited ability to actually halt or control the undesired practices of other businesses not adopting these codes of conduct.

Beard (2012) studied nearly 640 articles on comparative advertising and found that the issues of disparagement of competitors and the misappropriation of their brand names and trademarks set the stage for an extraordinary conflict between the industry, its self-regulators, and the Federal Trade Commission. The study pointed to the need for wider consultation between the self-regulators and the state regulators.

In a roundtable on reproductive technologies, Madeira (2013) studied the information provided to consumers/patients on company websites. The research raised several questions: such as how medical websites should be classified as informational spaces; what purposes could they serve, and what ends are they accomplishing; how patients perceive and comprehend text on a website that simultaneously fulfills multiple goals which are both complementary and conflicting (including advertising, informing patients about clinic practices and philosophies, providing medical advice, and recruiting donors). This research recommended the need for more regulatory clarity on website content and the need to update self-regulatory codes.

Jernigan & Rushman (2014) found that on new and highly interactive social networking sites (SNS) popular with youth, the tools used for measuring youth exposure to alcohol marketing were inadequate. They reviewed the existing policies of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube designed to keep branded alcohol content away from underage youth and found that

they failed miserably, and such advertising had grown dramatically in the past three years.

Similarly, Smith et.al. (2014) analyzed beer, spirits, and alcopop magazine advertisements to determine adherence to federal and voluntary advertising standards. They conducted content analysis of 1795 unique advertising creatives placed in nationally available magazines between 2008 and 2010 and found that while advertisements adhered to existing regulations and codes of conduct, the creatives included degrading and sexualized images, promoted risky behavior, and made health claims associated with low-calorie content. They concluded that existing codes and regulations do not adequately protect against content that promotes unhealthy and irresponsible consumption and degrades potentially vulnerable populations in its depictions, recommending an enhanced federal oversight to protect public health instead.

A study by Tan et al. (2015) examined the sociodemographic correlates of self-reported exposure to e-cigarette communications and their relationships with support for restricting vaping and smoking in public venues. Online survey data was collected from a representative sample of U.S. adults (n= 1449) between October and December 2013. The researchers recommended further research to assess whether messages portraying e-cigarettes to circumvent smoking restrictions from advertisements, influenced public support for vape-free policies.

Research by El Toukhy & Choi (2016) monitored cigarette advertising in 344 magazines in the U.S. from 2010-2014. They studied 5317 tobacco advertisements. The data confirmed that magazine tobacco advertising used specific targeting of some demographic groups to perpetuate or increase the consumption of tobacco leading to health concerns. concluding that self-regulation of advertising of tobacco products did not sufficiently tackle the issues.

Noel et al. (2017) performed a thematic content analysis on 289 beer ads broadcast during the

U.S. NCAA Men's and Women's 1999-2008 basketball tournaments. Similar to the research on the tobacco industry, this study revealed that self-regulation has not adequately addressed issues related to responsible advertising in the beer and spirits industry.

Dickinson-Dela Porte et al. (2020) explored who has the power and responsibility for advertising self-regulation in a boundary free digital world. The research elicited insights from 18 key stakeholders in the self-regulatory process, across Europe, United States, and Asia-Pacific; highlighting the need for more collaboration and alignment of self-regulatory systems and building a framework for action through embedding responsibility, aligning standards, initiating processes, and improving outcomes to improve effectiveness.

The literature review clearly establishes that self-regulation of advertising has yet to evolve to meet the challenges of truthful advertising resulting from the change in technology, exponential growth of digital marketing, and the possibilities arising from use of sophisticated consumer research and artificial intelligence to churn out customized advertisements and the assertions by the industry to better regulate themselves have been empty promises.

Consumer Complaint Data Related to Misleading Advertising

Consumer complaint data was accessed from two major sources: the CFPB website and the BBB. The CFPB data was publicly available in 2 batches, one from 2012 to November 2017 (see Table 1) and the second from 2017 -2020. While the complaints up to 2016 were largely related to misleading statements, those after that were redefined as misrepresentation. Further, data was collected under several classifications of misleading complaints that complicated collecting comprehensive information on the complaints.

Table 1: Advertising and Marketing Complaints on Financial Services: CFPB- 2012-2017**.

Year from	Year to	Number of Complaints
12/01/2011	12/29/2011	26
01/03/2012	12/30/2012	354
01/01/2013	12/31/2013	1230
01/01/2014	12/31/2014	4132
01/01/2015	12/31/2015	3991
01/01/2016	12/31/2016	3882
01/01/17	11/21/2017	3883*

Up to November 21st, 2017. ** www.consumerfinance.gov/data

Figure 1 highlights the misleading advertisements, information and communication related complaints that were received by CFPB between 2017-2020.

Figure 1: Misleading advertising, communication, and information complaints 2017-2020.
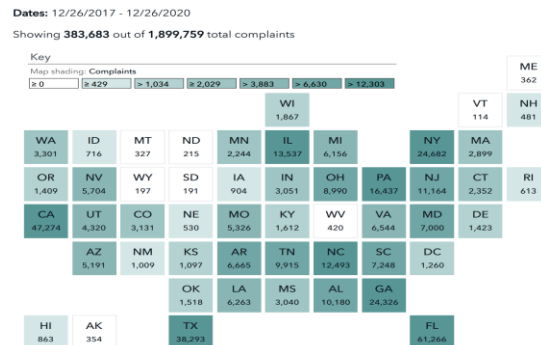
Source: ** www.consumerfinance.gov/data

Thus, the number of consumer complaints have increased during this period in specific states like, Florida, California, Texas, New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and North Carolina as compared to other states. The data correlates to the density of the population in each of these states and is consistent with the findings made by Soh et al. (2007).

The BBB website displayed data for total inquiries and complaints received, complaints resolved, complaints not resolved and complaints that could no longer be resolved. The data is

available for 3 periods: for the years 2010-2014; 2015-2020 and 2021-2024. The data does not specify whether it related to -misleading advertisement, misleading claims, misrepresentation or hiding vital information or shoddy or poor quality of product or service, etc. at present. If we compare data from 2016 to 2021, complaints rose by 48%. Digital media advertising complaints increased from 16.63 billion in 2016 to 48.95 billion in 2021 or 194% (Statista, 2023).

Table 2: Total Complaints received by Better Business Bureau: 2010-2021.

Year	Complaints received	Complaints settled %	Complaints not settled % (numbers)	Complaints unable to pursue%
2021	1236433	79	20 (241648)	1
2020	1166991	81	17(199678)	2
2019	907,563	78	20 (184172)	2
2018	835846	78	20 (163936)	2
2017	799502	79	19 (151369)	2
2016	834373	80	19 (155124)	1
2015	842219	79	19 (161503)	2
2014	843884	78	19 (159624)	3
2013	885845	78	20 (172802)	2
2012	950132	76.7	20.4 (193738)	2.9
2011	894868	76.4	20.8 (186555)	2.7
2010	844054	75.8	21 (177123)	2.9

Source: Compiled from complaint statistics BBB

https://www.bbb.org/content/dam/iabbb/systemwide-pages/complaint-stats/2021

stats/US%20BBB%202021%20Complaint%20Statistics.pdf

Complaints related to online marketing are now being separately included in the BBB database and the digital marketing complaints are broken down into several categories. A summary of complaints for selected online categories are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Selected complaints related to online/digital marketing

Year/Complaints	Online retailers	e-commerce	Online shopping	Online education	Total Complaints
2020	64713	18729	20139	4949	108530
2021	49830	19694	15549+8176 social media	1944	95193

Source: Compiled from BBB data.

While it is important to look at the different sources of complaints and companies that are attracting these complaints, it is also important to get an aggregated picture about the nature of

the complaint and information on the demographics of the people making these complaints to identify specific demographics facing unfair practices. In 2023, the CFPB filed 29 enforcement actions and resolved through final orders 6 previously-filed lawsuits. Those orders require lawbreakers to pay approximately $3.07 billion to compensate harmed consumers and pay approximately $498 million in civil money penalties.

Observation of existing self-regulatory framework

This section examines the self-regulatory mechanism as it prevails in the U.S. including the new developments to meet the changing landscape of advertising. The advertising industry in U.S. opted to self-regulate in 1971. The BBB sets standards for marketplace trust and encourages and supports best practices in business by educating consumers and businesses. It also celebrates marketplace role models and calls out and addresses substandard marketplace behavior. ***It has developed a code of advertising*** (https://www.bbb.org/code-of-advertising) consisting of 39 items, which emphasizes that the advertisements should be truthful and sincere offers to sell. It specifies that the advertisers have a responsibility to substantiate all claims made upon request and avoid all advertising that may mislead or deceive consumers. On the field, many trade associations are increasingly moving away from complying with the codes of advertising and choose to ignore peer pressure.

The BBB Institute creates programs to educate consumers on traditional and digital space. In 2018, BBB launched AdTruth a new online reporting tool that allows consumers to report confusing or misleading advertisements. More than 217 million Americans learned about problematic advertisements through Ad Truth radio and television public service announcements.

Recently BBB restructured itself to address the continual number of complaints and the complications arising from digital technology. As of June 2019, the Council of Better Business

Bureau (CBBB) became the third-party administrator of a self-regulatory system that examines the truth and accuracy of advertising claims, the appropriateness of children's advertising practices and, in the case of the Accountability Program, promote compliance with the advertising industry's self-regulatory standards. It restructured itself around specific stakeholder groups that were served by it and with effect from June 1, 2019, each line of business began operating separately with its own independent board of directors and staff. Four business lines were identified: International Association of BBBs (IABBs), BBB Institute for Marketplace Trust, BBB National Programs, Inc., (BBBNP) and BBB Wise Giving Alliance (BBB WGA). These new structures intend to protect specific stakeholder groups. Please see **Figure 2.**

It created groups to oversee transparency such as the Digital Advertising Alliance ("DAA"), Self-Regulatory Principles for Online Behavioral Advertising ("OBA Principles") and Multi-Site Data ("MSD Principles"), the Application of the Self-Regulatory Principles to the Mobile Environment ("Mobile Guidance"). These principles are collectively known as the "Principles" and apply to the practice of using Multi-Site Data and Cross-App Data collected from a particular browser or device for use on a different computer or device.

The International Association of BBBs, Inc. (IABBB) serves the 100 local Better Business Bureaus and their 160+ offices across the United States, Canada, and Mexico overseeing core programs such as BBB Accreditation, the BBB Code of Advertising, (www.BBB.org). The website hosts 5.4 million business profiles, investigations, and material related to consumer education. The BBB Institute for Marketplace Trust, BBB's U.S. foundation, manages programs such as BBB Scam Tracker, Fighting Financial Fraud, Military & Veterans Initiative, etc.

BBB National Programs, Inc. (BBB NP https://www.bbb.org/) is the home of industry self-regulatory and dispute resolution programs. The National Advertising Division (NAD) examines advertising claims made for diverse and critical goods and services including telecommunications, infant nutrition, over-the-counter medications, dietary supplements and "green" products.

The Online Interest-Based Advertising Accountability Program **(OIBA)** is charged with ensuring industry compliance with the Self-Regulatory Principles for Online Behavioral Advertising (OBA) (Principles). It hosts the online archive: a collection of 6000 legal advertising decisions.

The Digital Advertising Alliance **(DAA)** establishes and enforces responsible privacy practices across industry for relevant digital advertising. In 2021, DAA provided more consumer control in viewing advertisements and exercising choice. It announced expansion of the Choice mechanisms beyond cookies and mobile ad identifiers creating the **new YourAdChoices** tool. Finally, it developed the Electronic Retailing Self-Regulation Program (ERSP) to examine the truth and accuracy of core claims made in electronic direct-response advertising. BBB Wise Giving Alliance (BBB WGA) (give.org), to help donors make informed giving decisions and promote high standards of conduct among organizations soliciting contributions.

Another focus of the CBBB is vulnerable populations and the impact of digital technologies. Recognizing the special vulnerability of young children, the Children's Advertising Review Unit **(CARU)** holds advertisers to ambitious standards of truth and appropriateness when they advertise to young children. CARU examines advertising in all media, including electronic media, and monitors websites to assure that they are compliant with CARU's guidelines.

Figure 2 : Changed organization structure of BBB (2019)
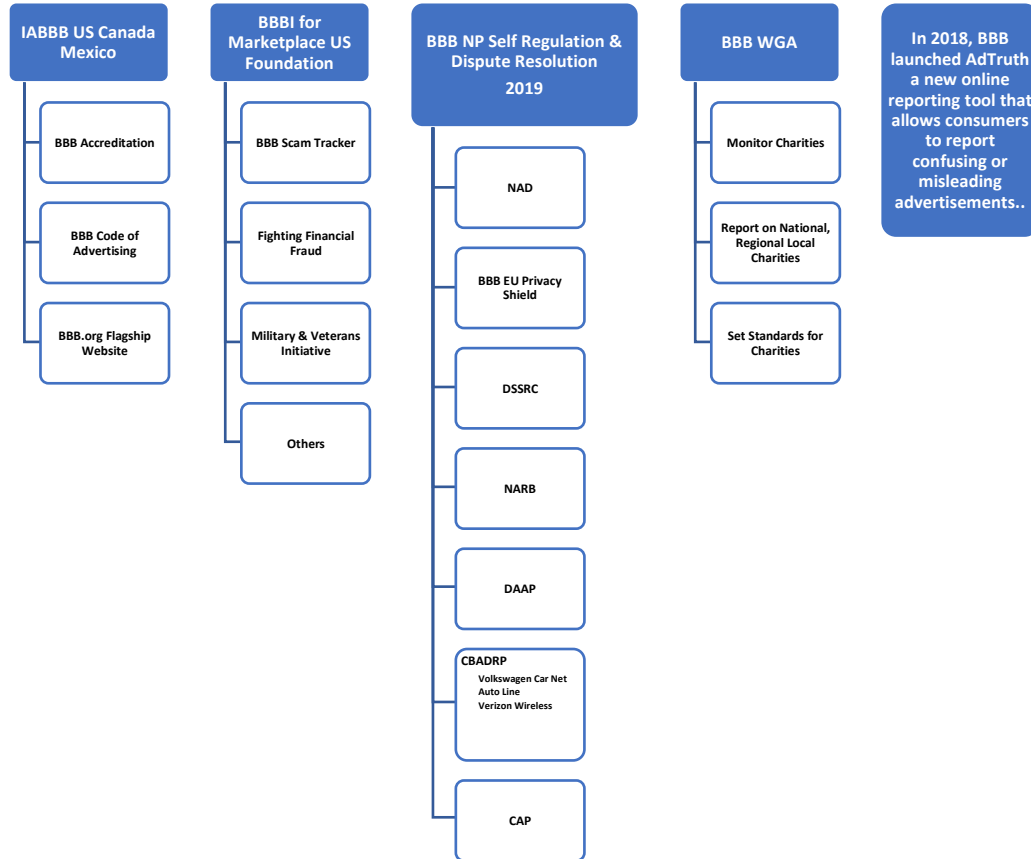
Additional oversight was established through The Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) 2006; The Children's Confection Advertising Initiative (CCAI) 2016; and the new bill "Kids PRIVCY Act" in 2020, specifically aimed to protect consumers between 13 to 18 years by requiring an opt-in consent requirement.

Thus, we see that changes in self-regulation provisions are being made to keep up with the changing technological environment and advertising and media. In 2005, the Mobile Marketing Association (MMA) published its first set of Mobile Advertising Guidelines for the mobile web. Over the past three years, the guidelines have evolved to include data across linked devices and tailored advertising must provide consumers with transparency and control. The MMA's Mobile Advertising Guidelines are increasingly accepted as best practice across the

industry worldwide. These new structures have the added benefit of being able to establish guidelines for digital media.   However, the effectiveness of these measures is yet to be seen.

Conclusion

The research has tried to capture the three pieces of evidence that could indicate the effectiveness of self-regulation: reporting from the existing research studies, the consumer complaint data and the institutions engaged in the field. Three convergent qualitative studies were used to better understand trends in self-regulation of advertising in the U.S.

In an effort to avoid government oversight, self-regulation has moved from being dependent solely on trade associations to oversight by the CBBB. The Center for Industry Self-Regulation (CISR), a 501(c)(3) non-profit, was created to harness the historic power of self-regulation in the United States in order to empower business accountability.

However, the consumer complaints have continued to increase. In response to the increase, the CBBB has recognized the complexity stemming from digital media and created new oversight structures to focus on the impact from web technologies. The guidelines have changed from being general and broad based to more specific to each media (Soh, et al, 2007). The year 2019 saw several changes in the structure of self-regulation in the U.S.

A great milestone that has been achieved is that the complaint database is now available at the BBB website. The database is organized by industry classification at present. It might take time to get the database organized by the nature of complaint, like misleading advertising, defective products, deficiency in service, etc., and sector wise like retail, health, services, manufacturing etc., reported separately for brick and mortar and online stores to make it more comparable over time. Additional information on the demographic of the population filing complaints and complaint resolution will also provide insight into how to better protect the

consumers.

The mere fact that more guidelines are being revised and issued indicates robustness and responsiveness of self-regulatory initiatives, but at the same time, it also points out to increased incidences of misleading and untruthful advertisements. Marketers have been finding ways to work around the guidelines rather than change their philosophy towards encouraging truthful advertising. Mandy Walker (2018) found that since 2014, more than 150 lawsuits were brought against more than 80 retailers alleging deception of consumers through false advertising of prices and not offering legitimate sales. As a result, some retailers have had to agree to pay hefty amounts to resolve suits brought by various law enforcement agencies. In 2017-18, Amazon paid $1.1 million in penalties; overstock.com paid $6.8 million, Neiman Marcus agreed to pay 2.9 million for putting false original price tags in its Last Call stores, JC Penny paid $50 million and $50.8 million for settling deceptive pricing class action suits; Michael Kors and Ann Taylor reached similar settlements as well. It is surprising why businesses are not deterred despite such heavy penalties resulting in the continued call for government oversight to protect consumers.

It will be important to highlight again that the self-regulatory organizations can at best obtain voluntary compliance but by themselves have no teeth. Self-regulation efforts have largely been reactive rather than proactive-and have largely followed regulations rather than precede them.

Further, the self-regulatory agencies cannot have resources large enough and tools comprehensive enough to be able to prevent, monitor, and control misleading advertising. The temptation to make quick profits in the highly competitive environment is an important motivator. It appears that businesses can only be prevented from adopting unfair practices by imposing hefty penalties which can be enforced by government agencies alone.

There is also growing evidence that consumer expectations regarding responsible advertising have changed. The consumers expect that not only should advertising be truthful and not misleading but be socially responsible promoting social welfare by demarketing products and services that have a harmful impact, like smoking cigarettes, using drugs, etc., and not taking advantage of the vulnerable members of the society. Sharma et al (2010) recommended that there was a need for self-regulation to attract more industry players to adopt the codes created by their industry associations. Companies must perceive economic benefit in resisting temptation to use misleading advertising for short term gains. With the rapid dissemination of information through digital technologies, it is important that institutions become more purposeful in their messages.

Alex Silverman (2020) found that while most Americans say funny commercials are still their favorite, the majority of Super Bowl viewers believe it is appropriate for brands to promote social justice in their spots.

Poortvliet & Lokhorst, (2016) suggest that consumers need to encourage retail giants to favor suppliers who adopt ethical procurement standards for their purchases and that third-party certification and oversight coupled with public reporting were essential to ensure compliance with more stringent advertising codes of conduct. There is also a need to improve the participation of industry members big and small in the self-regulatory measures adopted by industries. Further, it is important to have more consumer representation on various self-regulatory decision-making bodies to provide a competitive strength to consumer interests and to achieve meaningful standards and external credibility.

Limitations and future research

This study was primarily a qualitative study. It is important to encourage conclusive research. Continuous research in the area will keep the issues alive and within the perspective of

policy makers. Additional research questions need to be addressed, including the impact of advertising on different population demographics, immigrants, and vulnerable consumers; how AI can impact advertising messages; and the increasing access to information by consumers.

Businesses in the future are likely to feel increasing pressure from global regulators in the field to develop uniform guidelines and a level playing field. Therefore, it is in the best interest of businesses to follow best practices for their own survival and growth. Self-regulation is likely to be reactive rather than proactive, so the basic designing and implementation initiative falls on the government.

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SHAPING CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS THROUGH HIGHER ED

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Keywords: Environment-friendly, Sustainable Consumption, Higher Education, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness

Description: This research explores the impact of higher education curricula on students' sustainable consumption behavior.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: What is the impact of higher education on students' sustainable consumption behavior?

Method and Data: Empirical Research using both survey and experiment.

Key Contributions: The results have important pedagogical implications for educators by demonstrating that the inclusion of sustainability-focused content can indeed influence the attitudes and behaviors of upcoming generations. The insights generated by this research offer considerable potential in guiding both educational and administrative policymakers. These results can serve as a guide when formulating novel curricula aimed at upholding the environment for both present and future generations. University administrations may find it necessary to thoroughly scrutinize the content of their curricula and explore ways to seamlessly integrate sustainability-related material to enhance students' education.

References are available upon request.

SHOULD RETAILERS USE GAMIFIED PROMOTIONS IN SHOPPING APPS?

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Keywords: gamification, promotions, anticipated regret, effort justification, purchase intention

Description: Relying on effort justification and regret theory we find positive effects of a gamified (vs. non-gamified) promotion on consumers' purchase intention in a shopping app.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consumers often receive multiple promotions a day (Forbes 2017). Therefore, retailers face the challenge to find new attractive promotion types to capture consumers' attention (Stipp 2018). Gamification might be an excellent tool to catch attention as gamification motivates consumers through the use of game elements (Seaborn and Fels, 2015), which retailers can combine with traditional monetary promotions. Since consumers invest effort (playing the game) in order to receive the monetary reward, we assume that consumers perceive a higher effort compared to a traditional promotion. Based on effort justification theory, we further assume that consumers will feel higher regret if they do not redeem the monetary reward.

Following regret theory, consumers should then have a higher purchase intention. As previous literature does not provide clear evidence of positive effects of gamified promotions on consumers' purchase intention, our study extends existing research by focusing on effort justification and regret theory. We further analyze the effect of gamification on purchase intention under different conditions (e.g. different discount levels and if the prize is specified beforehand or not).

Method and Data

We conducted three scenario-based experiments to test the relationship between a gamified (vs. non-gamified) promotion on consumers' purchase intention through perceived effort and anticipated regret. The first experiment uses a 2-level single factor (gamified vs. non-gamified) design, the second experiment uses a 2 (gamified vs. non-gamified) × 3 (discount level: 5% vs. 10% vs. 20%) design and the third experiment uses a 3-level single factor (non-gamified vs. gamification with unspezified prize vs. gamification with specified prize) design. We created a mock up app for the scenario experiments. In this mock up app participants were able to click on categories and products so that it looked and worked like a real app. In the gamified scenario participants could play a game in the app to win a prize. In the non-gamified scenario participants received the monetary reward (10% discount) immediately. For data analysis we used ANOVA and PROCESS in SPSS.

Summary of Findings

We find positive effects of a gamified promotion on consumers' purchase intention. This positive effect can be explained by effort justification and regret theory. Consumers perceive a higher effort and higher anticipated regret for a gamified vs. non-gamified promotion and consequently have a higher purchase intention. Accordingly, we were able to demonstrate serial mediation. However, we only find support for this relationship for higher discount levels.

Further, consumers' anticipated regret is higher when they know the prize before playing the game.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our results have three key contributions. Firstly, we find support for a positive effect of a gamified promotion on consumers' purchase intention in the shopping app context. Secondly, we considered regret theory and effort justification theory and thus contribute to the explanation of the relationship between gamification and consumers' purchase intention. Thirdly, we considered different design aspects of a gamified promotion such as different discount levels and if the prize is specified or unspecified before respondents play the game to examine how gamification works best. In addition, our study provides retailer implications such as implementing gamified promotions with more demanding tasks to positively influence regret and purchase intention.

References are available upon request.

THE ATTRACTION EFFECT IN CONSUMERS' RESPONSE TO COUPON PROMOTIONS

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Keywords: Attraction effect, Coupon promotions, Coupon redemption, Price consciousness

Description: The current research examines whether, when, and why the construction of a set of promotional coupons can evoke an attraction effect wherein consumers' reactions to a target coupon (e.g., "Save 20% today with coupon A") are more favorable when it is distributed along with an inferior decoy coupon (e.g., "Save 10% tomorrow with coupon B")—that is dominated by the target coupon—than when it is distributed alone.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Coupon promotions are ubiquitous and enjoy great popularity on both sides, among marketers and consumers. While a great deal of research has examined a variety of coupon design elements, including face value (e.g., Bawa, Srinivasan, and Srivastava 1997; Leone and Srinivasan

1996; Raghubir 2004), coupon duration (e.g., Krishna and Zhang 1999; Kumar and Swaminathan 2005), or redemption efforts (e.g., Chakraborty and Cole 1991; Xia, Kukar-Kinney, and Monroe 2010), the fact that coupons are frequently distributed as a set comprising multiple coupons has been neglected so far. This raises the question of how the construction of a coupon set can shape consumers' response to coupon promotions. Thus, the current research investigates *whether, when, and why* the construction of a set of promotional coupons can evoke an attraction effect wherein consumers' reactions to a target coupon (e.g., "Save 20% today with coupon A") are more favorable when it is distributed along with an inferior decoy coupon (e.g., "Save 10% tomorrow with coupon B")—that is dominated by the target coupon—than when it is distributed alone.

Method and Data

In order to examine the attraction effect in consumers' response to coupon promotions, we conducted a series of five studies, including online studies and a field experiment. This series of experimental studies provides substantial empirical evidence of the existence of the effect, sheds light on the mechanism underlying this phenomenon, and identifies context-specific moderators that determine the strength of the effect.

Summary of Findings

The studies demonstrate that consumers' evaluations of the attractiveness of a target coupon and redemption intentions increase, when it is distributed along with an inferior decoy coupon, compared to when it is distributed alone. This effect also manifests in actual coupon redemption in the field and increases with the amount of attention paid to the decoy. In addition, considering context-specific moderators, the studies reveal that the attraction effect in consumers' response to

coupon promotions is more pronounced among price-conscious consumers and increases with the extent to which a decoy coupon is inferior to the target coupon.

Key Contributions

First, this research complements extant knowledge about the scope of the attraction effect. While prior research demonstrates the attraction effect in a variety of domains its effectiveness in the context of promotional activities, such as coupon promotions, has not been the subject of extant studies. The current research develops a basic understanding of the attraction effect in multi-coupon promotions by documenting its occurrence in a series of online studies and a field experiment, shedding light on the mechanism underlying the phenomenon, and uncovering the moderating role of a consumer-specific characteristic (price consciousness) and a design-specific parameter (inferiority of a decoy coupon) as well as their interplay in this particular context.

Second, the current research offers implications for a more efficient usage of coupon promotions in business practices. In particular the findings that (1) the effectiveness of a decoy coupon in improving the attractiveness of a target coupon is determined by the extent to which it is inferior to the target, that (2) the effect increases with the amount of attention a decoy coupon attracts, and that (3) the effect is more pronounced among price-conscious consumers provide important insights that should be considered when developing and implementing a coupon promotion campaign.

References are available upon request.

THE EFFECT OF SYMBOLIC SPECIAL-DAY PROMOTIONS ON PRODUCT SALES: THE CASE OF BOOKS IN QUEBEC

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Keyword: *Sales Promotion, Nonmonetary incentives, Book Industry, Symbolic Benefits*

Description: *This research examines the short-term effect of a symbolic special-day promotion on product sales.*

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Despite the ambiguity about the worth of price promotions (Delvecchio et al., 2006; Hansssens & Siddarth, 2002; Jiang, 2022) and the growing interest in sales promotions that primarily offer nonmonetary benefits (Aaker, 1991; Chandon et al., 2000), little attention has been paid to symbolic promotions. The present study fills the gap by studying the effectiveness of a symbolic special-day promotion and examine whether such promotion is subject to the same inherent limitations as price promotions. Unlike traditional price promotion days (e.g., Black Friday), which are centred toward monetary incentives to stimulate purchases, symbolic special-day promotions (e.g., "small business Saturday") create symbolic benefits for consumers, by tapping in their desires to express their values and affirm their social identity (Holbrook, 1994; Kahle & Kim, 2006; Park et al., 1986;

Rokeach, 1973). Given the distinct benefits associated with symbolic promotions, it is unclear to what extent they can stimulate sales.

Drawing on fundamental concepts from the sales promotion literature, our research aims to answer the following questions: 1) Are symbolic promotional days effective in increasing sales? 2) To what extent do they circumvent the drawbacks usually associated with price promotions?

Method and Data

To address the research questions, the study investigates the effect of the symbolic special-day promotion *"On August 12 I buy a Quebecois book,"* using a unique longitudinal dataset comprising 510,506 observations representing sales data for 5,000 different literary books in the French-speaking Quebec market, over an 8-year period, from one week before to one week after the promotion day. The study employs a zero-inflated model with a negative binomial distribution on the conditional model (ZINB) that overcomes the methodological challenges posed by count data covering many distinct products with high heterogeneity distribution. The model assumes that the total quantities sold (Q) vary by day (*Day*) and randomly by books (*TitleID*), and allows both the conditional and zero-inflation models to differ between the promoted products (local books) and non-promoted products (international books). The model captures the variation in the outcome variable (Q) after the promotion, and consider whether Day d is after (=1) the promotional day or not (=0). Important variables, such as Brand power, Newness, and Average Book price are included as moderating factors of the effect of the promotion. The model also controls for possible sources of endogeneity, such as time-varying factors

(Rossi, 2014) and cross-sectional variations (van Heerde & Neslin, 2017). A series of diagnostic tests is performed to ensure the reliability of the findings.

Summary of Findings

The result of the analysis suggests a significant increase in the quantity of local books (i.e., the promoted product) sold on the day of promotion. This effected is moderated by the brand power, newness, and average price of the book. However, contrary to most price promotions, the price elasticity does not significantly change during the promotion, meaning that while consumers are sensitive to the price of the books, their sensitivity does not change significantly during the promotional event.

Interestingly, the results suggest that there is no substantial decrease in international book sales (i.e., the nonpromoted product) during the promotion. In fact, all else being equal, the expected sales quantity also significantly increase for international books, but to a lesser extent. Furthermore, the results show no significant drop in sales in the days following the promotion, both for local and international books, allaying fears of a short-term post-promotional dip. However, a marginal drop is observed 6 days before the special day for local books, suggesting a minor fluctuation in sales prior to the event.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study contributes to the theoretical and practical understanding of symbolic special-day promotions as an understudied yet effective promotional tool, particularly within the cultural product domain. Overall, we find that when a promotion toward a cultural product generates highly symbolic benefits for the consumers, price cuts are not a necessity. Drawing upon the sale promotions literature, we disentangle the effect of symbolic promotions, and find that they may work differently than other types of

promotions. Our results indicate that, in contrast to most price promotions, the increase in sales during the promotion stems from primary demand growth rather than secondary demand effects. In fact, we observe a positive increase in the quantity sold for the non-promoted products during the promotional event, which suggests the presence of a spillover effect associated with the promotions. Furthermore, we find limited evidence of pre- and post-promotional dips, compared to traditional price promotions.

From a practical perspective, the study emphasizes the cost effectiveness of symbolic special-day promotions, demonstrating a positive overall increase in sales. The findings can provide empirical support to guide publishers, bookstores and authors in making decisions about their marketing plans.

References are available on request.

Virtual Influencers: Does Self-Image Congruence with Consumers Matter?

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Description: This paper examines the positive effects of consumers' self-image congruence with virtual influencers on download intention. Questionnaires (n = 166) were collected in the US and the data were analyzed focusing on the mediating roles of mental visualization and affective response.

Extended abstract

Research question

Virtual influencers are animated agents created by the artificial intelligence (AI) technology, possessing human-like characteristics (Lou et al., 2023). Marketers have recently turned their attention to virtual influencers due to their growing number of followers and their influence on social media. For instance, Lil Miquela, a virtual influencer, boasts more than 2.7 million followers on Instagram and endorses brands like Prada and Calvin Klein. However, despite their emerging role as an endorser, literature suggests that consumers hold divergent attitudes toward virtual influencers. On the one hand, virtual influencers enhance consumers' perception of ad novelty (Franke et al., 2023). On the other hand, literature on the uncanny valley suggests that consumers may experience negative emotions such as creepiness or disgust (Lou et al., 2023). Given this uncertainty, it is important to investigate the role of virtual influencers as a new type of endorser.

This paper focuses on influencer-consumer congruence, which refers to the degree of perceived fit between consumers' self-image and influencers. Previous research has

identified positive effects of influencer-consumer congruence on attitude towards ads and purchase intentions (Choi & Rifon, 2012), attitude toward brand-related content (Shan et al., 2020), and brand trust (von Mettenheim & Wiedmann, 2021). Given that virtual influencers share some similarities with human influencers, our goal is to confirm this effect in the context of virtual influencers. Our theoretical lens to define low versus high congruency are rooted in the Construct Level Theory (CLT; Trope & Liberman, 2010; Trope et al., 2007). According to CLT, consumers' judgements are influenced by their psychological distance. Previous research has shown that there is a relationship between psychological distance (i.e., social distance) and judgement of a target's actions, with consumers tending to judge similar targets more concretely (Liviatan et al., 2008).

In a similar vein, we argue that a higher degree of self-image congruence with virtual influencers indicates a greater perceived similarity. This, in turn, reduces the psychological distance between consumers and virtual influencers. As this psychological distance diminishes, consumers are more inclined to retrieve information, such as knowledge or memories. This prompts them to adopt a low-level construal, resulting in the construction of a richer and more detailed psychological representation, often referred to as visualization (Lee et al., 2016).

Our novelty lies in the theoretical contribution in connecting the congruence effect with the theory of the cognitive visual fluency or visualization. Previous research has demonstrated the positive effects of visualization on consumer emotions (Ha et al., 2019). Consumers are more likely to remember positive memories than cold memories (Sujan et al., 1993). The vivid visuals would retrieve more positive memories and trigger consumers' positive responses. Consequently, we expect that the perceived image congruence between a virtual influencer and a consumer will have a positive influence on the consumer's visualization of the ad promoted by the virtual influencer. This, in turn, is likely to result in positive affective responses and ultimately lead to positive consumer reactions, such as intention to download intention and use the product being advertised.

Methods

An online survey was conducted to collect 176 questionnaires. After removing 10

invalid responses (4 responses did not pass the screening questions, and 6 responses had repeated IP addresses), 166 responses remained for analysis. Among them, about 72% were male (n = 120) and the remaining 28% were female (n = 46). The average age was about 32.4 years old.

For the analysis, we used Hayes Process macro version 4.2 in SPSS to test the hypotheses, setting a 5,000-boostrapping with a 95% confidence interval. We used self-image congruence as the independent variable, visualization and positive affective response as two serial mediators, and download intention as the dependent variable to test the mediation effects.

Summary of Findings

The result revealed that self-image congruence positively influences visualization (b = 0.364, p < 0.000). Furthermore, visualization significantly influences positive affective response (b = 0.266, p < 0.000), which, in turn, positively influences download intention (b = 0.524, p < 0.000). Hence, visualization and positive affective response sequentially mediate the relationship between self-image congruence and download intention, with an indirect effect of 0.05 (CI = [0.022, 0.084]).

Main contributions

Our findings have two significant contributions. Firstly, we confirm the positive effect of influencer-consumer congruence in the context of virtual influencers. Although consumers may encounter negative emotions (e.g., creepiness) toward virtual influencers (Lou et al., 2023), a greater congruence of self-image with virtual influencers results in consumers' favorable reactions such as affective responses and download intention. For marketers, our findings suggest that firms should consider enhancing the similarities (e.g., similar personalities) between consumers and virtual influencers to gain more consumers' positive responses.

Furthermore, our mediation analysis results contribute to the literature by connecting the congruence effect and theory of visualization. We demonstrate that the congruence effect will enhance detailed visualization toward the promotions, resulting in accessing more positive memories and finally leading to download intention. These findings suggest that marketers should adapt promotions to amplify consumers' capacity for visualization. In addition, marketers should go beyond strengthening

consumers' future-oriented mental imagery (i.e., using the product in the future) and also incorporate consumers' past experiences or memories into the promotion. This approach can enhance consumers' responses to the promoted products.

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B2B and Relationship Marketing

DOES ANYONE READ YOUR MARKETING EMAILS? NO? THEN CUSTOMIZE IT! – THE EFFECT OF CONTENT AND TIMING

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Keywords: Email, newsletter, customization, personalization

Description: The paper investigates the effect of two PL branding strategy options (linked or stand-alone) on PL brand attitude considering PL tiers and degree of specialization of the online retailer as moderators.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The relevance of email marketing is often overlooked. Yet, the usage and reach of emails are still high. Consumers prefer to be contacted via email by brands rather than on other channels. Consequently, email marketing is still one of the most important communication channels. However, click-through rates declined from 6% to 3.1%. Thus, marketers are challenged even more to effectively manage their email marketing. Personalization can lift email effectiveness by increasing the relevance of offers for consumers. However, personalized emails can increase consumer's privacy risk perceptions, reactance, and

perceived intrusiveness. These negative effects can be mitigated by extending the passive concept of personalization to a participative customization. In this context, customization means the involvement of the consumer who can independently define parts of the marketing mix and therefore influence its elements. So far, research mainly focused on positive effects of personalization in email marketing and neglected how to counteract negative effects. To our knowledge, there is only study investigating the effect of email customization (Hartemo 2022) and it is exclusively focusing on content as a customization dimension. Therefore, our paper aims to answer the following research question: *Does the customization of the dimensions content and timing impact email marketing effectiveness?*

Method And Data

To test the effects of the customized email marketing dimensions of timing and content on email marketing effectiveness, a field experiment with a 2 x 2 between-subjects design (no (with) content customization / no (with) timing customization) was conducted. The customization email was sent to 8.091 prospective students. The prospects received a „customization email". This email invites prospects to subscribe to a newsletter that provides university-related information. The prospectives were randomly assigned to one of the four treatment groups. Overall, 504 individual contacts have registered for the newsletter (our study participants). These participants were randomly assigned to the four groups: group 1 (no content customization; no timing customization – control group) = 122 participants; group 2 (no content customization; timing customization) = 110 participants; group 3 (content customization; no timing customization) = 124 participants; and group 4 (content customization; timing customization) = 148 participants.

Summary of Findings

Timing manipulation and the group getting both timing and content manipulations do have a higher opening rate (OR) (+14.9% and +10.1%) compared to the control group. The group content manipulation and the group content and timing manipulation show a higher click-to-open-rate (CTOR) (+8.8% and +9.8%). A binary logistic regression for the dependent variable OR show that the timing manipulations has a significant effect ($\text{ß} = 0.437, p < 0.05$). For the CTOR the content treatments lead to a significantly higher CTOR ($\text{ß} = 0.502, p < 0.05$). The odds ratio of participants getting the timing without content manipulation is 2.033, indicating that these participants are twice as likely to open the newsletter than participants in the control group. The odds ratio to open the newsletter for the participants getting the timing and content manipulation is 1.584. Content alone has a considerably lower effect on the opening rate. Further, to calculate the odds ratios for CTOR, all study participants who had opened the newsletter were selected. The results reveal that participants who either get only the content or the content and timing manipulation were ~1.6 times as likely to click within the email newsletter than the control group.

Statement of Key Contributions

The results of our study indicate an effect of the timing and the content customization. While the timing dimension positively influences the opening rate (OR) the content dimension impacts the click-to-open-rate (CTOR). Our paper contributes to the research by investigating the timing dimension on top of the content customization. As both dimensions influence email marketing effectiveness, it is recommended to consider the content as well as the timing dimension in future research dealing with email marketing newsletters. In line with Hartemo (2022) our study confirms a positive impact of the content customization of email marketing newsletters. Additionally, in contrast to Hartemo (2022), our study considers and confirms a positive effect of the timing customization of email marketing newsletters. Based

on these results marketing managers should gather consumer insights regarding their timing

and content preferences. This should be applied for new email marketing subscribers as well

as for existing email newsletter subscribers in the database. While new subscribers can be

asked directly during the subscription process, existing subscribers can be approached with a

dedicated email gathering their customization preferences. Based on our study results, a set of

three to four selections options per customized dimensions of email marketing is already

sufficient.

References are available upon request.

INTERCEDING DISPUTES: SALESPERSON'S INFLUENCE IN B2B CLAIM AND COUNTERCLAIM DISPUTE RESOLUTIONS

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Keywords: Negative interfirm relation quality, Claim and counterclaim situation, Salesperson, Negative spillover theory, Dual agency theory.

Description: This study delves into a nuanced facet of negative inter-firm relations, specifically introducing the dynamics of claim and counterclaim scenarios within B2B organizations and providing sales managers with a framework for conflict management strategies.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Understanding how B2B relationships are damaged is an important component in building and restoring strong relationships. Our study focuses on specific problems of claim and counterclaim situations within interfirm negative relation quality. Past researchers have ignored the role of the salesperson in interfirm conflict and how the salesperson takes an active role in dispute resolution. The current research addresses the salesperson's role within the framework of inter-firm relational disturbances, especially in the nuanced scenarios of claim and counterclaim.

Summary of Findings

Drawing upon the theoretical frameworks of social identity and social exchange theories, we introduce a conceptual model of relationship destructive factors that lead to claim and counterclaim situations. We contend that involving a salesperson on behalf of the seller during B2B negotiations can facilitate more effective issue resolution in claim and counterclaim situations. We highlight the impact of relationship uncertainty in B2B firms, focusing on the risks associated with claim and counterclaim situations. We suggest that the salesperson's dual agency role moderates the relationship between the salesperson's effort and dispute resolution.

Key Contributions

The study claims that there is a heightened importance of salesperson's role in resolving negative interfirm relation quality, especially specific problems of claim and counterclaim situations. Our research underscores the significance of relational uncertainty within interfirm dynamics. Furthermore, we extend the dual agency theory to address the role of industrial salespersons in conflict resolution during claim and counterclaim situations. This study provided sales managers with a framework for conflict management strategies.

"References are available upon request."

PROHIBITING UNFAIR TRADING PRACTICES: THE IMPACT OF A REGULATORY INTERVENTION ON MARKET PRICES

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Keywords: Regulation, Unfair Trade, Governance, Business-to-Business

Description: We find that a two-phased regulatory intervention by the European Union (EU) prohibiting unfair trading practices (UTPs) by buyers toward sellers (e.g., producers) increased prices paid to producers by €8.86 billion (inflation-adjusted) and that its impact was moderated by EU Member States' cultural values and their motivation and ability to mitigate UTPs.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

We study the impact of Directive 2019/633, a European Union (EU) regulatory intervention prohibiting ten UTPs imposed by larger buyers toward smaller sellers (predominantly producers) within its business-to-business agri-food supply chain. UTPs often emerge in cases of strong power asymmetry, as powerless parties lack direct leverage to influence their exchange partners or indirect leverage to incentivize other market players to intervene. Regulatory interventions are valuable, as they can establish codes of conduct and formalize exchange rules. However, marketing literature has largely studied the regulation of UTPs in business-to-consumer markets, while related work has found equivocal evidence regarding regulation's effectiveness at fostering desirable exchange outcomes.

We study the Directive's impact across two phases. In phase one, the EU passed the Directive, but could not sanction noncompliance. In phase two, EU Member States (MSs) were required to implement the Directive or face sanctioning. The Directive *did not* mandate prices; it prohibited UTPs (e.g., refusing written contracts; imposing unilateral contract changes).

We address the following questions: Is an intervention prohibiting UTPs effective at increasing prices paid to producers? Is it effective before there is an active sanctioning mechanism, afterward, or in both phases? Under what conditions is it more or less effective?

Method and Data

We utilize discontinuous growth modeling (DGM), an approach used to examine the longitudinal effects of interventions or universally adopted policies. DGM uses a regression model that includes time-related variables based on discontinuities (i.e., phases) in the time

series. In a context with a two-phased intervention, variables describe the slope of the outcome (1) before phase one (e.g., pre-intervention), (2) during phase one, and (3) during phase two.

To examine prices before and after the Directive, our observation window begins in January of 2018 (16 months before its passage) and ends in September of 2022, spanning 57 months. The sample includes 1,493 MS-month-year observations from all 27 EU MSs.

"Price Paid to Producers" is the dependent variable: the average monthly inflation-adjusted price (in euros) paid to producers for 100 kilograms of raw cow's milk. The "Collectivism," "Power Distance," and "Masculinity" moderators were gathered from Hofstede's National Culture Index for each MS. The "Regulatory Enforcement" moderator was gathered from the World Justice Project. We determined whether there was "Preexisting UTP Legislation" (a moderator) for each MS manually. We control for each MS's milk production volume, milk export volume, agricultural cooperatives' market share, and average monthly EU support payments to its farmers.

Summary of Findings

Prior to the Directive's passage by the EU, inflation-adjusted prices paid to producers were decreasing over time. In phase 1 of the intervention (after the Directive's passage), prices paid to producers increased at a decreasing rate. In phase 2 (after the Directive's implementation by MSs and after which noncompliant parties could be sanctioned), prices increased linearly until the end of our observation window. When compared to the negative slope of prices paid to producers pre-Directive, our results show that both phases of the Directive were related to significantly higher prices paid to producers than would have been expected without it,

supporting our main effect hypotheses. Up to September of 2022, we estimate that the Directive increased prices paid to EU producers by €8.86 billion (inflation-adjusted).

After its passage, the Directive's impact on prices paid to producers was stronger in MSs higher in collectivism and masculinity, but lower in those higher in power distance, in line with our hypotheses. After its implementation, the Directive's impact was stronger in MSs that had preexisting UTP legislation (i.e., those with greater motivation to mitigate UTPs) and in those higher in regulatory enforcement (i.e., those with greater ability to mitigate UTPs), supporting our hypotheses.

Statement of Key Contributions

First, we find that a regulatory intervention prohibiting UTPs can provide weaker market actors with higher prices for their products, showing that regulating buyer-seller relationships can have a positive market-level impact.

Second, we offer a richer perspective on regulatory interventions as phased, as opposed to singular, events. While their phases differ in impact, both are related to increased prices for producers. These insights contribute to the debate about whether regulations can be effective without sanctions.

Third, we demonstrate that a society's cultural values and its motivation and ability to mitigate UTPs affect an intervention's impact. In phase 1 (pre-sanctioning mechanism), the Directive's impact was stronger in societies higher in collectivism and masculinity, but weaker in those higher in power distance. In phase 2 (active sanctioning mechanism), its impact was stronger in societies with preexisting UTP legislation and in those with higher regulatory enforcement.

Furthermore, our findings encourage managers at small firms to lobby for regulation in markets with pervasive UTPs. *Second*, our findings can benefit industry associations that regulate exchange, as we demonstrate the benefits of outlining rules of conduct. *Third*, we show policymakers concerned with sustainable business and protecting smaller market players that regulation can positively impact market outcomes.

RISING GEOPOLITICAL UNCERTAINTY AND A SUPPLIER FIRM'S CUSTOMER CONCENTRATION

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Keywords: geopolitical uncertainty, customer concentration, product-market strategy, lobbying

Description: Analysis of a panel data set of 49,018 firm-year observations of 5,933 U.S. public firms between 2001 and 2021 shows that Geopolitical uncertainty (GPU) causes a supplier firm's managers to perceive higher risk, which leads them to lower the concentration of their firm's sales to customers, i.e., managers allocate sales revenues more evenly across their customers instead of relying on a few major customers.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Geopolitical uncertainty (GPU) is on the rise, and it is impacting business. We reason that GPU may elevate managers' perceived risk, causing them to adjust their marketing decisions that suppress firm-specific uncertainty. One such decision is customer concentration (CC), i.e., the level of concentration of the firm's sales revenue among its major customers. A firm's CC decision is consequential because it impacts its performance outcomes, such as cost of equity

capital, IPO outcomes, innovation behaviors, and profitability (Dhaliwal et al. 2016; Patatoukas 2012; Saboo et al. 2017; Zhong et al. 2021). Interestingly, how managers would adjust CC in response to rising geopolitical uncertainty is *a priori* unclear. Thus, we seek to address: *How do managers of a firm adjust their firm's customer concentration in response to rising geopolitical uncertainty?*

Because we propose managers' perceived risk as the mechanism between GPU and CC, factors that alter managers' perceived risk should moderate this relation. We suggest lobbying and customer type as two such factors and test their moderating effects.

Further, does a firm's adjustment to customer concentration—triggered by GPU—matter to its product-market performance? We test the effect of CC on firms' product-market performance, i.e., new product introductions.

Method and Data

We combined data from four sources—(1) Standard & Poor's Compustat – Capital IQ North America Fundamentals Annual, (2) Standard & Poor's Compustat – Capital IQ Customer Segments, (3) Caldara and Iacoviello's (2022) geopolitical risk (GPR) website (https://www.matteoiacoviello.com/gpr.htm), and (4) LobbyView (https://www.lobbyview.org/). We merged the data from these four sources, creating a final data set of 49,018 firm-year observations, covering 5,933 firms from 2001 to 2021. We use fixed-effects ordinary least squares (OLS) estimator with robust standard errors.

Following Ak and Patakouskas (2016) and Banerjee et al. (2008), we measure the dependent variable, customer concentration (CC), as the Herfindahl-Hirschman index (HHI) of a firm's sales revenue to its major customers. Our primary explanatory variable is GPU. We use

Caldara and Iacoviello's (2022) news-based and U.S.-specific GPR index. Because lobbying spending likely has carryover effects, we measure it as a "stock." Following Giannetti and Srinivasan (2022), lobbying at time *t* is calculated as lobbying stock from previous years divided by the book value of a firm's assets at time *t*. Consistent with prior research, we create lobbying stock using a Koyck-type distributed lag function with a decay parameter of .50 (Martin et al. 2018).

Summary of Findings

The study has four key findings. First, geopolitical uncertainty (GPU) causes a supplier firm's managers to lower the concentration of their firm's sales to customers (CC), i.e., managers allocate sales revenues more evenly across their customers instead of relying on a few major customers. Second, the firm's lobbying spending—a proxy for managerial salience of geopolitical uncertainty—strengthens the effect of GPU on customer concentration (CC). Third, when GPU rises, a firm does not change its *corporate* CC, but lowers the *government* CC. Also, it decreases its *domestic* CC more than its *foreign* counterpart. Lastly, reducing CC in response to rising GPU hurts the firm's performance by impeding its number of new-product introductions.

Additionally, we conduct several robustness checks, including alternative measure of customer concentration, alternative measure of lobbying, alternative estimation using the Tobit estimator, correction for endogeneity using Gaussian copulas, ruling out an alternative explanation, and alternative time dynamics. The results are statistically similar to our main findings.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our findings contribute to the multidisciplinary literature at the intersection of geopolitical uncertainty and firm customer concentration. Calling attention to the insufficient inquiries to supranational institutions, e.g., geopolitical environment (Hartmann et al. 2022; Sun et al. 2021), we add to the literature by reporting that risk originating in the geopolitical environment impacts a firm's global operations strategy, which, in turn, affects its product-market outcome of #NPIs. Similarly, the extant literature on customer concentration has focused on its consequences (e.g., Chen et al. 2021; Dhaliwal et al. 201; Saboo et al. 2017), with little attention to its determinants (Leung and Sun 2021). We address this lack of attention by demonstrating that a firm lowers its customer concentration during times of escalated GPU and, conversely, raises it during periods of low GPU.

Moreover, the findings have three implications for managers. First, we alert managers on how rising GPU in contemporary times shapes their strategic decisions and outcomes. Second, we inform managers that their lobbying moderates their response to rising GPU. Third, by showing that GPU has different effects on different types of customers, this study describes which group of customers managers emphasize when GPU rises.

Note: References are available upon request.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING OF B2B FIRMS IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

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Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Circular Economy, Trust, and Commitments

Description: Social Media Marketing can play an essential role in customer acquisition and retention for B2B firms in the circular economy.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Sustainability has gained so much attention from scholars and executives (Trail & McCullough, 2020). The traditional economy is transformed into a Circular Economy (CE) which is defined as an "economic and value win-win approach" to meet the sustainability goals (Homrich et al., 2018, p. 534). Firms transform their business models into circular business models for various reasons such as social norms, consumer pressure, regulations, and anticipated performance (Mostaghel et al., 2023). Circular Business Models (CBM) are defined as "one in which a focal company, together with partners, uses innovation to create, capture, and deliver value to

improve resource efficiency by extending the lifespan of products and parts, thereby realizing environmental, social, and economic benefits" (Frishammar and Parida, 2019, p. 4).

Collaborations and relationships have evolved in the CE (Parida et al., 2019). Relationships with various stakeholders are extremely critical in a CE for the success of the whole ecosystem (Parida et al., 2019).

Social Media Marketing (SMM) has been employed by B2B firms (Kong et al., 2021) and in 2022 accounted for 36.7% of all digital advertising marketing for a value of USD230 billion (Statista, 2022). LinkedIn has been the most used social media platform for B2B firms (Content Marketing Institute, 2022). Extant literature recognizes the role of SMM in B2B firms for acquiring and maintaining relationships (Li et al., 2021). However, SMM has been employed more in B2C firms in comparison to B2B (Cartwright et al., 2021). Few studies have emphasized the use of sustainability content in SMM and how it can positively impact maintaining relationships (Han & Lee, 2021) and acquiring relationships (Amoako et al., 2022). Extant literature has not comprehensively examined the role of including circularity activities in SMM and there is a dearth of academic research on the consequences of including sustainability content in SMM. Thus, the purpose of this study is twofold. First, it aims to investigate how sustainability and circular activities are communicated in SMM of B2B firms. Second, the study investigates how to create trust and commitment in B2B relationships with various stakeholders in a circular economy.

Drawing on Relationship Marketing Theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) and Social Media Marketing Theory (cf. Wu 2016), we look into the inclusion of sustainability and circular activities.

Relationship Marketing Theory emphasizes acquiring and retaining relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) for exchanging value between more than one actor (Grönroos, 1994). It includes not only the relationships between customers, suppliers, and partners but also the relationships with all actors in the ecosystem (Iankova et al., 2019). Building trust and commitment decreases the risks and uncertainties in transactions (Hadjikhani & Lindh, 2021).

The success of the CBM of each firm depends on the relationships with other actors in the ecosystem (Oghazi and Mostaghel 2018). Since the whole ecosystem competes with other ecosystems (Parida et al., 2019). Long-term relationships that are built upon trust and commitment have more value than short-term relationships with short-term gains (Gundlach et al., 1995).

Social Media Marketing empowers firms to deliver superior value to their relationships (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009) by providing two-way communication and building trust (Kong et al., 2021).

Including sustainability and circular activities in SMM improves the trust, commitment, and satisfaction of involved actors in addition to enhancing corporate branding (Du et al., 2017). Marketing in the circular economy focuses on not only selling the offer but also to taking responsibility for the whole life cycle of the offering (Mostaghel et al., 2023). Such communications include sharing metrics of carbon emission (Reilly & Hynan, 2014) and green packaging or eco-labels (Majeed, 2022). However, since there are no clear standards in sustainability measurements and the way they are communicated misunderstandings would occur and firms may be tempted to "greenwash" (Reilly & Hynan, 2014).

Research Questions

In order to fulfill the identified research gaps in (1) SMM literature in B2B firms (Cartwright et al., 2021), (2) the evolved relationships in the CE literature (Oghazi et al., 2022), and (3) transformed marketing strategies in the CE (Mostaghel et al., 2023) the following research questions are formulated:

RQ1: How SMM is used in B2B firms in the CE?

RQ2: What are the consequences of using SMM in B2B firms in the CE?

Method and Data

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the communication of sustainability and circular activities in SMM of B2B firms, this study adopted a multiple case study design.

Our sample included 13 B2B firms that dynamically communicated their sustainability and circular activities via SMM to their stakeholders. Thus, we secured the theoretical relevance of the cases selected (Gioia, 2021).

Data collection was gathered largely through primary sources of in-depth individual and group interviews. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. In total, we had 16 participants with positions such as CEO, Marketing Manager, and Sustainability Director. The key informants had between 1 and 20 years of experience at the firm. These firms were active in various industries such as manufacturing ventilation/indoor climate, products and solutions for mining, construction, and demolition, manufacturing chemical solutions, and manufacturing plumbing solutions. The secondary sources of data gathering were also used for triangulation.

The Gioia approach was employed for data analysis (Gioia et al., 2013). The preliminary focus was on how B2B firms use SMM in the CE and what are the consequences of using SMM.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study emerged through the thematic analysis with four steps (Braun and Clarke 2006). The major findings are listed as follows. First, the majority of the respondents used LinkedIn as their major social media platform, thereafter Instagram, and Facebook were common. Second, the SMM primarily was toward customers; however, in some cases, it was also for informing or communicating with the customers' customers, suppliers, employees, partners, and even potential ones. Third, the firms found SMM relevant to (1) educate their audience about their circular solutions such as specific products made of recyclable materials, and (2) inform their audience about their circular activities, such as using clean energy and solar panels for their inventories. Here the audience could be not only customers, suppliers, employees, and partners but also potential ones.

Key Contributions

The results of this research shed light on several theoretical implications. First, the relationships between various stakeholders have evolved in the CE (Frishammar and Parida, 2019; Oghazi et al., 2022). Thus, the findings of this study add to the body of literature on CE. Second, digitalization has enabled firms to establish and maintain relationships with their customers more efficiently and effectively (Oghazi et al., 2022). SMM is practiced extensively by B2C; yet, less attention has been devoted to B2B firms (Cartwright et al., 2021). Thus, this study fills this research gap and adds to the body of literature on SMM by B2B firms.

The findings of this study have several managerial implications and could be a guideline. First, offline communications are still very valuable for establishing new relationships; (2) SMM facilitates the establishment and maintenance of relationships; (3) Employing sustainability content in SMM enhances the brand image; (4) Transparency in SMM and (5) third-party validation empower trustworthiness; (6) SMM has an important role in educating the customers and consumers about the sustainability and the solutions that the firm provides in this regard.

References are available upon request.

THE IMPACT OF ON-SITE COMMUNICATION IN BANK-FIRM LOAN MARKET

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Keywords: B2B Communication, Information Asymmetry, Loan Market, Large Language Model

Descriptions: We investigate the impact of on-site visits, as a form of business-to-business communication, on loans lent by banks towards firms visited.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This study examines the impact of on-site communication, specifically site visits, on transaction outcomes in the business-to-business (B2B) market. By analyzing a unique dataset of on-site visits to listed firms by banks in China, we investigate how these visits reduce the agency cost of customers and improve transaction outcomes in the bank-firm loan market. Our findings demonstrate that pre-loan site visits facilitate the gathering of proprietary information from visited firms, resulting in larger loan amount, lower secured requirements, and reduced default risk. To assess the effectiveness of communication

during site visits, we employ a combination of manual labels and a large language model (i.e., ChatGPT 3.5) for textual analysis. Our analysis focuses on four dimensions of communication: frequency, bidirectionality, non-coerciveness, and formality. Overall, our research highlights the value-creating role of on-site communication in B2B markets.

Method and Data

We gather corporate loan data of listed companies from the China Stock Market & Accounting Research (CSMAR) database. This data set records loan-level information offered by major banks to listed companies. The data also contains detailed loan-level information, i.e., a unique firm identifier, bank information (e.g., the names and locations of branches), and loan-level characteristics (e.g., loan amount, loan maturity, credit guarantee providers, internal ratings, issuing date, maturity date on contracts, and loan delinquency status). We keep non-financial private firms listed in A share. We then merge the deal-level loan data with site visits data based on the issuing date. Corporate site visits in China, often initiated by financial institutions, are trips to a firm's headquarter and its production facilities. Visitors generally ask questions and solicit in-depth answers from top executives or board members. We manually collected site visits data from the Juchao Website including comprehensive archive of detailed Q&A transcripts for each visit. In the main analysis, we consider site visits by banks within one year prior to the issuing date of loans. The sample period is set from 2012 to 2019. We choose 2012 as starting year because the detailed Q&A transcripts of site visits begin from 2012. The sample period ends in 2019 because COVID-19 broke out in 2020.

In our framework, the effectiveness of site visits depends on the quality of communication. Based on 2,610 Q&A transcripts collected, we use a combination of ChatGPT and manual labels to extract the transcript-level communication quality. Specifically, as a typical large language model, ChatGPT uses a multi-layer neural network to model the structure and patterns of natural language, which performed better than most deep learning models in natural language processing. The communication quality is measured from four dimensions based on previous literature (Mohr et al. 1996; Fisher et al., 1997; Palmatier et al. 2006): frequency, bidirectionality, non-coerciveness, and formality. We firstly manually classify 10% random sample of 2,610 Q&A transcripts with two independent research assistants. Then we use GPT-3.5 to classify the remaining transcripts in our sample, with prompts trained by manual labels in the first stage.

Summary of Findings

We find that site visits before loan dealing significantly increase the size of loans and decrease the secure requirement in the contract. In addition, site visits reduce the default risk of loans in the post-issuance period. We find that higher communication quality during site visits is significantly associated with larger size of loans, lower secured requirement and lower default risk. The results further documents that the impact of site visits on bank-firm loans depends on communication quality.

Key Contributions

This study makes a valuable contribution to the existing body of literature on B2B

communication in marketing. Previous studies have primarily focused on analyzing the effectiveness of communication from the seller's perspective, with the aim of improving customer satisfaction and customer retention (Mohr et al. 1996; Fisher et al., 1997; Palmatier et al. 2006; Mittal et al., 2021). However, there is a gap in understanding the win-win outcomes of communication, particularly in terms of reducing agency costs for firms, facilitating better loan deals and helping banks select safer borrower firms through effective communication. To address these gaps, our research employs a unique approach by utilizing human-AI collaborated textual analysis to measure the quality of B2B communication. Specifically, we analyze detailed Q&A transcripts, making our study one of the first to delve into this aspect of B2B communication quality.

This study also contributes to the existing body of marketing research on lending and loans. Previous studies have primarily focused on examining various signals that can help reduce information asymmetry between lenders and borrowers. These signals include factors such as social distance from lenders (Galak et al., 2011), long-term relationships with a principal customer (Cen et al., 2015), countersignaling (Caldieraro et al., 2018), and bonus payment (Jiang et al., 2021). However, these studies have predominantly focused on either consumer-to-consumer or business-to-consumer contexts. In this paper, we propose and test a comprehensive framework that explores the impact of on-site communication specifically in a business-to-business loan market.

Our research findings provide valuable insights into the practices of relationship lending.

Traditionally, it has been believed that long-term, repeated interactions between lenders and borrowers are necessary for mutually favorable outcomes. However, our study reveals that even a single site visit can significantly improve loan outcomes. The effectiveness of site visits can be attributed to the opportunity they provide for face-to-face interactions and on-site tours of the firm.

References, tables, and figures are available on request.

THE ROLE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ACTIVITIES AS A RELATIONSHIP-DESTROYING FACTOR MITIGATION MECHANISM IN B2B RELATIONSHIP.

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Keywords: corporate social responsibility, opportunism, unfairness, conflict, B2B

Description: This study examines the role of CSR in mitigating relationship-destroying factors of opportunism, unfairness, and conflict in B2B markets by utilizing CSR activities as relationship marketing investments.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This study focuses on the insurance-like protection provided by CSR, which can mitigate relationship risks (Godfrey, Merrill, and Hansen, 2009), and aims to shed light on the role of CSR in reducing relationship-destroying factors such as opportunism, unfairness, and conflict in B2B relationships. While previous studies have suggested that CSR activities have the potential to mitigate negative factors in exchange relationships (Boyd et al., 2007; Tsarenko and Tojib, 2015), research on these issues in B2B contexts is scarce.

Relationship marketing literature emphasizes that negative factors are more critical to long-term relationship success than positive factors (Anderson and Narus, 1990; Samaha, Palmatier, and Dant,

2011). In practice, it is recognized that relationship-destroying behavior is unavoidable in reality and still occurs repeatedly, but related studies on solving this issue are still limited (Abosag, Yen, and Barnes, 2016; Kang and Jindal, 2015).

The objective of this study is to investigate the role of CSR in mitigating relationship-destroying factors, particularly conflict, opportunism, and the increasingly prominent unfairness. We draw two dimensions of CSR activities, namely "Business-Practice CSR activities" and "Philanthropic CSR activities," from Homburg et al. (2013) and empirically test how CSR activities aimed at stakeholders alleviate opportunism, unfairness, and conflict in B2B relationships.

Method and Data

To gather the necessary data, we administered a survey with company representatives who are knowledgeable about B2B partners. We received 225 usable responses out of 250, excluding unusable responses. To ensure diversity, the survey was conducted on various industries with sales revenue ranging from 10M to 500M USD. The respondents considered both suppliers (110 responses) and buyers (115 responses) almost equally as key partners.

All measures are adopted from the existing literature. To assess reliability, we checked whether CR, AVE, and Cronbach's alpha for each measure are higher than recommended value. To verify discriminant validity, a four-step procedure was conducted: 1) 95% confidence interval ($\pm$ 2 SE) for the standardized correlation coefficients among the constructs, 2) the chi-squared value comparison between the constrained model with coefficient to be 1 with the unconstrained model, 3) AVE value exceeding the squared value of the correlation coefficient (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), and 4) high correlation values above .85 (Kline, 1998).

To address the possibility of common method bias due to single respondent, we checked the data with a

Harman's single factor test (41%) and the fit change when the CFA includes a single common factor ($\Delta\chi^2$>3.84, p<.05), indicating no concern with the CMB.

Summary of Findings

Data analyses using the structural equation modeling show all the hypotheses are supported with acceptable fit measures (Chi-Square=1063.13, df=413, P-value=0.00, RMSEA=0.084, NFI= 0.95, NNFI = 0.96, CFI = 0.97, IFI = 0.97, RFI = 0.95). The results of our analysis show that perceived CSR truly acts as mitigating strategies of relationship-destroying factors in B2B relationships.

Specifically, both Business-Practice CSR and Philanthropic CSR activities reduced the perceptions of opportunism, unfairness, and conflict in business exchanges. In turn, reduced perception of relationship-destroying factors affects exchange performance.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study has the following academic contributions. First, B2B CSR research focus had been limited to positive mechanisms linking performance mainly in B2C contexts. We incorporate CSR and relationship marketing by exploring the relationship-destroying factors of opportunism, unfairness, and conflict, considering the potential role of CSR as an insurance-like protection. Second, this study highlights the role of CSR as a new control mechanism for relationship-destructive behavior, which are perceived as unavoidable but continue to occur in practice. Third, we explain how CSR activities are linked to performance from relationship marketing perspective. For instance, by concerning the transaction cost related to relationship-destroying factors, we justify the reasons why cost-consuming CSR activities can be meaningful. Specifically, we add theoretical and practical explanations for the under-researched role of philanthropic CSR in driving performance in B2B relationships.

The practical implications are as follows. First, this study suggests that CSR can serve as an effective investment strategy for building B2B relationships, and can actually control relationship-destroying factors, instead of superficial or uncontrollable concepts (e.g., relationship length). Second, in building a new relationship, this study shows that relatively weaker exchange partner can achieve feasible signals to be perceived positively through CSR activities in a market with power asymmetry. Third, we have shown that CSR can be used as a partner qualification criterion in B2B relationships to mitigate negative factors when selecting a partner.

References are available upon request.

WHAT DRIVES THE NATURE AND MAGNITUDE OF NEGATIVE CHANNEL RELATIONSHIP OUTCOMES IN THE AFTERMATH OF A DESTRUCTIVE ACT?

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Keywords: Distribution Channels; Relationship Marketing; Destructive Acts; Commitment; Opportunism.

Description: We empirically examine how the nature of a supplier's commitment towards its dealers can buffer or amplify different types of negative relationship outcomes in the aftermath of a supplier-initiated action that is considered damaging by the dealers

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question -- Firms undertake strategic actions to respond to disruptions in their external environment and reinforce their competitive positioning. However, while such actions may not be intentionally targeted towards channel partners, they can cause financial loss or operational difficulties to the latter, turning out to be a significant negative event during the course of the business relationship. In this study, the long-term relationship consequences of such strategic actions by a supplier, wherein the affected exchange partners (dealers) stay in the relationship but behave opportunistically, are studied.

Method and Data – The context of this empirical study is a distribution channel of a large manufacturer of consumer durables. Our study focused on one supplier and its dealers. Primary survey data was collected from key informants on both sides of the supplier-dealer dyads. Our measures were validated using the three-step procedure recommended by Churchill (1979) and Gerbing and Anderson (1988). Econometric analyses were undertaken to assess the hypothesized main and interactive effects on the dependent variables. Additional analyses and robustness tests were conducted, including mediation analysis as well as analysis that confirmed that CMV bias was not a substantial concern.

Summary of Findings – Our empirical analyses reveal that the nature of the supplier's post-destructive act relationship commitment impacts the nature and magnitude of opportunism by the dealers. We find, in the aftermath of a destructive act by the supplier, variations in how different types (affective and calculative) of the supplier's relationship commitment to dealers amplifies/buffers the nature (passive or active) and magnitude of dealer opportunism.

Key Contributions – Our findings make several contributions to extant scholarly knowledge in the marketing discipline, particularly streams of B2B/Relationship Marketing research on (a) negative events in channel relationships, (b) consequences of multiple types (affective and calculative) of relationship commitment, and (c) antecedents of active and passive opportunism. Our findings reveal a key managerial implication for practice – in the aftermath of a destructive act by a firm that affects its channel partner, the type of relationship commitment that the firm has to the partner has a significant impact on different types of negative relationship behaviors exhibited by the latter.

Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, and Machine Learning Insights

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) DRIVEN BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION: THE IMPACT OF AI-POWERED TRY-ON TECHNOLOGY ON LUXURY SHOPPING EXPERIENCE (LSE)

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Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Business Model Innovation, Luxury Shopping Experience, Customer Satisfaction

Description: Our study has investigated how firms in the luxury sector can leverage AI marketing activities to innovate their business model and boost the development of future digital marketing to enhance Luxury Shopping Experience.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

(1) Whether AI technologies can enhance customers' satisfaction with LSE (luxury shopping experience);

(2) Which dimensions of LSE are most impacted by AI marketing efforts?

(3) How do AI technologies can influence BMI (business model innovation) in Luxury?

Method and Data

We use a video-based vignette experimental study since this technology is new within the context. Considering the benefits of video vignettes, we conducted an online video-vignette-based experiment through SoJump (www.sojump.com). Our treatment group (n=100, 60 participants were female, and 40 participants were male) was assigned an ATT shopping condition, and the control group (n=100, 81 participants were women, and 19 participants were male) was assigned the same shopping setting but without ATT. Thus, the majority of our sample were female participants.

The study used SPSS and SPSSAU algorithm software to analyze data. First, we used CFA, KMO, VIF test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, and Pearson correlation analysis to ensure our data can be analyzed further. Second, we checked the manipulation by using the one-sample t-test. Third, our results reveal a significant negative moderation effect of AI marketing activities in the relationship between LSE and Satisfaction; Fourth, AI would drive BMI. Moreover, there is

conclusive evidence about the significance of the positive association between satisfaction and BMI. Therefore, all the hypotheses have been supported.

Summary of Findings

The findings corroborate the underlying hypotheses that (1) LSE has a positive effect on customer satisfaction, (2) AI marketing activities play a moderate role in the relationship between LSE and customer satisfaction, (3) and can drive BMI, (4) which is positively correlated with customer satisfaction. The study's findings support marketing research which contends that digital technologies affect satisfaction of customers assessing new technology via shopping experience, and strategy research that considers AI and AI-enabled customer experience can drive BMI, respectively.

Although the findings are generally consistent, it should be noted that there are a few interesting points. First, this study demonstrates that ATT has a negative moderating effect on the relationship between LSE and customer satisfaction. This is contrary to previous research tested positive digital marketing efforts that ensure a satisfying luxury shopping experience (i.e., AI chatbots, Chung et al., 2020; AR, Barhorst et al., 2021). In other words, the marketing activities of ATT can rather replace traditional LSE than enhance LSE. Our results outline that luxury customers strongly put a particular expectation on aesthetic in LSE and recognize that AI technology can help to build superior quality rather than uniqueness and signaling status dimension of LSE.

Key Contributions

Theoretical Contribution:

Firstly, we contribute to the fragmented body of existing academic research and limited evidence on the impact of AI technologies in digital marketing. We determined the key marketing dimensions impacted by AI in delivering unique Luxury shopping experiences.

Secondly, we contribute to both BMI and marketing literature by arguing that AI-powered marketing activities as the antecedents of BMI. We shed light on this gap by testing the integrated model and arguing that luxury firms can create business value and achieve these long-lasting competitive advantages with digital customer experience in such a dynamic environment.

Thirdly, this study sheds light on enhancing knowledge of AI in customer experience management of luxury brands and new perspectives for future challenges and trends in the luxury segment.

Managerial Implication:

First, maintaining LSE is vital for embracing the changes of new technologies in the digital environment, which doesn't mean erasing the heritage and nature of luxury brands. AI applications should focus on protecting brand identity as well as the uniqueness of LSE. Second, this study suggests that luxury firms should not get too close to customers, and digital interaction may negatively influence the brand's aesthetics and deep connection with luxury customers.

References are available upon request.

CROSS-CULTURAL DYNAMICS IN CROWDFUDING: A MULTIFACETED ANALYSIS OF LINGUISTIC ADAPTATION

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Keywords: Cross-Cultural Marketing, Crowdfunding, Sentiment Analysis, Topic Modeling.

Description: This study examines cross-cultural marketing in Kickstarter projects, highlighting language distinctions across languages and cultures and offering strategic insights.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – Exploring the realm of successful crowdfunding, particularly on diverse platforms like Kickstarter, poses significant challenges. This study aims to understand the intricacies of cross-cultural marketing by examining the language used in crowdfunding project descriptions. This approach involves the comprehensive use of topic modeling, sentiment analysis, and entity extraction to navigate this complex terrain. The core of this investigation focuses on how linguistic adaptation unfolds in Kickstarter projects originating from various cultural backgrounds. The hypothesis is that cultural nuances play a pivotal role in shaping the language and emotional aspects of project descriptions, ultimately influencing backers' behavior. To thoroughly address this hypothesis, our conceptual framework seamlessly integrates different natural language processing techniques.

Method And Data – To fulfill the research objectives, three distinct Kickstarter datasets were collected, each comprising more than 5,000 projects randomly chosen in categories such as arts,

design, games, music, and illustration: projects from the USA in English, projects from Mexico in English, and projects from Mexico in Spanish. This combination allows for capturing differences in how individuals from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds express themselves in digital marketplaces. The datasets encompass rich spectrum of projects representing diverse cultural contexts. Each dataset was carefully curated, featuring project descriptions that formed the basis for this detailed analysis. Employing advanced natural language processing techniques, textual data is transformed into quantifiable variables, laying the groundwork for the analysis. Leveraging Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), this study used topic modeling to extract overarching themes within project descriptions, revealing core linguistic attributes. Four topics were extracted for each dataset, shedding light on the diverse facets of content. For sentiment analysis, TensorFlow, a widely used machine learning framework, was employed. Sentiment analysis served as the bedrock for gauging emotional tones, while entity extraction facilitated the quantification of linguistic structures. This integrative approach provided a holistic view of both linguistic patterns and emotional resonances embedded within project textual content.

Summary of Findings – Interesting differences were observed in Kickstarter projects from the USA and Mexico. American projects were kept short and impactful, using lively words to grab attention. Meanwhile, in Mexican projects, whether in English or Spanish, a mix of cultural words was employed, showcasing communication across different cultures. Notably, Mexican projects used fewer words, opting for a brief and impactful style. Additionally, emotions in Mexican projects in English varied more than in Spanish ones, influenced by the language used. When examining the words used, differences in how verbs and pronouns were employed were identified. Common themes such as creativity, community engagement, and storytelling were found in both

American and Mexican projects. However, there were distinctions. Mexican projects placed more emphasis on specific locations, Mexican film and storytelling, and quality craftsmanship, reflecting focus on their unique culture. On the other hand, gaming-related terms and broader creative pursuits were highlighted in American projects.

Statement of Key Contributions – Crowdfunding, a widely researched topic, heavily relies on written content, akin to digital marketplaces. This study pioneers a new approach, using advanced methods like machine learning to explore cross-cultural marketing in Kickstarter projects. Integrating text analysis methods like topic modeling and sentiment analysis enhances both academic and practical aspects. Unraveling language and culture's impact on consumer engagement, it deepens understanding in academic marketing, shedding light on adaptation dynamics. Bridging language studies and marketing, it probes cultural nuances in language expressions, enhancing crowdfunding projects' funding performance. Beyond academia, this research benefits various stakeholders. International businesses can tailor projects for cultural resonance, and non-profits can craft sensitive communication strategies. In summary, it enriches marketing practices and promotes cultural understanding. Integrating various natural language processing methods offers a comprehensive exploration of linguistic adaptation, advancing academic understanding. Beyond academia, insights empower businesses, non-profits, governments, and policymakers to navigate linguistic adaptation ethically, fostering cultural understanding and informing policies across diverse cultures.

 "References are available upon request."

TITLE DATA DRIVEN CULTURE in HIGHER EDUCATION

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Keywords: data driven culture, data driven decision making, data informed decisions
Description: This study explores an instrument that can be employed to measure levels of data driven culture in an organization

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Developing a data-driven culture in higher education is important for many reasons. This study has significant implications for both academics and practitioners. By embracing data-driven decision making, institutions can make informed and evidence-based choices that lead to improved student outcomes, enhanced institutional effectiveness, and increased efficiency. A data-driven culture enables institutions to identify at-risk students, understand their needs, and provide targeted interventions to support their success (Henderson et al., 2016). By leveraging data, institutions can enhance retention, graduation rates, and overall student achievement.

Institutions can optimize resource allocation by utilizing data to identify areas of inefficiency, allocate budgets effectively, and make data-informed decisions regarding staffing, facilities, and infrastructure (Weerts & Ronca, 2017). Data-driven decision making facilitates a culture of continuous improvement. Institutions can monitor progress, evaluate the impact of initiatives, and adjust strategies based on data insights (McCormick & Zhao, 2015). This fosters a culture of learning and adaptation.

This presentation can be valuable to academics and practitioners in both for profit and not for profit organizations as they attempt to create a culture that embraces data and the powerful value it has in decision making. This study provides direction to measure constituents' engagement in data driven decision making.

Data Use in Higher Education

Historically in higher education, decision making was largely based on anecdotal evidence, personal experiences, and intuition. There was limited use of data and analytics to drive decision making. IN the mid 20th century, the field of institutional research began to emerge, aiming to provide evidence-based decision support to higher education institutions. Institutional research offices were established to collect, analyze, and report institutional data for various purposes, including enrollment management, budgeting, and institutional effectiveness (McCormick & Zhao, 2015).

The current status of data application for decision making in higher education is characterized by increased emphasis on data-driven decision making, the adoption of advanced analytics, and a focus on leveraging data to improve student outcomes and institutional effectiveness. Institutional research offices continue to play a crucial role in data collection, analysis, and reporting within higher education institutions. They serve as central repositories of institutional data and provide insights to inform decision making (McCormick & Zhao, 2015). The use of learning analytics, which involves collecting and analyzing data related to student learning behaviors and outcomes, has gained prominence. Learning analytics enable institutions to identify at-risk students, personalize instruction, and enhance student success (Siemens & Baker, 2012).

Predictive analytics techniques are increasingly applied to identify patterns and forecast student behaviors, such as retention, graduation, and course completion rates. Institutions use these insights to design interventions and support services (Arnold & Pistilli, 2012). Higher education institutions are leveraging advanced business intelligence tools and data visualization techniques to present complex data in accessible and actionable formats for decision makers (Colwell & Hutchings, 2016). There is a growing emphasis on evidence-based decision making in higher education, driven by the need for

accountability and continuous improvement. Data-driven insights are used to inform strategic planning, resource allocation, and program evaluation (Coben et al., 2018).

Method and Data

In order to develop a benchmark as to determining how the institutions' employees are engaged in the data use across the institution, we apply survey methodology to explore the degree of data culture in organizations to 83 academic institutions in the mid Atlantic region. Two-hundred and fifty-one participants from across these institutions responded to a survey that was distributed live at a conference setting. All data was collected with Qualtrics survey software, and SPSS was used for all analyses. Summary data will be presented along with the instrument.

The instrument was adapted from the non-profit Center for Data and Innovation and provides measures of data driven culture. There are essentially six dimensions to represent the status of data driven culture in an organization: purpose, leadership, organizational culture of learning, resources and professional development, analytic capability, and ongoing improvement.

Summary of Findings

Respondents include 13% faculty, 13% staff and 78% administrators. Thirty percent or the majority of respondents have worked at their institution for less than five years. The next largest reporting group has been with the institution for 6-10 years (20%) and 20% of respondents have been at their institutions for over 20 years. Eighty percent of the respondents believe that the institution has goals that clearly relate to mission, and 39% believe leadership serves as a role model for data use in the organization. Further while 36% believe leadership is motivating staff to use data to support decision making, only 18% believe leadership clearly communicates expectations regarding data use.

Surprisingly, 56% of respondents believe their institution is collecting quality data, but only 34% believe the institution is applying the right tools to manage and work with the data. 22% believe they are not trained properly to use data.

While there is no statistically significant relationship between years worked at the institution and progress towards goals, the belief that the organization uses technology efficiently and leadership serves as a role model for data use (p<.05). Additionally, there is no statistically significant relationship between employee group (staff, faculty, administration) and the communication of expectations, and the belief that Staff and stakeholders are involved in continuous improvement based on data (p<.05). There is, however, a statistically significant relationship between employee group and the belief that leadership serves as a role model for data use and that the organization supports professional development related to the use of data. In both cases, administrators are more likely to believe that leadership serves as a role model and supports professional development (p<.05).

Key Contributions/Implications

This study has a few implications for the application of data in higher education. First, the application of data must be supported by a commitment to developing a data driven culture. This instrument may be appropriate for institutions attempting to explore their data culture and understand employees' perceptions of and acceptance of data use in their organizations. Organizations can label their data driven status as "not present," "emerging." "present," or exemplary."

Second, organizations can apply the six underlying constructs to measure the variety of dimensions of data driven culture in their organization. These can be used to establish benchmarks as well as gauge organizational engagement in a data driven culture. Organizations may also compare their scores relative to other organizations in their industry and beyond. The data driven culture would be essential to facilitating operations and enhancing customer relationships (Troisi et al, 2020)

Finally it is important to make the distinction between a data driven culture and data driven decision

making. While data driven decision making might exist without a data driven culture, a data driven

culture will support and ensure that data driven decision making is central to the mission of the

organization and that resources are committed to data driven decision making. Additionally, a data

driven culture is essential to engage employees in this process and to ensure understanding of the

importance of data driven decision making.

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF THE METAVERSE IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY: A TEXT MINING APPROACH

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Keywords: fashion, metaverse, text mining, fashion innovation, ambidexterity theory

Description: This study sheds light on the role of the Metaverse in the fashion industry and provides valuable insights for companies to navigate this new digital landscape.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Despite the fashion industry's robust engagement and increasing consumer spending on the Metaverse, it is unclear why companies are engaged with the Metaverse and how this engagement will impact the fashion industry's future. Many people consider the Metaverse as the future of the Internet – a three-dimensional evolution of the Internet. As with the historical development of the Internet, there are concerns about what the future of the Metaverse would mean for companies. The previous dot.com crisis demonstrated that the companies that could incorporate the Internet survived, and the rest went bankrupt. This concern is amplified for the fashion industry, as small and emerging fashion brands struggle to incorporate the Metaverse. Thus, investigating comprehensive integration strategies becomes crucial for the fashion industry to make informed decisions. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the role of the Metaverse in the fashion industry. Specifically, we aim to answer the following research questions: 1) What do

fashion companies think about the Metaverse? 2) How can the fashion industry tap into the power of the Metaverse technology? 3) What are the opportunities and challenges in incorporating the Metaverse?

Method and Data

Considering that consulting firms such as McKinsey & Co., BCG, Pew Research, Deloitte, Ernst & Young, PWC, KPMG were among the first movers investigating the Metaverse from wide angles, we collected 75 reports and interviews published by those companies during 2021-2022. The selection criteria for articles were based on a discussion of the Metaverse in fashion only. Next, as the data preparation step, the corpus, a database in Posit Cloud, was created, consisting of these 75 documents. The data underwent a cleaning process by removing stop words, converting the whole textto lowercase, and eliminating unnecessary signs.

After data cleaning, a descriptive text mining analysis, including word cloud and word co-occurrence networks, was utilized to gain an overview. Subsequently, a detailed sentiment analysis was employed using the NRC library to determine the emotional responses. Finally, a topic modelling analysis was conducted using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA). LDA assumes that each document consists of a blend of topics. Therefore, it is an appropriate method to identify distinct Metaverse-related aspects and associated opportunities and challenges. By thematically analyzing retracted topics and relevant keywords, we determined eight themes. A pilot analysis of five documents was conducted to validate the approach before completing the analysis.

Summary of Findings

Our analysis revealed the positive sentiments among fashion companies towards the Metaverse. The fashion industry particularly values growth, content creation, and the potential

enhancement of the quality of life. The Metaverse impacts the fashion industry by enabling virtual retailing, boosting luxury sales, improving customer experiences, and offering innovative sustainability solutions. The fashion industry remains optimistic about the potential of the Metaverse by seeking integration strategies. However, the challenges include limited application, entry barriers, and operational adaptations to virtual nature. The Metaverse has been driving changes in business models, marketing, and supply chain management.

Applying the ambidexterity theory, we recommend that fashion companies undertake both explorative and exploitative actions. For exploration, firms can research sustainable virtual fashion, test VR prototypes, partner with tech companies, explore blockchain, and test VR platforms. These activities ensure competitiveness by staying ahead. For exploitation, firms can strive to optimize existing virtual experiences and enhance operational efficiency by offering personalized recommendations, realistic environments, and interactive experiences to improve customer engagement. Balancing exploration and exploitation, such as launching virtual stores, utilizing social media, offering customized products, and collaborating with luxury brands, empowers fashion companies for the Metaverse triumph, fostering growth and innovation.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study is an innovative effort within the academic marketing discipline, showcasing the application of natural language processing and text mining to explore a recent trend: the convergence of the Metaverse with the fashion industry. By harnessing these analysis techniques, the study examines fashion companies' perceptions of Metaverse integration, specifically focusing on motivations, opportunities, and challenges. This research provides in-depth insights into the intricate interaction between the Metaverse and fashion, including enhancing customer experiences, optimizing operations, and crafting innovative marketing strategies. Specifically, the study findings highlight how fashion firms are encompassing luxury fashion retail, sustainability, and social

dynamics within the realm of the Metaverse. The study utilizes ambidexterity theory to explain the findings and provides implications to diverse non-academic stakeholders. Fashion enterprises, ranging from established companies to emerging ventures, can derive actionable insights from this study to fine-tune their Metaverse strategies, catalyzing growth and innovation.

Hey There, My Name is …? Literature Review of The Role of Naming AI in Consumer Trust and Satisfaction

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Keywords: artificial intelligence, anthropomorphism, AI naming, systematic quantitative literature review

Description: This article aims to contribute to existing research by examining over 20 years of research on naming AI by using systematic quantitative literature review which encompasses work on naming AI across the fields of marketing, consumer behavior, psychology, and computer science.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Research on AI has received increased attention given the growing ubiquity of AI in consumers' lives ranging from chatbots, voice-based assistants, virtual agents to robots and AI influencers. However, current research still offers scant insights regarding how consumers experience AI. Extant work focuses on the element of anthropomorphism while studying AI. However, naming AI, which should be considered as one of the most important elements of anthropomorphism, has been surprisingly underexamined. Previous research notes that consumers judge AI products not only focusing on their behavioral realism but their form realism as well (Miao et al. 2022). Additionally, as Christoforakos et al., (2021) suggest, anthropomorphism of a robot can be manipulated explicitly through verbal (e.g., voice) and non-verbal (e.g., gestures) design cues along with implicit cues such as naming the robot. Even though we can list different AI names which have been studied in this domain, no strong consensus exists regarding how to name an AI-powered product. We aim to provide an integrated theoretical framework by identifying and categorizing names of AI powered products which are currently studied by diverse AI scholars. Additionally, we synthetize this stream of work and offer propositions which entail both managerial insights and future research ideas.

Method and Data

We conducted a thorough research of a diverse AI literature by employing a systematic quantitative literature review technique to provide a comprehensive mapping of a topic of inquiry and assess the relevant literature (Pickering and Byrne 2014). The data were collected by searching the following databases: Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, ProQuest, Sage, Wiley, and EBSCO. To be included in the current review, each paper had to meet the following criteria: (1) be a journal article, conference proceeding, or PhD thesis, (2) be published in English, (3) appear in press/print up until May 2023, (4) pertain to empirical research. For each database, the same keyword search was employed ("naming AI;" "AI names;" "AI product names"; "naming AI products"; "human vs. non-human AI names"). 194 AI names were identified. The following variables were coded: Publication details, research methods used, variables measured, type of AI examined (voice-based assistant, chatbot, robot, influencer, virtual agent), name of AI (classified as whether it is a human vs. non-human; if human male vs. female; if non-human whether the name is alphanumeric, semantic, suggestive, nonsensical, phonetic), and the effect found (whether AI name has a positive vs. negative effect on the focal outcome variable(s) of interests).

Summary of Findings

Our review helps to categorize the current research in terms of whether the AI product of interest has a human vs non-human name; if the product has a human name; we then categorize the gender; if the product has a non-human name; we determine the category of the non-human name chosen (alphanumeric, semantic, suggestive, nonsensical, phonetic). As our analysis shows, use of human names for AI products has increased tremendously over the years. Among the human names chosen, most of the AI products have female names. If an AI product has a non-human name, our analysis shows that the use of semantic or suggestive AI name is more common in comparison to other categories. Further, semantic and suggestive AI names have more positive effects on consumers (among 194 names used in our analysis, 92 of those were non-human names; 58 of those were named either using semantic or suggestive names and 32 of those names had positive effect on consumers' trust, satisfaction, and consumer desire to use that AI product). Finally, the main type of AI of interest where the research examines the influence of AI on consumers were robots followed by voice-based assistants, AI influencers, virtual agents and chatbots.

Statement of Key Contribution

With this article, we aim to make three contributions to AI theory and managerial practice. First, given that current research remains ambiguous and limited with respect to naming AI, it is particularly difficult for researchers to compare current empirical results and draw meaningful conclusions across studies. To this end, we comprehensively compile the body of literature on naming AI, using systematic quantitative literature review which encompasses work on naming AI across the fields of marketing, consumer behavior, psychology, and computer science. Second, we synthesize findings from prior literature to produce a taxonomy of AI naming to highlight key elements which academics and managers can leverage to ensure AI-powered offerings perceived effectiveness. Third, we develop an integrative framework of AI names/categories which synthesizes antecedents and consequences of naming AI differently and

offer key theoretical insights, research propositions, and managerial implications as well as lay out a comprehensive agenda for future research.

*References are available upon request.

HUMAN-LIKE OR ROBOT-LIKE? MODERATING EFFECT OF CHATGPT'S ERRORS ON PERCEIVED HUMANNESS

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Keywords: Anthropomorphic design cues, Perceived humanness, ChatGPT's errors, social presence, service quality

Description: This article presents a framework in which anthropomorphic design cues affect perceived humanness moderated by ChatGPT's errors.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Anthropomorphic design cues are characteristics of humans applied to computers such as the voice of a male or female. Users exhibit social responses in interpersonal interactions based on anthropomorphic design cues even when it is clear that they are interacting with a computer(Nass and Moon 2000). Buhrke et al. (2021) found that anthropomorphic design cues lead to higher perceived human nature. Besides, Buhrke et al. (2021) demonstrated in

an experiment that anthropomorphic design cues lead to higher social presence and service quality. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study:

H1: Anthropomorphic design cues of ChatGPT are positively associated with service quality.

H2: Anthropomorphic design cues of ChatGPT are positively associated with perceived humanness.

H3: Anthropomorphic design cues of ChatGPT are positively associated with social presence.

H4: Service quality is positively associated with perceived humanness.

H5: Social presence is positively associated with perceived humanness.

de Sá Siqueira et al. (2023) found that Chatbot errors harm users' social presence, while anthropomorphic communication style can effectively reduce the negative impact of chatbot's errors but cannot fully compensate. However, Buhrke et al. (2021) state that making mistakes can also be considered an anthropomorphic design cue, which may have positive effects on perceived humanness.

H6: ChatGPT' errors have moderating effects on social presence effect on perceived humanness.

Method and Data

This study adopted a survey research method and recruited 184 respondents (93 with ChatGPT's errors and 91 without ChatGPT's errors) from WenJuanXing (WJX, http://www.wjx.com), China's largest online survey website which can attach to as wider as possible population that uses ChatGPT. Measurements adopted: anthropomorphic design cue (Sheehan, Jin, and Gottlieb 2020), service quality (Bührke et al. 2021), perceived humanness (Bührke et al. 2021), and social presence (Toader et al. 2019).

Summary of Findings

We used a professional marketing research firm to gather survey respondents. This firm provides access to several demographic sources, allowing for broad representation. Incentives were offered for participation in the study. We implemented partial least square and used specific software "SmartPLS 4.0" to analyze data. All constructs were significantly converged (P<0.001) except perceived quality to perceived humanness and social presence to perceived humanness. The scales achieved discriminant validity, convergent validity, and reliability. The effect of anthropomorphic design cues on service quality (β=0.642), social presence (β=0.597), and perceived humanness(β=0.540) is significant (p<0.001). Besides, the moderating effect of ChatGPT's errors on the social presence (β=-0.345) affect perceived humanness is significant (p<0.001). Hence, the anthropomorphic design cue of ChatGPT is positively associated with service quality,

perceived humanness, and social presence; ChatGPT's errors have a negatively moderating effect on social presence effect on perceived humanness.

Statement of Key Contributions

Scientifics are devoted to improving the similarity between robots and humans. The effects of chatbots' errors on users' perspective during interaction are complicated and are unidentified in many aspects now. There is a lack of research on ChatGPT's errors affecting perceived humanness. Studying these effects would impose to improvement of ChatGPT's humanness as well as supplement the research of chatbots' errors, which is important for both academics and markets. This article provides digital marketing with a deeper understanding of chatbots' errors. It is confirmed that ChatGPT's errors have negative effects on social presence affects perceived humanness, in other words, when errors occur, ChatGPT seems more robot-like with high social presence. Besides, the positive effects of anthropomorphic design cues on perceived humanness, service quality, and social presence also have been proved. The finding holds theoretical implications for what kind of effects will ChatGPT's errors have on perceived humanness and practical implications for improving the user experience of interacting with chatbots in marketing.

Integrating AI into Value Co-creation Customer Journey

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Keywords: Value, Value co-creation, Customer Journey, Artificial Intelligence

Description: This paper aims to understand how artificial intelligence facilitates value co-creation along the customer journey.

Abstract

Research Question

The artificial intelligence resulting from digital transformation is profoundly altering the way companies cocreate value throughout the customer journey. Our study aims to examine how AI can co-create value during the various stages of customer journey. The research questions addressed in the study are as follows:

1. What is the difference between the traditional value co-creation customer journey and the AI-facilitated value co-creation customer journey?
2. What is the impact of artificial intelligence on the VCC throughout the customer journey, and how does it reshape the dynamics of value co-creation at different touchpoints?
3. In what ways does AI contribute to the provision of functional, emotional, and social value to customers during distinct phases of the customer journey, how do these values become evident and change over the course of time?
4. What are the theoretical and practical implications of the findings for understanding the evolving landscape of AI-driven value co-creation customer journey and what potential areas for future research emerge from the insights gained in this study?

Methodology

This literature review investigates human-machine interaction in value co-creation throughout the customer journey, emphasizing the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Employing a systematic approach guided by Tranfield et al. (2003), we conducted a literature review using precise search strings on the Scopus database. Following recommendations by Rowley & Slack (2004) for objectivity, we initiated the search with keywords from existing reviews, Artificial Intelligence, Value Co-creation, and Customer Journey. The resulting 92 articles align with systematic review norms, ensuring comprehensive findings. The analysis follows the Lemon & Verhoef (2016) framework, focusing on the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase phases, systematically identifying triggers that guide the customers in their journey.

Summary of findings

In this study, we expand Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) customer journey framework, introducing modifications that make it more adaptable to various theoretical ideas. We argue that the distinction between Traditional and AI-facilitated VCC customer journeys is conceptually and practically fluid, with AI serving as a catalyst across touchpoints to create value throughout the journey. Our findings highlight the transformative impact of AI on the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages, demonstrating how automation, anthropomorphism, automated social presence, psychological ownership, and theory of mind contribute to increased functional, emotional, and social value.

In the pre-purchase stage, AI enhances the customer experience through personalized recommendations, real-time support, and efficient automation. During the purchase stage, AI facilitates smooth transactions and decision-making, while in the post-purchase stage, it continues to enrich the consumption experience and foster customer loyalty. Our study emphasizes the importance of considering the dynamic intersections between different types of AI in driving functional, emotional, and social value co-creation along the customer journey.

In the customer journey, functional value, rooted in a product's utilitarian purpose, is enhanced by mechanical AI, providing consistency and efficiency. Emotional value, stemming from emotional responses, is influenced by both "thinking AI" predicting preferences and "feeling AI" engaging customers emotionally. Social value involves feeling, thinking, and mechanical AI in a Social Value Creation Context. In the pre-purchase stage, AI contributes to functional value through personalized recommendations, emotional value through positive interactions, and social value through social media engagement. During the purchase stage, AI optimizes pricing for functional value, provides personalized support for emotional value, and influences perceptions through social proof for social value. In the post-purchase stage, AI-driven support maintains functional value, personalized follow-ups nurture emotional connections, and loyalty programs contribute to social recognition, emphasizing the dynamic role of AI in creating functional, emotional, and social value along the customer journey.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study contributes to ongoing discussions on AI's impact on value co-creation across customer journey phases. It explores how AI enhances value co-creation compared to traditional methods. The paper conceptualizes the difference between traditional and AI-facilitated customer journeys, emphasizing AI's transformative role in touchpoints and its potential to deliver personalized experiences in real-time.

The study reveals AI's pivotal role in shaping the future of customer engagement and satisfaction. It highlights AI's functions, such as automation, interactivity, and emotional connection, at different stages of the journey. These functionalities collectively contribute to increased functional, social, and emotional value, aligning products more closely with customer needs.

The study recommends a model that encapsulates different stages and touchpoints, guiding managers in reinventing business models and strategies. AI facilitates personalized experiences at scale, improving the overall customer journey. Successful integration and automation of customer and marketing data platforms empower brands to optimize in real-time, enhancing relationships, influencing decision-making, and gaining a competitive advantage.

References are available upon request.

SYNTHESIZING AI AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT - THE FUTURE OF DECISION-MAKING IS A COLLABORATIVE ACT

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This research delves into the integration of Artificial Intelligence in organizational decision-making, exploring its vital role in contemporary business strategies and future success, and utilizes an extensive analysis of scholarly articles through advanced machine learning techniques.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION –

This paper studies the evolution of Management and Artificial Intelligence (AI) literature based on an analysis of complete articles published in 53 of the leading journals. Our research aims to visualize the structure of the content of both fields. Thus, it paves the way towards a solid understanding of the evolution of Management and AI fields. In addition, our foundation of a possible rapprochement would be illustrated, so that a contribution is delivered wherein scholars of both fields can design a joint collaboration. We apply a Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) algorithm on the digitized keywords of 151,282 research articles. Since LDA is an unsupervised learning algorithm for topic modeling, we expect to receive a less biased selection of research topics which play a key role in the last decades.

The research was guided by three main questions:

1) How can transformation efforts be enhanced using AI alongside human decision-making processes in modern firms?
2) What are necessary preconditions and requirements from both sides of the equation to ensure synergistic effects?
3) What information can be derived from the most significant management and AI research findings to date?

METHOD AND DATA –

The proposed methodology of the research embraces many essential facets and necessary dimensions to establish itself as a contribution for future researchers, who either must cope with a large amount of data or by choice, who would like to deliver solid contributions of establishing a solid and exhaustive account of the history of the different fields and disciplines. Our main focus was to avoid bias in conducting our research, therefore all the topics that were analyzed by us went through a thorough machine learning algorithms (MLA) analysis for establishing the historic and in-depth CA. Usually, conceptual articles are not very much free from some conceptual bias that goes with these types of papers. Above all, we have analyzed the total amount of textual data of both journals with the help of unsupervised MLA to establish an objective account of the historical narrative. Thus, we have combined the scholarly analyzed "lay of the land" in marketing with the techniques and tools of AI for more precision and objectivity in establishing unbiased labeling of the "topic-keyword relations". 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. Based on the contemporary developments in ML capacity, we think our methodology delivers a robust foundation not only for this research but also for additional research wherein a vast amount of textual data could be analyzed for a more holistic grounded theory design. We deliver a dynamic approach to highlight the evaluation of topics over time.

A CA was first performed of all papers published in 53 Management and AI journals, that are not editorial notes, errata, or commentaries, to examine the content of the marketing literature, trace its evolution and identify its main streams or subfields (see figure 1). This analysis is used for an objective, systematic and quantitative consideration of the published articles while allowing for an interpretation of the shifting priorities of editors, reviewers, and authors, which shaped the evolution of the field.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS –

To answer our first research question 1) "How can transformation efforts be enhanced using artificial intelligence (AI) alongside human decision-making processes in modern firms?" we perform another zoom-in snapshot of our CA. It becomes apparent, that the focus on Deep Neural networks as a conglomeration of multi-layered artificial neural networks will contribute to the ongoing transformation process of companies. Especially Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) as introduced by Goodfellow (2014), where two networks compete against each other will be able to perform complex tasks. These algorithms can be labeled as "new-age algorithms". They are displayed on the far north-east of the CA-analysis in figure 6, mutually pointing in the future direction of the spiral form of topic associations. This process will be accelerated by Internet of Things (IoT) projects as well as with the (payable) introduction of quantum computers. But also, the introduction of basic ML algorithms as well as the implementation of Natural Language Processing (NLP) units as displayed of the center of the 2020-2023 year bubble are going to support the digital transformation of firms. These technological hurdles are crucial for digital value creation and innovation, which is a topic of its own well suited in the heart of the 2020-2023 bubble.

To capture the second research question "What are necessary preconditions and requirements from both sides of the equation to ensure synergistic effects?" it becomes obvious from figure 6 that Big Data characterized by the 4Vs (Volume, Variety, Velocity and Veracity) and computational power are necessary preconditions for applying AI technologies. Further text

mining processes must be implemented to transform large volume amounts of unstructured textural data in to structured e.g. bag-of-words representations that can be used by generative models such as ChatGPT as well.

The third research question "What information can be derived from the most significant management and AI research findings to date?", indicated the following foundation:

1. Prioritization of Research and Development: The weights assigned to various topics indicate the importance and the volume of research in these areas. This information can guide organizations on where to focus their research and development efforts for integrating AI into management practices.

2. Curriculum Development for Education: Educational institutions can use these insights to develop or update their curriculum, focusing on the areas of management that are most influenced by AI, such as knowledge management and adaptive control systems.

3. Strategic Planning and Investment: Companies can use this data to inform their strategic planning, identifying which AI technologies are ripe for investment and which are likely to have the most significant impact on their operations.

4. Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration: The variety of topics suggests the need for collaboration across different disciplines, such as computer science and business management, to fully realize the benefits of AI in management.

5. Policy Making: Regulators and policymakers can use this information to understand the areas where AI is having the most significant impact and where regulation might be needed, such as in data privacy for knowledge management systems.

6. Innovation and Competitive Advantage: The data can help organizations identify emerging trends in AI that could be leveraged for competitive advantage, such as using NLP for improved customer interaction or optimization algorithms for supply chain management.

7. Enhanced Decision-Making: Semantic information retrieval and fuzzy clustering can be used to develop decision support systems that provide managers with more accurate and nuanced information, leading to better business decisions.

By using the data to inform these aspects, a model of rapprochement between management and AI can be crafted, ensuring that the integration of AI into management is strategic, effective, and aligns with the latest research findings and industry needs.

STATEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTIONS –

In synthesizing the merging of AI and organizational change management, this paper has highlighted a transformative shift in decision-making paradigms. As we stand on the brink of a new era where AI is no longer a random auxiliary phenomenon but moreover a pivotal actor in firms' strategy, it's crucial to realize the symbiotic relationship that has emerged between AI and management practices.

The empirical evidence and theoretical discussions presented in our paper underpin the foundational impact AI has on decision-making processes. AI's ability to process and analyze vast amounts of data far exceeds human capability, enabling more informed, efficient, and strategic decisions. However, the data also demonstrates the indispensable function of AI and human interplay in steering technology-driven enterprises of our epoch, thus adding ethical considerations, and providing the nuanced understanding that only human experience can offer.

As firms adapt to this corporation, change management becomes pivotal. It's no longer about managing human resources per se but moreover about orchestrating a harmonious alliance between human intellect and artificial intelligence.

The future of decision-making, as evidenced by the research findings, is indeed a collaborative act. It's about leveraging AI to augment human potential, not replace it. Organizations that embrace this synergy will not only enhance their operational efficiency but will also foster a culture of innovation, where AI and human talent co-create solutions for convoluted business challenges.

In conclusion, the amalgamation of AI into organizational frameworks is not a distant outlook but a present reality. The management strategies that will flourish are those that recognize AI's transformative potential while remaining anchored in the rich base of human judgment and ethical values. The era of collaborative intelligence is upon us, and it promises a horizon brimming with possibilities for those prepared to steer its waters with foresight and agility.

When Voice-Activated Assistants and Consumer Service Encounters Go Wrong:

Attribution of Responsibility, Emotional Response, and Consumer Behavioral Outcomes

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Voice-activated assistants, service, attribution, consumer outcomes.

This paper highlights the importance of the attribution of responsibility, emotional response, and consumer behavioral outcomes when the service delivered by voice-activated assistants goes wrong.

EXTENDED ABSTACT

Research question

Interactions between VAs and consumers often go wrong. Despite technological advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI), consumers experience repeated service failures when dealing with VAs (such as Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant etc.).

Existing studies argue that consumers often attribute responsibility for the service failure to the service provider (Cowley, 2005). However, when the service providers are VAs, many factors

determine the attribution of blame. Hence, it is critical to understand how consumers attribute blame when the service between VAs and consumers fails, the factors that influence this attribution, the consumers' emotional response to attribution of responsibility and consumers' behavioral outcomes.

Summary of findings

Attributional search after service failure

In service encounters, consumers often attribute success to their personal abilities and give responsibility to others for failures (self-serving bias) (Miller & Ross, 1975; Campbell & Sedikides, 1999). However, in case of service failure with AI, the attribution of responsibility is more complex. Folkes (1984) posits that the high complexity of a service drives consumers to live in a moment of neutrality where consumers ask for information from the company to get more insights about the service failure. After service failure, consumers start an attributional search, searching for information to make sense of the service failure. Usually, in human-human and in human-AI interactions as well (Meyer et al., 2022), consumers tend to protect their self-worth unless during the attributional search other external factors impede or lower the possibility of protecting the self:

P1. If service with VAs fails (vs. succeed), consumers tend to attribute responsibility more externally (vs. internally).

During the attributional search, because the final attribution has not been established yet, the company can persuade consumers that the failure is not under their control and encourage consumers to blame some other external factors (Folkes, 1984). Indeed, during the attributional

search, consumers continuously collect information to understand where to place responsibility after the service failure with VAs:

P2. After service failure, during the attributional search, responsibility attribution shifts from internal to external attribution and vice versa.

The role of joint recovery strategies on attribution of responsibility after service failure

Firms can control the attribution of responsibility after service failure, designing and managing the recovery strategies implemented by VAs. Indeed, after service failure, VAs implement recovery strategies such as apologizing or asking to repeat the request. Consumers engage in self-repair strategies as well (e.g., over articulation, syntactical adjustment, increased volume of the voice, and repetitions) (Beneteau et al., 2019, Cuadra et al., 2021). When recovery strategies are implemented by both parties the voice-activated assistant and the consumer, the service failure is recovered through co-creation (Meyer et. al., 2022). Hence, the attribution of blame shifts internally, softening the self-serving bias. In this occasion, consumers recognize the VAs' efforts to recover the failure:

P3. After co-creation of recovery (vs. absence of co-creation of recovery) the consumer attributes responsibility more internally (vs. more externally).

The effect of VAs anthropomorphism on attribution of responsibility after service failure

According to Computers Are Social Actors (CASA) Paradigm, people attribute human characteristics to algorithms and communicate with them as they would communicate with other humans (Nass & Moon, 2000; Reeves & Nass, 1996). The perceived human-likeness of VAs

(VAs anthropomorphism) leads consumers to unconsciously apply social rules. Therefore, the more VAs are perceived as anthropomorphic by the user, the more they are believed responsible in case of service failure.

Applying social rules, customers perceive VAs to have more control over a task and over a failure. If anthropomorphism leads the consumers to recognize the VAs as human-like, the self-serving bias applies to protect the self-worth of the customer who finds relief in attributing responsibility externally to the VAs.

P4. The higher (vs. lower) the perceived VAs anthropomorphism, the more (vs. the less) consumers will attribute responsibility more externally.

Emotional Response to attribution of responsibility after service failure

Weiner (2000) argues that after a product failure, consumers go through phases, starting from thinking to acting. After the attributional search, consumers attribute the responsibility for the failure, and, at the end, they experience certain emotions and behave accordingly. In this process, emotions mediate as a bridge between responsibility attribution and behaviors.

Past research found that emotions experienced by consumers can influence their subsequent behaviors (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004; Wetzer et al., 2007, p. 663) and trigger complaining behaviors (Day and Landon, 1977), such as NWOM (Choi and Choi, 2014). Weiner (1985) argues that the corresponding emotional response after attribution of responsibility is driven by expectations and goals. In this paper, I refer to negative emotional response when customer's expectations and goals are not met, I refer to positive emotional response when customer's

expectations and goals are met. I argue that in both cases, internal and/or external attribution of responsibility, positive and negative emotional response may arise:

P5. After service failure, whether the attribution is internal or external, consumers experience a positive (vs. negative) emotional response based on whether their goals and expectations are met (vs. not met) when the attribution of responsibility occurs.

Behavioral outcomes after service failure

I investigate three possible behavioral outcomes following service failure. I refer to positive (vs. negative) emotional response those that lead to positive word-of-mouth (WOM) (vs. negative WOM), satisfaction (vs. dissatisfaction) and willingness (vs. unwillingness) to reconcile with the VAs and the service firm. I include both the VAs and the service firm because I consider external attribution made towards the service providers, the VAs, and the service firm as well.

P6. Positive (vs. negative) emotional response, leads to positive (vs. negative) WOM.

P7. Positive (vs. negative) emotional response leads to (dis)satisfaction with VAs and the service firm.

P8. Positive (vs. negative) emotions lead to willingness (vs. unwillingness) to reconcile with the VAs and the service firm.

Key contributions

First, this conceptual paper contributes to the interaction between voice-activated assistants (VAs) and humans' literature, and to service literature. Creating a new theoretical framework and

providing future research venues (Table 1) starting from Weiner (1972, 2000) and Folkes' (1984, 1987) this research aims to understand the outcomes following a service failure and highlights the importance of attribution of responsibility in human-VAs interactions.

Second, this research suggests that firms can strategically manipulate anthropomorphism (the extent to which consumers perceive humanlike traits in VAs). Anthropomorphism in VAs can be shaped through the design of elements such as Natural Language Processing (NLP), voice, personality, appearance. When VAs are perceived highly anthropomorphic, consumers recognize them as peers and activate mental models like those in human-human interactions. However, firms should avoid the uncanny valley effect (Mori, 2012), where overly human-like VAs trigger feelings of unease and danger. Highly anthropomorphic VAs that are blamed for failures can paradoxically lead to increased consumer trust and willingness to re-engage with the company.

Third, firms can manipulate recovery strategies in VAs. According to Kim and Song (2021), service satisfaction increases when VAs take full responsibility for the failure and apologize. VAs are trusted less than humans (Longoni et al., 2022) and are perceived as being less reliable over time. Recovery strategies improvements such as designing more complex and more human-like repair techniques (e.g., a more complex systems of apologies) could drive higher trust in VAs, increase consumer's satisfactions and increase future interactions after repeated failures. Companies could also consider designing Vas that communicate to consumers that other users had the same issue in the past (e.g., "30% of users had the same issue, it's common!"). In this way, consumers might perceive the mistake as a typical VA-consumer interaction communication issue and shift the blame towards situational causes.

"WILL YOU LISTEN TO AI WHEN IT CAN PUT ITSELF IN YOUR SHOES?" ——

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF EMPATHY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF

ALGORITHM-BASED PERSUASION

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Keywords: algorithm-based persuasion, anthropomorphism, empathy, emotional closeness

Description: This research investigates the types and effectiveness of algorithm-based persuasion (ABP) in marketing, using thematic analysis of online comments from social media platforms to develop a new conceptual framework involving perceived empathy, anthropomorphism, and emotional closeness.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

As new technologies such as machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) evolve, interactions with consumers increasingly rely on algorithms. Algorithm-based persuasion, which is defined as any attempt to change consumers' attitudes or behaviour via algorithm-based technology (Gass and Seiter 2018), is widely used to improve marketing efficacy and consumers' well-

being. Such ABP is expected to help consumers use the app wisely and avoid over-indulgence.

However, the effectiveness of ABP and how consumers respond to ABP are still unclear.

Existing research lacks a comprehensive understanding of different types of ABP, and it has not

compared these types to determine which is more persuasive. Moreover, we have a limited

understanding of how ABP generates persuasiveness, and in particular, which factors or

mechanisms make them more persuasive.

Based on the above, this research aims to explore the following questions:

1. What are the major types of ABP, and which of them is more persuasive?

2. What makes ABP persuasive?

3. Will the persuasiveness of ABP vary according to the context?

Method And Data

To answer those research questions, we investigate the consumer experience of algorithm-based

persuasion (ABP) to understand how it works based on thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke

2006) of 1256 consumer online comments.

The research context is Douyin, the Chinese edition of TikTok. It is a video-sharing social media

application that enjoys immense popularity around the world (Statista, 2022). Douyin overuse

has been proven to damage personal well-being, such as difficulty in maintaining concentration

(Zhao, 2021). To address this issue, Douyin has introduced intervention measures to curb excessive usage since 2018 and has continued to iterate on them thereafter.

The qualitative data was obtained from online comments posed on the relevant and major social media platforms, e.g., Doyin and Weibo. Relevant customer comments were identified by searching for the keywords "Douyin anti-addiction", "Douyin rest reminder", "Douyin time management", "Douyin sleep reminder", "Douyin warm moment", "Douyin time reminder". The original data is in Chinese and was translated into English after coding. The data was collected between December 2021 and March 2022. The final dataset adopted comprised 1,256 comments in total, including 432 comments from Weibo and 824 comments from Douyin.

Summary of Findings

This research classified ABP into empathic ABP and non-empathic ABP based on thematic analysis. The main argument is that empathic ABPs that show empathy through conversation are more effective, as the perceived empathy will increase users' perceived congruence between the motivation of ABP agents and the ABP content. Furthermore, empathy, as a unique human quality, can prompt users to anthropomorphize the ABP agent, creating an emotional closeness with it, and therefore users are more likely to accept the ABP agent's suggestions (Blut, Wang, Wünderlich, & Brock, 2021; Choi, Mattila, & Bolton, 2021). Increased emotional closeness captures more trust perception which means users perceive the ABP agent as a credible source of

information, which leads to higher persuasiveness (Korchmaros & Kenny, 2001; Touré-Tillery & McGill, 2015).

The findings further suggest that the effect may vary depending on two boundary conditions, i.e., the humanlike feature and the orientation of the ABP agent. Specifically, excessive anthropomorphic traits could provoke the Uncanny Valley effect, thereby undermining the effectiveness of empathy on persuasion. Well-being-oriented ABPs are more effective than consumption-oriented ABPs, because consumption-based ABPs may raise users' doubts about the motivations of such persuasions.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research enhances algorithm-based persuasion (ABP) research in two significant ways. Firstly, it conceptualized ABPs into empathic ABP and non-empathic ABP, shifting the focus from AI intelligence levels to consumer experience. Secondly, it identified the potential mechanisms of how perceived empathy influences consumers' decision-making. This advances the empirical research of the matching effect in the ABP domain, by identifying the importance of perceived empathy, anthropomorphism, and emotional closeness. This research extends existing conceptual research to practical consumer behavior, highlighting the expanding relevance of conscious AI in applications like wearable devices and AI sales assistants.

In marketing, algorithm-based persuasion is increasingly utilized, but its implementation requires careful consideration. This research suggests that practitioners should first determine whether empathic ABP is suitable for a specific application context. Empathic ABP is more beneficial for a well-being-oriented context. Whereas in goal-oriented contexts, such as the scenario of Microsoft integrating ChatGPT to improve efficiency, ABP might better aim to provide function benefit, avoiding over-empathy that may seem unprofessional. Secondly, the designs of ABPs are crucial. A balance in humanlike features enhances empathic ABP's impact, but it is also necessary to avoid excess to prevent the 'uncanny valley' effect and consumer discomfort.

References are available upon request.

Consumer Behavior

TITLE: 'Women-Owned Business' Label Enhances Perceived Competence

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Keywords: stereotype content model, women business owners, stereotyping, gender bias

Description: This study examines one intervention that can be implemented by women entrepreneurs to counter stereotyping and improve firm outcomes.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question:
It is widely recognized that gender bias has negative effects on women in business, impacting aspects such as hiring, promotion, pay equity, and access to venture capital funding. Here we identify a counter-intuitive strategy that women founders can employ to boost business outcomes. Specifically, we theorize and empirically demonstrate across five preregistered studies ($N = 2500$), including a field study, that affixing the owner attribute label "woman-owned business" can engender positive business outcomes, including perceptions of business competence and service quality. These effects are driven by an increase in perceptions of the business owner's agency. Affixing this gender-based owner attribute label is especially effective in situations that lack other credible cues of competence and in industries that are perceived as competitive. The present work advances our understanding of stereotypes, discrimination, and identity in the consumer marketplace, and offers practical implications for business owners in traditionally marginalized groups who face—and must combat—stereotypes.

Method and Data:
Five preregistered experiments test these predictions. Study 1 examines whether affixing a "woman-owned" business label (i.e., WOB label) influences consumers' perceived competence and expected quality of the firm and finds that the presence of the WOB label is significantly influential. Study 2 tests in the field the positive role affixing a gender-based owner attribute label plays in consumer choice of the firm. Study 3 examines the proposed psychological mechanism and demonstrates a boundary condition in which the label is mitigated when the owner is perceived as acting without agency (i.e., when the WOB label is assigned by a third party). Studies 4 and 5 examine moderating factors. Study 4 investigates whether the positive effect of the label is attenuated when the owner's high (vs. low) industry experience is communicated, while Study 5 tests industry competitiveness as a boundary condition.

Summary of Findings:
Across five preregistered studies, we investigated the psychology of a gender-based owner attribute label, namely a "women-owned" business label. We first showed that affixing a "women-owned" business label improves perceptions of competence and service quality for women business owners (Studies 1–5). This effect was robust across multiple racial categories

(Study 1) and directly benefits firms by increasing consequential consumer outcomes (Study 2). We demonstrate that perceived agency and competence of the business owner drives higher expectations of service quality (Study 3). We also found that this label is especially effective in situations that lack other credible cues of competence (Study 4) and in industries that are perceived as especially competitive (Study 5).

Key Contributions:

Despite the rising number of women-owned businesses in America, female business owners face many challenges from both firms and consumers. While prior research has primarily focused on documenting gender bias and its deleterious effects, little attention has been given to interventions. This research investigates the psychology of utilizing a "woman-owned business" label in marketing communications. We show that affixing this gender-based owner attribute label can engender positive firm outcomes by increasing perceptions of agency and competence, thus counteracting the prevailing stereotype that women are less competent than men.

This work contributes to multiple streams of consumer behavior research. First, we contribute to emergent research on interventions individuals can employ to counter bias in the marketplace. Second, by examining the experiences of business owners, we offer another perspective on stereotypes, given that prior research has primarily focused on consumers' felt experiences of stereotype threat. Relatedly, we advance the current understanding of identity marketing by investigating how business owners can leverage their own identity attributes to improve business outcomes. Finally, our work provides actionable managerial insights for business owners and marketing managers by providing an integrative understanding of when and why affixing owner attribute labels can engender positive business outcomes.

360-DEGREE VIRTUAL TOURS IN DESTINATION MARKETING: A MULTI-METHOD APPROACH EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF PRESENCE AND EMOTIONS ON INTENTION TO VISIT

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Keywords: Consumer Behaviour; Tourism; Virtual Reality; Presence; Emotions

Description: This experimental paper examines the effectiveness of immersive virtual reality (VR) media in the tourism context, assessing their impact on physiological arousal, presence, and intention to visit the promoted destination.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question:

In recent years, the 360-degree video format has witnessed a notable surge in demand, thus increasing the attention of marketing researchers and practitioners due to its potential to provide effective "try before you go" experiences. Virtual reality (VR) technologies in the consumer market mediate users' perception of objects and the environment, thus becoming a real

extension of their bodies and offering new ways of experiencing virtual content characterized by superior interactivity and immersiveness. Despite the increasing attention toward VR technologies and their possible impact on destination marketing, there is a limited body of research examining the relationship between presence, emotion, and intention within the field of tourism (Yung et al., 2021). Moreover, despite calls for a comprehensive approach and the recognized importance of emotional factors (e.g., Martínez-Molés et al., 2021), the utilization of physiological data to quantify emotional responses in VR tourism studies is notably underrepresented in the literature. Based on this rationale, the present paper aims to investigate how presence and arousal impact individual intentions to visit a destination after VR exposure by adopting a multi-method approach.

Method and Data

A between-subjects experimental design was adopted to investigate the effect of media typology (VR vs desktop condition) on presence and intention to visit the promoted destination. The stimulus was a 360-degree movie with the most famous attractions in the city of Valencia, Spain. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions. In the 360-degree VR condition, they were equipped with a Meta Quest 2 virtual reality headset. Participants in the desktop condition interacted with the stimulus using a mouse and a desktop screen. The stimulus remained unaltered across the two conditions; hence, exposure time in both treatments was the same. We involved 100 participants in the study aged between 18 and 31 (28% female, M_{age}= 23.66, SD_{age} = 2.55). Throughout the experiment, implicit measures related to physiological arousal were measured by acquiring galvanic skin response through a pair of finger electrodes placed on the distal phalanges of each participant. Explicit self-reports related to perceived presence, intention to visit, and innovativeness toward new technologies were also

gathered. All the self-reports were adapted from previous literature and measured using a seven-point Likert scale.

Summary of Findings

Our empirical evidence showed the existence of a significant main effect of media typology on presence and physiological arousal. However, physiological arousal did not mediate the relationship between the manipulated variable and the sense of presence perceived by individuals. Previous studies exploring the causal relationship between arousal and presence primarily focused on the manipulation of emotional content within VR stimuli, overlooking the technological aspects of the media used. Our results suggest that the attribution of arousal to the content - more than the technological features of the media - of the virtual experience is essential for inducing presence. Also, the present study highlights that presence is a mediator of the relationship between media typology and intention to visit the destination, but no relationship between physiological arousal and purchase intention was found. Therefore, the results of our paper suggest that cognitive elaboration of the experience via presence can significantly impact the visit intention, while the autonomic arousal generated by immersive devices remains limited to the experience itself and does not result in tangible effects.

Key Contributions

This study makes contributions to the literature and offers practical implications for travel agencies and DMOs. First, we contribute to the existing discourse by advancing the understanding of the underlying processes that affect arousal and presence. While the relationship between media typology and presence has been extensively investigated, emotional engagement has often been seen as a consequence of presence in the tourism literature (Yung et al., 2021). Our research findings suggest that the measurable characteristics of immersive

media themselves can induce emotional arousal during the consumption of VR experiences, independently of the presence reported by the individuals. Second, our study contributes to the methodological debate in destination marketing by introducing and testing a multi-method approach to evaluate the role of emotions in 360-degree virtual tours. In doing so, we support the validity of utilizing physiological measures within the realm of tourism, showing the potential to reliably anticipate the behavioral reactions of individuals following VR experiences. Regarding practitioners, our findings support marketers in shaping VR experiences to increase the likelihood of converting virtual explorations into real-world visits. In this regard, our research highlights the need to prioritize the quality of virtual experiences over merely inducing high arousal, leading to effective conversion.

References are available upon request.

A META-ANALYSIS OF POSITIVITY BIAS OR NEGATIVITY BIAS IN ONLINE REVIEWS

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Keywords: Meta-analysis, negativity bias, positivity bias, review helpfulness, online reviews

Description: Using Meta-analysis on 60 effect sizes from 53 studies, the study explores the prevalence of positivity bias and negativity bias, considering factors such as the number of reviews visible to consumers and the rarity of reviews.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Do consumers display positivity bias or negativity bias? The findings from the extant research on online reviews is mixed. While some studies have shown that negatively valenced information weighs more than positively valenced information and is perceived to be more helpful (termed as 'negativity bias'), other studies have shown that positively valenced information helps customer to gain knowledge and thus are perceived to be more helpful (termed as 'positivity bias'). These mixed findings impede the field, and confuses the marketing manager. It is thus important to understand the conditions under which negativity/positivity bias occurs. It is also imperative for the field to understand why such differences in various studies are occurring.

Method and Data

Following common practice, we started our data collection by doing an extensive literature search on online reviews. We specified various inclusion criteria to refine our search. The dependent variable for the study was helpfulness of online reviews. The data included 60 effect sizes extracted from 18 experiments, 39 archival studies and 3 surveys covering a total of 10236575 sample size between the years 2008 to 2022. The studies included online reviews for different type of products like digital camera, restaurants, hotels, applications, washing machine, etc. and included different platforms used in archival analysis like Amazon, Yelp, TripAdvisor, etc. For the purpose of our meta-analysis, we recorded the correlation between the independent and dependent construct.

Summary of Findings

The results of the current meta-analysis showed that there is a mix in the findings of studies producing an overall effect size of virtually zero. While the difference in the findings could not be attributed to the chance, we find that the difference lie in the way data was collected from the respondents. We found that studies where a set of reviews are visible to consumer while making the decision, positive reviews were weighed more helpful than negative reviews. We also found that consumers weigh positive information as more helpful in case of experience products than in case of search products. There was no evidence for differences because of culture, methodology, sample type or the type of construct used in the study.

Key Contributions

Even though a substantial body of research has explored the different causes related to negativity and positivity bias, a consensus among researchers has not been reached. We still have limited understanding of the specific conditions under which negativity or positivity

biases arise. Through meta-analysis, our research synthesizes the literature concerning the relationship between valence and helpfulness within the context of online reviews. Utilizing 60 effect sizes from 53 studies, we found a mean effect size close to zero, indicating that researchers lack consensus regarding the prevalence of a specific bias. We also tested four moderators: culture, review set, product type, and review rarity, to examine their effects on the relationship between online review valence and helpfulness. Our findings revealed a moderating role played by the composition of the review set, rarity within the review set, and product type.

We discovered that in cases where a set of reviews is visible to consumers during their decision-making process, positive reviews were considered more helpful than negative ones. Furthermore, consumers tend to find positive information more valuable in the case of experience products compared to search products. No evidence of differences due to culture, methodology, sample type, or the type of construct used in the study was found. Our research extends scholarly understanding of the diverse conditions contributing to positivity or negativity bias in the realm of online reviews. Moreover, our study provides valuable managerial insights regarding the composition of reviews that are visible to customers when they make purchase decisions.

ADDRESSING THE "ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOR" GAP IN EV ADOPTION IN INDIA: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIENTIOUSNESS.

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Keywords: Electric Vehicle Adoption, Charging Efficacy, Attitude Behavior Gap, Environmental Conscientiousness

Description: The paper provides a comprehensive review about one of the main moderating factors affecting electric vehicle adoption in India by specifically focusing on the "attitude behavior gap" that exists in the Indian consumers mindset.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

India is the third-largest automobile market in the world, ranking after the US and China. However, 30% of the automobiles sold in China were EVs, compared to 4.1% in India in 2022. This shows the extent of the "attitude-behavior" gap present in the typical Indian consumer. Although most consumers have positive attitudes towards electric vehicles, these favorable attitudes don't translate into actual purchasing behavior. Our research aims to address this gap and study the intrinsic motivational factors moderating the gap in this relationship. Our hope is that our research will unlock new perspectives and paradigms that will help a variety of stakeholders in the EV ecosystem, from marketing professionals to EV manufacturers and policymakers, better understand the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of the Indian consumer when it comes to electric vehicle adoption.

Our research question mainly focuses on the moderating mechanisms that affect the relationship between attitude and actual buying behavior of electric vehicles. The moderating variable is termed Environmental Conscientiousness (EC). This latent variable moderates the relationship between pro-environmental attitude towards electric vehicles and actual purchasing behavior of electric vehicles.

RQ: Does EC play a moderating role in bridging the "Attitude-Behavior" gap for EV Adoption?

Method and Data

Here, we hypothesize that environmental conscientiousness has a moderating influence on the relationship between attitude towards EVs and EV adoption behavior. A brief description of the variables is as follows:

Environmental Conscientiousness (EC): Measuring the participants' concerns for the environment, eco-friendly behavior, and attitudes towards sustainable practices Conscientiousness has been seen as a moderator in addressing the "attitude-behavior" gap in green IT practice. However, its effect has not been measured in the context of EVs. "Environmental conscientiousness" has been used before in literature to refer to an organization's approach to environmentally friendly policies. However, here we define it in terms of an individual's conscientiousness towards their environmental and biospheric behavior.

Attitude/Perception towards EVs: Measuring participants' overall favorable or unfavorable evaluation of EVs Assess participants' perceptions of EV advantages (e.g., reduced emissions, lower operating costs) and disadvantages (e.g., limited range, charging infrastructure).

EV Adoption Behavior/Intention: Measuring participants' likelihood to adopt or purchase an EV within a specified timeframe.

The data will be collected via survey using scales used in prior research regarding EV Adoption in Chinese, Italian, UK and Spanish population. Once the data is collected, it will be analyzed using SPSS to find the moderating influence of EC on EV Adoption in India.

Summary of Findings

This paper aims to understand the moderating factors that affect the "attitude-behavior" gap when it comes to EV adoption among Indian consumers. While previous literature has discussed this gap in the context of India using the DEMATEL approach, they found the three main barriers to EV adoption are the issues of power availability, concern about battery life, and absence of proper charging infrastructure. We would argue that all these barriers are external in nature, and although they influence the EV adoption behavior, the model does not account for intrinsic motivational factors that may moderate this relationship. According to value-belief norm theory (VBN), which is an extension of norm activation theory (NAT), pro-environmental attitudes emerge from one's values, which can be segregated into three distinct domains: altruistic, biospheric and egoistic. Understanding the interplay of these motivations is critical to unlocking the next generation of EV consumers as the product moves from early adopters to the mainstream market in India. While the latent variable CE accounts for some of the factors discussed prior related to battery life, charging infrastructure and power availability, there has not been much research into understanding the implications of intrinsic motivation in purchasing of Electric vehicles in the Indian market. We find that the latent variable EC, has roots in all the three distinct domains from which pro-environmental attitudes emerge namely altruistic, biospheric and egoistic.

Summary of Findings

Although there has been significant research in EV Adoption in developed countries, the "attitude-behavior" gap remains largely unexplained. Compared to the western counterparts, research regarding the transition from ICE to EVs in India is still in its nascent stage. There are multiple reasons for this ranging from fixed and variable costs to range anxiety. Most of the research in this field has focused on extrinsic factors regarding the performance of the vehicle itself or the perception of the performance. Accordingly, there is a gap in literature as to how EC can play a part in bridging the "attitude-behavior" gap that permeates the Indian population.

Here, we explore the moderating effect of EC on addressing the "attitude - behavior" gap for the Indian consumer. By effectively tapping into consumers' EC companies can design effective marketing campaigns to penetrate the EV Market. However, there are limitations to this study, as literature has shown that intrinsic motivation is not enough by itself to fully explain the relationship between the attitudes and behaviors of a consumer when it comes to high involvement purchases such as an electric vehicle.

ADOPTION CRITERIA FOR AR SHOPPING APPS
–
THE ROLE OF MAXIMIZING TENDENCIES IN THE ADOPTION INTENTION OF AR SHOPPING APPS

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Keywords: maximizing tendencies, AR shopping apps, adoption criteria

Description: This study advances AR shopping app theory by showing that the decision-making style of strategy maximizing has a positive effect on the adoption of AR shopping apps.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Augmented reality (AR) is one of the most important technological developments right now (Gartner 2018). The possibility to enrich physical environments through virtual elements bears a plethora of possible use cases one of which is to enhance online shopping experiences for consumers. While the theoretical merits of AR are widely acknowledged the actual impact of AR on consumer behavior is not completely known (Hilken et al. 2022). Inter-individual differences are assumed to play a role in consumers reactions to AR applications (Hilken et al. 2022). Up until now several consumer characteristics have been researched, however Hilken et al. (2022) call for a consideration of different decision-making styles such as maximizing tendencies (Cheek and Schwartz 2016).

The goal of this work is thus to investigate the effect of the decision-making style of maximizing on the adoption intention of AR shopping applications, purchase intention and willingness to pay (WTP). Because maximizing consumers are interested in and gather more data from different information sources it is assumed that they have a higher adoption intention of AR applications than non-maximizing consumers. It is further assumed that the use of an AR app has a stronger positive effect on purchase intention and WTP for maximizing consumers than non-maximizing consumers.

Method and Data

Data was gathered via an online questionnaire, which was distributed through a student panel of a German university as well as through social media outlets. At the beginning participants were asked about their online shopping frequency (seldom = less than once a month, occasionally = once or twice a month, often = more than twice a month) and their WTP for a pair of shoes. Then they were introduced to the "Wanna Kicks" app, a virtual try-on application for sneakers. The participants were then asked to imagine a scenario in which they were searching online for a pair of shoes. Successively, the participants saw a short video which simulated using the app after which the participants were asked about their intention to adopt the "Wanna Kicks" app and similar AR-shopping apps respectively. Purchase intention and WTP for a pair of shoes was asked again. At the end goal maximizing was measured with the 7-item version of the Maximizing Tendency Scale, (MTS-7, Dalal et al. 2015) and strategy maximizing was measured with the 12 items of the Alternative Search Subscale of the Maximizing Inventory, (MI-AS, Turner et al. 2012). The final sample consisted of 105 participants.

Summary of Findings

We run multiple linear regression analyses with stepwise backward elimination and gender, age, goal maximizing, strategy maximizing and online shopping frequency as predictors. In three models the variables strategy maximizing and seldom online shopping were significant predictors. These were the models predicting adoption intention of the "Wanna Kicks" app ($F(2, 102) = 5.005$, $p < .01$, $R2 = .089$), adoption intention of AR shopping apps in general ($F(2, 102) = 6.191$, $p < .01$, $R2 = .108$), and purchase intention ($F(2, 102) = 4.437$, $p < .05$, $R2 = .080$).

Our results suggest that strategy maximizing promotes the use of AR shopping apps, which aligns with earlier findings that consumers who use strategy maximizing but not goal maximizing exploit more channels (e.g. stores, online, mobile apps, and catalogues) before making a purchase decision (Harris, Dall'Olmo Riley, and Hand 2021). It seems that because maximizing consumers try to process all available information (Liu, Kaikati, and Arnold 2022) they are more open to additional information AR shopping apps provide. Further participants with higher online shopping frequencies were more interested in the adoption of AR shopping apps and reported higher purchase intention. Thus, it appears that consumers already familiar with online shopping see the most benefits from the adoption of AR shopping apps.

Key Contributions

This research makes several important contributions to the AR shopping app and maximizing literature. It advances AR shopping app theory by showing that the decision-making style of strategy maximizing has a positive effect on the adoption of AR shopping apps. It further contributes to maximizing theory by showing distinctions between the strategy component of maximizing which promotes an adoption of AR shopping apps and the goal component for which

no such influence was found. Additionally, this research found that maximizing consumers reported higher purchase intention after product presentation through the AR shopping app. These findings are interesting for marketing practitioners and firms who want to identify market segments open for the adoption of AR shopping applications. By promoting information and comparison aspects of AR shopping apps, adoption among online shopping maximizing consumers could be increased which in turn would have a favorable outcome on product sales.

References

References are available upon request.

AN ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR REGARDING ARTIFICIALLY INTELLIGENT APPLICATIONS OWNED BY THE LUXURY RESORT INDUSTRY.

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Description: The study investigates consumer behavior in the hospitality industry, focusing on factors influencing attitudes towards artificially intelligent -powered applications.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The increasing popularity of artificially intelligent applications in resorts has greatly enhanced the appeal of premium services in the realm of travel entertainment. This has resulted in the emergence of a novel area of research that specifically examines the impact of artificially intelligent applications on the field of consumer behavior. The hospitality industry has been able to utilize advancements in robotics and big data to introduce artificially intelligent luxury resort applications, which offer partially personalized service experiences. These applications provide functionalities such as self-checkout, reservations for dining, and corporate occasions

for socializing, augmenting the perceived value of the visit. The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated the development of a comprehensive model that outlines the conceptual pathway through which consumers' behavior can enhance the perceived value of the experience as a whole. Prior research has examined various technological aspects in the hospitality sector. However, there is a scarcity of studies that specifically investigate consumer acceptance of sophisticated artificial intelligence applications in hotels and resorts. The objective of this study is to address a deficiency in current research regarding the implementation of artificially intelligent resort applications in the hospitality sector, aiming to identify specific factors that impact consumers' decisions to adopt such applications.

Method And Data

The study implemented structural equation modeling to examine the relationship between factors affecting technology adoption and customer perceived value in the hospitality industry. We used a questionnaire to assess the constructs in artificially intelligent luxury resort applications, modified from prior research, guaranteeing the reliability and validity of the measurements. All constructs were evaluated using five-point Likert scales, which were adapted to fit the specific requirements of the research. To verify appropriateness, participants affirmed their utilization of such applications during their most recent vacation. The concluding segment encompassed inquiries regarding demographic data, educational background, occupation, place of residence, and income level. The study employed the Partial Least Squares Modeling technique to analyze the data, testing the proposed hypotheses of the model. The study primarily examined the reliability of items, the internal consistency of constructs, the convergent validity, and the discriminant validity. The reliability and convergent validity of the scales were assessed through factor loading, Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted. The discriminant validity was assessed through the utilization of

the Fornell and Larcker methods as well as the Heterotrait-Monotrait method. Subsequently, the structural model was utilized to examine both the direct and indirect impacts. The findings corroborate the hypotheses.

Summary of Findings

The results are consistent with previous research, indicating that the assessment of perceived value plays a vital role in the acceptance of innovative Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Enjoyment, observed immersion, confidence, and lifestyle change are a few examples of the factors that affect people's willingness to pay for artificially intelligent applications in opulent resorts. The study demonstrates that consumers' perception of value is an essential component that determines the relationship between willingness to accept and willingness to pay using artificially intelligent applications. The mediation analysis revealed that the existence of perceived value among consumers increases both satisfaction and a greater motivation to adopt and utilize artificially intelligent luxurious resort applications in order to enhance the overall experience. Empirical evidence proves the mediating role of perceived value results in increased sales and business success. This supports the claim that emotions have a direct impact on customers' assessments of value. Upon analyzing consumer behavior, it becomes evident that experiential purchases evoke greater happiness in individuals as compared to material possessions. Positive consumers' experiences enhance happiness by fostering receptiveness to positive reinterpretations, serving as a fundamental component of one's identity, and playing a pivotal role in establishing prosperous social connections.

Key Contributions

The findings have implications for profit firms in the hospitality industry, hotel directors, and practitioners, who should focus on creating positive emotional reactions for applications' users

in the hotel industry. The results assist ICT developers in understanding the key drivers of customer acceptance behavior, increasing profitability, implementing effective marketing strategies, and enhancing their artificially intelligent application offerings to attract more customers. Moreover, non-profit organizations in the tourism and hospitality sectors can also benefit from the findings by understanding the significance of emotional factors influencing tourists' behavior. These understandings may help particular stakeholders improve their services and better cater to tourists' preferences and needs. Finally, government agencies and policymakers in the tourism industry can benefit from the research as well. It can help them come up with rules and incentives to get people to use artificial intelligence in the hospitality industry. It can also give policymakers useful information and help them make decisions about how to accept advances in artificial intelligence technology in the hospitality sector.

References are available upon request.

ASSESING TOURIST'S MINDFUL MINDSET AND BEHAVIOR ON RESIDENTS WELL-BEING: COMPEMENTING ROLE OF DESTINATION LOYALTY AND SELF BRAND CONNECTION

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Keywords-Environmental Sustainability Attitude, Private Self Consciousness, Mindful

Consumption, Destination Brand Loyalty, Self-Brand Connection, Well Being

Description –Mindful Consumption and Well Being

Extended Abstract

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

RQ1: What is the impact of a mindful mindset on mindful consumption?

RQ2: How does mindful consumption influence mindful behaviour?

RO 3: What is the role of destination loyalty and self-brand connection as mediators in the

relationship between mindful consumption and the well-being of tourists?

METHOD AND DATA:

A structured questionnaire was developed after assessing the important constructs from literature review. The questionnaire was divided into two parts wherein first part comprised the demographic details of respondents including age, gender, education, and frequency of vacations. The second part contained all the items under **Environmental sustainability attitude**, **Private self-consciousness, Mindful consumption, Destination brand loyalty/Commitment, Self-brand connection and Consumption well-being** on the scale of 1-9 with 1 as 'strongly disagree' and 9 as 'strongly agree'.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

In the study, H_1 and H_2 are accepted as the impact of environment sustainability attitude and private self-consciousness on mindful consumption are found to be significant. Mindful consumption is also found to significantly contribute to destination loyalty which leads to the acceptance of H_3 whereas H_4 is rejected as mindful consumption is found to have no significant impact on self-brand connection. Lastly, self-brand connection has an insignificant impact on well-being whereas destination loyalty is found to have a significant contribution to well-being. This leads to the acceptance of H_5 whereas the rejection of H_6.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

The study identified that the presence of a more sustainable attitude and self-consciousness could result in promoting mindful consumption which further would bring destination loyalty but no impact could be derived on self-brand connection. Moreover, destination loyalty affect the well-being of the residents of the particular tourism destination but the self-brand connection does not.

BRAND POWER IS NOT ENOUGH – THE ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOR GAP AND ITS IMPACT ON THE REVENUE OF CHOCOLATE BARS

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Description: This study introduces a method to identify and measure the attitude-behavior gap for branded chocolate bars, revealing its negative impact on revenue through a Bayesian statistical linear model approach.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

Consumers partly do not act as they claim to. In the literature, this is referred to as attitude-behavior gap (ABG) and its existence is mainly confirmed for sustainable products. To our knowledge, there is no research on how the ABG in regard to branded products might affect revenue. The relationship between attitude and behavior is an important factor for any marketing decision. Therefore, companies need to know whether the ABG has an impact on their revenue and how they can make use of the ABG to increase their revenue. For these reasons, this study focusses on a new approach to measure the ABG towards well-known branded products and answer the question on how the ABG might impact the revenue of chocolate bars.

METHOD AND DATA

This study is based on German household panel data from the grocery retail sector. The data includes purchases from January 2006 till December 2022. The source of the data is GfK Consumer Panels & Services. The data includes information from 5,495,984 chocolate bar purchases. 10,265 households reported their purchases on average per year. Based on the approaches by Berg, Kortum, and Rüschen (2021) and Ermecke et al. (2023), we combine household panel data with corresponding survey data and data on the brand index score. We calculate the attitude toward branded products by using a confirmatory factor analysis and calculate the share of branded products purchased. Using z-standardisation, the households are ranked from low to high for both components of the ABG, attitude and behavior, seperatly. We calculate the rank differential between the households' ranked attitude toward brands and the households' ranked share of well-known brand purchases resulting in a sample including only negative ABG-values (*SampleNegative*) and a sample including only positive ABG-values (*SamplePositive*). For statistical analysis a Bayesian linear regression models was calculated for each of the two samples. Therefor Bayesian parameter show probabilities and are intuitively interpretable.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

We calculate the resulting 89-percent Highest Density Intervals (HDI) as well as the probability of direction (PD) on basis of the posterior-distribution. Here, an HDI defines the 89-percent probability interval, which includes the most probable values for a parameter, whereas the PD is defined as probability of a parameter to be positive or negative, respectively the probability of an independent variable to have a positive or negative effect on the dependend. Regarding the ABG both models evaluates the probability of an effect as very high with a $PD_{Negative}$ of 99

percent for each sample. Examining the HDI length, the model is also fairly certain about the assumend effects. Whereas in *SampleNegative* a strong ABG goes along with a rise in revenue, the ABG reduces revenue in *SamplePositive*.Surprisingly the HDI includes similar effects sizes for β_{ABG} in both models compared to two of the considered covariates ($\beta_{Variaty}$, $\beta_{Promotion}$) for which the influence on revenue is confirmed by the literature. Therefore we conclude, that the probability for a relevant effect of the ABG is highly probable and that the ABG can indeed influence monthly revenue by a substantial amount. This insight highlights untapped potential for development and revenue growth.

STATEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

We introduce an adapted approach, based on Ermecke et al. (2023), to operationalize the ABG in regard to brand preference by combining household panel data, self-estimated attitudes and brand index data and therefore indiciate further possibilites for future research. The novel method can help to combine survey-based attitudes with actual purchasing data. Therefore, we provide an approach to identify the ABG for different combinations of attitudes and corresponding behaviors and also confirm the existence of the ABG relating to brand preferences and branded product purchases. In addition, we show how researchers can integrate the ABG in more complex analyses by using Monte Carlo Markov Chain simulations within a Bayesian statistical linear model approach to analyze the impact of the ABG and covariates on revenue. We distinguish the data into two samples according to each household's negative or positive expression of the ABG, which allows for a differentiated analysis of the ABG and its impact on revenue.

The findings are relevant for both brand managers and retailers as the ABG has a significant impact on the revenue of chocolate barsfor both groups. By identifying and showing the potential of the ABG, we offer a new opportunity for revenue optimization.

References are available upon request.

BUSY BIAS: YOUR BUSYNESS INDICATES COMPETENCE, MINE DOES NOT

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Keywords: Self-other difference, Busy, Competence, Construal Level Theory

Description: When others are busy, individuals assume it is because those people are more competent; when they see themselves as busy, they don't feel this way.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Appearing to be busy is valued so highly that friendly greetings, such as "How are you?" are often met with a response of, "Busy" (Kreider, 2012). It has become a part of the expected corporate workplace culture to be viewed as busy. Being busy is also part of the social culture, especially in the United States (Waytz, 2023; Giurge et al., 2020).

Most of the extant research in the busyness area concentrates on how people perceive others who are busy. For example, research shows that when we observe others who are busy, we perceive them to have better social status (Bellezza et al., 2017). Generally, when we see a person with a busy schedule, it is seen as a badge of honor (Felber, 2020; Gershuny, 2005).

An interesting question that has not received attention is self-other perception differences when it comes to being busy. While substantial examination exists of self-other differences in areas such as products (Polman et al., 2022), money (Polman et al., 2018), and showing vulnerability (Bruk

et al., 2018) etc., we found little research on busyness. Thus, the primary objective of this research is to explore self-other differences in busyness perceptions, which we refer to as the "busy bias."

Method And Data

We use experimentation to test the research question. We report five studies that found people tend to believe that when others are busy, they are seen as being more competent, while when they themselves are busy, they don't feel this way. Studies 1 and 2 test this basic notion and find that individuals perceive others to be more competent than themselves when asked to think of a situation when they found themselves or someone else to be busy. Studies 3A and 3B test whether this effect is only associated with busyness or extends to when people are not busy. We find that the differing competence perceptions occur only when people are considered busy and not when they are not busy, suggesting that there is something unique in seeing others as busy. Study 4 rules out the explanation that this effect occurs only with socially close people. The findings from this study reveal that this busy bias applies broadly to many types of others, from socially close friends to socially distant celebrities.

Summary of Findings

Across five studies, we find that when others are busy, individuals assume it is because those people are more competent. When they see themselves as busy, they don't feel this way. Further, this perception does not occur when people are not busy, suggesting that the effect is tied to busyness perceptions and not a generalized effect. Finally, we find that this effect extends broadly to others irrespective of whether they are socially close or distant.

Key Contributions

This study investigates the difference in busyness perceptions and, therefore, contributes to the literature on self-other differences. While previous research in products and social judgement has explored self-other differences, there are very few studies focusing on busyness – a subjective perception of long working hours and a large number of tasks to complete over a relatively longer period of time.

Our research provides insights into the prevalent busy culture. By examining the self-other difference in busyness perception, we can start to understand how individuals interpret busyness (Waytz 2023). The findings can help illuminate factors that contribute to the busy culture perpetuation by understanding the psychological processes of busyness as a symbol of competence. This knowledge can help individuals better understand their busyness and allow corporations to reward output rather than focus on effort. By encouraging individuals to reassess their beliefs about busyness, we can promote personal and professional wellbeing.

This research holds significant implications for companies and organizations. By recognizing the tendency for individuals to perceive others as more competent when busy, organizations can encourage a supportive and collaborative work environment. This can involve promoting a culture that values work-life balance, provides opportunities for skill development, and emphasizes the importance of well-being and productivity.

References are available upon request.

CAN SOLVING A MATH PROBLEM MAKE CHILDREN MORE MINDFUL WHEN SELECTING FOODS? EVIDENCE FROM A FIELD STUDY

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Keywords: children's decision making; children's food behavior; mindful choices; mindful eating; cognitive stimulation.

Description: This paper explores how undertaking a cognitively stimulating task right before selecting food influences children's choices.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – 200 Words

The increasing number of obese and overweight children is a highly prevalent problem worldwide (Pechmann, Catlin, and Zheng 2020). Given the number of meals children eat at school, and the unique, independent decision-making context schools provide, regulators use school cafeterias as an arena to combat childhood obesity. Despite well-intentioned efforts, regulatory policies seem to have had very limited success.

The current research takes a novel, less restrictive approach and explores a low-cost school-based intervention that can nudge children toward more mindful choices (i.e., to select fewer total items, and fewer unhealthy items). The present research investigates how encouraging cognitive decision making through solving a math problem before choosing food encourages children to make more mindful food choices. We address the following research question: would solving a mathematical problem (vs. not) before choosing food lead children to select fewer options overall as well as fewer unhealthy options (i.e., make more mindful choices)?

Method And Data– 200 Words

We tested this prediction in a field experiment at a public middle school in the US. The study was conducted in the school cafeteria during the scheduled lunch periods in collaboration with the district and school administrators. The experiment had a between-subjects design with two manipulated conditions (cognitively stimulating task: undertaken vs. not). Volunteering children (N = 130, M_{age}: 12.95 years; 44% females) were either given a survey with or without

one mathematical problem. After receiving the survey and completing the math problem (for participants in the treatment condition), students were allowed to select items from the lunch menu and the a la carte menu. After getting their food, the students came back to their seats and finished the rest of the survey. Participants were asked to return the survey to the researchers at the end of their lunch period. The key dependent measure, mindful choices, was operationalized as the total number of items purchased by each student. We also explored how the quality of food choices (i.e., the total number of unhealthy items selected, and the proportion of unhealthy items selected out of total items) varied between groups (Kidwell, Hasford, and Hardesty 2015).

Summary of Findings – 200 words

The results showed a significant effect of mental stimulation exercises (i.e., solving a math problem) on the number of total items selected. Participants in the "no math" condition chose more items (math = 1.69 items vs. no math = 2.38 items, Wald χ^2 (1) = 7.42, p = .006). Additionally, participants in the "math" condition chose fewer unhealthy items (math = .60 items vs. no math = 1.04 items, Wald χ^2 (1) = 7.61, p =.006) and chose a lower proportion of unhealthy items out of total items (no math = 45.33% vs. math = 33.01%). These findings support our hypothesis. Interestingly, BMI moderated the effect of math-solving on the total number of items chosen (F (1, 104) = 4.17, p = .044). That is, the math problem-solving effect on the number of options selected gets stronger with a higher BMI and attenuates with a lower BMI.

The results from the field study provide evidence that solving a math problem before a food choice leads to more mindful eating in terms of fewer items chosen and importantly, fewer unhealthy items chosen. This effect attenuates for children with a relatively low BMI and gets amplified for children with a high BMI.

Statement of Key Contributions – 200 words

The findings of this research have strong implications. From a theoretical perspective, while there is extant research on cognitive and mindful approaches to decision-making involving adult consumers, very little research has focused on children's food 4 behavior. Our research is novel, primarily focusing on children's food behavior and exploring the effects of cognitive stimulation on children's food choices. We also contribute to the literature by suggesting that the effect of a cognitive task on the choice outcome may vary based on the decision stage in which the task occurs. While prior research shows a cognitive task during food selection can decrease self-control when it comes to choosing food due to limited cognitive resources, our study shows undertaking cognitive tasks before choosing food can promote mindful food choices. Our research findings also have strong implications for consumer health and wellbeing. For example, our findings suggest cafeteria administrators might create a "math problem of the day" and have it displayed strategically in the school cafeteria where children line up for their lunch.

References

References are available upon request.

COLOR ME AROUSED WHILE KEEPING THE COOL

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Keywords: Colors, Logos, Visual Complexity, Arousal, Brand Excitement, Willingness to Purchase, Choice

Description: This paper investigates the impact of multi cool colored logos on arousal and marketing outcomes via visual complexity

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Brands increasingly use multiple cool colors in their brand logos and marketing materials. Yet, most color research examines single colors. In this research, we examine the impact of the use of multiple cool colors (3 or more colors with shorter wavelengths together) on arousal and the mediating effects of visual complexity and the downstream consequences of arousal induced by multiple cool colors on marketing outcomes. Specifically, we examine:

1. How can brands use cool colors to induce arousal besides using longer wavelength colors, such as red?

2. How does visual complexity explain the effect multi cool colors on arousal?

3. How does arousal driven by multi cool colors impact marketing outcomes?

Method and Data

Across 5 experimental studies we investigated a total of 4 color combinations in comparison to a total of 4 single colored logos across 3 product categories. Study 1[N=138, 4-cell(logo color: blue, red, multi-blue, blue/green/violet)] investigated the impact of multi cool colors vs. single colors on arousal and study 2[N=321, 7-cell(blue, green, red:low brightness, red:higher brightness, multi-blue, multi-green, blue/green/violet)] investigated the mediating effect of visual complexity between multicolors and arousal. Participants self-reported their arousal level (Mehrabian, and Russell, 1970) and visual complexity of the logos (Berlyne, 1958). Study 3 [N=443, 6-cell(blue, green, violet, multi green, multi violet, blue/green/violet)] expanded the context to a logo on product packaging on an advertisement by examining fictitious sneaker brand advertisements. In addition to the constructs measured in studies 1 and 2, participants rated brand excitement (Aaker, 1997) and willingness to purchase (Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal, 1991). Study 4[N=357,4(logo color: blue, green, multi green, blue/green/violet)* 2(Product category: energy drinks, mineral water)] compared an exciting product (energy drinks) vs. a less exciting product (mineral water) and all constructs from previous studies were measured. Study 5[N=77,2(number of colors: single vs. multi-color) X 2(color of the multi-color logo: multi-green, blue/green/violet) mixed factorial design] extended our research to another product, chocolate bars, and introduced a behavioral outcome (product choice).

Summary of Findings

Study 1 shows that on average cool multi-colored logos are more arousing than cool single-colored logos. Study 2 replicates the findings from Study 1, provides initial evidence that visual complexity is stronger in cool multi-colored logos compared to cool single-colored logos,

and shows visual complexity mediates the effect of logo color on arousal. Study 3 shows that brands using cool multi-colored logos are perceived as significantly more exciting and have higher willingness to purchase than brands using cool single-colored logos. Study 4 provides evidence of serial mediations between logo color and brand excitement and willingness to purchase. A pre-test and a manipulation check suggest that energy drinks are considered significantly more exciting than mineral water. We find that multicolored logos seem to have a significant impact on excitement, primarily on energy drinks. Finally, study 5 replicates the results of studies 1-4 (including the serial mediation) while providing evidence that the phenomenon works for real choices. Participants were more likely to choose the chocolate with the multicolored logo (76.2% for blue-green violet and 82.86% for multi-green); the bars with the two multicolored logos were equally preferred ($\chi^2 = 0.15$, $p > 0.60$).

Key Contributions

This research contributes to the color literature by advancing the current knowledge of color-driven arousal by proposing new methods that can induce arousal in addition to the use of warm colors. Additionally, the findings present evidence of the underlying theoretical process between multicolors and arousal, thereby providing additional marketing implications. Using a multitude of cool colors, this research provides a broader theoretical understanding of how cool colors can be used to induce arousal and further contributes to the color literature by investigating the area of multicolors, which has received comparatively less attention. Managers can use the suggested theoretical framework about cool multicolors in choosing colors for their brand stimuli, instead of relying on limited theoretical knowledge. The findings across the

various product categories that were tested and the real choice study offer further insights to brands to effectively choose colors for their stimuli to drive intended consumer responses.

References

References are available upon request.

CONSUMER ADOPTION OF MOBILE HEALTH APPS

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Keywords: Acceptance of Innovations, Mobile Health Apps, Smartphones, Structural Equation Modelling.

Description: This research investigates the determinants of consumers' adoption of health-centric mobile applications.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The definition and implications of Mobile Health (m-Health) encapsulate a dynamic and transformative landscape in healthcare. For individuals constrained by time or geographical limitations, m-Health technologies offer a solution by providing effective healthcare services. In developing countries, m-Health emerges as a catalyst for enhanced healthcare provisions. It aids in diagnosing and managing chronic illnesses, promoting healthier lifestyles, disseminating crucial public health information (Alaiad et al., 2019), and curbing healthcare expenses.

Despite the proliferation of m-Health apps offering cost-effective and evidence-based healthcare content (Sari et al., 2018), adoption rates remain suboptimal (Aboelmaged et al., 2021).

This is particularly pronounced among elderly users (Alsswey & Al-Samarraie, 2020), and even those who do adopt often discontinue usage after minimal interactions (Soni et al., 2021).

Past research highlights the predominance of models like the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) in explaining healthcare technology adoption (Tao et al., 2020). These findings underscore the intricacies of m-Health adoption and point to the need for comprehensive frameworks to unravel its complexities. To answer this call, this work aims to propose a new and parsimonious model to shed light on the determinants of m-Health adoption by consumers.

Method and Data

The present study undertook a cross-sectional electronic survey involving 512 respondents (with a mean age being 43 years - standard deviation of 12.15; females comprised 57% of the sample) and proposed a structural model to test the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a direct and positive effect of Attitude (A) over Behavioral Intention (BI) towards mHealth apps' adoption.

H2a: There is a direct and positive effect of Perceived Usefulness (PU) over Attitude (A) towards mHealth apps' adoption.

H2b: There is a direct and positive effect of Perceived Usefulness over Behavioral Intention (BI) towards mHealth apps' adoption.

H3a: There is a direct and positive effect of Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) over Attitude (A) towards mHealth apps' adoption.

H3b: There is a direct and positive effect of Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) over Perceived Usefulness (PU) towards mHealth apps' adoption.

H4: There is a direct and positive effect of Self-Efficacy (SE) over Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) towards mHealth apps' adoption.

H5: There is a direct and positive effect of Trust (TRU) over Perceived Usefulness (PU) towards mHealth apps' adoption.

Summary of Findings

The proposed model was able to explain 66.2% of respondents' behavioral intention regarding the decision of adopt (or not) some smartphone health app. Attitude had a stronger influence over intention than perceived usefulness (0.613 versus 0.218). More than 80% of respondents' attitude can be explained by the proposed model, with a strong direct influence by Perceived Usefulness (0.813). These results indicate that marketing strategies related to smartphone health apps should emphasize more their utilitarian aspects.

Furthermore, the decision about the acceptance of a mHealth app strongly depends on their capacity to provide useful information with security, as can be seen by the strong influence of Trust over Perceived Usefulness (0.647). On the other hand, Perceived Ease of Use had a little influence over both Perceived Usefulness (0.208) and Attitude (0.123). In the healthcare context, this little influence could be explained by users' need to take care of their own health, regardless the complexity of the technology involved.

Finally, Self-Efficacy explained 65.2% of Perceived Ease of Use, which corroborates previous studies involving this relationship. This means that consumers who feel more capable to use these technologies usually perceive that these apps are more ease to use (Tao et al., 2020).

Key Contributions

The study's results offer insights into the factors shaping consumer behavior toward mobile health app adoption. The research model reveals the prominence of attitude and perceived usefulness on adoption intention. This highlights the need for marketing strategies that accentuate the utilitarian aspects of these apps. Trust emerges as a central element, influencing perceived usefulness, particularly pertinent due to the amplified reliance on healthcare technologies during the pandemic. Perceived ease of use marginally affects perceived usefulness and attitude. Consumers' prioritization of achieving positive health outcomes through app usage might diminish the ease of use's impact, accentuating perceived usefulness. However, the importance of intuitive mHealth app interfaces should be underscored, since it can enhance both ease of use and perceived usefulness. Furthermore, the transformative potential of mobile health apps in healthcare access and cost reduction must be emphasized, particularly in developing nations. Implications for practice stress the primacy of utilitarian attributes in marketing and the imperative to cultivate trust via data security measures. This study provides theoretical insights into consumer mobile health app adoption and contributes to industry practices and governmental policies, enriching comprehension of consumer behavior in this evolving landscape.

Note: References are available on request.

COOPERATION AS IF BY MAGIC: SELFISH PEOPLE MAKE PROSOCIAL CHOICES BY ACTING AS IF THEIR MOVE WILL INFLUENCE OTHERS

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Keywords: Cooperation, Game theory, Public Goods, Causality, Consumer Choice

Description: Payoff-maximizing players in sequential public goods games display quasi-magical thinking, acting as if their moves will influence others even though they know this is impossible; marketing applications trade on the idea that even the self-interested are considering what others would do in their shoes.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Social cooperation without external monitoring is widely regarded as fundamental to human culture, sustaining teamwork, mass political participation, and personal sacrifice for family, tribe, or nation. People often face opportunities to incur an individual cost in exchange for a collective benefit, and there is a rich literature exploring the whys and wherefores. For example, a CEO might choose to move assets overseas in order to avoid taxes, or she might choose to avoid chicanery, keep assets domestically, and pay more in taxes—in the end, contributing to the public weal. Each choice involves a tradeoff between what is good for the agent and what is good for

the group. There may, however, be circumstances in which even people who are only maximizing their own payouts end up cooperating.

RQ1: Do self-interested players act *as if*, cooperating because cooperation maximizes their individual payoff on the assumption that people in the future will make the same move they have —even when they know influencing other players is impossible?

Method And Data

We investigate this question with a subtle variation on the classic one-shot PGG, changing it so that players within a single round move one after another but do not observe each others' moves: a sequential PGG without observation (SPGG). Players are randomly assigned to one of the positions in the sequence (e.g., first-mover, second-mover, etc.). If subjects are acting as if future players will make the same move they have, we should see a decline in cooperation with increasing order and effects should be proportional to the number of people yet to move: the positional order effect. In a five-player game, Player 1 has four other players who are yet to move and therefore available to "influence", while Player 5 has none.

We establish this effect by demonstrating that positional order effects exist only among the most self-interested players, and by turning the effect on and off by breaking the "magical" causal connection between a player and those moving after her. All experiments are preregistered, real-time online group tasks where participants interact via text chat before learning the rules of the game to establish some sense that they are completing the task with real people in real time.

Summary of Findings

In four studies among 3,615 participants we see clear evidence of a decline in contribution to the public good with increasing order.

Studies 1-3 establish that the average contribution to the public good declines as position nears the end of the sequence, with the largest contributions being made by players moving first and the smallest by those moving last. Further, Studies 1-3 establish that this effect is driven almost entirely by players who understand the game and who are trying to maximize their own payoffs.

In Study 4, the positional order effect is eliminated by telling the focal player that everyone moving *after* him has their move made randomly, while the positional order effect is preserved if only those moving *before* him have their moves made randomly. This makes it clear that future players must have agency over their own moves in order to generate the positional order effect, suggesting implicit causal thinking is at play.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research provides evidence for quasi-magical thinking among payoff-maximizing SPGG players, who act as if they can influence others' moves—even when they know they cannot, and even contributing to the public good at their own cost. We suggest that this sort of thinking results in the most selfish players cooperating if near the beginning of a sequence of moves. This has notable implications for policy and marketing. In the case where a consumer is making a decision, he or she implicitly considers the question: What if people in my shoes were to make the same decision as me?

The relevance for purchase decisions is clear: reminding consumers that many other people will be standing in their shoes in the future, making the very same decision, could lead to thinking *as if* with all its attendant implications. What if everyone buys bottled water when tap is available? Well, there will be many more empty bottles washing up on the beach. This dress looks great for the summer, but it's prominently advertised at a retail chain—if I buy it, will everyone else be wearing it too? Quite possibly, so perhaps it's better to buy at a boutique.

DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK OF IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOR IN THE NEW REALITIES.

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Keywords: Impulse Buying, Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Conceptualization

Description: Finding the effect of AR, VR on Impulse Buying

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This study investigates the nexus of Impulse Buying (IB) with Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies. Three key objectives are achieved: (1) A critical review of the evolutionary trajectory of IB research, highlighting theoretical and methodological advancements. (2) Emphasis on the pivotal role of AR/VR technologies in shaping IB behavior. (3) Identification of mediating mechanisms explaining the relationship between AR/VR-induced experiences and IB. The study contributes a synthesized conceptual framework, encompassing antecedents triggering AR/VR-mediated IB, mediating mechanisms elucidating cognitive and emotional pathways, and potential moderating variables requiring further exploration. The paper concludes with managerial implications and avenues for future research.

1. Research Questions

The following Research Questions are investigated.

1. How the AR and VR Affect Impulse Buying Behavior.

2. What are the antecedents of AR and VR technology impacting impulse buying behavior.

3. Find out the mediating mechanisms that underlie the relationship between AR/VR-induced experiences and impulse buying behavior.

4. Formulate a Conceptual framework for impulse buying in the AR VR space.

2. Method and Data

An experiment conducted in a controlled environment at a university consumer lab. Post graduate MBA and Doctoral students were the sample. Total of 45 final sample were used in this study.

3. Summary Findings

Exploring the impact of Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) on Impulse Buying is relatively limited, with fewer than five studies identified. AR overlays digital info onto the real world, enhancing user perception, while VR immerses users in computer-generated environments. Both technologies enhance sensory experiences, potentially stimulating emotional responses and impulsive tendencies. Reduced risk perception and a sense of personal connection between consumers and products in AR and VR contribute to impulse buying. However, individual differences, product type, and context can moderate these effects, emphasizing the need for further research to fully comprehend the nuanced dynamics. Marketers must strategically leverage AR and VR's potential while considering diverse factors underlying impulse buying behavior.

4. Key Contributions

The conceptual framework elucidates the impact of Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) on impulse buying, integrating antecedents, mediating mechanisms, and AR/VR attributes. Customer traits like impulse buying tendency, variety seeking, and materialism serve as antecedents, intertwined with cognitive, affective, social, and self-control mediating mechanisms that induce impulsive purchases. AR/VR attributes, notably platform factors and immersive experiences, enhance product presentation, address online product intangibility challenges, and trigger affective responses like enjoyment and excitement. The social dimension, particularly through integration into social media, amplifies enjoyment and decision-making via recommendations, fostering a sense of community.

AR/VR emerges as transformative technologies reshaping impulse buying, influencing satisfaction, and brand bonds. Their interactive nature aids informed decisions and self-control, fostering responsible consumption. For retail managers, understanding individual antecedents facilitates personalized marketing, while leveraging AR/VR attributes creates dynamic shopping environments. Emotional engagement insights guide campaigns, and interactive features empower virtual trials and customization options, addressing cognitive load concerns. Integrating AR/VR into social media fosters community and trust, influencing purchasing decisions through peer recommendations.

Future research directions include exploring the nuanced impact of AR/VR experiences on cognitive and affective processes, delving into the social dimension's role, and examining the ethical implications of AR/VR in retailing. Rigorous methodologies and cross-cultural investigations can provide empirical evidence and uncover variations in impulse buying behavior across diverse consumer contexts.

DO I BELIEVE IN AI? TOWARD A CONCEPTUALIZATION OF AI CREDIBILITY

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Description: This research takes a conceptual development approach to define AI credibility, propose its dimensions, and list its antecedents, consequences, and moderators.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is generally perceived as a black-box where its internal workings are not clearly known, consumers do not trust AI directly and instead assess AI's credibility first using various heuristics (Shin, Zhong, and Biocca 2020). Consumers may also consider AI's credibility important when there is a high uncertainty (Van Den Bos 2001). Consumers' assessment of AI credibility affects firms incorporating AI in their offerings. Higher AI credibility can lead to usage intentions and adoption (Kim et al. 2022), brand attitudes, and purchase intention (Li et al. 2023).

While extant research has explored AI credibility to some extent (Cheng and Jiang 2021; Shin, Zhong, and Biocca 2020), it lacks a clear understanding of how consumers perceive and assess AI's credibility in an AI-enabled offering. Moreover, while previous research has investigated AI credibility's relationship with various factors (Chong et al. 2021; Edwards et al. 2019; Zarouali et al. 2020), it lacks a comprehensive understanding of the antecedents and consequences of AI credibility. To address these gaps, this study aims to explore and address the following research questions:

RQ1: What is consumers' perceived AI credibility and its dimensions?

RQ2: Which factors affect consumers' perceived AI credibility?

RQ3: What are the outcomes of consumers' improved perceived AI credibility?

This study follows a conceptual development approach using source credibility theory (SCT) to analyze and define AI credibility, differentiate it from similar related concepts, and define its dimensions.

Summary of Findings

In this research, we review, integrate, and synthesize the existing literature on credibility to define AI credibility as "consumers' perceived believability of an AI algorithm used in any AI-enabled offering based on its reputation due to past actions with others or own experiences and information sources (e.g., popular media, company policy) impacting it's perceived understanding, processes, and ability and intention to deliver promised outcomes."

As per SCT, the two critical dimensions of source credibility are trustworthiness and expertise (Lowry, Wilson, and Haig 2014). Under the trustworthiness dimension, we borrow Shin, Zhong, and Biocca's (2020) conceptualization of algorithmic credibility using fairness, accountability, and transparency (FAT) to propose that an AI will be perceived as more trustworthy if it is perceived as having higher FAT (Shin, Zhong, and Biocca 2020). Under the expertise dimension, as AI's ability to deliver is an important parameter while assessing AI's credibility, we propose that the perceived customizability of AI will considerably improve the chances of AI being able to deliver on its promises to consumers. Consumers perceived FAT and customizability are our novel additions to the trustworthiness and expertise dimensions derived from SCT for defining AI credibility.

By thoroughly analyzing the extant literature on AI credibility across domains such as marketing, information systems, human-computer interaction, communication, sociology, policy, and media, this study synthesizes antecedents, consequences, and moderators of AI credibility to present a comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting AI credibility.

Key Contributions

This study offers valuable theoretical contributions. First, it contributes to the emerging research on consumer behavior with AI (Granulo, Fuchs, and Puntoni 2021; Longoni, Bonezzi, and Morewedge 2019; Puntoni et al. 2021) by developing a comprehensive definition and understanding of the concept of AI credibility, which is still underexplored in the literature (Cheng and Jiang 2021; Shin, Zhong, and Biocca 2020).

Second, this study contributes to the SCT by extending it to the context of AI-enabled offerings. Though extant literature has investigated AI credibility in a piecemeal fashion, most studies lack a theoretical basis of SCT while analyzing AI credibility (Cheng and Jiang 2021; Li et al. 2023). Apart from conceptualizing AI credibility with two dimensions – trustworthiness and expertise, this study proposes perceived fairness, accountability, and transparency (FAT) as sub-dimensions of trustworthiness and perceived customizability of AI as a sub-dimension of expertise. Third, a conceptual framework with antecedents, consequences, and moderators is proposed, offering a holistic picture and potential future research opportunities.

This study offers valuable insights for firms offering AI-enabled products and services. For example, we recommend improving AI credibility, especially in high-consequence (Diamond 1988) situations. In cases where consumers face incorrect AI outputs, AI credibility can be increased by giving some control to consumers for customization. Our recommendations aim to help firms increase the adoption and diffusion of their AI-enabled offerings through improved AI credibility.

References

References are available upon request.

DO NOT EAT ALONE: EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL FACILITATION ON COMPENSATORY BEHAVIORS IN EATING VICE AND VIRTUE FOODS.

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Keywords: Behavioral Compensation, Consumer Psychology, Social Facilitation, Food

Description: Social Facilitation has a moderating effect on compensatory behaviors in choosing between vice and virtue foods.

Extended Abstract

Research Questions

The first research objective of this study was to examine the compensatory behaviors in eating vice foods and virtue foods in everyday consumption choices. According to the sequence of actions and the type of behaviors, the concept of compensatory behaviors was divided into four categories: Post-compensatory Approach, Post-compensatory Avoidance, Pre-compensatory Approach, and Pre-compensatory Avoidance. Post-compensatory behavior means eating virtue after eating vice, which typically occurs because the individual wants to reduce guilty feeling after indulging in hedonic actions. On the other hand, pre-compensatory behavior means eating vice after eating virtue, which derives from self-licensing or the intention to reduce their guilt in anticipation of the future tempting events. Compensatory approach means active compensatory behaviors pursuing healthy behaviors after or before unhealthy behaviors, while compensatory avoidance means avoiding unhealthy behaviors after or before unhealthy behaviors.

Extending the result of the first research question, this study attempted to examine the influence of social facilitation on the compensatory behaviors in eating. It is presumed by previous literature that the presence of other people being changes the pattern of compensatory behaviors due to the distraction, self-monitoring, and modelling effect of social facilitation. Therefore, the second research objective of this study was to examine the moderating effect of eating alone on the compensatory behaviors in eating.

Method and Data

This study utilizes food diary data collected by OpenSurvey, which consists of everything participants eat and drink for a week. The dataset includes 324,098 daily observations from 14,036 subjects selected monthly between March 2019 and November 2022 in South Korea. Each pair of two neighboring records on the same day was combined for analysis, excluding the pairs of one before 4 a.m. and one after 10 p.m. The vice food category included snacks, ice cream, and dessert bread, while the virtue food category included fresh and processed fruits

and vegetables.

Two binary models were constructed for the first research question. Model 1.1 is the vice model, in which the dependent variable is the present choice of vice food. Model 2.1 is the virtue model, the dependent variable of which is the present choice of virtue food. For the second research question, Model 1.2 and 1.2 were established, with the moderator of eating alone added to the initial models. Demographic variables (age, sex, marital status) and factors related to the choice of vice and virtue (frequency of vice and virtue food consumption across all records, whether the previous or present choice was a meal or snack) were controlled for.

Summary of Findings

The result for the first research question revealed the strong Post-compensatory Avoidance, which means avoiding vice food after eating vice food, and the strong Pre-compensatory Avoidance, which means avoiding virtue food after eating virtue food. We also could find the weak Post-compensatory Approach, which is eating virtue food after eating vice food. However, as opposed to the prior research on self-licensing, we could not find the empirical evidence on eating vice food after virtue food, which is referred to as Post-compensatory Approach.

The result for the second research question on the moderating role of social facilitation showed that eating alone strongly mitigates the Pre-compensatory Avoidance, and weakly mitigates the Post-compensatory Avoidance. In summary, the presence of eating companion is only related to Compensatory Avoidance, but not to Compensatory Approach.

Statement of Key Contributions

To our knowledge, this is the first study that demonstrates the effect of social facilitation on behavioral compensation, especially for eating behaviors. While behavioral compensation is a widely studied topic, there have been a limited attention for contextual or environmental factors that affects the compensation. The finding on the effect of social facilitation on compensatory avoidance could practically contribute to public or private health-care services. For example, for a discipline person with high health approach-motivation, it is recommendable to eat alone, while for a person with passive motivation to avoid vice food, it is better to eat with other people.

In academic aspect, this study develops the previous studies on behavioral compensation with daily consumption data in unconstrained environments. Previous studies in laboratory settings have some limitations on study method because the subjects were able to choose within limited food options, and it was hard to reflect the eating habits or preferences in daily life. Proving the compensatory behaviors in non-experimental circumstances, this study revealed the strong pattern of compensatory avoidance in daily life. The findings of this study are expected to provide practical implications to healthcare, or food retail service businesses.

References are available upon request.

Extended Abstract

DO ZERO-SUGAR LABELS MISLEAD CONSUMERS IN PERCEIVING CALORIE AND VISUAL HEAVINESS?

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Keywords: Claim, Sugar-free, Perceived Calorie

Description: This study found that consumers were misled regarding calories based on the zero-sugar-labeled package.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The inclination toward health-conscious lifestyles and efforts to reduce sugar intake is intensifying, signifying a sustained interest in sugar-free products globally. As an increasing number of consumers seek to balance health with indulgence, the notion of "healthy pleasure" appears poised to influence consumer choices and propel package renovations as part of an aggressive marketing strategy in the food and beverage sector. While continued growth in the production and availability of sugar-free items is anticipated, some manufacturers and marketers are worried that increased consumer apprehension may lead to an eventual decline in the popularity of zero-sugar (or sugar-free) products. However, there is currently no dedicated research investigating how the placement of zero-sugar labels or product images on front packages might be associated with consumers' perceptions of visual weight and calories. Subsequently, we demonstrate that altering location of the image and label, each respectively, on the package can impact how consumers perceive the visual weight of the product, and these varying perceptions can subsequently influence how the package is evaluated. As such, the

objective of this study is to examine whether the placement of product images and zero-sugar labels can impact consumers' decision-making, measured by calorie perception and perceived heaviness. With this goal in mind, the following research question is articulated as one of the research questions: Does the zero-sugar label on the front package influence consumers' calorie perceptions?

Methods

Prior to the main study, the prerequisites were confirmed through a pilot study. Participants were recruited online to take part in a survey in which they were told that they would evaluate a snack food product. A total of 58 participants participated (Mage = 39, age range 16–70, male = 50%).

Participants were first asked to estimate how many calories would be contained in a certain food. They were then asked to imagine that they were hungry for an afternoon snack and that the product pictured was available. Based on the situation, they were asked how many jellies they would eat. As each pack contained 15 jellies in total, the respondents were asked to answer between 0 and 15. This measure served as the key dependent variable for the consumption amount estimates. The participants were then asked to estimate the number of calories they would expect in a product serving.

Summary of Findings

The average calorie estimate from *Group 1,* who estimated the calories significantly low, was 5 kcal (compared to the actual calories of 125 kcal per 52 g). By contrast, the *Others* group estimated that 14 kcal or above responded 119 kcal (calories ranged from 15 to 400). Further information was given to all groups that "the jelly you have just seen is not zero-calorie, and the actual calorie is higher than 0 kcal." After the debriefing, calorie estimates and

consumption amount estimates were asked again.

Group 1, who had first estimated the calories significantly low, increased their estimation by 260% in the second response. Moreover, they reduced the number of jellies willing to eat by 11.11% after debriefing. *Others* lowered the perceived calories by 0.84%, while showing no change in the number of jellies they were willing to eat.

This study found that consumers were mislead regarding calories based on the zero-sugar-labeled package. In summary, consumers who estimated the calories significantly lower had increased their calorie estimates and decreased their consumption amount estimates than before the information was given. Those who significantly underestimated calories increased their calorie estimates and decreased their consumption amount estimates after debriefing, while those who overestimated calories did not change significantly. The reason for the lack of change was that they were not misled in the first place.

Statement of Key Contributions

Recently, marketers have successfully tapped into consumer trends favoring healthier food choices. Consequently, it is essential for them to comprehend the significance of perceived product weight and how to translate it effectively into a valuable product proposition. Packaging plays a crucial role in both the marketing and distribution of items. When customers are making a purchase, the product's packaging can significantly impact their decision. Even post-purchase, the packaging can still affect how the product is experienced. Therefore, comprehending the ways in which packaging elements including visual design, which impact how consumers perceive, assess, and act is of great significance from both a theoretical and practical standpoint. The findings of this current study would contribute to determining what aspects of the product's package front mislead consumers regarding calorie information and the product's perceived heaviness. Collectively, these results provide intriguing understandings

of the way individuals comprehend and analyze the visual elements of product packaging. In summary, we underscore several practical consequences stemming from the concepts discussed in this study that could capture the attention of both product designers and policy makers. To be more precise, we delineate the potential utilization of packaging visuals to encourage consumers to opt for healthier food alternatives. Additionally, we elucidate the potential hazards and measures that must be considered when dealing with visual elements in packaging.

DOES INTEREST IN HEALTH AND NATURALNESS LEAD CONSUMERS TO PREFER SUSTAINABLE READY-MEAL PRODUCTS? A COMPARISON OF HEAVY VERSUS NON-HEAVY USERS OF READY-MEALS

Key Contributions

Previous studies have mainly focused on general health interests that affect the preference for a single sustainability label, such as organic. This study expands the scope of prior research by classifying sustainability labels into three types—eco-friendly, sustainable packaging, and animal welfare—and examining multiple dimensions within each. Moreover, it extends the literature by subdividing health claims into calorie-reduced, protein-enhanced, fat-reduced, and sugar-reduced claims and examining different aspects of health interest.

To our knowledge, this is one of the first studies to investigate the relationship between health claim interest and sustainability label preference, specifically between heavy and non-heavy users. The findings highlight the importance of consumer group comparisons based on food consumption frequency when examining the association between consumer perceptions of different claims or labels.

This study reveals which sustainability labels are preferred by consumers with an interest in specific health and natural claims. The findings indicate that consumers who are more interested in natural claims have a higher sustainability label preference. Therefore, marketers planning to emphasize sustainability labels for ready-meal products may actively leverage natural claims as synergistic claims.

This study also demonstrated that the effect of health claim interest on sustainability label preference differs depending on the type of sustainability label and the nutritional information

emphasized in the claims. Specifically, marketers may adopt co-labeling strategies by combining eco-friendly labels with fat-reduced and sugar-reduced claims, sustainable packaging labels with sugar-reduced claims, and animal welfare labels with calorie-reduced claims.

This study offers practical implications for marketers in recognizing that heavy and non-heavy users represent distinct segments when applying sustainability labels to food. Thus, they can identify when to target heavy (e.g., increase product penetration) or non-heavy users (e.g., increase product loyalty), and apply our findings to create suitable communication strategies featuring labels and claims tailored to each segment.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

Growing consumer interest in sustainable food consumption is driving demand for various types of sustainability claims and labels (Brown et al. 2020). As food labeling serves as a tool to encourage consumers to adopt sustainable diets (Tobi et al. 2019), sustainability labels encompassing health, environment, and social/ethical responsibility aspects are being utilized to encourage sustainable food practices (e.g., Asioli, Aschemann-Witzel, and Nayga 2020; Bangsa and Schlegelmilch 2020; Rokka and Uusitalo 2008). Concurrently, these labels extend to diverse food categories to meet evolving consumer demands, with a notable expansion into the ready-meal category (Mintel 2023). Although studies on sustainability labels cover various food categories, such as dairy and meat (Tobi et al. 2019), research focusing on ready-meal products is scarce. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the factors that influence consumer preferences for sustainability labels for ready-meal products. To achieve this goal, this study focused on interest in health and naturalness as the factors influencing sustainability label preference, given

that sustainable food is perceived as healthy and natural based on its halo effect.

Numerous studies have examined consumer motivations in relation to preferences for sustainability labels for food products. However, these studies have yielded mixed outcomes regarding the relationship between consumer perceptions of health and sustainability—either synergistic or conflicting (Aschemann-Witzel 2015). Synergistic findings have suggested that promoting health motives increases the likelihood of choosing sustainable products by inferring health benefits through a halo effect (Magnusson et al. 2003; Vega-Zamora et al. 2013). For instance, while sustainability labels do not include health-related information, consumers hold their belief that food products with sustainability labels are healthier such as lower in calories, sugar, and fat, and higher in protein (Amos, Hansen, and King 2019; Besson et al. 2019; Neuhofer, Lusk, and Villas-Boas 2023). Conversely, it has also been argued that there is a trade-off in pursuing the two goals together, as health-oriented food choices are seen as self-centered, while sustainability is seen as altruistic (Aschemann-Witzel, Maroscheck, and Hamm 2013).

In the food industry, there is a growing trend of co-labeling, combining sustainability labels with health or nutrition claims (Gröppel-Klein, Franke, and Spilski 2020). This makes it crucial to identify potential synergies and conflicts between health claims and sustainability labels (Aschemann-Witzel 2015). Consumers perceive a healthy diet and a sustainable diet as closely related, as both are considered nutritious and natural (Van Loo, Hoefkens, and Verbeke 2017). However, research on the interaction between health and natural claims and sustainability labels is still limited (e.g., Aschemann-Witzel 2015; Cho and Baskin 2018; Gröppel-Klein, Franke, and Spilski 2020). Therefore, this study focused on consumer interest in health claims—such as nutrient reduction or enhancement—along with natural claims, aiming to explain preferences for sustainability labels on food products.

The consumption frequency for a specific food category also holds significance in segmenting consumers engaging in sustainable food consumption. For example, there are differences in the sustainable consumption behavior of heavy meat buyers compared to others (Schäufele-Elbers and Janssen 2023). Therefore, this study distinguishes between heavy and non-heavy users of ready meals and compares the association between health/natural interest and preference for sustainability labels.

Overall, this study explored the following research questions:

RQ1. Does interest in specific health claims (e.g., calorie-reduced, protein-enhanced, fat-reduced, sugar-reduced) influence preferences for sustainability labels for ready meals?

RQ2. Does interest in natural claims influence preferences for sustainability labels for ready meals?

RQ3. Do these relationships vary between consumers who frequently consume ready meals (heavy users) and those who do not (non-heavy users)?

Methods

An online survey was conducted from January 18 to February 2, 2023, involving 640 participants (320 males and 320 females) in South Korea. Respondents were evenly distributed across age groups ranging from 20 to 59 years, with a mean age of 37.0 years.

This study employed a multiple linear regression model. Heavy users were categorized as those with a weekly ready-meal consumption frequency in the 3rd quartile or higher; others were classified as non-heavy users. The dependent variables comprised preferences for three sustainability labels (eco-friendly, sustainable packaging, and animal welfare), which were assessed using a 7-point Likert scale. Independent variables included objective health status,

interest in health claims, and interest in natural claims. Health status was assessed by inquiring about health problems related to chronic diseases. Interests in health and natural claims were measured using a 7-point Likert scale focusing on preferences for specific claims. Interest in health claims was individually evaluated based on four types: calorie-reduced, protein-enhanced, fat-reduced, and sugar-reduced. The control variables encompassed sex, age, presence of children, household income, and employment status.

Key Findings

This study found that among heavy users of ready meals, there was no difference in their preference for sustainability labels based on their health status. However, among non-heavy users, those with health problems had a higher preference for eco-friendly and sustainable packaging labels than those without health problems. Nonetheless, the presence of health problems did not significantly impact non-heavy users' preference for animal welfare labels.

This study also demonstrated that the impact of interest in various health claims on sustainability label preferences varied across label types and between heavy and non-heavy users. Non-heavy users who were more interested in fat-reduced claims and heavy users who were more interested in sugar-reduced claims had higher preferences for eco-friendly labels. In addition, non-heavy users who were more interested in sugar-reduced claims were more likely to prefer sustainable packaging. Surprisingly, for heavy users, interest in any health claim had no significant effect on their preference for sustainable packaging labels. For animal welfare, non-heavy users who were more interested in sugar-reduced claims and heavy users who were more interested in calorie-reduced claims had higher preferences for this label.

Moreover, this study revealed that interest in natural claims was the most important factor

influencing preferences for sustainability labels among heavy and non-heavy users. Specifically,

consumers who were more interested in natural claims had a higher preference for eco-friendly,

sustainable packaging, and animal welfare labels.

Table 1. Results of factors influencing preference for sustainability labels for ready-meal products

	Eco-friendly		Sustainable packaging		Animal welfare	
Dependent variable: Preference for labels for ready-meal products						
	Non-heavy	Heavy	Non-heavy	Heavy	Non-heavy	Heavy
Constant	1.646*** (0.348)	1.830** (0.749)	2.116*** (0.396)	1.918** (0.853)	0.828** (0.395)	1.675** (0.777)
Sex (male=1, female=2)	0.133 (0.098)	0.14 (0.187)	0.346*** (0.111)	0.428** (0.213)	0.349*** (0.111)	0.223 (0.194)
Age	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.009 (0.012)	-0.004 (0.007)	-0.008 (0.013)	0.003 (0.007)	-0.016 (0.012)
Presence of children (presence=1)	0.118 (0.126)	-0.161 (0.243)	-0.134 (0.144)	0.047 (0.277)	-0.053 (0.143)	0.278 (0.252)
Household income	0.00002 (0.0001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.00004 (0.0001)	-0.0001 (0.001)	0.0001 (0.0001)	-0.002** (0.001)
Employment status (employment=1)	0.014 (0.104)	-0.111 (0.197)	-0.048 (0.118)	0.148 (0.224)	0.020 (0.118)	-0.065 (0.204)
Health status (health problems=1)	0.228** (0.091)	-0.060 (0.184)	0.187* (0.104)	0.240 (0.209)	0.144 (0.103)	0.144 (0.191)
Interest in calorie-reduced claims	-0.040 (0.042)	0.073 (0.082)	-0.075 (0.047)	0.135 (0.093)	-0.056 (0.047)	0.190** (0.085)
Interest in protein-enhanced claims	0.069 (0.043)	-0.065 (0.081)	0.061 (0.049)	0.088 (0.092)	0.064 (0.049)	0.082 (0.084)
Interest in fat-reduced claims	0.125** (0.049)	-0.007 (0.102)	0.073 (0.055)	-0.022 (0.116)	0.072 (0.055)	0.062 (0.106)
Interest in sugar-reduced claims	0.038 (0.047)	0.172* (0.089)	0.129** (0.054)	0.037 (0.101)	0.123** (0.054)	-0.054 (0.092)
Interest in natural claims	0.449*** (0.042)	0.514*** (0.080)	0.305*** (0.048)	0.257*** (0.091)	0.440*** (0.047)	0.383*** (0.083)
Observations	492	148	492	148	492	148
R^2	0.323	0.353	0.196	0.165	0.288	0.298
Adjusted R^2	0.307	0.300	0.178	0.098	0.272	0.242
F Statistic	20.793***	6.740***	10.644***	2.452***	17.686***	5.259***

Notes: Coefficients with standard error in parentheses are reported; *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

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EFFECT OF PRODUCT USE BEFORE REVIEW (PUBR) ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

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Keywords: Product usage, review time, online reviews, e-commerce

Description: Using archival data, the study uncovers a positive relationship between product use before writing a review (PUBR) and recommendation tone, a positive relationship between PUBR and continued product usage, and a negative interaction effect of PUBR and recommendation tone on continued product usage.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Customers are increasingly relying on online reviews provided on the e-commerce platforms for making purchase decisions. The online reviewers are (at least ostensibly) users who have already purchased the product and are trying to help other customers by providing information about it. Sensing the importance of online reviews, new e-commerce platforms regularly ask customers to review the products they purchase. Even established platforms like Amazon ask for reviews repeatedly.[1] When should they send such requests? Should they wait until there has been sufficient product use? These are important questions that should guide

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[1] https://sageseller.com/blog/what-is-the-request-a-review-button-on-amazon/

firm behavior. This study, thus, sought to document any relationship between product use before review (PUBR) and reviewer's behaviour.

Method and Data

The analyses testing these ideas used archived consumer reviews posted by video game players on the Steam online games website.[2] The game Back 4 Blood was selected for study because it had been released 40 weeks previously (on 12th Oct, 2021) and had attracted 30,734 mixed reviews. For each review, date of posting was recorded along with its textual content, the number of helpful votes it attracted, its recommendations and the length of the review. The ancillary data collected were the number of hours the reviewer had played the game when the review was posted, as well as his total hours on all games on Steam. We performed OLS regression on the collected data.

Summary of Findings

The study finds a positive relationship between product use before writing a review (PUBR) and recommendation tone, a positive relationship between PUBR and continued product usage, and a negative interaction effect of PUBR and recommendation tone on continued product usage.

Key Contributions

Even though a substantial body of research has examined how online reviews influence consumers' purchase decisions, the impact of temporal cues in online reviews on consumer behavior remains unexplored. While temporal aspects have been studied in other

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[2] https://store.steampowered.com/about/

contexts, there is still much that we do not know about the relationship between the duration of product use before review (PUBR), i.e., the time a consumer spends using a product before reviewing it, and consumer behavior. For example, does the duration of PUBR affect the likelihood that a consumer will continue to use the product? Is the sustained product usage influenced by the sentiment of the review? Utilizing archival data, the current study demonstrates that PUBR is positively correlated with the tone of recommendations and continued product usage. Our results suggest that firms should wait to ask for writing reviews in order to increase the likelihood of recommendation and to increase continued product usage by the reviewers.

Through this paper, we make a contribution to the existing literature on online reviews by introducing an unexplored variable: product use before review. We have found that PUBR is an important variable that affects both review writers and readers. This variable can also be useful for sorting reviews based on the time elapsed since the product review was written. The study's findings hold significant value for researchers and practitioners in the fields of marketing and consumer behavior, as it aids consumers in their decision-making process, thereby enhancing the credibility of the review platform.

EFFECT OF ROBOT SERVICE ON EVALUATION OF PROCESSED AND UNPROCESSED FOODS

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Keywords: Service robot; Perceived naturalness; Contagion; Food consumption

Description: Our research focuses on the food serving by robots, and examines the effect of the robot serving on the perceived naturalness of foods and food evaluations.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

We predict that serving robots will negatively affect the perceived naturalness of the food. Based on the contagion principle, we postulate that the food served by robots would inherit robotic attributes, such as unnaturalness, due to a contact with the robot. Existing research indicates that consumers perceive foods as more natural, and such foods receive more favorable evaluations (Rozin, 2005; Li and Chapman, 2012). As such, if robotic serving diminishes the perceived naturalness of food, we anticipate that this will also result in a less favorable evaluation of the food.

However, the degree of robot serving effect varies depending on the food category. We predict the perceived naturalness will be lower for less-processed foods than for high-processed foods although a contact with the serving robot will transmit unnatural associations to both high and less-processed foods. More formally, the following hypotheses are derived.

H1: Consumers who are served by a robot (vs. a human staff) will perceive foods as less natural.

H2: Consumers who are served by a robot will evaluate foods more negatively. Perceived naturalness will mediate the effect.

H3: The effect of the robot serving on perceived naturalness will be positively moderated by degrees of processing for the food served.

Method and Data

To test these hypotheses, we conducted two online studies using CrowdWorks and Yahoo! Crowdsourcing, Japanese crowdsourcing services.

In study 1, to test hypotheses 1 and 2, 173 participants were randomly assigned to either serving robot or human staff conditions (94 females; M_{age} = 42.48, SD_{age}= 10.69). Participants were presented with images and scenarios of a robot (vs. a human staff) serving a hamburger. Then, participants indicated perceived naturalness of the food (Szcos et al. 2022) and product evaluation (Aaker 2000).

In study 2, we used a 2(server: robot vs human) x 2(food processed: high vs low) design to test Hypothesis 3. In this study, 290 participants were recruited (61 females; M_{age} = 51.92, SD_{age}= 11.64). The high-processed group saw a fruit tart image, and the low-processed group viewed assorted fruits. Tests confirmed significant processing differences ($M_{high-processed}$ = 4.27, $SD_{high-processed}$ = 1.23 vs. $M_{low-processed}$ = 3.14, $SD_{low-processed}$ = 1.50, $p < .01$). The same procedure as in study 1 was used to measure perceived naturalness and product evaluation.

Summary of Findings

Our results demonstrate that the serving robot (vs. human staff) decreases consumers' perceived naturalness of food, which leads to decreased food evaluation (study1 and study2). We conducted a mediation analysis to test hypotheses 1 and 2 (Hayes 2018, Model 4) in the study1. As expected, the results confirmed the negative effect of the robot serving on perceived

naturalness (b=-.52 SE=.18, t=-2.94, p<.01) and positive effect of naturalness on product evaluation (b=.28, SE=.08, t=3.30, p<.01). Bootstrap analysis using 10,000 resamples revealed significant indirect effect of perceived naturalness (b=-.14, SE=.07, 95% CI [-.31, -.03]). Then, we conducted a moderated mediation analysis to test hypothesis 3 (Hayes 2018, Model 8) in the study2. Bootstrap analysis using 10,000 resamples revealed that the index of moderated mediation was significant (b=.16, SE=.07, 95% CI [.03, .30]). Also, there is a negative indirect effect in low-processed condition (b=-.14, SE=.06, 95% CI [-.26, -.04]), in addition, there is no significant indirect effect in high-processed condition (b=.02, SE=.05, 95% CI [-.08, .12]). The results of these studies support our hypotheses.

Statement of Key Contributions

To our knowledge, this is the first research that investigates serving robots' effect on perceived food naturalness. The findings of this research give theoretical and practical insights to food marketing scholars and practitioners in the food industry.

As for theoretical contribution, we identify the effect of serving robots on the perceived naturalness of food. While extant literature on the perceived naturalness of food focuses on the history of food growth, production and process, and the properties of the final product (to see review Rom´an 2017), this research gives novel insights into the literature by showing the effect of serving robots. As for practical contribution, our results suggest that restaurant managers should care about the potential influence of serving robots on customers. In addition, we have identified food categories in which the use of food serving robots is appropriate, thereby guiding the future use of service robots.

References are available upon request.

EFFECTS OF COLOR COMBINATIONS' PROPERTIES ON VISUAL COMPLEXITY, VIBRANCY, AROUSAL AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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Keywords: Color Combinations, Warmth, distance between colors, number of colors, vibrancy, visual complexity, arousal

Description: This paper examines the characteristics of color combinations to determine the types of color combinations that are most effective in driving arousal and marketing outcomes via visual complexity and vibrancy.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Colors help establish brand identities and brand recognition. As a result, managers dedicate ample time and resources in selecting suitable colors for their brands. With the rise of digital communications and design, many brands are breaking away from single colors and are instead embracing multiple colors to stand out in the market (Google, NBC, etc.). Yet limited research has investigated multicolors in an in-depth manner. We address this gap by examining color combination charatcertistics and their effects on consumers' arousal and downstream marketing outcomes. Specifically, we examine:

1. How do three characteristics of color combinations – distance between colors, warmness of the color combination, and number of colors – predict consumers' arousal and thereby marketing outcomes?

2. What roles do visual complexity and vibrancy play in the theoretical process between the three characteristics of color combinations and arousal and thereby marketing outcomes?

Method and Data

Two studies were conducted with consumers in the US on Prolific. In study 1 (N=2,400), 793 fictitious logos (constructed using Python scripts) made up of different color combinations (up to 4 colors) were evaluated using a cross-classified experiment. Each participant was randomly assigned to rate 10 logos and each logo was rated by 30 participants. Logo color characteristics (weighted average wavelength, number of colors, and distance between colors) were calculated. Participants rated arousal (Mehrabian, and Russell, 1970), visual complexity (Berlyne, 1958), and vibrancy. The measurement scale of vibrancy was created for this study based on practitioner blog posts (e.g., PPG, Apiumhub), with three other researchers reviewing items for face validity. A CFA confirmed good absolute fit and the Fornell and Larcker method (1981) established discriminant validity.

Study 2 ($N = 400$) adopted a 2 (warmth: low, high) *2 (number of colors: low, high) *2 (distance between colors: low, high) between-subjects design. We purposely sampled 25 IPA cans and coded their wavelength (using Google API to mine data on the cans' HEX codes and pixel percentages), number of colors (Li and Xie, 2019), and distance between colors (using HEX codes) . Eight cans that best fit the experimental conditions (e.g., low warmth, low number of colors, low distance) were then selected for use in the study. In addition to the constructs

measured in study 1, each participant rated their willingness to purchase (Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal, 1991). We also measured participants' visual perception of the can's colorfulness.

Summary of Findings

Using multiple mixed effect regressions, study 1 found that the weighted average wavelength, number of colors, and the distance between colors of color combinations had a significant positive impact on arousal. All three-color properties positively impacted visual complexity and vibrancy. Moreover, we found that warmth had the strongest impact on arousal and vibrancy and that visual complexity was primarily driven by the number of colors of the color combination followed by the distance between colors and wavelength.

Study 2 yielded similar results, yet we found that it may be pivotal to consider the perceptions of consumers rather than merely relying on objective colorfulness (number of colors), especially with complex color patterns as in IPA cans. We also found that vibrancy played a prominent role in driving color combinations' arousal effects and thereby willingness to purchase and that instead the effects of visual complexity and vibrancy acted as serial mediators.

Key Contributions

This research advances the knowledge of the effects driven by characteristics of color combinations by incorporating methods to evaluate them simultaneously. Moreover, this work adds to the literature by investigating "color vibrancy", which has not been studied previously in the marketing literature. We provide empirical evidence supporting the underlying theoretical process of how vibrancy mediates the effects between color combinations' properties and arousal while also acting as a serial mediator together with visual complexity in driving those arousal

effects. Also, we introduce a mechanism to measure color vibrancy and provide evidence of the robustness of the scale by conducting a CFA. Managerially this work is relevant as we suggest a theoretical framework that can guide managers on how to adjust for the different outcomes driven by the characteristics of color combinations, to optimize marketing outcomes. The comparison of the characteristics provides a robust framework of which color combination would be most effective for their brands in driving marketing implications. Furthermore, our work provides managers with rich insights about a larger number of color combination options they may work with when developing stimuli. The applications of our findings to IPA beer brands makes this work more relevant to real brands and can ease managers' task of choosing color combinations for their brand material.

References

References are available upon request.

EFFECTS OF CONSUMERS' FOOD-AND-HEALTH-RELATED LIFESTYLE ON ALTERNATIVE PASTA PRODUCTS PREFERENCE: PROTEIN-ENHANCED VERSUS CALORIE-REDUCED

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

As the health and wellness market grows, consumers' needs for protein enhancement and weight loss are growing (Banovic, 2018; Sun, 2020). Accordingly, a number of alternative food products with enhanced health aspects are being launched into the market. In particular, the alternative proteins market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 11.1% from 2021 to 2030 (Emergen Research, 2022).

Much research has been done on alternative foods, mostly from a vegan perspective. These studies have focused on replacing meat with plant-based alternatives (Onwezen, 2021; Demartini, 2022). However, there is a lack of research on staple foods that are naturally plant based and that have now been produced with other plant-based ingredients.

While plant-based meat alternatives have been motivated by environmental and sustainability concerns (Possidónio, 2021; Tilman, 2014), substitutions in staple foods have been driven by health and wellness needs (Gohara-Beirigo, 2022; Romano, 2021).

In addition, few existing studies have examined consumer preferences for alternative staple foods in relation to consumer characteristics. In accordance with this research gap, this study begins with two main research questions.

RQ1. What characteristics make consumers prefer alternative staple foods?

RQ2. What food-and health-related lifestyles drive preferences for the two products?

Method And Data

For this study, data were collected through an online survey. The 640 respondents were evenly split in age with 160 each in their 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s, and evenly split in gender with 320 each. Respondents (N=640) were given a scenario in which they were buying pasta, one of the staple foods, and were asked to indicate on a Likert scale (1 to 7) how much they preferred the product based on the examples of soy pasta and seaweed pasta presented. In this study, soybean pasta as a protein-enhanced pasta and seaweed pasta as a reduced-calorie pasta were set as study subjects. We chose the subjects because soybeans are a major protein source with a protein content of 40–45% (Padalkar, 2023; Gohara-Beirigo, 2022; Melendrez-Ruiz, 2019), and seaweeds such as wakame and kelp are low in calories (Roohinejad, 2017; JiMENEz-EscRiG, 1999).

To understand their food-and-health-related lifestyles, we also collected information about where they usually shopped for food, how they consumed food, and how many times a week they exercised for each of three exercise intensities. Finally, we included questions on age, gender, average monthly income, and number of family members.

Summary of Findings

Female and older participants had significantly higher preferences for soybean and seaweed pasta. This suggests that being female and being older increases the preference for health and wellness alternative food products.

There were also differences in preference for the two products based on food-and-health-related lifestyles. Soybean pasta, a protein-enhanced product, was preferred by consumers who engaged in the most intense workouts and ate less frequently through food delivery services, while seaweed pasta, a calorie-reduced product, was preferred by consumers who engaged in the least intense workouts and purchased ingredients from department stores.

The analysis of the results also shows that consumers with a high preference for protein-enhanced staple foods are more active in health and wellness, and consumers with a high preference for calorie-reduced staple foods are less active in health and wellness.

Statement of Key Contributions

While previous studies have examined the psychology and behavior of consumers who purchase alternative food products, there have been few studies on consumer preferences for alternative staple foods. This study reinforces the existing literature on the characteristics and behaviors of health-and-wellness-minded consumers by analyzing the segments of consumers who show a high preference for alternative staple foods.

This study also reveals the actual consumer reactions and preferences to changes in food ingredients. This enables us to predict the actual market reactions of alternative staple food products that are being studied scientifically beyond the limitations of not being able to observe the market reactions and consumer acceptance of such products in studies analyzing changes in existing food ingredients. The study also provides a rationale for the development of alternative staple foods in the laboratory and in business to meet the health and wellness needs of consumers.

Similarly, the study's finding that there are differences in consumer segments that prefer protein-enhanced versus calorie-reduced alternatives can inform business strategies for developers and marketers of each product.

TITLE: EMERGING INSIGHTS INTO THE NATURE OF FEAR IN THE MARKETPLACE

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Keywords: Fear, customer journey, emotion, experience, decision-making

Description: The study develops new conceptual and managerial insights around the consumer experience of fear and its effect in the marketplace.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Webster's Dictionary defines fear as "unpleasant, often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger". Once felt in the wild and dark, chased by tigers and monsters, fear now comes to consumers as they live through pandemics and are trailed by digital agents. These new uncertainties, in the era of feeling economy and marketing literature's over-reliance on abstract psychological concepts, reinstate a need for concrete comprehension of fear and its marketplace phenomenology.

Furthermore, prior researchers have devoted significant effort to understanding how fear experiences influence consumer decision-making (Wyer et al., 2019). However, the fear effect in consumption journeys varies from a consumer avoidance tendency towards an innovative medical treatment (Achar et al., 2020) to panic buying toilet paper #toiletpapergate, resulting in inconsistent findings.

Additionally, an account of fear in the marketplace through personal consumption journeys is missing (Pham & Sun, 2020), despite continuous calls for a transition of customer journeys that focus on firm-controlled touchpoints (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) toward consumption journeys (Akaka & Schau, 2019; Schau & Akaka, 2021) that take on a consumer-centric approach.

In accordance with the above, using a qualitative approach, we answer the following research questions: What are the antecedents, drivers, and moderators of fear experiences in the marketplace? How does fear influence consumer evaluation and behaviour across the consumption journey and throughout the decision-making stages? How can marketers engineer and manage fear experiences?

Summary of Findings

Our conceptualization considers the dynamics of fear experience in the marketplaces. We first identify three main aspects of fear in the marketplace, including the appraisals of "threat", "uncertainty", and "situation" or "other accountability". These three environmental dimensions are precursors of fear experience.

Secondly, delving into the drivers and moderators of fear, we identify 1) perceived uncertainty level, which is a function of unfamiliarity and temporal distance, 2) anticipation of the perceived level of threat, which is a function of the consumer thinking process and expected loss level, 3) social presence, and 4) individual temperaments, as factors that influence the intensity of fear across individual and situations.

Furthermore, resolving inconsistencies around fear influence, we conceptualize fear response at adaptive and maladaptive levels. We contend that these two responses to fear co-exist with the emotional experience, varying along individual and situational characteristics. Furthermore, while the adaptive effect enables positive outcomes for a marketer and consumer,

the Maladaptive effect leads to dysfunctional outcomes. Such classification also enables us to build a "fear customer journey", which underscores the fear's inhibiting and facilitating role across decision-making stages. Finally, we discuss how our findings can be utilized to develop strategies to engineer and manage fear emotional experiences and future research avenues.

Statement of Key Contributions

Firstly, this study systematically conceptualizes fear experiences, bringing together the fragmented emotion literature. We present an integrative and dynamic model that provides a blueprint/emotional heatmap specific to fear.

Secondly, unlike traditional studies, we present an investigation grounded in the personal consumption journey. This operationalizes fear in the marketplace. As inventorying the sequence of firm-customer interactions is a significant part of understanding customer experiences (Schau & Akaka, 2021), we contribute to a holistic understanding (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) of fear experiences that are driven by personal consumption journey (account for a customer's perspective) and map on to the firm-controlled touchpoints.

Thirdly, contributing to the phenomenology of fear emotion experience, beyond the abstract concepts of appraisals, we identify real-life triggers of fear experience in a marketplace context. Practically, we have drawn six tactics that enable marketers to have greater control over fear experiences by managing the retail environment, communication, and positioning.

Finally, conceptualizing the consequence of fear experiences as maladaptive and adaptive, we underscore that negative emotional experiences are not inherently dysfunctional for the marketplace. Consumers can regulate, and marketers can manage consumer experience to overcome probable maladaptive responses. In fact, understanding consumer fear response at two levels provides opportunities for marketers.

"References are available upon request."

ENGAGING WITH CUSTOMERS ONLINE: THE CASE OF ONLINE VIDEO CHAT

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Key words: attitude towards video chat, intention to use video chat, media synchronicity theory, technology acceptance model

Description: This study examines the relationship between four antecedents: ease of use, trust, source credibility, and the feelings evoked by customer service; and three outcome variables: attitude towards video chat, attitude towards the company, and intention to use video chat.

ABSTRACT

Media Synchronicity Theory, and Technology Acceptance Theory provide theoretical support for researching video chat as an engagement tool with customers online. A total of 246 completed responses were used to test the research hypotheses. A Regression-based Process Macro with bootstrapping was employed to test the proposed hypotheses. Results and implications are provided and discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Considering all the benefits and advantages provided by video chat, it is imperative for

marketing practitioners to adopt video chat features in customer service. The theory of media

synchronicity provides strong theoretical support for video chat as a service-related marketing

communication tool to engage customers (Dennis and Valacich 1999).

Previous research on video conferencing has mainly focused on the use of video chat in work

settings (e.g., Fauville et al. 2021), and few studies have examined video chat as a tool to engage

customers in services. Therefore, this study addresses the gap in the service marketing literature

and explores the factors influencing customer attitudes towards video chat and the company on

digital platforms and the subsequent consequences on customers' intention to use video chat.

This study examined the interrelationships between the selected key variables as antecedents

and outcomes. The variables included in this study are perceived ease of use, trust, source

credibility, feelings evoked by service representatives, attitude towards video chat, attitude

towards the company, and intention to use video chat.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Antecedents: Ease of Use, Trust, Source Credibility, and Feelings Evoked by Customer Service

As one of the two core constructs in the TAM, ease of use is a key determinant of customers'

attitudes toward video chat. Perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which an individual

believes that using technology will be relatively free of effort (Nie et al., 2018). Previous studies

have explored the importance of the ease of use of video chats among senior customers. For

example, using the case of a Korean life insurance company, Jeong et al. (2023) confirmed that

perceived ease of use is positively related to the adoption and intention to use video chat services

Among the many external variables incorporated into TAM, trust is considered an important

factor that influences a user's technology acceptance. Trust is defined as the willingness of a

party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the latter will

perform actions that are important to the former one. A meta-analysis of trust confirms the

positive relationship between trust and attitude toward the technology adoption (Wu et al. 2011).

A study shows that a profile picture of the Airbnb renter with eye contact vs. no eye contact

reduces consumers' feelings of uncertainty and brings more trust, which will further lead to a

higher booking intention (Broeder & Remers, 2018). By making eye contact with customers, video chat allows businesses to express sincere and genuine care to their customers and build trust with them.

Previous research has shown a positive effect of source credibility on information usefulness (Chen et al., 2014; Filieri, 2015). Defined as the believability of information (Rubin et al., 2004), source credibility may affect customers' attitudes toward the company and video chat as well as intention to use the video chat in the future. Customers interacting with a professional, knowledgeable, and sympathetic service provider in online video chat will have a positive attitude toward the video chat features and have a positive attitude toward the company.

One of the most important contributions of TAM is the acknowledgment that people are not always rational. This is because consumers' feelings aroused by interaction with service providers during video chat will change their attitudes toward the company and toward the video chat. When a customer feels disrespected, unappreciated, cannot be understood, and/or not listened to, they will become confrontational with customer service representatives (Dunn, 2016). In an online video chat setting, customer service representatives are viewed by customers as the touching point and extension of the company. Based on the literature review, following hypotheses have been generated:

H1-H4: Ease of use (H1), trust (H2), source credibility (H3), and positive feelings (H4) are positively related to (a) attitudes toward the company, (b) attitudes toward video chat, and (c) intention to use video chat.

Attitudes as Antecedents and as Mediator for the Antecedents-Intention Relationship

Attitudes as antecedents of intention to use online video chat are based on two well-known theories: the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980) and its modification as the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1991). Both theories posit that attitudes lead to intentions to

engage in specific behaviors. Subsequent TAM development also included behavioral intention

as a new variable, which could possibly explain and predict actual usage behavior. Specifically,

attitude was found to partially mediate the relationship between perceived usefulness, perceived

ease of use, and users' intention to use (Davis, 1985).

H5: Attitudes toward (a) the company and (b) toward video chat will be positively related to
intentions to use video chat for customer service.

H6 & H7: The relationship between the users' intention to use video chat and (a) perceived ease
of use, (b) trust, (c) source credibility, and (d) feeling evoked by customer service is mediated by
attitudes toward the company (H6) and by attitudes toward video chat (H7).

Figure 1 presents the proposed conceptual model that depicts the hypothesized relationships.

Figure 1

A Model of Antecedents of Intentions to use video Chat
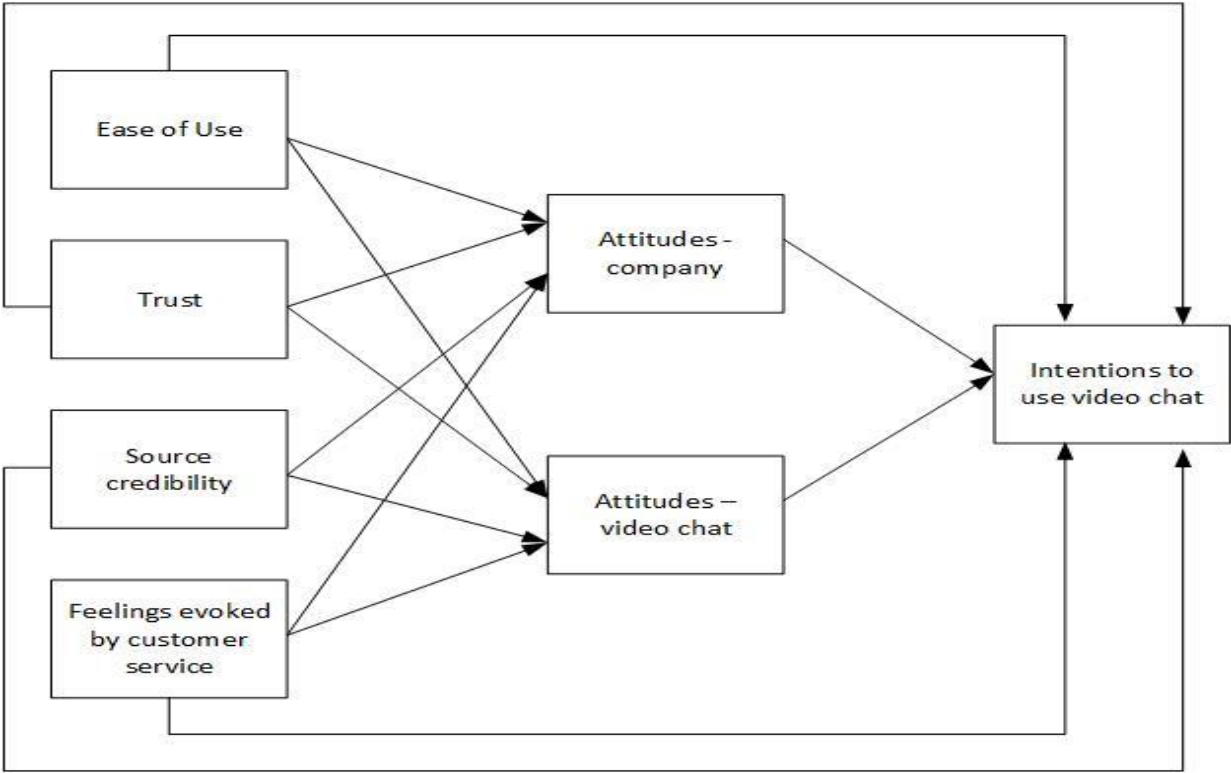
METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

An online survey was used to collect data for this study. Students enrolled in business classes at a suburban university in the northeastern region of the United States were invited to participate in the study in exchange for extra credit toward their course. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the host university. Participants were presented with a short video clip showing a fictitious customer service representative welcoming the customer to the video chat customer help line and offering to help resolve the customer's issues. Following exposure to a sample of the video from a simulated video chat line, participants were asked to answer questions related to the various measures used in the study. A total of 246 completed responses were obtained (female = 44.7%, mean age = 21.00 years) and used to test the proposed relationships.

Measures

Ease of use (Cronbach's alpha=0.89) was measured using the five item Likert scale developed by Kulviwat et al. (2007). Trust (Cronbach's alpha=0.84) was measured using the six item Likert scale adapted from the scale developed by Larzelere and Huston (1980). Source credibility (Cronbach's alpha=0.94) was measured using a semantic differential scale involving 18 pairs of opposing adjectives adapted from McCroskey and Taven (1999). The feelings evoked by customer service video chat (Cronbach's alpha=0.82) were measured using 11 item-measure by asking participants to indicate the extent to which they agreed that the customer service representative made them feel in certain ways. Attitudes toward the company (Cronbach's alpha=0.95) were measured using a semantic differential scale involving five pairs of opposing

adjectives. Attitudes toward video chat (Cronbach's alpha=0.94) were measured using a semantic differential scale involving six pairs of opposing for the list of items. Intentions to use video chat (Cronbach's alpha=0.96) were measured using the four item Likert scale.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

SPSS Process Macro (Hayes 2022) (model 4) with bootstrapping (5000 bootstrap samples in each case) was used to test for direct and indirect effects of antecedent variables on intentions to use video chat. Table 1 presents the results of the regression analyses.

Direct Effects of Four Factors on Attitude and Intention

As shown in Table 1, ease of use was a significant predictor of attitudes toward the company (b = 0.360, $t = 5.090$, $p < 0.001$) and toward video chat (b = 0.717, $t = 9.756$, $p < 0.001$), providing support for H1a and H1b, respectively. In addition, ease of use was a significant predictor of intention to use video chat (direct effect) (b = 0.315, $t = 5.132$, $p < 0.001$), thus supporting H1c.

As expected, trust was a significant predictor of attitudes toward the company (b = 0.695, $t = 14.546$, $p < 0.001$) and toward video chat (b = 0.586, $t = 8.867$, $p < 0.001$), providing support for H2a and H2b, respectively. As hypothesized, trust was a significant predictor of the intention to use video chat (b = 0.137, $t = 2.099$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, H2c is also supported.

As expected, source credibility was a significant predictor of attitudes toward the company (b = 0.257, $t = 17.239$, $p < 0.001$) and video chat (b = 0.233, $t = 11.057$, $p < 0.001$), providing support for H3a and H3b. However, source credibility was not a significant predictor of the intention to use video chat (b = -0.017, $t = 1.767$, n.s.), thus not supporting H3c.

As expected, positive feelings evoked by video chat were a significant predictor of attitudes toward the company (b = 0.418, $t = 13.266$, $p < 0.001$) and toward video chat (b = 0.403, $t =$

9.941, $p < 0.001$), providing support for both H4a and H4b. The results of the analysis showed that positive feelings evoked by video chat had no direct effect on intention to use video chat (b = -0.032, t = -0.786, n.s.). Thus, H4c is not supported.

Attitudes toward the company were not a significant predictor of intention to use video chat (b = 0.104, t = 1.68, n.s.), thus rejecting H5a. Only attitudes toward video chat were significant predictors of intentions (b = 0.480, t = 9.98, $p < 0.001$), supporting Hypothesis H5b.

Indirect Effects of Four Factors on Intention Mediated by Attitude

As shown in Table 1, the indirect effect of ease of use when attitude toward the company was the mediating variable was not significant (b = 0.044, 95% CI = -0.052 – 0.111). H6a was not supported. However, the results of the mediation analysis showed that ease of use had an indirect effect on intentions to use video chat only when attitudes toward video chat were the mediator variable (b = 0.249, 95% CI= 0.121-0.414), providing support for H7a.

The indirect effect of trust on intentions was not significant when attitudes toward the company were considered the mediator variable (b = 0.014, 95% CI = -0.151 – 0.165). H6b was not supported. However, the results of the mediation analysis show that trust had an indirect effect on intentions to use video chat when attitudes toward video chat were the mediating variable (b = 0.276, 95% CI = 0.153-0.449), providing support for H7b. The indirect effect of source credibility on the intention to use video chat was insignificant when attitudes toward the company were used as mediator. Thus, H6c is not supported. However, source credibility had an indirect effect on intention chat when attitudes were used as mediators, supporting H7c.

The indirect effect of positive feelings evoked by video chat with and attitudes toward the company as mediating variables on intentions was not significant (b = 0.054, 95% CI = -0.054 – 0.152), thus not supporting H6d. However, positive feelings evoked by video chat had an indirect

effect on intentions to use video chat when attitudes toward video chat were used as mediating

variables (b = 0.197, 95%CI = 0.115 – 0.311), thus providing support for H7d.

Table 1. Results of Bootstrap Regression Analyses Using PROCESS Macro

Variable/Effect	B	SE	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence interval	
EOU -> ATT - CO	0.360	0.071	5.090	<0.001	0.221	0.499
EOU -> ATT-CHAT	0.717	0.074	9.756	<0.001	0.572	0.862
EOU -> INT	0.315	0.061	5.132	<0.001	0.194	0.436
ATT-CO -> INT	0.122	0.059	2.060	<0.050	0.005	0.234
ATT-CHAT -> INT	0.347	0.057	6.068	<0.001	0.234	0.494
Effects						
Direct	0.315	0.061	5.132	<0.001	0.194	0.436
Indirect EOU -> ATT-CO -> INT	0.044	0.042			-0.052	0.111
Indirect EOU -> ATT-CHAT -> INT	0.249	0.075			0.121	0.414
Total indirect effect	0.293	0.057			0.186	0.409
Total model effect	0.608	0.061	10.028	<0.001	0.488	0.727
TRUST -> ATT - CO	0.695	0.048	14.546	<0.001	0.601	0.789
TRUST -> ATT-CHAT	0.586	0.066	8.867	<0.001	0.456	0.716
TRUST -> INT	0.137	0.065	2.099	<0.05	0.008	0.265
ATT-CO -> INT	0.020	0.074	0.271	0.786	-0.125	0.165
ATT-CHAT -> INT	0.471	0.053	8.833	<0.001	0.366	0.576
Effects						
Direct	0.137	0.065	2.099	<0.05	0.008	0.265
Indirect TRUST -> ATT-CO -> INT	0.014	0.080			-0.151	0.165
Indirect TRUST -> ATT-CHAT -> INT	0.276	0.0777			0.153	0.449
Total indirect effect	0.290	0.055			0.189	0.406
Total model effect	0.427	0.057	7.492	<0.001	0.314	0.539

EOU = Ease of Use; TRUST = Trust in customer service representative; SOURCE = Source credibility; FEEL = Feelings triggered by customer service representative; ATT-CHAT = Attitudes toward Video Chat; ATT-CO = Attitudes toward the company; INT = Intentions to use video Chat feature.

Table 1 (Continued). Results of Bootstrap Regression Analyses Using PROCESS Macro

Variable/Effect	B	SE	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence interval	
SOURCE -> ATT - CO	0.257	0.015	17.239	<0.001	0.227	0.286
SOURCE -> ATT-CHAT	0.233	0.021	11.057	<0.001	0.192	0.275
SOURCE -> INT	-0.017	0.025	-0.702	0.483	-0.066	0.031
ATT-CO -> INT	0.136	0.077	1.767	0.079	-0.016	0.288
ATT-CHAT -> INT	0.487	0.054	8.949	<0.001	0.380	0.594
Effects						
Direct	-0.017	0.025	-0.702	0.483	-0.066	0.031
Indirect SOURCE -> ATT-CO -> INT	0.035	0.337			-0.036	0.097
Indirect SOURCE -> ATT-CHAT -> INT	0.114	0.029			0.066	0.179
Total indirect effect	0.148	0.025			0.102	0.099
Total model effect	0.131	0.020	6.638	<0.001	0.092	0.170
FEEL -> ATT - CO	0.418	0.032	13.266	<0.001	0.356	0.480
FEEL -> ATT-CHAT	0.403	0.041	9.941	<0.001	0.324	0.483
FEEL -> INT	-0.032	0.041	-0.786	0.432	-0.112	0.048
ATT-CO -> INT	0.130	0.070	1.848	0.066	-0.009	0.269
ATT-CHAT -> INT	0.489	0.055	8.954	<0.001	0.381	0.596
Effects						
Direct	-0.032	0.041	-0.786	0.432	-0.112	0.048
Indirect FEEL -> ATT-CO -> INT	0.054	0.052			-0.054	0.152
Indirect FEEL -> ATT-CHAT -> INT	0.197	0.050			0.115	0.311
Total indirect effect	0.251	0.039			0.177	0.330
Total model effect	0.215	0.037	5.863	<0.001	0.146	0.293

EOU = Ease of Use; TRUST = Trust in customer service representative; SOURCE = Source credibility; FEEL = Feelings triggered by customer service representative; ATT-CHAT = Attitudes toward Video Chat; ATT-CO = Attitudes toward the company; INT = Intention to use

DISCUSSION

The analysis revealed significant relationships between all four independent variables-ease of use, trust, source credibility, and emotions evoked by customer service-and the dependent

variables, encompassing attitudes towards the company and attitudes towards video chat. However, the analysis demonstrated that only the attitude towards video chat emerged as a significant predictor of the intention to use it. The link between the attitude towards the company and the intention to use video chat did not attain statistical significance. Although company reputation often acts as a crucial predictor for market acceptance of product offerings, this research indicates that attitudes towards the company might not affect customers' intentions to use video chat.

Concerning the direct impact on the intention to use video chat, two independent variables-ease of use and trust-exhibited direct effects. Source credibility and emotions evoked by customer service did not manifest a direct influence on the intention to use video chat. However, this finding suggests that all four independent variables have an indirect effect on intention to use video chat for customer service when mediated by attitudes toward video chat.

In this era dominated by digital technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI), companies can find a conducive environment for enhanced customer engagement and diverse online collaboration with customers. Text-based asynchronous communication methods fall short of achieving optimal marketing communication objectives due to their limited real-time synchronization and engagement capabilities. Companies must weigh the trade-off between benefits and costs when considering increased synchronization and engagement, attributes that video chat communication can facilitate.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was based on a constrained dataset collected from college students. While college students do represent authentic consumers, future investigations could incorporate a broader

array of data encompassing more diverse demographic segments including Generation X and Baby Boomers. Future research may expand the research scope to a global context. Synchronous and interactive video chat has proven efficient in the realm of worldwide customer service, particularly in context where language barriers and cultural distinctions come into play (Tener and Pudelko 2016). For instance, within high-context cultures like Japan and South America, the significance of context often outweighs that of content in utilizing video chat for services, catering to the cultural nuances and preferences.

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ENHANCING WELL-BEING: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENTIAL AND MATERIAL PURCHASES THROUGH THE LENS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RICHNESS

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Keywords: *Psychological richness, experiential advantage, well-being, happiness, experiential vs. material purchases*

Description: How psychological richness from experiential (vs. material) purchases enhances well-being

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The pursuit of happiness and well-being is a topic of keen interest among policymakers and researchers in various fields, including consumer research. Within marketing, the experiential advantage suggests that people derive greater happiness from experiential vs material purchases (van Boven & Gilovich 2003; Goodman, Malkoc, & Stephenson 2016; Zhang et al. 2014). There has been a comprehensive body of research surrounding this area, and barring some exceptions, this is a construct that has stood the test of time. Lately, there is a growing interest in consolidating this line of research and identifying the key factors that lead to the experiential advantage. Recent meta-analysis identified key variables contributing to well-being through experiential advantage, such as autonomy, relatedness, and self-esteem, happiness, and meaningfulness (Weingarten & Goodman 2020). However, emerging research identified psychological richness (PR) as a distinct pathway to well-being, characterized by complex, perspective-changing experiences (Oishi & Westgate 2021). Though there is a growing interest in the field in understanding PR as another important driver of well-being, we know little of its implication on consumer behavior. We predict that experiential purchases, compared to material purchases, add to the PR of one's life and, in turn, contribute to greater overall well-being.

Method and Data

To test our hypothesis, we conducted four studies.

Study 1 (N=240) tests our primary hypothesis and assess the effect of purchase type on PR and happiness. Participants were randomly assigned to material versus experiential conditions and completed a recall task. Then, participants rated the degree to which the purchase made their life

psychologically rich using a 3-item measure (α = .92) and the degree to which the purchase contributed to their life's happiness using a 3-item measure (α = .92). One-way ANOVA with purchase type as the predictor revealed a significant effect (F (1,238) = 8.83, p <.01). Experiential purchases led to more PR (M = 5.81, SD = 2.08) than material purchase (M = 4.95, SD = 2.38).

Study 2a (N = 122) tests the hypothesized relationship and its downstream effect. Participants were randomly assigned to material versus experiential conditions and completed a recall task. Then, participants rated the degree to which the purchase made their life psychologically rich and contributed to their life's overall well-being. One-way ANOVA with purchase type as the predictor revealed a significant interaction effect (F (1,120) = 18.65, p < .001). Experiential purchases led to more PR (M = 5.97, SD = 1.91) than material purchase (M = 4.40, SD = 2.12). There was a significant effect of purchase type on overall well-being (F (1,120) = 9.75, p = .002). Experiential purchases contributed more to overall well-being (M = 6.63, SD = 1.57) than material purchase (M = 5.65, SD = 1.89). Mediation analysis (PROCESS Model 4) with purchase type as the predictor, overall well-being as the dependent variable, and PR as the mediator revealed a significant indirect effect (b = .49, SE = .12, 95% CI [.2657, .7643]). The direct effect became non-significant (b= .08, p = .74).

Study 2b (N = 240) demonstrates the robustness of the effect using a parallel mediation analysis with PR and happiness as the mediator. Participants recalled a material versus experiential purchase and answered questions related to overall well-being, PR, and happiness. Parallel mediation analysis using PROCESS (Model 4) with purchase type as the predictor, PR and happiness as mediator, and overall well-being as the dependent variable, revealed a significant

indirect effect of PR (b = .42, SE = .12, 95% CI [.2055, .6800]). The effect of happiness was non-significant (b = -.11., SE = .10, 95% CI [- .3376, .0929]).

Study 3 (N = 305) tests our hypothesis with manipulation adapted from Mead & Williams 2023. Participants were randomly allocated to PR versus control condition and either wrote about activities that make their life more psychologically rich or their daily life. Next, participants chose between a material versus experiential purchase. Participants in the PR versus control condition were more likely to choose the experiential purchase (χ^2 = 24.66, p <.001). Specifically, 47.97% of participants in the PR condition chose experiential purchase, compared to 26.11% in the control condition.

Summary of Findings

In four studies, where we measured and manipulated psychological richness, we found converging evidence that this factor has a greater impact on well-being than just happiness, experiential purchases lead to greater psychological richness compared to material purchases, which in turn leads to a greater sense of well-being. This effect holds in the absence of happiness. We contribute to the experiential advantage literature, showing an alternate and unexplored pathway to well-being exists.

Key Contributions

We live in a world where there is increasing concern and awareness about the need to focus on the well-being of people. This is something the field of marketing is also seized of, and there is increasing focus among researchers in this area. From a consumption perspective, one of the ways in which well-being can be enhanced is through experiential (vs. material) purchases, also known as the experiential advantage. But while there has been research into the mechanisms

leading into this, we identify a novel route that enhances the well-being of people- that of experiential purchases which are psychologically rich. These are defined as purchases that are perspective-changing and have a degree of complexity, driven by curiosity and energy (Oishi & Westgate 2021). We find that engaging in such pursuits enhances well-being to a greater extent than material pursuits. This has important managerial and theoretical implications. We enhance our understanding of the types of consumption which can lead to increased well-being and identify psychologically rich experiences as one of those. Managers seeking to improve the well-being of consumers and employees may promote psychologically rich experiences to attain greater well-being. Policy makers looking to promote greater well-being in society promote psychologically rich experiences compared to material purchases.

References are available upon request.

EXAMINING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN THE CONTEXT OF PERSONAL DATA SHARING FOR DIGITAL HEALTHCARE: EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF HEALTH LITERACY AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS ON INTENTION TO DISCLOSE

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Keywords: Digital healthcare, Personal data sharing, Health literacy, Healthcare big data, UTAUT model

Description: This study investigates consumers' intentions to disclose personal information for digital health, examining factors such as perceived benefits, privacy concerns, health literacy, and individual characteristics, with the goal of providing insights into strategies to enhance the sharing of personal information in the use of big data in healthcare amidst the challenges of an aging society and increasing prevalence of chronic diseases.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Due to the aging of society and the rising prevalence of chronic diseases, digital healthcare technologies are being adopted worldwide to lower costs, increase accessibility, and improve the quality of healthcare services.

Sharing of personal information is considered essential for successful use of digital health. The proper collection and analysis of relevant data is a valuable tool in the development of new treatments, medicine, and medical techniques.

Based on previous studies, the UTAUT theory, and the Privacy Calculus model, this study aims to examine consumer behavior regarding the sharing of personal information for use in digital healthcare. Specifically, this study aims to address the following questions:

RQ1: What impacts do Privacy Concerns and the Perceived Benefits have on an individual's Intention to share personal information?

RQ2: What impacts do consumers' Health Literacy have on factors of Perceived Benefits?

RQ3: Does consumers' age moderate the relationship between Perceived Benefits and Privacy Concerns and the Intention to disclose personal information?

RQ4: What knowledge and considerations should government and companies have regarding the acquisition of personal health information for the utilization of health-related big data?

Method and Data

We conducted our research in Japan, targeting Japanese citizens as respondents for the survey. Both the screening survey and the main survey were distributed through a specialized research company. The screening questionnaires were distributed as an online survey in June and July 2023, with quality control methods such as limiting submissions to one per account and incorporating reverse-worded items. Adjustments to measurement items and design were made based on the 350 responses to the screening questionnaire. After conducting a survey with a small number of respondents, adjustments to the study design were made and confirmed.

To test the research model, we employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), evaluating the measures and structural model using SmartPLS. The main survey had specific requirements: (i) respondents were required to fully understand the overview of digital healthcare, its purpose, and the process of sharing personal data for the usage of digital healthcare based on the provided instructions, and (ii) respondents had to provide correct answers to the reverse-worded test.

We obtained 233 valid responses from the main survey, out of a target population of 350 people, after 7 days of data collection in July 2023.

Summary of Findings

Our findings underscore the impact of perceived benefits factors—namely, Performance Expectancy and Social Influence—in shaping the intention to engage with digital healthcare platforms. Notably, it is discerned that the factor of Effort Expectancy does not yield a statistically significant support toward fostering the intention to use

digital healthcare. Moreover, Performance Expectancy and Social Influence exhibit an indirect influence on the inclination to share personal information, while the Facilitating Conditions directly impacts intention to share personal information. The moderating effect of age is found to be significant solely in the context of Facilitating Conditions vis-à-vis intention to share personal information. Notably, the intention to share personal information is observed to be positively influenced by the intention to utilize digital healthcare, thereby signifying the interplay between these constructs. Additionally, the negative impact of Privacy Concern on the intention to share personal information is significant.

Key Contributions

This study quantitatively examined individuals' intentions to provide personal information by focusing on the perceived benefits and perceived concerns associated with adopting new technologies. By doing so, this research contributes to the understanding of how consumers behave with regard to sharing their personal information, particularly in the context of health-related big data.

Our study indicates that in order to enhance individuals' inclination to divulge personal information, it is necessary to focus on fostering determinants associated with perceived benefits. Specifically, these determinants encompass Performance Expectations, Social Influence, and Facilitating Conditions. Moreover, a judicious incorporation of each individual's level of health literacy is imperative during the strategic development process when creating new products that require personal information. Notably, the

potency of the aforementioned factors becomes increasingly pronounced with advancing age. As subjects' age, the affirmative impacts on performance expectations and the enhancement of facilitating conditions attain heightened significance. This underscores the pivotal role of age-related considerations in the efficacy of strategies aimed at augmenting individuals' willingness to share personal information. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for promoting individual consent and formulating relevant policies, thereby enabling governments and private companies to effectively use big data resources.

References are available upon request.

EYES ON DECISION: DEVELOPING A TAXONOMY OF EYE TRACKING TECHNOLOGY USE IN CONSUMER DECISION MAKING RESEARCH

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Keywords: eye-tracking, consumer decision making, attention, emotion, decision-making process.

Description: In this study, a taxonomy was developed to illustrate how eye tracking technology can be effectively utilized in consumer decision-making research.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Despite the increasing use of neuroscience tools in consumer behavior research, there is still a lack of knowledge regarding the role of unconscious processes in decision-making, and how different informational cues influence product selection. One of the key neurosciences tools is the eye-tracking technology (ET), which allows a glimpse into conscious and unconscious processes of consumer decision-making, thus providing valuable insights to explain the whys behind consumer choices. ET is a powerful tool for studying human behavior. In this regard, developing a taxonomy of the use of ET in consumer-decision making (CDM) might help advance the research of unconscious processes and different informational cues. While some attempts have been made to classify the use of ET in CDM, previous research has focused on attention-related data but did not consider blink rates and pupil dilations, which are essential data

that can be extracted with ET devices. Therefore, in this study, a comprehensive taxonomy of ET technology use in CDM research is developed.

Method and Data

The method consisted of three stages: (1) defining boundaries of the topical area; (2) classifying different types of data collected with ET technology; and (3) synthesizing the results by applying a theory. The first stage involved conducting a systematic literature review to ascertain the diverse contexts in which ET has been utilized. A comprehensive search was conducted for studies that were published between 2000-2022 and utilized the ET technology. This resulted in the retrieval of 119 studies which were further screened by following criteria: (a) empirical study, not a conceptual paper; and (b) the use of eye-tracking technology was a primary research method. This led to 63 studies that were used in the analysis. Subsequently, six distinct types of data that can be obtained with ET technology were identified. The final stage centered on the synthesis of the six data types and a five-stage decision-making theory, which facilitated the development of a taxonomy of ET use in CDM research.

Summary of Findings

The taxonomy illustrates that the six types of ET data (fixations, saccade, gaze path, heat map, blink rates, and pupil dilation) can be used in CDM research to understand emotional response and attention. By grouping attention into categories of consumer engagement and information processing, taxonomy offers a nuanced understanding of how ET data can provide insights into consumer decision-making processes.

When applying decision-making stages theory, different uses of varying ET data across decision making stages were identified. In the **need recognition stage,** ET can be used to study how different cues in advertisement and product display drive consumer engagement. ET

data can determine the initial attention-grabbing elements in stimuli, frequently viewed areas, and emotional intensity of the process. In the **information search stage**, ET can be used to study how consumers interact with online webpages and the importance they attach to different product attributes. Different types of ET data can provide insights into consumer decision-making process and information processing order. In the **evaluation of alternatives stage**, ET can help study how consumers compare product attributes of different alternatives, such as label, package design, price, brand, and logo. ET data can reveal frequently viewed areas, the mental effort required to evaluate each option, cognitive strain, and emotional arousal. No study used ET for examining purchase or post-purchase stages of CDM, hence these were not discussed.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study provides a taxonomy of six types of ET data in the context of consumer decision making. Notably, the proposed taxonomy extends beyond the conventional focus on attention and incorporates emotional response. The study identifies key topical areas where ET technology can be effectively applied. This taxonomy can serve as a valuable roadmap, guiding researchers to explore various aspects of consumer behavior using eye tracking technology.

GAZE CONGRUENCY AND AD ATTITUDE

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Keywords: Horizontal Gaze, Processing Fluency, Directional Bias, Ad attitude.

Description: The congruence of the advertising model's gaze with the consumer's reading and writing direction enhances ad processing fluency, promoting a more positive attitude towards the advertisement.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In 2023, the US invested over $10 billion in print ads, and global spending neared $50 billion, with expectations of continued growth (statista.com, 2023). Ad executives exert significant influence in presenting human models in ads for optimal impact (Rossiter & Smidts, 2012). A key decision involves the gaze direction of the model—whether it is direct (looking at the viewer) or averted (looking away from the viewer) (Hutton & Nolte, 2011). Despite traditional preferences in human interactions (Mason et al., 2005), recent findings suggest that averted gaze might be more effective in print ads than direct gaze (To & Patrick, 2021), challenging established norms and creating a more immersive ad experience.

Extant research has only established that an averted gaze may be more effective than a direct gaze, however, an averted gaze may be either to the left or to the right, and whether one direction is more preferred than the other is currently unknown. We suggest that the answer to this question may depend on the viewer's directional bias and that ads, where the gaze direction is congruent with the viewer's directional bias, may lead to a more positive ad attitude.

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. To be included, the ads had to feature a human model and the eye gaze direction could be coded as left, right, or direct.

In Study 2, consumer preferences were examined concerning ads featuring models gazing in a direction consistent with one's directional bias versus those featuring models gazing

in an inconsistent direction. 339 participants recruited from a U.S. university, were presented with ten pairs of mirror images, each featuring a model facing either rightward or leftward and 8 pairs of filler images.

Study 3 investigated the impact of a congruent directional gaze of an ad model with directional bias on ad attitude, considering processing fluency. Using a study abroad flyer ad with mirror images of a female model facing rightward or leftward, participants were randomly assigned to left or right conditions. Ad attitude and processing fluency were assessed using five seven-point items each. From the initial 162 participants recruited from a U.S. university, 150 were included in the analysis after excluding inattentive participants.

Summary of Findings

In the US, Study 1 found that approximately half of the ads used direct gaze (88 advertisements), and the other half used averted gaze (81 advertisements). Notably, among the ads with averted gaze, 55.55% featured a model with a rightward gaze, while only 44.44% featured a leftward gaze, indicating a prevalence of averted gaze congruent with the population's directional bias. In Arabic advertisements, almost two-thirds used averted gaze (51 advertisements), where 70.59% featured a leftward averted gaze consistent with the Arabic right-to-left directional bias, while only 29.41% featured a rightward gaze. A significant difference between countries was confirmed by a chi-square test of independence (X2 (1, N = 132) = 8.63, p = .003).

Study 2 findings indicate that participants preferred ad model gaze images directed to the right (55.46%), which is consistent with their directional bias, over images with a leftward gaze (44.54%). A chi-square test of independence indicates that the difference between ad model gaze is significant (X^2 (1, N = 339) = 20.25, p < .0001).

The results of ANOVA in study 3 indicated that there was a significant main effect of ad model gaze congruency with favorable ad attitude (F(1, 148) = 4.329, p < .039; M_{right} =

5.27, Mleft = 4.8), as expected. Additionally, the analysis revealed a significant relationship between the gaze direction of an ad model that is congruent with consumers' directional bias and processing fluency (F(1, 148) = 4.009, p < .047; Mright = 5.23, Mleft = 4.71).

PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes, 2022) revealed that there is a positive relationship between eye gaze direction and processing fluency (b = .52, t = 2.00, p < .047). Further, processing fluency is positively related to ad attitude (b = .54, t = 9.50, p < .001). When controlling for processing fluency, the effect of eye gaze direction on ad attitude is not significant (b = .19, t = 1.06, p = .29). However, in support of our predictions, the indirect effect is significant (b = .28, LLCI = .0041, ULCI = .5748).

Key Contributions

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. Based on directional bias 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. Furthermore, 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 three studies. 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 by manipulating the gaze direction of ad models to enhance ad processing ease and foster a more positive attitude toward the ad.

GENERATING INSULT FROM INJURY: RECEIVING SELF-IMPROVEMENT GIFTS LEADS TO NEGATIVE WORD OF MOUTH

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Keywords: gift giving, self-improvement, irritation, word of mouth

Description: Four pre-registered studies demonstrate that people who receive self-improvement products as gifts generate negative word of mouth because they experience feelings of irritation.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – Self-improvement products (e.g., self-help books, weight loss products, anti-aging creams) encompass an array of goods and services designed to facilitate the enhancement of personal attributes, skills, or overall well-being (Allard & White, 2015; Grewal et al., 2021). Research suggests that people gift self-improvement products less often than others would like to receive them (Reshadi, 2023). Yet recipients' responses to receiving self-improvement products remain relatively uncharted territory. We theorize and find consistent evidence that recipients of self-improvement products experience irritation upon receiving such gifts. Consequently, these individuals cope with their irritation by spreading negative word of mouth about the product itself. The effect of receiving self-improvement (vs. non-improvement) gifts on negative word of mouth persists even when an alternative coping mechanism is made salient (e.g., the option to exchange or return the gift). However, not all self-improvement products provoke such negative reactions. We find that products designed to enhance consumers'

strengths, rather than restore their deficiencies, do not cause feelings of irritation and subsequent negative word of mouth. Thus, some types of self-improvement products (i.e., those that promise to enhance one's strengths) could be marketed and given as gifts.

Method And Data – Four preregistered experiments tested our hypotheses. In Study 1, an ANOVA revealed that participants who received a self-improvement (vs. fictional) book gave it significantly fewer stars ($M_{\text{self-improvement}}$=3.23 vs. M_{control}=3.67; $F(1, 296)$=17.74, $p< .001$). They indicated being somewhat more likely to upvote another user's negative review ($M_{\text{self-improvement}}$=2.63 vs. M_{control}=2.28; $F(1, 296)$=3.16, $p=.077$). Participants also reported being less likely to speak positively about the book to others ($M_{\text{self-improvement}}$=3.49 vs. M_{control}=4.28; $F(1, 296)$= 23.30, $p< .001$). Study 2 showed that stronger feelings of irritation explained the relatively lower star ratings (indirect effect= -.38; CI 95%[-.51, -.26]), greater likelihood of upvoting a negative review (indirect effect= .52; CI 95%[.29, .79]), and lower willingness to speak positively about the product (indirect effect= -.75; CI 95%[-.99, -.53]). Study 3 showed that self-improvement gifts which restore a deficiency (p = .004), but not those which enhance a strength (p = .596), induce feelings of irritation. Study 4 demonstrated that both those in the self-improvement condition (p < .001) and those in the gift receipt condition (p<.001) experienced stronger feelings of irritation than those in the control group. There was no difference between those in the self-improvement and self-improvement product with gift receipt conditions (p = .330).

Summary of Findings – Study 1 showed that self-improvement products given as gifts induce negative word of mouth among recipients, using a self-help (vs. fictional) book. Using a different product, namely a slimming (vs. Moroccan) tea, Study 2 showed that feelings of irritation mediate this effect. Study 3 used a skincare cream which was either designed to restore or

enhance the skin's appearance. This study demonstrated that the feelings of irritation and negative word of mouth are attenuated when the product enhances the appearance of already attractive skin (vs. restores skin-related deficiencies). Study 4 tested whether the effect of receiving a self-improvement (vs. non improvement) product on negative word of mouth is attenuated when a disposition related coping mechanism is made salient (e.g., through the inclusion of a gift receipt). Results showed that including a gift receipt does not attenuate the effect of self-improvement gifts on negative word of mouth. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that while people favor purchasing self-improvement products for themselves, receiving them as gifts is irritating and can spill over to the consumers' evaluation of the product itself.

Statement of Key Contributions – First, we contribute to the gift giving literature related to coping with failed gifts (e.g., Branco-Illodo et al. 2020; Roster 2006; Sherry et al. 1993) by documenting a novel coping mechanism: spreading negative word of mouth. Identifying how gift recipients manage the negative emotions that arise from receiving an undesirable product is important to understanding the consequences of gift giving. Second, we contribute to the gift giving literature examining consumer reactions to self-improvement gifts (Reshadi, 2023). While self-improvement gifts designed to restore a deficiency spark irritation and negative word of mouth, those aimed at improving an existing strength do not provoke such undesirable reactions. Third, the present research contributes to the literature on self-improvement products (e.g., Allard & White, 2015; Grewal et al., 2021; Reshadi, 2023). Although consumer demand is high for self-improvement products, consumers react negatively to these products when received as presents. Finally, gifting some types of self-improvement products can lead to negative word of mouth. Since negative word of mouth can influence sales (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006), our

findings demonstrate that managers must be cautious when deciding whether and which self-improvement products they should promote as gifts.

References are available upon request.

HOW A MAXIMIZING DECISION-MAKING STYLE ENHANCES CONSUMER FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

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Keywords: Mazimizing; Financial Self-Control; Financial Well-being; Spending Behaviour.

Description: With two studies, this paper investigates the effect of a maximizing decision-making style, both as a trait and state, on consumers' financial well-being, i.e., the perception of being able to maintain desired standards of living, as mediated by higher self-control

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The literature suggests that maximizers, i.e., people that always strive to make the best decision (Schwartz et al., 2002), face a paradox: despite investing more resources in their search, they experience greater dissatisfaction and regret with the outcome of their decisions (Dar-Nimrod et al., 2009). Consequently, a maximizing decision-making style has generally been associated with lower overall wellbeing (Belli et al., 2022). However, the link between maximizing and financial well-being, which pertains to maintaining desired standards of living and achieving financial freedom (Brüggen et al., 2017), has been overlooked. Given the growing importance of securing consumers' financial future among marketing practitioners and public policy makers (Hoffmann & Plotkina, 2020), we investigate whether maximizing can positively affect financial wellbeing.

We hypothesize that maximization positively affects financial wellbeing through financial self-control, i.e., one's ability to overcome spending impulses and break bad financial habits (Baumeister, 2002). First, maximizers' focus on the future consequences of their actions (Misuraca et al., 2017) may refrain them from displaying impulsive behavior (Ding et al., 2023). Second, their tendency to compare many alternatives may increase their purchase decisions' deferral to mitigate their anticipated regret (Shiner, 2015), thus leading to more responsible financial behavior (e.g., increased savings; Brannon, 2021).

Method and Data

We conducted two studies to test our hypothesis. Study 1 surveyed a representative sample of 300 US consumers (160 females, mean age = 45.8 years). As per Cheek and Schwartz (2016), we consider maximizing as a two-dimensional construct comprising the dimensions of high standards and alternative search. We use the 9-item Maximization Tendency Scale (MTS) by Diab et al. (2008) to

capture "high standards" and the 12-item Maximization Inventory (MI) by Turner et al. (2012) to capture "alternative search." We use Haws et al.'s (2016) 10-item Spending Self-Control scale to measure financial self-control. We measure financial well-being with Netemeyer et al.'s (2018) 10-item Perceived Financial Well-Being Scale. In contrast, Study 2 employed a between-subject experimental design. We randomly assigned 132 respondents to either a maximizing or a satisficing mindset condition and asked them to pick either "the best" or "a good enough" option in a series of choice sets, respectively (Ma & Roese, 2014). We then measured financial self-control by asking respondents to allocate a $3,000 tax refund between spending on something nice, spending on necessities, and adding to savings (Dholakia et al., 2016). Finally, we assessed participants' financial wellbeing following the above-mentioned budget allocation task (Wong & Lynn, 2020).

Summary of Findings

In Study 1, two partial least squares structural equation models revealed that maximization is positively associated with financial wellbeing, mediated by financial self-control, regardless of whether it is measured as high standards or alternative search (CMMS: β_{HS} = -0.049, p = 0.001, β_{AS} = -0.054, p = 0.049; EFFS: β_{HS} = 0.043, p = 0.001, β_{AS} = 0.051, p = 0.048). The structural models showed satisfactory model fit as indicated by SRMR values of 0.085 (high standards' model) and 0.079 (alternative search's model) (Benitez et al., 2020).

In Study 2, we discovered that respondents in the maximizing mindset condition displayed more financial self-control (β = 12.025, p = 0.009) and that this decreased individuals' present money management stress (β = -0.183, p = 0.001) and increased their perception of a financially secure future (β = 0.013, p = 0.013). Finally, we found a negative indirect effect a maximizing mindset on current money management stress through higher financial self-control as expressed in the money allocation task (β = -0.220; 95% CI = -0.441 - -0.047) and a positive indirect effect on the perception of a financially secure future (β = 0.159; 95% CI = 0.016 - 0.354).

Key Contributions

We contribute to the academic marketing discipline's existing knowledge on the topic by shifting the existing consensus on the effects of maximizing on individual well-being. Although a maximizing decision-making style has been shown to lead to counterfactual thinking (Leach & Patall, 2013) and regret (Huang & Zeelenberg, 2012), and is thus linked to poorer general well-being (Belli et al., 2022), we show that it can in fact be beneficial for *financial well-being*. Furthermore, we add to our existing knowledge of the antecedents of financial well-being, with prior literature having considered economic and health shocks (Kleimeier et al., 2023), negative financial behaviors (Strömbäck et al., 2017), and psychological traits such as the propensity to plan and financial self-efficacy (Netemeyer et al., 2018) as drivers. However, the extant literature has not considered how different *decision-making styles*, such as maximizing vs. satisficing, can influence financial well-being.

In terms of our contribution to non-academic stakeholders, we offer guidance to policy makers and business practitioners such as banks on how to maintain or improve consumers' financial well-being. In particular, the results of our study suggest that consumers might benefit from situationally inducing a maximizing mindset (Ma & Roese, 2014) when making financial decisions.

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HOW DOES EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS AFFECT CONSUMERS' WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SECOND-HAND PRODUCTS?

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Keywords: *second-hand consumption, financial constraints, willingness to pay, pain of paying, hedonic consumption*

This research examines the role of financial constraints in second-hand product valuation.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The literature on second-hand consumption has mostly focused on understanding its individual-level antecedents from a consumer perspective. It has extensively explored the motivations for second-hand shopping (e.g., critical, economic, recreational, environmental; Guiot and Roux, 2010) or other individual factors (e.g., age, gender, past experience, education, nostalgia proneness, need for uniqueness, fashion involvement, shopping frequency; Cervellon et al. 2012; Ek Styvén & Mariani, 2020; Evans et al. 2022). However, investigation of contextual, product-related factors that influence consumers' purchasing of second-hand products has been comparatively limited. The present study aims to extend this latter stream by exploring a substantively critical, yet unexplored factor: the role of product age, *the duration of prior use*, in second-hand buying behavior.

Moreover, it specifically aims to discover the effect of financial constraints on consumers' WTP depending on product age. Tunnelling of attention on monetary problems leads consumers neglecting other information (Mullainathan and Shafir, 2013). Therefore, we

expect that financially constrained consumers' will disregard product age and product depreciation when deciding their WTP. Instead, their pain of paying will mediate the effect of product age on their WTP. We suggest that this effect disappears in the context of hedonic purchases.

Method and Data

Overall, we run a total of six studies. First, we conducted two focus group discussions (FGDs) in order to better understand the construct of product age. Subsequently, informed by the findings of the FGDs, we designed and implemented four experiments using a set of diverse products (desk lamp, laptop bag, jacket, sunglasses and wristwatch) and varied indicators for product age, such as the duration of previous product use, release season, and product condition. The experiments had 2 (product age) x 2 (financial constraints) between-subjects designs. The respondents were recruited from both behavioural labs of the authors' universities and the Prolific platform. Additionally, to enhance our understanding with real-life insights and to differentiate the effect of manipulated experience of financial constraints from that of permanent income, a field experiment was conducted.

Summary of Findings

The findings consistently demonstrated that product age constitutes an important construct in the valuation of second-hand goods. It is a cue that signals a product-related attribute; depreciation of the product. However, financially constrained consumers disregard product depreciation when assessing the monetary value of a second-hand product. Instead, their WTP is mediated by pain of paying. More specifically, we demonstrate that financially constrained consumers experience a heightened sensitivity to the pain of paying as compared to others who do not experience financial constraints. As pain of paying increases, the difference in consumers' WTP for older versus newer second-hand products diminishes. More specifically, when the pain of paying is lower, WTP for newer products is significantly higher than that for

older ones. As the pain of paying increases, WTP for both products decreases, and this decrease is more substantial for newer second-hand products as compared to older ones. Hence, as a result of their heightened levels of pain of paying, financially constrained consumers demonstrate a convergence in their WTP for both older and newer products.

We also provide initial evidence for a boundary condition for the information neglect effect of financial constraints; when financially constrained consumers consider buying hedonic, i.e., non-necessity, products.

Key Contributions

Our research contributes to the growing literature on product valuation and psychology of financial constraints. First, we introduce the concept of product age, and present evidence that it plays an important role in consumers' WTP for second-hand products. Second, the current work suggests a link between WTP and experience of financial constraints in the context of second-hand consumption. Our work extends the literature by showing that the effect of financial constraints is observed also in consumers' decision-making processes such as formation of WTP for previously used products. Instead, consumers' pain of paying mediates the effect of product age on their WTP. Third, our studies provide initial evidence that this effect disappears for hedonic purchases. Our findings have several implications. In the current era characterized by the prominence of sustainability efforts accompanied by financial difficulties experienced by a growing population, it is essential to implement public policies and marketing strategies based on comprehensive understanding of the effects of financial constraints on consumers' decision-making processes. Different consumption types as well as customer segments may require tailored marketing communication especially during economic downturns.

References are available upon request.

How Motivations Affect the Language of User-Generated Content

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Keywords: Word familiarity, Motivation, Language, Text analysis

Description: Informational motivation often results in a higher degree of word familiarity in language use in user-generated content, as compared to social motivation.

Extended Abstract

Research Question

This research investigates how motivations influence UGC writers' language choice with different word familiarity. People post user-generated content (UGC) driven by different motivations. We divide the main motivations into two types: informational and social. Informational motivation includes goals such as transmitting information to others (Sepp, Liljander, and Gummerus 2011) and persuasion (Berger 2014). Social motivation includes goals such as connecting to others (de Vries et al. 2017) and impression management (Berger, 2014).

Literature suggests that the unfamiliar attracts interest, curiosity, and conversation (Kashdan and Silvia 2009; Silvia and Berg 2011). Further, texts that have more unfamiliar words are perceived as more credible and written by more competent authors (Galak and Nelson 2011; Markowitz and Shulman 2021). Familiar words, on the other hand, are easier to process, making the text easier to understand, and therefore may be more effective and more influential (Chan et al. 2020; De Franco et al. 2015), enhancing compliance with the recommendation (Markowitz and Shulman 2021). Taking together, we predict:

H1: Consumers with higher social motivation will be more likely to post UGC with lower word familiarity.

H2: Consumers with higher informational motivation will be more likely to post UGC with higher word familiarity.

Method and Data

Study 1 compared word familiarity of social network posts (n = 1175) and a matched-size dataset of Amazon reviews (n = 1175), as UGC posted by social and informational motivations, respectively. Supporting H2, results showed that the informative UGC displayed language with a higher level of word familiarity (M_{Social} = 585.75, SD = 27.6; $M_{Informational}$ = 593.80, SD = 11.83; t(2344) = -9.182, p < .001; *Cohen's d* = -.379).

Study 2 is a text analysis of Yelp reviews from three different restaurants (n=1003) as informative UGC, and Facebook posts (n=1003) as social UGC. Results replicated the findings of Study 1, comparing two different platforms (M_{Social} = 588.37, SD = 26.84; $M_{Informational}$ = 592.12, SD = 10.96; t(1996) = -4.093, p < .001; *Cohen's d* = -.183).

Study 3 is an online two-cell (informational vs. social motivation) between-subject experiment. Supporting H1 and H2, participants in the informational motivation condition showed a higher level of word familiarity, whereas participants in the social motivation condition showed a lower level of word familiarity (M_{Social} = 587.54, SD =21.65; $M_{Informational}$ = 593.51, SD = 20.17; t (174) = 1.893, p = .03, *Cohen's d* = .286).

Summary of Findings

The findings from Studies 1 and 2 provided support for our hypotheses, demonstrating that UGC posted with social motivation was characterized by lower word familiarity than

informational UGC. Study 3 further corroborated this theoretical distinction in a controlled environment, showing how social and informational motivation influence word familiarity in UGC.

Prior research explored a host of motivations to post UGC. We extend this literature by offering a conceptual taxonomy of the motivations into two types – social and informational – and suggest that these two types of motivations influence the language that consumers use in UGC. As language has been shown to influence readers (e.g., He & Bond 2013; Eisingerich et al. 2015; Kronrod & Danziger 2013; Pancer et al. 2019) the proposed distinction is meaningful for research on UGC and its outcomes.

From a practical standpoint, analyzing the language of UGC can help managers identify the motivations underlying consumers who post it and use this information to improve their response to consumer needs. Understanding consumers' motivations to post UGC can also help marketers in achieving more accurate segmentation. Companies can identify consumers with social and informational needs as different segments and potentially gain deeper understanding of their preferences and behaviors.

Statement of Key Contributions

Prior research explored a host of motivations to post UGC. We extend this literature by offering a conceptual taxonomy of the motivations into two types – social and informational – and suggest that these two types of motivations influence the language that consumers use in UGC. We further identified word familiarity distinguishing between the two types of UGC. We hope that this work spurs interest among researchers to propose additional theoretical distinctions, additional features, additional operationalizations, and additional analyses. Future

research can also apply and extend the predictions to other contexts involving social or informational motivation, such as interpersonal communication, negotiation, or sales.

Practically speaking, identifying the motivations driving consumers to post UGC can help marketers understand how to react to consumers' online communication, how to interpret it, and potentially also – how to participate in consumer online chatter. In addition, understanding consumers' motivations to post UGC can also help marketers in achieving more accurate segmentation. The findings of this research can also help companies in understanding the overall consumer motivations associated with their social media community and develop an appropriate community engagement style for their firm.

HOW OFFENSIVE! WHEN POLITICAL ORIENTATION INFLUENCES ACCEPTANCE OF RACIALLY DIVERSE ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA

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Keywords: Political Orientation, Racial Diversity, Entertainment Media, System Justification, Feeling Offended

Description: In this research, we investigate a counterintuitive situation in which conservative (versus liberal) consumers are more accepting of racially diverse entertainment media.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

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Research Question

In recent years, there has been a rise in the number of movies that feature lead actors from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. Additionally, movies such as *In the Heights*, *Black Panther,* and *Crazy Rich Asians* not only feature casts composed of predominantly minority actors, but also tell stories of historically underrepresented individuals. Such movies have received mixed reactions from the public, with some consumers celebrating them and others condemning them. The purpose of this research is to examine factors driving these mixed reactions. Building on system justification theory, we study the role that consumers' political orientations play in their responses to racially diverse entertainment media (RDEM), by which we mean entertainment media that includes underrepresented actors and stories of underrepresented characters. While the effect of political orientation on acceptance of RDEM

may seem intuitive, we seek to identify a situation in which the counterintuitive effect emerges: when will conservatives be more likely to accept RDEM than their liberal counterparts? Specifically, we investigate how the stereotypical nature (stereotype-*refuting* versus stereotype-*reinforcing)* of the portrayals of underrepresented individuals in RDEM influence conservatives' (versus liberals') acceptance of these media.

Method and Data

In study 1, we presented undergraduate business students with the choice between watching two existing movies. All participants saw the same two movie options, but between participants, we manipulated which movie was framed as the stereotype-*refuting* option and which movie was framed as the stereotype-*reinforcing* option. Additionally, participants provided their demographic information, including their political orientation. In study 2, we recruited adult participants based in the United States from Prolific Academic. Study 2 used a movie that participants were unfamiliar with and manipulated whether it was framed as having stereotype-*refuting* or stereotype-*reinforcing* diversity. After reviewing the movie details, participants completed a modern-day movie watching scale (i.e., *How likely would you be to… stay up late watching [movie title]*), which we created to measure consumers' acceptance of the racially diverse entertainment media. Participants also provided their demographic information, including their political orientation. Study 3 was identical to study 2 with one exception: we measured our proposed mediator, consumers' feelings of offense.

Summary of Findings

Across three studies, we find that when racially diverse entertainment media (RDEM) feature stereotype-*reinforcing* (versus stereotype-*refuting*) diversity, conservatives are more likely to accept the media than liberals. We measured consumers' acceptance of the movie both

as a choice (study 1) and as willingness to watch (studies 2 and 3). When RDEM portray stereotype-*refuting* diversity, on the other hand, conservative consumers are less accepting of the media than their liberal counterparts. This effect holds regardless of whether participants are familiar (study 1) or unfamiliar (studies 2 and 3) with the movie. The results of study 3 also suggest that this effect is driven by consumers' feelings of offense, which, to our knowledge, we are among the first to study.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our research identifies a counterintuitive situation in which conservatives are more accepting of RDEM than their liberal counterparts. We contribute to the literature political orientation and consumption literature as well as the emerging literature on how consumers respond to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in the marketplace. Additionally, we study how feelings of offense influences consumption behavior, which, to our knowledge, we are the first to study. Finally, we create a movie-watching scale that reflects current trends in media consumption.

As directors' decisions to diversify the casts of their media are met with strong reactions both praising and criticizing these choices, it is important for practitioners to understand what drives these charged responses. Our results highlight that conservatives (liberals) are more accepting of stereotype-*reinforcing* (stereotype-*refuting*) RDEM, which is important for directors and producers to note as they increasingly create stereotype-*refuting* RDEM. While we do not advocate for stereotype-*reinforcing* portrayals of underrepresented groups, our findings shine light on a factor driving mixed reactions from consumers. As different metrics for measuring on-screen diversity, such as Mediaversity and The Seal of Female Empowerment in Entertainment,

become more prevalent in the marketplace, both directors and marketers can leverage these

metrics to promote their projects.

HOW SEQUENTIAL EXPOSURE TO MUSICAL PIECES AFFECTS CONSUMERS' CROSSMODALL ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN PITCH AND BRIGHTNESS

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Keywords: musical pitch; context effect; sequential effect; crossmodal correspondence; sensory marketing

Description: This study demonstrated that consumers who were presented with higher (vs. lower) pitched music before exposure to a focal musical piece were more likely to associate focal music with spatial descent, which, in turn, led to associations with and favourable evaluations of dark- (vs. bright-) coloured paintings or products.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In their daily lives, consumers are sequentially presented with music in a wide range of contexts such as shopping at a complex or talking in a café. However, most marketing studies on crossmodal correspondences involving audition use standalone sounds as experimental stimuli.

That is, the effects of sequential exposure to auditory stimuli have not been thoroughly investigated in the marketing context. This study bridges this gap by focusing on the effects of sequential music presentation on consumers' audio-visual crossmodal correspondence. Specifically, the present study investigates (1) how consumers precedingly presented with higher- (vs. lower-) pitched music perceive another musical piece subsequently presented and (2) how the perception of the subsequent focal music influences a crossmodal correspondence between the focal music and brightness. Additionally, this study examines the downstream effects of sequential crossmodal correspondence in a marketing context. Specifically, we investigate whether consumers who are presented with higher- (vs. lower-) pitched music before exposure to another (focal) musical piece positively respond to products with dark (vs. bright) colour.

Method And Data

A controlled lab experiment (Study 1) and a real-world field experiment (Study 2) were conducted in Japan. The studies used a single-factor (P_1: low vs. high) between-participants design. In Study 1, participants (n = 128, M_{age} = 41.50, male: female = 1:1) were presented with one octave lower and higher versions of the original version (Bach's Sonata in D minor, BWV

964) in the low and high P_1 conditions, respectively. Next, while being presented with the opposite versions, the participants were randomly presented with 20 paintings and asked to indicate their evaluations individually.

In Study 2, customers who ordered the target product (coffee) were asked to select a white or black pair of cup and saucer for their use, which was treated as the dependent variable. In the low and high P_1 conditions, five notes that were lower and higher than the original version (Dona Nobis Pacem), respectively, were played repeatedly around the entrance (preceding music). Meanwhile, in the dining and seating areas, the original version of the same piece was played repeatedly (subsequent music). Ninety-five target products (N_{lowP1} = 46, N_{highP1} = 49) were sold during the study period (10 weekdays).

Summary of Findings

In Study 1, the participants were more likely to associate the subsequent music with spatial descent (M_{lowP1} = 3.26, M_{highP1} =3.91, $t(126)$ = -2.958, p = .004, d = .524) and evaluate dark (vs. bright) paintings more positively (M_{lowP1} = -0.66, M_{highP1} = -0.44, $t(126)$ = -2.040, p = .043, d = .361) when they were precedingly presented with a higher- (vs. lower-) pitched music. Notably, the possible alternative explanation that the effects would be obtained through the participants' emotional states or construal levels was ruled out.

Similarly, Study 2 demonstrated that the participants previously exposed to the higher- (vs. lower-) pitched music were more likely to choose the black cup and saucer (high P_1 condition: 61.2% vs. low P_1 condition: 39.1%, $\chi^2(1) = 4.633$, $p = .031$, $\varphi = .221$). Notably, neither the total amount of money spent per table ($M_{lowP1} = 1203.1$ JPY vs. $M_{highP1} = 1211.1$ JPY) nor the number of items purchased per table ($M_{lowP1} = 3.29$ vs. $M_{highP1} = 3.53$) was significantly different between the high and low P_1 conditions. Therefore, the manipulation of the study (i.e., high/low P_1) did not significantly influence the sales volume.

Statement of Key Contributions

This is the first empirical marketing study to investigate the context dependence of pitch-brightness associations and to demonstrate the downstream effects on consumers' responses. This study suggests that even when individuals perceive a song's pitch to be high, they do not necessarily associate it with bright colours. This depends on the context. That is, if consumers were presented with a 1500 Hz (on average) song, they would associate a 1000 Hz (on average) song with dark objects instead of bright ones.

The present study will be useful to a wide range of people in charge of music. Sound logs, jingles, background music, and music in advertisements for a brand, product, store, café,

restaurant, or company whose colour is bright/dark are expected to improve their effectiveness

by playing after a lower/higher-pitched song. In a shopping mall, a tenant whose brand colour is

dark would benefit from playing background music with a lower pitch compared to the music

played outside of the tenant. Playing higher-pitched music at the entrance, compared to

background music in the store, might enhance consumers' evaluation of products infused with

dark-coloured paintings, such as Picasso's works in the Blue Period.

IDENTITY CONFLICT OR POWER STRUGGLE? THE INTERPLAY OF IDENTITY CONFLICT AND POWER IN DONATION DECISIONS

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Keywords: identity conflict, prosocial behavior, political identity, religious identity

Description: This paper explores how identity conflict, and the varying levels of power between the two identities experiencing conflict, impact donation decisions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

As our world increases in complexity and connectivity, individuals have the chance to experience greater levels of identity multidimensionality than ever before. The acknowledgement of one's multiple identities has a variety of benefits and impacts many consumption-related decisions. But what happens when the values, norms, or expectations of these multiple identities begin to conflict with one another – a phenomenon more generally called identity conflict? While research on multiple identities is increasing in popularity, very little research has considered the consequences of conflicting identities on consumption. And while there are many consumption-related dependent variables that must be addressed when attempting to fill this gap, the current paper looks specifically at identity conflict's impact on *donation* decisions. In doing so, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

1) How does experiencing identity conflict affect one's likelihood of donation to identity-relevant causes?

2) Does the impact of identity conflict on donation intention towards identity-relevant causes vary based on the relative power of these identities?

Method And Data

Five studies test these predictions using secondary and primary data in the context of identity conflict between religious and political identities. Study 1 uses data collected from Wave 5 (2017) of the Baylor Religion Survey which allows for the analysis of the effect of identity conflict (via responses to questions related to political and religious identity) on real donation behavior towards political and religious causes. Studies 2-5 take an experimental approach using both direct measurement and a novel measured manipulation to study how identity conflict (vs. the lack of identity conflict) impacts donations towards religious and political causes. In all studies, donation towards religious causes is used as a proxy for donation towards one's more powerful identity, while donation towards political causes is used as a proxy for donation towards one's less powerful identity. These proxies are based on several pre- and post-tests that indicated that the strong majority of individuals see their religious identity as having more power in their lives than their political identity.

Summary of Findings

Across all studies, this research shows that identity conflict has a positive effect on donation intention, but only when that donation is towards a cause connected to the less powerful of the conflicting identities. This is shown in the specific scenario of identity conflict between one's

religious and political identities, with those experiencing identity conflict (vs. those not experiencing this conflict) showing increased donation intention towards political causes (considered the less powerful identity). No difference is found between those with and without identity conflict in terms of donation towards religious causes (considered the more powerful identity). This finding is consistent whether using scaled likelihood of donation or the specific amount one would be willing to donate as the dependent variable. Additionally, both a mediation and moderated mediation study found that this effect is indeed being driven by a desire to help the less powerful of the conflicting identities, indicating identities not only differ in the power they hold in one's life, but that we are aware of these differences in power and, when in a state of identity conflict, seek to help the less powerful identity when considering donation opportunities.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research has several important implications for both theory and practice. This research is the first project to directly study the impact of identity conflict and its resolution on donation intention. Prior research on identity enhancement poses that individuals default to the most powerful of their identities, but this work shows that this is not always the case. In addition, it adds to theoretical conversations on power and authenticity, by proposing that identities can hold relatively different levels of power within the same individual and by showing that a desire to help the less powerful of two conflicting identities increases feelings of authenticity. Finally, this work provides a novel approach to manipulating identity conflict. The "measured manipulation" tested and used throughout the experiments in this work can serve as a resolution. Practically, this research suggests that identity-linked nonprofit organizations can benefit from targeting consumers experiencing identity conflict, which goes against existing expectation. It also

proposes that organizations would benefit from implying that the identity they relate to is

relatively low in power or resources, which could be done through direct comparison. Finally, it

encourages non-profit organizations to appeal to consumers' desire for authenticity, especially

those experiencing identity conflict.

References are available upon request.

IMPLICIT DONATIONS

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Keywords: donations, support, dignity, agency

Description: My paper is about the exploration of the main factors nudging consumers to make donations, through purchases, to support beneficiaries, such as small business owners.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research question – What are the main factors that nudge consumers to engage in prosocial behavior, purchasing products or services, as a means to make a donation to for-profit businesses?

Method and data – I interviewed 20 participants utilizing a purposive sampling with a snowball approach (Goodman 1961). The interviews lasted from 35 minutes to 1 hour and 35 minutes, with an average of 1 hour per informant. The interviews were recorded through the platform Zoom and were transcribed into about 400 single-spaced pages of text. To design the interviews, I followed the guidelines proposed by Arsel (2017). Before the recorded interview, I have built rapport with the informants, through a more informal conversation, in which I clarified the role of the interviewer and the interviewee. The conversation lasted between 20 to 30 minutes. After the recorded interview, informants clarified some comments and shared other information that they forgot or did not prefer sharing during the recording. This post-session lasted between 10 to 20 minutes. I followed a semi-structured interview approach with a set of a few open-ended questions based on previous knowledge, as suggested by Kallio et al. (2016).

Summary of findings - I define implicit donations as acts of generosity by a donor masked as genuine interest in the offerings of a beneficiary that are hidden as acts of generosity to avoid the possibility of the beneficiary's dignity being threatened by these acts. Generosity is defined as "giving things to others

freely and abundantly" (Herzog and Price 2016). Through in-depth interviews, I have found that the main reasons why individuals make implicit donations are related to a donor's awareness that the beneficiary is in need, donor's empathy for the beneficiary, a donor's perception of the positiveness of the interaction with the beneficiary, a donor's desire to support the beneficiary's agency, and a donor's perceived threats to the beneficiary's dignity. In the context of small businesses, consumers mask their generosity through the purchase of a product, so that the beneficiary is not aware about their intention to donate.

Statement of Key contributions – This paper contributes to the literature about donations, opening a new stream of research regarding implicit donations. I explore the factors that influence consumers to make donations in contexts different than those where consumers are used to make donations (Dai and Zhang 2019). Additionally, my paper contributes to the literature regarding agency, empathy, service encounter interaction, and human dignity. For instance, I show that donors mask their intention to make a donation because they perceive that they would threaten the beneficiary's dignity, in case they revealed their intention to make a donation.

Regarding managerial implications, small business owners should give consumers the option to make explicit donations to their business. Through a donation, they would be able to sell a product, destined to the donor, to another customer who is truly interested in it. Furthermore, small business owners should nudge consumers to make implicit donations through products with almost no cost for the company, such as gift cards. Gift cards would allow implicit donors to donate money without redeeming the gift card, whereas business owners would not know if consumers did not redeem the gift card because of an implicit donation, or because they forgot to redeem it.

"References are available upon request."

The Impact of Internet Maven Co-Shoppers on Showrooming Behavior

Abstract

In the contemporary retail landscape, showrooming has emerged as a significant consumer behavior. This study delves into the largely uncharted territory of how internet mavens, individuals with extensive online shopping expertise, influence showrooming behavior. The major objective is to investigate whether the presence of internet mavens as co-shoppers influences consumers to engage in showrooming, the mechanisms underlying this influence, and its implications for consumers and retailers. Adopting a case study approach, this research combines insights from consumer behavior and social influence theory to understand the role of internet mavens in shaping showrooming dynamics. Data will be collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and analysis of online shopping logs, illuminating the complex interplay between online and offline channels in consumer decision-making. The practical implications encompass aiding consumers in making informed decisions about showrooming while offering retailers strategies to adapt to this evolving retail paradigm. Theoretically, it extends our comprehension of social influence dynamics within the digital shopping landscape, offering a novel perspective on the impact of internet mavens on contemporary consumer behavior.

Keywords: Showrooming, Internet mavens, Co-shopper

Introduction

 In today's digital age, consumers have unprecedented access to information and the ability to make informed purchase decisions. One phenomenon that has emerged from this digital transformation is showrooming, where consumers visit physical stores to evaluate products and then purchase them online to find the best deals (Kokho Sit et al., 2018). Nevertheless, an intriguing advancement in this particular context is the involvement of internet experts engaging in co-shopping activities alongside consumers. Internet mavens are individuals who possess a significant amount of knowledge and expertise in the realm of online shopping (Belch et al., 2005). Despite their potential impact on showrooming behavior, this particular aspect of consumer behavior research has not been thoroughly investigated.

The current retail environment is characterized by rapid changes, leading to a notable shift in consumer shopping behaviors. The exclusive reliance on traditional brick-and-mortar stores as the primary shopping destination has been supplanted by the inclusion of the digital realm as an essential component of the consumer purchasing process. Within the present context, the occurrence of showrooming has emerged as a pivotal facet of consumer behavior.

Showrooming is "using the presentation and services of a brick-and-mortar channel but making the purchase through an online channel (Arora et al., 2017) . People do showrooming because they want to find the best deals, which are often at lower prices than what they can get in a store. Customers evaluate products, experience them firsthand, and seek expert guidance from the store personnel (Gensler et al., 2017) . But instead of buying things in stores, these people use their phones or other connected devices to compare prices, read reviews, and then buy things online.

This way of doing business has given retailers both problems and chances. On the one hand, it's a threat to traditional retailers, who have to deal with fewer sales in stores and the need to change how people shop. On the other hand, it gives consumers a powerful tool that helps them make smart decisions about what to buy and find the most competitive prices.

However, amidst this landscape of showrooming, there is one unique aspect that is a relatively unexplored dimension: the influence of internet mavens. These people are not just ordinary online shoppers; they know a lot about how the online shopping ecosystem works. They have a lot of experience and know how to use e-commerce platforms, find deals and discounts, and give other people helpful advice.

The most important question is how the presence of these Internet mavens as co-shoppers affects showrooming behavior. Someone who goes shopping with the main shopper is called a co-shopper (Yim et al., 2014). In other words, do these Internet mavens, with their wealth of knowledge and experience, affect how consumers who showroom make their decisions? And, if so, how does this effect show up?

The goal of this study is to answer these important questions. It tries to figure out what happens when people who know a lot about the internet go shopping with the primary shoppers. Do they

act as sources of information, giving advice and suggestions, or do they use social pressure to get people to act in certain ways? This study will look into these parts to find out how showrooming works in the digital age.

Also, the study doesn't just look into the phenomenon; it also tries to figure out what its findings mean for both theory and practice. By understanding the role of internet mavens' co-shoppers in showrooming, both consumers and retailers can make smart choices about how to deal with this changing landscape. Retailers can come up with plans to improve the in-store experience or use internet mavens' co-shoppers as influencers. Theoretically, this research pushes the limits of what we know about social influence in online shopping, adding to the field of consumer behavior as a whole.

Purpose of Study

The goal of this study is to find out how showrooming changes when Internet Mavens shop with customers. In particular, it seeks to understand whether the consumers are more likely to do showrooming when internet mavens co-shoppers are around, and if so, how this influence manifests and implications for both consumers and retailers.

Research Question

RQ1. How does the presence of internet mavens as co-shoppers affect showrooming behavior among consumers?

RQ2. What are the underlying mechanisms that govern this influence?

Background of Study

People are more likely to do showrooming now that online shopping is becoming more popular and smartphones are everywhere. People go to stores to check out products, and then they use their phones to compare prices and buy things online. This has changed the way stores usually do business and forced brick-and-mortar stores to change. Even though showrooming has been studied a lot, the influence of internet experts as co-shoppers is still not well known. Internet experts know a lot about online shopping, which makes their effects on how people act an interesting topic to study.

Model

The study uses a theoretical framework that brings together parts of consumer behavior theory and social influence theory. It says that when internet mavens co-shopping with consumers, they can influence them both in terms of informational and normative social influence on the latter. This can cause consumers to change how they shop in showrooms. Informational influence happens when people ask internet mavens for advice or information. Normative influence happens when people want to act like the rest of the group, in this case the internet maven co-shopper.

Methodology

In this study, a case study research approach is used to address the research question. A case study is a way to do research that gives you a deep, multifaceted understanding of a complicated issue in its real-world setting (*Case Study Research and Applications Sixth Edition*, n.d.) . Multiple case studies will be conducted with people who are engaged in showrooming and internet experts who shop with them. A mix of in-depth interviews, observations, and an analysis of online shopping logs will be used to get information about how showrooming works when internet experts are around. The study will also look at how internet mavens co-shoppers affect how people evaluate products, compare prices, and decide what to buy when they are showrooming.

Practical Implications

Understanding how internet experts affect showrooming behavior can be useful for both shoppers and stores in a number of ways. This study will give consumers more information about the pros and cons of co-shopping with internet experts. This will help them make better decisions about when and how to do showrooming. For retailers, the findings may suggest strategies to mitigate showrooming or capitalize on it by improving the in-store experience or forming partnerships with internet mavens to influence consumer behavior positively

Theoretical Implications

This study adds to the literature on consumer behavior by introducing the concept of "internet mavens" as "co-shoppers" and looking at how they affect "showrooming" behavior. The research will grow our understanding of how social influence works in the context of showrooming and extend the application of social influence theory in the digital shopping environment. Additionally, it will provide insights into the complex interplay between online and offline channels in the consumer decision-making process.

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LIMITED EDITION PRODUCTS AND CONSUMER ANXIETY

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Keywords: Consumer anxiety, Limited edition, Product scarcity, Self-perception, Promotion strategy

Description: This study explores how providing limited-edition products reduces consumer anxiety and improves well-being, contributing to knowledge on using marketing strategies to benefit consumers emotionally.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Persistent experience of anxiety has become a global issue (Taylor & Asmundson, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic increased anxiety disorders by 25% (WHO 2022). In the U.S alone., anxiety exerts its impact on 40 million adults annually (ADAA 2022). What's worse, it can cause diminished well-being and disability (Beurs, Beekman, Van Balkom, Deeg, Van Dyck, and Tilburg 1999). Scarcity has been proven as one of contributing factors to stress and anxiety (Hinkle 1973; Perlow 1999; Roxburgh 2004; Etkin et al. 2015). In marketing, companies utilizing time or quantity scarcity (e.g., limited-edition products) as promotion strategies are not rare (Wu and Lee 2016; Balachander and Stock 2009; Cialdini 2008). Although limited edition is often used to increase profits (Balachander and Stock 2009), having access to limited-edition products could also influence how consumers view themselves. For example, limited edition can engender exclusivity and scarceness, which can satisfy consumers' need for uniqueness and differentiation from others

(Wu and Lee 2016; Chan, Berger, and Van Boven 2012). Moreover, obtaining scarce limited-edition products may also provide a sense of control because one source of power is the ability to control and allocate scarce resources (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, and Magee 2003). Given the unneglected anxiety problem and the potential of limited edition to affect self-perception, the research question of this study is whether providing an opportunity to obtain limited-edition products will influence consumers' anxiety level.

Method And Data

This study (n = 200) employed 2 (limited- edition: yes vs. no) by 2 (determining factor: by-choice vs. by-chance) between-subject design. In the yes-limited-edition conditions, participants saw a coupon for A Free Bag of Chips from Six Flavors and a Chance to Try the Limited Edition. We presented six different flavors in the coupon. One of the six flavors was marked and highlighted as a "limited edition". In the no-limited-edition conditions, participants saw a coupon for A Free Bag of Chips from Six Flavors. We presented the same six different flavors, but none was marked as a limited edition.

In the by-chance condition, participants were asked to scratch the coupon to reveal the favor they would receive. In the by-choice condition, participants were asked to choose the flavor they liked. Participants' attitudes toward the coupon were measured by a 6-item seven-point scale, and their general anxiety level was measured with an established 7- item four-point scale (Spitzer, Kroenke, Williams, and Löwe 2006). The two-way ANOVA analyses indicated a main effect of limited-edition on anxiety, such that consumers in the limited-edition conditions (M = 1.72, SD = .74) reported a significantly lower general anxiety level than those in the no limited-edition conditions (M = 2.08, SD = .87; $F (1, 195) = 9.35$, $p = .003$). No main effect of determining factor ($p > .60$), or interaction of the two were found ($p > .20$).

Summary of Findings

In sum, we found that consumers who have an opportunity to receive a limited-edition

product (vs. no limited-edition), report a lower level of general anxiety. The effect holds when they receive the limited edition by chance or by their own choice. These findings can help marketers leverage product package designs while benefiting consumers' well-being. One limitation of this study is that we have not tested the underlying mechanisms of why the presence of limited-edition could reduce general anxiety levels. We plan to test it in the next study with a real shopping environment.

Statement of Key Contributions

The purpose of this study is to explore strategies marketers can leverage to improve consumers' well-being. Specifically, we focus on a factor that negatively influences consumer well-being: anxiety, as it has become a global concern in recent years. Specifically, we propose and demonstrate a marketing strategy that can reduce anxiety: providing consumers with opportunities to obtain limited-edition products (vs. not providing that opportunity). Our study contributes to the marketing literature by unveiling a hitherto unexamined facet of limited- edition products: the potential to ameliorate consumer well-being by mitigating prevailing consumer general anxiety.

From a managerial perspective, this research holds the potential to serve as a valuable point of reference and provide a nuanced view of the factors contributing to product appeal, which can serve as a source of inspiration for designing products while aligning with consumers' emotional needs. From consumers' perspective, the exploration of how limited-edition products influence consumer general anxiety could add to copying literature by showing how product information can help consumers cope with negative emotions. Our study can also serve as a source of inspiration for a research stream on designing products while aligning with consumers' emotional needs.

LOTTERY TICKET WARNING MESSAGES AS MEANS OF INFLUENCING MORE RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING: MERGING THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Keywords: Lottery tickets, protection motivation theory, the integrated model for social marketers, the cognitive model.

Description: We use theory and practice to develop lottery warning tickets for at risk individuals.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: Although playing the lottery is an acceptable form of entertainment for most people, many are harmed by excessive playing, buying when they cannot afford it, having unrealistic expectations of their chances of winning, and/or simply not being able to quit. Because of the harmful effects of lottery ticket consumption for some people, organizations are starting to develop initiatives to inform and help individuals at risk.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the potential efficacy of intervention messaging. We identify existent lottery ticket warning messages and evaluate them with their congruence with relevant theoretical models to propose improvements.

Protection Motivation Theory (a fear model) suggests threat and coping messages. The Integrated Model for Social Marketers ads insights from the Stages of Change Model and marketing. In addition, the Cognitive Model is particularly helpful in this context due to the

numerous cognitive distortions many individuals have, particularly about their chances of winning the lottery.

Method and Data: A literature review was conducted to identify and select theoretical models appropriate to guide communications for lottery tickets harmful consumption. Searches were conducted to identify initiatives aiming at persuading and helping at-risk individuals to change their behaviour in a healthy manner. Social marketing campaign messages were then compared with theoretical paradigms to identify ways in which campaign messages could be improved.

Summary of Findings: Results show campaign messages were relatively consistent with some aspects of the theoretical models. Warning messages provide information that is relevant to the target audience and describe the severity and vulnerability of irresponsible consumption. They also attempt to decrease perceived costs and increase perceived self-efficacy in a variety of ways. Some also attempt to modify cognitive distortions the audience has in respect to chances of winning. However, initiatives should also increase consumers' perceptions of the response-efficacy by emphasizing their agency, and further enhance individuals' perception of self-efficacy by incorporating strategies from the Cognitive Model. Managers responsible for developing warning messages and implementing social marketing campaigns can experiment with the various theoretical approaches to determine which are comparatively more effective for their situations.

Key Contributions: A key contribution is the adaptation of the Cognitive Model and the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy in social marketing campaign communications and warning labels.

Considering the unaffordability of therapy for many individuals, borrowing from this theoretical

knowledge and adapting it to fit on-line communications and warning labeling is significant.

MODERATING EFFECTS OF VARIETY-SEEKING ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SATIATION AND PURCHASE STATUS: LONG-TERM EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF TOMATO PURCHASE BEHAVIOR

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Keywords: Variety-seeking; Satiation; Food; Panel Data

Description: Consumers proactively engage in variety-seeking to delay satiation, and variety-seeking mitigates the negative impact of satiation on their purchasing behavior.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consumers combat satiation from repetitive consumption by seeking variety, a well-established correlation in numerous studies (e.g., Kahn, Kalwani, and Morrison 1986; McAlister 1982). Building on this foundation, Sevilla, Lu, and Kahn (2019) suggest that variety-seeking can occur reactively or proactively in response to satiation. With regard to reactively, consumers seek variety when they feel satiated to mitigate satiation, while concerning proactively,

consumers employ variety-seeking to delay satiation (Sevilla, Lu, and Kahn 2019).

Despite these insights, limited attention has been devoted to understanding the interplay between satiation and variety-seeking, particularly in consumer purchasing behavior. The extant body of research is constrained by short-term, laboratory-based examinations (Zhang 2022; Sevilla, Lu, and Kahn 2019). To address this research gap, this study utilizes long-term panel data to empirically analyze the relationship between satiation and variety-seeking, addressing the primary research question:

Does the extent of variety-seeking behavior differ among consumers, depending on their satiation level?

Furthermore, the impact of satiation on purchase behavior is acknowledged (Becerril-Castrillejo and Muñoz-Gallego 2022), yet the link, especially within the food sector, remains underexplored. Incorporating variety-seeking, the second research question is:

How do consumers' satiation levels influence their purchasing behavior, and does variety-seeking moderate this relationship?

Method and Data

This study comprises two parts - Study 1 explores consumer variety-seeking behavior across diverse satiation levels, while Study 2 investigates how variety-seeking behavior moderates the relationship between satiation and purchase status.

Focusing on the food category, which is favorable for measuring variety-seeking behavior due to its high consumption frequency and low switching costs (Tang and Chin 2007), the study utilizes panel data from the Rural Development Administration of South Korea, covering

grocery shopping information from January 2015 to December 2021. After removing outliers, 915 households were analyzed. Tomatoes, recognized for their diverse varieties and high consumption, and are among the most species-diverse fresh product items in South Korea (Lee, Moon, and Jeong, 2022), serve as a suitable context for investigating variety-seeking behavior.

Variable Description

1. Satiation

This study focuses on physiological satiation, characterized by exceeding one's desire and experiencing reduced enjoyment (Redden and Galak 2013). A prior study indicates that higher consumption quantity in a shorter time intensifies satiation, allowing its quantification through consumption per unit period (Sevilla, Lu, and Kahn 2019). Thus, the satiation level is measured using tomato purchase amounts per unit period, excluding 2021 data.

2. Variety-seeking

Variety-seeking is defined as the tendency to switch between different options within a specific category (Givon 1984). This study quantifies variety-seeking by counting the number of times each consumer switched tomato breeds from their prior purchases, excluding 2021 data.

3. Purchase status

Determining purchase status relative to each purchase history is crucial. Purchase status is defined as the difference between the purchase amount in 2021, the last year of data, and the average purchase amount over the past six years.

Summary of Findings

In Study 1, the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) model assessed the impact of satiation levels

on variety-seeking behavior, controlling for demographic variables. Three groups were identified: satiation-high (top 30%), satiation-low (bottom 30%), and satiation-moderate (remaining 40%). The results showed a significant effect of satiation level on variety-seeking behavior ($F_{(2,907)} = 361.355$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.443$). Specifically, the satiation-high group showed lower variety-seeking ($M = 9.73$, $SE = 0.712$) compared to the satiation-medium ($M = 35.66$, $SE = 0.717$) and satiation-low ($M = 21.76$, $SE = 0.599$). Notably, the satiation-low group exhibited the highest degree of variety-seeking among the tested groups.

In Study 2, the effects of satiation levels on tomato purchase amounts were explored using a multiple linear regression model. It also investigated how variety-seeking behavior moderates the relationship between these factors. The findings revealed that consumers' satiation level and their purchase status had a negative relationship ($\beta = -0.231$, $p<0.003$). The variety-seeking level had a negative moderating effect ($\beta = 0.006$, $p<0.023$), indicating that consumers' variety-seeking behavior mitigates the impact of lower purchases as their satiation level increases.

Collectively, Study 1 indicated that the lower the satiation level, the higher the variety-seeking. Thus, tomatoes appear to be a category where consumers proactively engage in variety-seeking behavior to delay satiation before they become highly satiated rather than reactively. In Study 2, the results reveal the role of variety-seeking behavior in mitigating the negative effects of satiation on purchase status.

Statement of Key Contributions

1. Empirical analysis of variety-seeking behavior

Departing from previous research, which predominantly relied on short-term and laboratory-based studies, this study adopts an empirical approach to analyze variety-seeking behavior.

Acknowledging the crucial role of purchase history in prompting variety-seeking behavior (Tang and Chin 2007), this paper applies a data-driven approach using consumer panel data. The extensive dataset provides a comprehensive understanding and empirical validation of the interplay between satiation, variety-seeking, and purchase status, validating these dynamics.

2. Verification of the dynamics between variety-seeking and satiation

Expanding the concept that consumers exhibit variety-seeking behavior either reactively or proactively in response to satiation, this study empirically confirms that consumers adapt their variety-seeking behaviors based on their levels of satiation. This yields essential insights into consumer decision-making processes, emphasizing the intricate relationship between variety-seeking and satiation.

3. Strategic implications for encouraging variety-seeking

Aligning with the research of Becerril-Castrillejo and Muñoz-Gallego (2022) in the hospitality sector, this study underscores the strategic significance of promoting variety-seeking behavior. Furthermore, the focus on the food category calls for a strategy within the food industry that encourages variety-seeking, fostering category growth by delaying satiation.

References are available upon request.

MORE EMPLOYEE ENDORSERS, MORE PERSUASIVE? CUE OF EMPLOYEE ENDORSER QUANTITY, SMILE INTENSITY AND PHOTO STYLE AFFECT SERVICE ADVERTISING PERSUASION

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Keywords: smile intensity, warmth perception, competence perception, collective employee endorsement

Description: This research posits that displaying collective employee endorsement, as opposed to solo employee endorsement, enhances perceived service competence, ultimately leading to higher expected service quality and intention to use the service, with smile intensity and photo style identified as key boundary conditions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Service firms often present employee portrayals to enhance service tangibility and facilitate consumer evaluation in the pre-purchase phase of the decision-making process (Mittal, 1999). This research poses an unexplored question: Will an image showing collective employment endorsement (i.e., displaying multiple employees in an ad) be more persuasive than solo employee endorsement?

Prior research suggested that consumers generally value competence more than warmth in human-to-human service encounters (Güntürkün, et al., 2020). Competence is usually expected to produce superior results in team than individual performance (Offermann et al., 2004). It is expected that displaying collective employee endorsement enhances service competence and lead to higher expected service quality and stronger intention to use the service.

We propose employee's smile intensity as a boundary condition. Broad (slight) smiles enhance warmth (competence) judgements regarding the expresser (Wang et al., 2017). Competence and warmth are two opposite stereotypes of social perception (Cuddy et al., 2008). It is possible that showing broad (vs. slight) smiles of multiple employees will reduce consumers' perceptions of service competence. We further propose the advantageous advertising effects of collective (vs. solo) employee endorsement only work when a professional portrait is used, but not when a working photo is used.

Method and Data

Three studies and one study on empirical data were conducted. In Study 1, a one-factor (employee endorsement: collective vs. solo) between-subjects design was used. Service competence and expected service quality served as the dependent measures.

In Study 2, a 2 (employee endorsement: collective vs. solo) x 2 (smile intensity: broad smile vs. slight smile) between-subjects design was conducted. Willingness-to-pay (WTP) served as the dependent measure.

In Study 3, a 2 (employee endorsement: collective vs. solo) x 2 (photo style: professional portrait vs. working photo) between-subjects design was conducted. Participants' intention to use the service was assessed with the same three items used in Study 1 and served as the dependent measure.

Study 4 was conducted to replicate the results found in Study 3 through empirical testing on online ads across medical clinics in the United States. The data included medical service sectors such as aesthetic medicine, dentistry, dermatology, mental health, ophthalmology, and pediatrics. Employee endorsement and photo style were coded as independent variables. We analyzed the average visiting time for each ad.

Summary of Findings

In Study 1, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that participants who saw the ad with collective employee endorsement reported higher expected service quality and stronger intention to use the service. The serial mediation analysis (Model 6 in PROCESS with 5,000 resamples) (Hayes, 2015) showed service competence and expected service quality as sequential mechanisms. Study 2 showed that the positive effect of collective (versus solo) employee endorsement is diminished when employees show broad smiles in the ad. Study 3 identifies photo style as the other moderator that a working photo reduces the differences of advertising persuasion caused by collective and solo employee endorsement. Study 4 replicates the results found in Study 3. The results of a simple slope analysis in Study 4 revealed that when the ads featured professional portraits, employee endorsement positively affected the average time

visitors spent on the web page. However, when the ads presented working photos, no significant relationship between employee endorsement and the average time spent on the web page was found.

Key Contribution

The current work contributes to employee endorsement literature by demonstrating that changes in quantity of employees (i.e., collective vs. solo) could make a difference in advertising persuasion. We provide insights into the unique process of service competence in affecting consumer's intention to use the service. We show that "the more the better" lay belief may affect advertising perceptions and enhance consumers' expected service competence. In addition, our results show that the advantageous effects of collective employee endorsement disappear in the following two conditions: employees show broad smiles or the working photos are presented. Furthermore, our research is the first one to examine the differences between professional portrait and working photo. Despite the prevalent use of these two images in service advertising, there is little guidance regarding the effectiveness of variations within these two images. The advantageous effects of collective (vs. solo) employee endorsement are found to disappear when a working photo is presented.

From a practical standpoint, our findings can help guide managerial decisions regarding whether multiple employees are more persuasive or become less persuasive. In particular, advertisers should be advised to utilize professional portraits of multiple employees in communications for services with cautions of smile intensity and photo style.

References are available upon request.

NEED FOR UNIQUENESS INCREASES PREFERENCE FOR UNCERTAINTY:

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY

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Keywords: need for uniqueness, uncertainty, preference for uncertainty, cognitive flexibility.

Description: This research identifies (trait and state) need for uniqueness (NFU) as a critical factor in promoting consumer preference for uncertainty in consumption settings.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Despite the notion that people are generally aversive to uncertainty, consumers are often attracted to product offerings that involve uncertainty (e.g., blind and subscription boxes, uncertain discounts, lucky draws, lucky money packets, etc.). Although previous research has provided critical insights into decision-level factors influencing consumer avoidance of uncertain prospects, little is known about individual-level factors that predict consumer preference for uncertainty. This is an important question because considerable heterogeneity can exist regarding consumer response to uncertainty, and companies nowadays have the motivation and capability to strategically target profitable consumer segments responsive to uncertainty-based marketing campaigns.

This research identifies (trait and state) need for uniqueness (NFU) as a critical factor in promoting consumer preference for uncertainty in consumption settings. NFU is defined as the desire to differentiate oneself from others (Snyder and Fromkin 1977). In our studies, uncertainty refers to situations in which consumers cannot accurately know in advance the outcome (e.g., product content or promotional magnitude) of their consumption decisions. We theorize that individuals with higher NFU tend to more readily deviate from conventional thinking and consider multiple alternative ways of problem-solving and decision-making, thereby facilitating cognitive flexibility. This increased cognitive flexibility, in turn, promotes tolerance and preference for uncertainty.

Summary of Findings

The results of 10 studies provide compelling evidence for this theorizing. Study 1A reveals a significant positive association between trait NFU and the choice share of an uncertain price

promotion. Study 1B conceptually replicates this finding by adopting a product-related behavioral proxy for NFU and a different form of uncertainty (blind box). Studies 2 and 3 provide causal evidence for the hypothesized effect of NFU on preference for uncertainty. To examine the robustness and relevance of the findings, Studies 4A, 4B, and 5 test our theorizing across different consumption contexts and different forms of uncertainty by employing managerially relevant manipulations of NFU. Studies 6A-C shed light on the psychological process underlying the effect by demonstrating that higher NFU is inherently associated with greater cognitive flexibility, and that state (trait) cognitive flexibility mediates (moderates) the effect of NFU on preference for uncertainty. Our results also indicate that the observed effect across studies is unlikely to be driven by varying levels of perceived popularity of choice options, or by changes in perceived uniqueness of options, perceived control, or perceived personal luckiness. Our results are robust to different product categories, different types of uncertainty, and different measures of consumer preference.

Key Contributions

This research bridges the NFU literature with the uncertainty literature by documenting a causal impact of NFU on consumer preference for uncertainty. This research represents the first effort to examine individual-level factors in causally influencing preference for uncertainty in consumption contexts. Furthermore, we uncover a novel psychological process underling the above effect. We provide evidence that the effect is at least partially driven by increased cognitive flexibility. Importantly, we demonstrate that the effect cannot be directly attributed to varying levels of perceived popularity of alternatives in a choice set, or attributed to changes in perceived uniqueness of uncertain prospects, perceived control, or perceived personal luckiness. Additionally, in a departure from many previous studies focusing on NFU as a trait-level

boundary condition of a relationship of interest, this work advances the literature on NFU by demonstrating that the influence of NFU goes beyond uniqueness seeking and has a broader influence on consumer judgement and decision making.

This work offers guidance to managers that they can leverage NFU to promote the effectiveness of uncertainty-based marketing campaigns. Companies can either situationally activate consumers' NFU using appropriate marketing communications or directly target individuals with higher trait NFU using consumer data and artificial intelligence technologies.

New Nutritional Label Effectiveness: The Case of the Inclusion of Added Sugar Daily Value on the Nutritional Facts Panel

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Keywords: Nutrition label, Added Sugar, Guilt, Difference-in-Difference, Experiment

Description: Added sugar information on the nutrition label is effective on consumer purchase behavior only when the %DV of added sugar exceeds the recommended level.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Research has shown that added sugar in foods significantly contributes to obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. It is necessary to motivate both food manufacturers and consumers to decrease the usage of added sugars in food processing and consumption. In 2016, the FDA announced a mandatory modification to the nutritional facts panel, which separated added sugar details – i.e., the quantity of added sugar (in grams) and its corresponding % daily value (DV), from the total sugar content. This change was implemented to differentiate between natural sugars and sugars added during food processing. We explore whether the additional information pertaining to the added sugar content and/or its corresponding %DV impacts consumer choice behavior. Specifically, the main research questions are: 1) is the inclusion of added sugar information effective in changing consumer behavior? 2) what is the primary underlying mechanism of this effect? We propose that the %DV offers contextualized meaning to the food's

nutritional value. When the %DV exceeds the recommended level (i.e., %DV surpasses 100%), the nutritional information serves as a warning sign for consumers, signaling a potential breach of one's health goals, ultimately discouraging consumers from consuming the food. This effect is expected to be mediated via anticipated guilt.

Method and Data

We used a multi-method approach to address the research questions. In Study 1, we analyzed US soft drink sales data (2014-19) and used a difference-in-difference approach based on the staggered adoption of the new nutritional facts label among established soft drink brands to evaluate the effectiveness of the labeling intervention on volume sales. We delineated the treatment group as products that transitioned to the new nutrition label ahead of the compliance schedule, such as Coca-Cola. Conversely, our control group was identified as a comparable brand within the same product category, which did not undergo the label change until a later date – i.e., Dr. Pepper. Study 2 used an experimental approach to replicate the observed findings. 730 MTurk participants were randomly assigned to a 2 (Amount of Added Sugar: Low vs. High) × 3 (Type of Added Sugar Information: Only Total Sugar Amount in gr., Total Sugar and Added Sugar in gr., Total Sugar and Added Sugar in gr. and its %DV) between-subjects design. Study 3 investigated the main underlying mechanism. 750 MTurk participants were randomly assigned to a 2 (Amount of Sugar: Low vs. High) × 2 (Type of Added Sugar Information: Only Sugar Amount in g, Sugar and Added Sugar in g and its %DV) between-subjects experiment.

Summary and Findings

Across three studies, the findings of this paper reveal a significant impact of the added sugar daily value (%DV) information on consumer attitude and purchasing behavior. Study 1 showed the volume sales of the treated brand with the new label showed a 4% sales decline for the products

where the %DV of added sugar exceeds 100%. The results support our main argument: exceeding the daily sugar intake threshold (i.e., 100%) acts as a deterrent, prompting consumers to refrain from purchasing soda. Study 2 revealed a significant two-way interaction between label format and the type of added sugar information. Post-hoc pairwise comparisons indicated a significant difference in attitude toward product and purchase intention when the %DV information was presented and exceeded 100%. Study 3 replicates these findings and identifies anticipated guilt as the main underlying mechanism. Serial mediation analyses demonstrated that goal inconsistency led to higher anticipated guilt, subsequently influencing negative attitudes toward the product and reduced purchase intentions. Moderation effects were observed, indicating that these serial relationships were more prominent only when the %DV information was presented and exceeded 100%.

Key Contribution

The paper contributes both theoretically and managerially to the understanding of nutritional label effectiveness. First, this study stands out as one of the first studies that empirically examines the influence of the newly updated nutritional facts panel on actual product sales. Previous lab studies have shown conflicting outcomes regarding the impact of added sugar information on label comprehension and consumer purchase intention. The current paper reveals that the inconsistent findings could be attributed to the omission of categorizing products according to their added sugar daily value percentage. Managerially, the paper offers insights for policymakers and food producers on effective nutrition labeling and package sizing strategies. The findings suggest that merely including added sugar information on labels is insufficient to impact consumer behavior for products with added sugar %DV below 100%. Governments should look into changing recommended allowances of serving size on nutritional labels in order to boost the %DV

information and stimulate stronger deterrence of unhealthy foods. Also, findings indicate sales decline for products with added sugar exceeding the %DV, highlighting the need for food producers to explore reformulation with natural sugars or adjust packaging size to stay below the %DV threshold for added sugar.

ONLINE REVIEW HELPFULNESS: THE MEDIATION EFFECT OF COOL AND FUNNY VOTES

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Keywords: Cool votes, funny votes, helpful votes, negative rating deviance, positive rating deviance.

Description: This study demonstrates that the effect of review rating deviance from the norm range on helpful votes is mediated by cool and funny votes, in the context of restaurant reviews.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Online review communities have encouraged users to vote for product reviews using labels such as like, vote up/down, helpful, cool and funny. These feedback systems have been likened to social evaluations that can be utilitarian or hedonic. While utilitarian evaluations (helpful votes) have received wide attention, hedonic evaluations (cool or funny votes) have been scarcely researched. Hedonic reactions represent "the extent to which the reading and understanding of reviews are perceived to be enjoyable in their own right, apart from any performance consequences that may be anticipated" (Liu & Park, 2015). Prior research suggests that emotions or hedonic reactions are important in understanding consumers' product evaluations (Mattila & Wirtz, 2000) and that users seek hedonic information that facilitates decision-making and general behaviors (Atkinson & Kydd, 1997). We propose that the effect of positive and negative rating deviance on review helpfulness is mediated by hedonic evaluations, namely, cool votes and funny votes. Moreover, since cool and funny evaluations capture different consumer emotions

and attitudes (McGraw et al., 2012; Warren & Campbell, 2014), we propose that reviews with *positive* rating deviance will lead to more cool votes and fewer funny votes, while reviews with *negative* rating deviance will have the opposite effect.

Method and Data

We prepared a Yelp dataset of reviews, posted from 2005 to 2019, on all restaurants in a large city area in United States. The data consists of review, reviewer and restaurant information. The review consists of review rating, text, the number of cool votes, funny votes, and helpful votes, among others. The reviewer's information includes the date of registration, name, the number of compliments, the number of friends, whether and when receiving the Yelp Elite badge, among others. The restaurant information includes average review rating, type, among others. This subset contains the total of 194, 695 review records.

Our key independent variable is rating deviance. It is a multicategorical variable, capturing whether the review rating falls into the norm rating range, above it, or below it. We use one standard deviation of the rating valence around the restaurant's average rating to define the *norm rating range*. We define a review with a *negative rating deviance* a review that is more negative than the norm range and a review with a *positive rating deviance* a review that is more positive than the norm range. We also include various control variables in our empirical model such as review age, review length, review readability, reviewer's gender, and number of friends on Yelp.

Summary of Findings

Overall, reviews with a *positive* deviance are more likely to attract *cool* votes, and reviews with a negative deviance are more associated with *funny* votes and helpful votes. Furthermore, empirical findings demonstrate that, in line with prior negativity bias effect, negative (vs. positive) review deviance from the norm range has a stronger impact on helpfulness. More

importantly, this effect is mediated by hedonic evaluations – cool and funny votes – in diverging ways. For instance, when the reviewer has Elite status, all else being equal, a review with *negative* deviance (vs. one within the norm range) directly increases the helpful votes by 15%, while indirectly, the same review decreases the helpful votes by 8% through *cool* votes and increase the helpful votes by 4% through *funny* votes. This presents evidence that omitting this mediation mechanism will lead to two consequences: the impact of negative deviance is greatly underestimated, and the details about the competing mediated effects by cool and funny votes are masked.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our work extends the eWOM literature by exploring readers' hedonic reactions to online reviews. Our main theoretical contribution is to demonstrate that the impact of review and reviewer characteristics on helpfulness is partially mediated by hedonic evaluations, namely, cool and funny votes.

Results show that hedonic evaluations or "review enjoyment" is a more complex phenomenon. The same review may attract more cool votes than funny votes or vice-versa. Reviews that deviate positively from the rating norm range are more likely to receive cool votes. Conversely, reviews that deviate negatively from the norm are more likely to receive funny votes. Overall, in support of a negativity bias, negative (vs. positive) review deviance from the norm range has a stronger impact on review helpfulness.

By providing more ways in which readers can compliment review writers, platforms can increase content generation. Review platform managers can encourage readers to order reviews by cool or funny votes. Our paper suggests that to develop an algorithm to identify cool and funny reviews, platform developers can start with review rating deviance. Current text mining approach is

sophisticated enough to identify sentiments, but rather limited in detecting sarcasm or other figurative speech that signals humorous or cool reactions.

References are available upon request.

PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISM OF CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR IN TRAVEL DURING PRODUCT-HARM CRISES: THE ROLE OF HEALTH BELIEFS AND MENTAL READINESS

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Keywords: product-harm crisis, consumers' beliefs, mental readiness, behavioral intention, health belief model, perceived stigma.

Description: This study aimed to elucidate the psychological process involved in consuming a travel-related product during product-harm crises.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

A product-harm crisis arises when a product causes harm to consumers due to design flaws, production errors, or other factors (internal and external) (Dawar and Pillutla 2000). The impact of a product-harm crisis on consumer behavior can be significant and long-lasting, including reduced sales, negative publicity, increased costs, and legal actions (Borah and Tellis 2016). Since the hospitality and tourism industry frequently offers intangible products, such as experiences and services, a product-harm crisis can damage a brand's reputation and negatively impact consumers' perceptions of a company's service (Cleeren et al. 2017).

A health-related crisis within the hospitality and tourism industry encompasses incidents such as foodborne illnesses resulting from contaminated food at hotels or restaurants, as well as contagious disease outbreaks on cruise ships that can be traced back to the company's facilities or

services. These crises fall under the category of product-harm crises, given their detrimental effects on the industry. Irrespective of their classification, health-related crises exert significant negative impacts, including decreased demand for services, heightened scrutiny of safety and hygiene protocols, and shifts in consumer preferences and behaviors (Pan et al. 2021a). Consequently, health-related crises have garnered increasing attention from scholars in recent years, warranting their recognition as a distinct subset within the broader realm of product-harm crises within the hospitality and tourism industry.

Method and Data

The primary objective of this study is to verify the validity of the proposed BMRI model. To ensure the broad applicability of this theoretical framework, the target population was defined as all individuals who have had at least one travel experience. To recruit study participants, U.S. traveler panels were engaged using Qualtrics, a widely recognized online survey platform that has been frequently utilized in social science research to reach diverse groups of people with a variety of demographic profiles. A total of 1,641 valid responses were collected and included in the following analyses.

To validate the proposed structural model, a three-step data analysis approach was employed using both SPSS v.29 and R-4.2.2. First, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to investigate the factor structure of the measurement instruments. Second, the reliability and validity of the measurement model were assessed by performing a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Finally, a structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis was performed to evaluate the proposed model. The goodness-of-fit of the proposed model was assessed using appropriate model fit indices, and the path coefficients were examined to test hypotheses.

Summary of Findings

This study aimed to elucidate the psychological process involved in consuming a travel-related product during product-harm crises. Toward this end, the study developed a conceptual framework (BMRI model), which outlines the influence of customers' health beliefs and mental readiness in the decision to consume a travel-related product during a health-related crisis. The study used travel by cruise as the product and COVID-19 as the crisis to test the BMRI model. The study confirmed the mediating role of consumers' mental readiness and examined the direct effects of each factor on consumers' health beliefs. Additionally, the study identified a weak moderating effect of diagnosis status in the relationship between consumers' mental readiness and their intention to travel.

Statement of Key Contributions

The theoretical implications of this study are threefold. First, the development and validation of the BMRI model make a valuable contribution to the fields of consumer psychology and crisis management. Second, this study has identified the mediation effect of consumers' mental readiness on the relationship between their beliefs and behavioral intentions. Third, the study has revealed a weak moderation effect of diagnosis status, which contributes to health-related crisis literature, particularly regarding consumer behavior.

The current research also has managerial implications for the industry. First, the government and other relevant agencies can utilize effective coping strategies to assist individuals and communities in managing the impacts of a crisis, as shown in the results of this study. Second, this study has demonstrated that consumers' assessment of the consequences of a crisis significantly impacts their mental readiness to travel and that their positive travel attitudes are more closely related to risk estimation and perceived barriers.

References are available upon request.

PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS DRIVING THE EFFECT OF FINANCIAL SCARCITY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: AN INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK.

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Keywords: Financial Scarcity, Resource Scarcity, Psychological Mechanisms, Financial Constraint.

Description:

The study addresses the fragmented understanding of the consequences of financial scarcity in consumer behavior by presenting a framework that categorizes and explores diverse psychological mechanisms (cognitive, emotional, perceptual, and motivational) underlying the impact of financial scarcity on thinking, decisions, and consumption, synthesizing insights from various theories and emphasizing the complexity of consumer behavior.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question:

How does financial scarcity, whether real or perceived, impact consumer behavior and what are the underlying psychological mechanisms that explain these effects?

The fundamental research question of this study explores the influence of financial scarcity on consumer behavior and aims to uncover the psychological mechanisms that underlie this impact. Financial scarcity is defined not only by objective resource insufficiency but also by individuals' subjective perceptions of inadequacy in meeting their needs and desires (Hamilton et al., 2019; Sharma & Alter, 2012). The study aims to integrate diverse psychological mechanisms into a unified framework, categorizing them into cognitive, emotional, perceptual, and motivational orientations. By conducting an extensive literature review, the researchers investigate how financial scarcity triggers various psychological processes. We provide a comprehensive understanding of how these mechanisms collectively shape consumers' thoughts, decisions, and consumption behaviors. Additionally, it suggests potential interventions for policymakers and marketers to enhance consumer well-being under conditions of financial scarcity. Future research directions include longitudinal studies, cross-cultural analyses, and investigations into coping strategies employed by individuals facing scarcity-induced mechanisms.

Summary of Findings:

The study presents a comprehensive framework exploring the diverse psychological mechanisms influencing consumer behavior under financial scarcity. We categorize these mechanisms into cognitive, emotional, perceptual, and motivational domains, drawing theoretical underpinning from Reactance Theory, Cognitive Load Theory, Construal Level Theory, and Compensatory Behavior Model. Cognitive mechanisms encompass information processing, attention allocation, and cognitive load, influencing decision-making and consumption (Sarial-Abi & Ulqinaku, 2020; Wang, You, and Yang, 2020). Emotional mechanisms involve arousal, sense of control, and emotional distress, impacting subsequent behavior (Zhu & Ratner, 2015; Yang & Zhang, 2022). Perceptual mechanisms, like optimistic future perceptions and shifts in moral standards, shape

interpretations of financial situations (Sarial-Abi et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2014). Motivational mechanisms include the drive to mitigate perceived financial deprivation and competitive orientation (Roux et al., 2015; Sharma & Alter, 2012). Each category is discussed in detail, covering specific mechanisms within each and their implications for thinking, decisions, and consumption behavior. The study also recognizes the interconnectedness of these mechanisms, highlighting how emotional and cognitive factors can impact perceptual judgments and motivations, influencing subsequent actions. Longitudinal studies can further explore the evolution of these mechanisms over time, while cross-cultural research can investigate variations (Hassan et al., 2022). Assessing coping strategies and refining interventions based on mechanism-specific targeting are suggested for future research.

Key Contributions:

This study enhances our understanding of how financial scarcity impacts consumer behavior holistically, along with how psychological mechanisms related to financial scarcity influence subsequent outcomes in terms of thinking, decision-making, and consumption (Blocker et al. 2023). The study also identifies overarching patterns across mechanisms, enhancing our understanding of the interconnected nature of factors under financial scarcity and paving the way for future research on different customer journey stages by drawing from how these mechanisms affect thinking, decisions, and consumption.

Policymakers can use our framework to look at the underlying mechanisms that drive the behavior of financially scarce consumers and can use it to develop policies that can help alleviate that feeling by looking at the factors driving the effect. Similarly, they can also leverage behavioral insights to design nudges that guide individuals toward beneficial decisions.

As for managers, understanding these mechanisms can guide them in crafting campaigns that resonate with consumers experiencing financial scarcity. Tailoring marketing campaigns to resonate with these strategies can help capture consumers' attention, align with their psychological responses to financial scarcity, and influence their behavior positively.

(References are available on request).

Reality vs. Rhetoric: Prevalence of Country-induced Subjective Language in Online Reviews and Its Impact on Readers

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Keywords: Bias Online Review, Pervasive Feelings Against Countries, Country Induced Reviews.

Description: In this paper, we investigate how subjective languages in online reviews shape prospective readers' opinions about the products.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Online reviews are a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they are blessings if they help customers make more informed decisions and help companies increase their sales. On the other hand, they might mislead customers and damage products' success in the online environment if they suffer from systematic bias. Research on online review bias has predominantly focused on three possible sources of bias as social influence bias, negativity bias, and self-selection bias. Extending these previous studies, the current research investigated the country-induced bias in product reviews when there is a pervasive sentiment against a country in society. Comparing Amazon's product reviews before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, it specifically argues that the pervasive feeling against a country (China in this case) increases consumers' sensitivity to products' country of origin. It also results in more expression of negative feelings about that country (Anti-China sentiment) in the review content. However, if the product quality is acceptable, pervasive feeling against a country will not negatively affect the overall rating of the products originated from that country.

Research Question

1) Do pervasive feelings against countries have impacts on the extend individuals utilize subjective cues when reviewing products? And 2) How do prospective readers evaluate subjective cues to make their judgments about products?

Method and Data

We conducted one secondary data analysis and designed two experimental studies to test the hypotheses. Study one examines whether consumers reflect their sensitivity to country of origin when reviewing products online if they experience a pervasive feeling in favor or against a

country. In addition, two follow up experimental studies jointly examine the impact of subjective language against country of origin in review content on prospective readers' perception of review's creditability, subsequently their attitude toward the brand and purchase intention.

Data for study one: We assembled a dataset of online reviews written for a wide range of products from Amazon product reviews. Particularly, the dataset contains online reviews of products that can be broadly associated with COVID-19 (e.g., hand sanitizer/alcoholic wipes); as well as products that their associations with the pandemic are minimal in the eyes of the public (e.g., mattresses/mattress toppers). We adopted a six-month window before and after the COVID pandemic for data collection. This approach left us with 26,369 reviews. We scraped reviews' text, title, date, and rating and created variables of interest using the collected data. We executed a series of logistic regressions to show the impact of experiencing pervasive feelings against a country on reflection of subjective feeling about products' country of origin (e.g., Zhou, Du, & Cutright, 2022).

Data for study two: Sixty-five undergraduate students took part in this experiment in exchange for course extra credits (31 Female; $M_{age} = 22$). The experiment used a one-factor, three-level (review type: subjective review with country-induced language vs. objective review vs. objective review with info about country). We ran a series of ANOVA tests to analyze the data.

Summary of Findings

The goal of our first study was to examine how online reviews reveal reviewers' subjective feelings toward products' country of origin. We used the COVID-19 pandemic as an event that created pervasive feelings against a country (China). The results corroborate the first hypothesis. We found that reviewers express their feelings about the product's country of origin

more after COVID-19 in comparison to the same time period before the pandemic. In addition, the results indicate a significant increase in the number of reviews that contained Anti-China sentiments after the pandemic. Thus, we conclude that in the presence of pervasive feelings against a country in society, consumers also express their feelings about where products are manufactured in review content. These findings are in line with previous studies that note online reviews may contain subjective language from reviewers with minimum associations with the quality of products (e.g., Chung and Darke, 2006; Yin et al., 2017). We extend this stream of research by showing how shocks to society can trigger consumers' biases when reviewing products.

The second study examined contexts a prospective reader's judgement after reading reviews that contained biased language about a product's country of origin. Previous research showed including subject languages such as personal emptions, exaggerations, and self-enhancing cues in online reviews can affect audience's judgement about the product (e.g., Ivanova et al., 2013; Rocklage et al., 2018). In study two, we shed light on how prospective readers evaluate online reviews with country-induced languages. The results validate the study's hypothesis about backfiring effects of including country-induced languages in the eyes of prospective readers. Indeed, this study reveals that prospective readers interpret subject cues about a product's country of origin as injustice. In such circumstances, they show higher intention to purchase a product with country-biased reviews.

Key Contributions

1) There are concerns about the possibility of systematic biases in customers' product review processes (Moe and Schweidel, 2012). We show that one source of bias in online reviews originates from society, where reviewers are affected by widespread pervasive feelings against a

country. The findings of current research offer a better understanding of how country-induced bias is likely to affect readers' judgments about products.

2) While the majority of research on online reviews finds that negative expressions will lead to negative consumer responses, we highlight a boundary condition for this effect. We show that the mere existence of a subjective review based on a product's nationality can enhance feelings of injustice for the brand, leading to subsequent support behaviors.

3) The current paper answers the research call for providing more insight into pandemic's marketing implications, by investigating one of the research questions about the short-term and long-term impact of the pandemic on consumers ethnocentrism, animosity and product demand (for a more extensive discussion, see Das et al., 2021). We address this call in the literature by showing how the COVID-19 pandemic affected product reviews in online platforms.

REVENGE CONSUMPTION – A LONGITUDINAL DATA ANALYSIS TO MEASURE INDIVIDUAL COMPENSATION AFTER DEPRIVATION

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Keywords: Compensation, Revenge consumption, Panel data analysis, COVID-19

Description: The paper examines whether, why, and for whom COVID-19 restrictions have led to a disproportionate increase in consumption, referred to as revenge, by using a longitudinal dataset collected throughout the duration of the pandemic.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Research has identified "revenge" as the dominant individual behavior following COVID-19 restrictions in several contexts and industries (Lins et al. 2022; Zaman et al. 2021). Revenge describes consumers' attempts to compensate for what was lost during the crisis by increasing their individual consumption behavior. The concept was originally observed in China in the 1980s after China opened its market to international trade, as individuals were deprived of purchasing Western products and wanted to compensate for prior restrictions (Lins et al. 2022). Nevertheless, literature has not yet provided sufficient evidence if, for whom, or why revenge emerged in context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly how deprivation was a

trigger for revenge in China in the 1980s, the present paper examines whether individuals who perceived higher deprivation during the pandemic (e.g., perceptions of more intense restrictions for themselves) may feel a greater need to compensate for these feelings and in turn increase consumption. Accordingly, this paper examines if individuals' perceived deprivation predicts post-pandemic consumption behavior. Additionally, this paper examines if the perceived deprivation affects all individuals equally, or whether specific characteristics or consumptions styles may shape individual reaction.

Method and Data

To examine the effects of interest, we conducted a longitudinal study over four measurement periods during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022). We collected data from the same individuals from Germany in each data collection period ($N = 954$), resulting in a final sample of $N = 3816$ respondents ($M_{age} = 51.25$ years, $SD_{age} = 14.40$ years; 48.4% female). We analyzed the data using a random effects model with time fixed effects to explicitly model the measurement period. We adopted a panel regression approach as it allows us to investigate how individual reactions change over time and, thus, how revenge might have developed over the course of the pandemic.

Summary of Findings

The study demonstrates that individuals who felt more deprived during the pandemic tend to increase their subsequent consumption, thus using it as a coping mechanism. Interestingly, we find this main effect to be significant for the intention to consume products or services that serve a hedonic benefit. Additionally, the results show that the strength of this effect is substantially influenced by the duration of the restrictions, the extent to which an individual

accepted the restrictions or found them to be appropriate, and whether the individual voluntarily restricted their consumption even before the pandemic.

Key Contributions

To the best of our knowledge, the present study is the first to examine the behavioral phenomenon of revenge by using longitudinal data and the corresponding quantitative methods. The results reveal that individuals' perceived deprivation during the crisis is a relevant predictor of subsequent revenge behavior. Moreover, based on interaction effects, we show that in the context of revenge the a) acceptability of the actions that caused the deprivation, b) the duration of the deprivation, and finally c) an individual's consumption style is worth to consider. Overall, the results extend the literature on revenge which was largely based on conjecture and cross-sectional data with a robust and representative longitudinal data analysis. Subsequently, the results provide important insights for future research approaches to examine current or future incidents associated with consumer sacrifices or restrictions (e.g., due to climate change, civil unrest, or wars) to pinpoint the emergence of revenge. In addition, the observed effects offer an opportunity for decision-makers in society and politics to counteract post-crisis compensation by explicitly stressing the relevant boundary conditions.

References are available upon request.

SHAPING E-COMMERCE EXPERIENCES: UNRAVELING THE YOUTH CONSUMER JOURNEY IN A DEVELOPING NATION

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KEYWORDS: customer behavior; emotional intensity; satisfaction; complaint; service quality

Description: This longitudinal study examined the relationship between service quality (SQ), customer satisfaction (CS), and consumer behavior in an online shopping environment, emphasizing the youth of the developing country. This study also measured the moderating effect of emotional intensity (EI) on the association between customer loyalty (CL), repurchase intentions (RPI), and recommendation intention (RI), has received less research attention.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions:

Firms of all stripes recognize that retaining satisfied customers in the current cutthroat and digital market relies on delivering exceptional customer service. Therefore, this study answered the following research questions. *RQ1:* What is the impact of SQ on CS in the context of online buying? *RQ2:* What is the role of CC between CS and CL? *RQ3:* What is the influence of CS on consumer behavior of repurchasing and recommending?

Method and Data:

A research model was developed and tested using two phases of customer data (n=331) collected from Pakistan. The researchers employed the method of computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI), in which participants are tasked with completing a survey via a computer without the physical presence of an interviewer, in two phases.

Summary of Findings:

The results show that in the online shopping environment, the dimension of SQ significantly enhances CS, which leads to the development of customer loyalty (CL). The mediating role of customer complaint (CC) has been identified in the relationship between CS and CL. Furthermore, it was found that the significant connection between CL, repurchase intention, and recommendation intention was moderated by emotional intensity (EI).

Key Contributions:

The findings will help companies in developing countries build long-term growth strategies by understanding the complex relationships between SQ, CL and CS that facilitate their buybacks and recommendations to others. The study also guides online marketers and practitioners in developing marketing and retail strategies.

SOME SWEETS KEEP DISEASES AWAY? DISEASE CUES ENHANCE CONSUMPTION OF SWEETS

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Keywords: vicarious experience, sweets consumption, disease cues, conceptual metaphor theory, cognitive reappraisal

Description: This research investigates how exposure to disease cues influences subsequent sweet consumption in three experiments, exploring the main effect of disease cues and considering two boundary conditions—metaphor for sweets and cognitive appraisal.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Recent studies have demonstrated that exposure to disease-related cues carry over into other contexts and unrelated behaviors (e.g., preference for atypical over typical products [Huang and Sengupta 2020]; pattern-seeking choice [Park et al. 2022]). Jointing this important stream of research, this article pursues research questions: will exposure to disease cues prime a desire for sweet foods, by eliciting vicarious experience contagion of pain and prompting thoughts about bitterness, and subsequently increase the propensity to show compensatory consumption by choosing a sweeter food option?

We further propose that the *metaphor for sweets* and *cognitive appraisal* as two boundary conditions. Drawing on the conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), we suggest that metaphors for sweets ("romantic love and sweetness" and "sweets are not healthful") will dilute the association with bitterness caused by the disease cue. Cognitive reappraisal is one common regulation strategy to avert negative emotions (Kemp et al. 2020). If reminding people that it is okay to feel negative emotions help them to stay focused, people will adjust the entire emotional sequence before emotional reactions are completely produced. Cognitive reappraisal was expected to reduce and down-regulate negative emotions evoked by the disease cue, and then reduce consumer's subsequent sweet consumption.

Method and Data

Three studies were conducted. Study 1 was an online experiment with a one-factor (disease cue vs. non-disease cue) between-subjects design. We expected that the consumption of sweets was more likely to be evoked by the disease cue than the non-disease cues. Willingness-to-pay (WTP) for the bucket of caramel popcorn served as the dependent measure of sweet consumption.

Study 2 was conducted to examine whether evoking metaphors for sweet consumption (i.e., chocolate) would reduce the effects of disease cue. A 2 (disease cue: disease cue vs. non-disease cue) x 3 (metaphor for sweets: sweets as romance vs. sweets as unhealthiness vs. no metaphor [control]) between-subjects design was conducted. Participants expressed snack preferences through an imagined free voucher, with the percentage of sweets chosen as the dependent measure. Study 3 was conducted to test whether cognitive reappraisal would reduce the effects of disease cue on subsequent consumption of sweets. A 2 (disease cue: disease cue vs. non-disease cue) x 2 (cognitive reappraisal: cognitive reappraisal vs. no cognitive reappraisal [control]) between-subjects design was conducted in a field setting. The snack choice (sweet vs. salty) as a thank-you gift served as the dependent measure.

Summary of Findings

The results Study 1 showed the significant main effect of disease cue on consumption of sweets: participants exposed to disease cue were willing to pay more for the caramel popcorn than those exposed to non-disease cue.

Study 2 showed the significant interaction of disease cue and metaphor for sweets. When no metaphor was provided, the participants in the disease cue condition tended to choose more sweets than those in the non-disease cue condition. No such differences were found when the sweets-as-romance metaphor or the sweets-as-unhealthiness metaphor was presented. Metaphors for sweets reduced the effects of disease cue on the percentage of sweets chosen from the snack list.

In Study 3, we performed a binary logistic regression with *disease cue*, *cognitive reappraisal*, and *disease cue x cognitive reappraisal* as independent variables, and with snack choice as the dependent variable. The interaction effect was observed. Furthermore, in the

condition of no cognitive reappraisal, participants exposed to the disease cue were likely to choose a sweet flavor than those exposed to the non-disease cue. Participants showed no such preferences on sweet flavors in the condition of cognitive reappraisal regardless of disease cue.

Key Contribution

Our research contributes to the literature on the impact of disease cues. Disease cues activated the concept of bitterness psychologically. Aligning with the compensatory consumption theory (Rucker and Galinsky 2008), sweets served as a means for individuals to address frustrations. Our study extends existing literature by exploring the influence of disease cues on sweet consumption and introduces the novel notion that conceptual metaphors associated with sweets can mitigate this effect. We reveal that presenting alternative metaphors for sweets can diminish the impact of disease cues, contributing to conceptual metaphor literature. Our findings align with previous research on cognitive reappraisal as an effective emotion regulation strategy, reducing negative emotions and, consequently, mitigating the influence of disease cues on sweet consumption.

Practically, our findings inform marketing strategies, suggesting that disease cues presented in various media can effectively motivate consumers to choose sweets. However, public awareness campaigns and policymakers should highlight the negative impact of disease cues on sweet consumption. Cognitive appraisal and alternative metaphors associated with sweets, such as those related to romance or unhealthiness, emerge as potential strategies to break the spell of disease cues on consumers.

References are available upon request.

The Brand: How the Definite Article 'The' Affects Brand Names

English encompasses over a million distinct words. Among them, the most frequently used word is the definite article 'the' (Betts 2021). However, despite its extensive use in communication, it is largely absent in branding, particularly concerning a brand's most essential linguistic communication—its brand name. Few prominent brands employ a definite brand name, and many of those that initially did intentionally dropped the definite article as they expanded (e.g., *The Facebook, The Gap*). Simultaneously, definite brand names remain prevalent among smaller, local, and independent brands (Kliman 2015). What underlies this inconsistency? Even more compelling, could simple adjustments to a brand's name affect its perception and performance? Can something as basic as the definite article 'the' influence a brand's success?

The definite article 'the' serves to highlight the distinct identifiability, familiarity, and prominence of its referent (Epstein 2002). Furthermore, the definiteness of the article establishes a tangible representation of the referent in the receiver's mind (Epstein 2002). In other words, the definite article 'the' takes the abstract brand concept and imbues it with a sense of concreteness. For instance, 'a cat' might denote any cat, while 'the cat' points to a specific, concrete feline.

Prior research on branding has typically found that concrete representations hold appeal for consumers. For instance, suggestive brand names enhance the recall of the primary attribute (Keller, Heckler, and Houston 1998), and descriptive logos enhance brand authenticity (Luffareli, Mukesh, and Mahmood 2019). Similarly, concrete language bolsters consumer attitudes towards brand representatives (Packard and Berger 2021).

Building on past research, our hypothesis posits that definite brand names will be perceived as more concrete representations compared to nondefinite brand names. Consequently,

the inclusion of the definite article 'the' will lead consumers to perceive the brand as more local, unique within its competitive domain, and smaller. This perception, in turn, is expected to correlate with improved performance across indicators such as brand loyalty, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions. We further anticipate that this effect will be most pronounced among individuals with a local mindset (locals), as they are prone to processing information on a more concrete level compared to those with a global mindset (Yang et al. 2019), thus fostering stronger brand-consumer alignment. Additionally, considering brands' potential strategies of either niche market penetration or mass expansion (Shaw 2012, Warren et al. 2018), we predict that definite brand names will enhance the performance of niche brands while potentially tempering the performance of mass-oriented brands.

Initial secondary data studies provide support for the hypothesis that definite brand names are more closely associated with their specific contexts, thus endowing them with a perception of uniqueness and niche appeal (Warren et al. 2018). In Study 1, a dataset comprising 4842 banks within the U.S.A. was utilized. This dataset included the bank name, total branch count, and the number of states where the bank had at least one branch. The prediction was that banks with a definite brand name, labeled as 1, would possess fewer locations and operate in fewer states compared to banks without a definite brand name, labeled as 0. Among the 4842 banks, 555 (11.5%) had a definite brand name beginning with 'the'. A one-way ANOVA conducted on the bank branch count unveiled a significant distinction between banks with definite brand names and those with nondefinite brand names ($F(1, 4831) = 4.528$; $p = .033$). On average, banks with definite brand names had a mere 4.47 branches, contrasting with an average of 17.35 branches for banks with nondefinite brand names. Additionally, banks with definite brand names operated in fewer states compared to their nondefinite counterparts (1.09 vs. 1.37; $F(1, 4831) = 13.646$; p

< .001). These findings held significance even after rerunning the data following a logarithmic transformation to normalize the distribution. Overall, the outcomes from Study 1 suggest that definite brand names remain localized to a greater extent than nondefinite brand names.

In Study 2, a dataset of 7,668 movies spanning the period from 1980 to 2000 was employed. This dataset encompassed variables like the average IMDb score, movie title, genre, film rating, and budget. A linear regression on the IMDb score (ranging from 0 to 10, with 10 indicating the highest rating) was performed, incorporating movie title (coded as 0 for indefinite movie names and 1 for definite movie names), the film's budget, release year, rating (categorical), and genre (categorical). The findings revealed that movies with definite titles (e.g., *The Matrix*) were, on average, rated higher than those with nondefinite titles (e.g., *Jurassic Park*; b = .008, SE = .003, t(5397) = 2.69, p = .007). These results further bolster the idea that movies with definite titles are regarded as more unique and better liked than those with nondefinite titles.

Both studies provide preliminary insights. Subsequent stages of this project will encompass experimental studies to probe the mechanics of concrete representativeness, as well as exploring the influences of consumer local-global mindsets and brand niche-mass strategies.

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THE DARK SIDE OF GOOD DEEDS: HOW COMPANIES' PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES SHAPE CUSTOMERS' BEHAVIOR

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Keywords: pro-environmental behavior, effort delegation, delegability, resolution provision

Description: This research demonstrates that firm's pro-environmental behavior decreases consumer's pro-environmental behavior when two behaviors are directly related (versus indirectly related).

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Over the past two decades, the industry's environmental impacts have become a focus in the consumer markets. It is not surprising that it has become mainstream for firms and brands to employ pro-environmental initiatives in daily business operations. For example, hotels recycle laundry water after washing guests' towels to promote an environmentally friendly stay; restaurants recycle leftovers to cut down on food waste; supermarkets recycle plastic bags to

minimize plastic pollution. It seems a common belief that firm's sustainable initiatives can encourage consumers to follow suit. Counterintuitively, this research challenges this notion and proposes that consumers would be less likely to take their own actions when a firm's and consumer's pro-environmental behaviors (PEB) are directly related. Rather than serving as an influencer to motivate customers to reduce environmental threats, a company's well-intended good deeds may unintentionally turn out to discourage consumers from taking their own good deeds.

Method and Data

Six experiments involving student and online (MTurk) samples were conducted to illustrate that consumers are less likely to engage in PEB (e.g., avoiding single-use plastic bags) when a firm's PEB is directly related to theirs (e.g., recycling plastic bags) compared to when it's indirectly related (e.g., recycling aluminum cans). Studies 1 and 2 show that this effect is mediated by effort delegation, where consumers delegate their effort to reduce environmental threats to the firm when PEB is directly related. Alternative explanations including resource abundance, allocation, profit motive, visibility, incongruent image, and moral licensing were ruled out.

Complementing the mediation analysis, Study 3 tests the delegation mechanism by manipulating the delegability of PEB in a process-by-moderation paradigm. To isolate the driver of the effect, Study 4 adds a control condition showing that it is the firm's direct PEB reducing consumers' PEB (as opposed to the firm's indirect PEB increasing consumers' PEB). To dig deeper into the mechanism, Study 5 demonstrates in a serial mediation that resolution provision precedes effort

delegation in driving the effect. Finally, Study 6 shows that, while consumers do not think much about the wastefulness of their actions on the spot, they do recognize wastefulness in retrospect.

Summary of Findings

When a company or brand shows sustainable commitments and initiatives to the public, it is commonly believed to inspire its consumers to follow suit to take relevant pro-environmental actions. Counterintuitively, this research finds that not all firm's good deeds have the same positive impact. Consumers turn out to be less likely to engage in their own pro-environmental behavior if the firm's sustainable practice is directly related. Moreover, this inadvertent consequence happens because consumers notice that the firm has provided a resolution, so they tend to delegate the effort of reducing environmental threats to the firm. Across six laboratory experiments, this research demonstrates a consistent effect of firm's relative PEB and its mediation, showing the robustness of the proposed theorizing.

Key Contributions

Our research makes three contributions. First, we demonstrate a novel effect of a firm's PEB on consumers' PEB. Specifically, when consumers perceive that the firm's and their own PEB are directly rather than indirectly related, they are less likely to take pro-environmental actions themselves. This effect is counterintuitive as it shows how a firm's PEB might reduce, rather than encourage, consumers' PEB.

Second, we demonstrate a unique underlying process via effort delegation, such that when a firm's and consumers' PEB are directly related, consumers tend to delegate their efforts to the firm thereby reducing the propensity of taking their own actions. Furthermore, we rule out several alternative explanations.

Last, this research has important managerial implications. Our findings suggest that a firm's PEB may lead to unintended consequences. To mitigate this boomerang effect, our findings suggest that the firm should prioritize sustainable initiatives that are indirectly related to consumers' PEB. Furthermore, the firm could be better insulated from the downsides of its action when consumers could not easily delegate their efforts. Overall, this research highlights the potentially negative impact of a firm's PEB on consumers' PEB and helps managers design and implement sustainable initiatives with lasting benefits for the environment.

References are available upon request.

THE DARK SIDE OF ROBOTICS: HOW THE ANTHROPOMORPHISM OF ROBOTS LEADS TO LONELINESS

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Keywords: Anthropomorphism; Robot; Loneliness; Experiential expectation violation; Human supervision

Description: High (vs. low) anthropomorphic robots make loners feel more lonely and lower their attitude toward service robots and company.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The application and popularity of artificial intelligence have become unstoppable especially after ChatGPT launched. As robots become prevalent, customers have to use them frequently in the future. Considering the fate and well-being of humanity, which social groups (e.g., the lonely) will be negatively affected by the spread of robots needs to be addressed. As an emerging group, loners are growing daily, especially in developed countries (e.g., US, EU, UK, and Japan; Barreto et al. 2021). Given loneliness's prevalence and serious consequences, we focus on whether and how loners suffer in the robot trend.

Previous research has shown that anthropomorphism can be an antidote for loneliness. On the one hand, the lonely are more likely to attribute human-like characteristics to non-human objects to satisfy unmet social needs (Bartz et al. 2016; Caruana et al. 2021; Lteif and Valenzuela 2022). On the other hand, engaging or interacting with anthropomorphic products can also satisfy social needs (at least partially) and increase the loner's sense of vitality and self-control abilities (Chen et al. 2018). Contrary to previous intuitions, we propose that the anthropomorphism of robots will fail to meet the social needs of the lonely and increases their loneliness.

Method And Data

We examine the effect through five studies and an internal meta-analysis. Study 1 initially tested the hypothesis in an open environment. We found that the loneliness-enhancing effect of anthropomorphism only worked for loners, not for ordinary people. Study 2 aimed to verify whether the main effect was robust among loners experiencing different spans of loneliness previously. Study 2 set after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and most of the Chinese has been infected with a virus and has experienced isolation. Thus, we test the loneliness-enhancing effect over a shorter (study 2a) and longer (study 2b) lonely spans. The effect was significantly higher than that of low anthropomorphic robot and human attendants. Study 3 explored the mediating effect of experiential expectancy violation through a two-step task. We found that even the high anthropomorphic robot could complete transactional procedures well, loners still perceived experiential expectation violations and felt more lonely. Furthermore, study 4 investigated the downstream results of robot anthropomorphism for loners. We found that robot anthropomorphism predicts loners' lower attitudes towards robot and companies, while the presence of human supervision can act as a mitigating factor. Finally, the combined results show the loneliness-enhancing effect of anthropomorphism through an internal meta-analysis.

Summary of Findings

In the environment of the anthropomorphic robots' trend, how niche and vulnerable group (e.g., loners) can better live is an essential topic for the well-being of humanity. Through five studies, we found that using anthropomorphic robots would lead to unintended negative outcomes. Specifically, anthropomorphic robots cause the loners to be more lonely in one-to-all (Study 1) or one-to-one robot service scenarios (Study 2) and within a shorter (Study 2a) or longer span of transient loneliness (Study 2b). This effect is mediated by the experiential expectation violation (Study 3). Out of a need for social connection, the loners will have higher expectations of anthropomorphic robots (both in terms of agency and experience). But current frontline robot servers can only perform procedural tasks and failure to meet the experiential expectation, which creates an experiential expectation violation for the loners thus making loners more lonely. The effect lowers the attitudes of loners towards robots and company (Study 4). The presence of human staffs can mitigate the loneliness-enhancing effect of robot anthropomorphism, which provides valuable insights for companies regarding the application of robots (Study 4).

Statement of Key Contributions

Theoretical contributions. First, we provide counter-intuitive experiences of loneliness. A large body of research confirms the beneficial effects of anthropomorphism on loneliness, but we find that the anthropomorphism of robots may be counterproductive and make the loners more lonesome. Second, we are the first article to single out experiential expectation violation and test it empirically. We argue that customer expectations of robots can be divided into agency and experiential expectations. And we empirically demonstrate that the violation of experiential expectation than agency expectation mediates the effect of anthropomorphism

on loneliness. Third, we provide novel and important insights into the topic of robotics in marketing. Meanwhile, we contribute to the uncanny valley theory and demonstrate that the anthropomorphism of robots can lead to negative emotions even at an acceptable level.

Marketing Implications. The first is that managers should provide flexible robot provisioning around customers. Although loners are not solitary, providing human services to solo travelers may be a better option, especially in some public areas (e.g., hotels, hospitals, airports). In addition, we find that the presence of human employees is effective in defusing the loneliness associated with anthropomorphism. Second, managers can manage expectations to mitigate the adverse effect.

THE DATES-AND-HOURS FRAMING EFFECT IN TEMPORAL JUDGMENTS

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Description: This paper examines how framing a temporal interval more precisely, with dates and hours (e.g., "from December 1st at 4 p.m. until December 5th at 3 p.m.") versus with dates only (e.g., "from December 1st until December 5th"), affects consumers' perception of time.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

People encounter and evaluate temporal information daily, evaluating product delivery terms, assessing the amount of time until a deadline, or choosing between investment opportunities with different temporal horizons. This temporal information can be presented with varying levels of precision. Yet, extant research has largely focused on the differences in consumer responses to numbers with more versus fewer zeros in the right-most positions (e.g., $200 vs. $203; $5.00 vs. $4.97; Isaac, Wang, and Schindler 2021; Pena-Marin and Bhargave 2016; Thomas and Morwitz 2009; Thomas, Simon, and Kadiyali 2010; Yan and Pena-Marin 2017). This research focuses on a different type of precise framing, wherein smaller units are added to larger units (e.g., from July 1st at 4 p.m. until July 5th at 3 p.m., hereafter referred to as the dates-and-hours framing).

Method And Data

We present six pre-registered studies (N = 3,905) examining how framing a temporal interval more precisely, with dates and hours versus with dates only, affects consumers' perception of time. Study 1 examines whether the dates-and-hours framing changes duration perceptions compared to the dates-only framing. Studies 2A-2C probe the consequences of the dates-and-hours framing effect for time-versus-money trade-offs, work planning, and product preferences. Studies 3A-3B provide process evidence for the effect through moderation and mediation.

Summary of Findings

We demonstrate that consumers perceive intervals framed with both dates and hours to be longer than those framed with dates only. This phenomenon occurs because integrating hour information into overall duration evaluations is relatively challenging, leading individuals to represent temporal intervals as collections of many granular time units under the dates-and-hours framing. Moreover, we show that these effects differ significantly from previously studied numeric precision effects. Specifically, when hour information is conveyed as a decimal fraction of a day (e.g., 4.04 days), the dates-and-hours framing effect diminishes. Lastly, we illustrate that the increase in perceived duration under the dates-and-hours framing can have important downstream consequences for consumers' decisions related to time-versus-money trade-offs, work planning, and product choice.

Key Contributions

Our work contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the cognitive underpinnings of precise magnitude judgments. Several studies indicate that more precise numbers and numeric differences are typically perceived as smaller (e.g., Thomas and Morwitz 2009; Thomas, Simon,

and Kadiyali 2010). However, our research reveals the opposite pattern. Temporal intervals described more precisely with dates and hours are perceived as longer than temporal intervals described less precisely with dates only. This occurs because, in contrast with previously studied forms of precise framing, the dates-and-hours framing involves the processing of magnitudes that combine different units. More generally, the current research outlines the distinct effects of precision communicated through the addition of more granular units to larger units, as opposed to precision communicated via the addition of decimal components to whole units.

THE EFFECT OF CONSUMER STRESS ON UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR

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Keywords: consumer stress, rumination, unethical behaviors, narcissism

Description: This paper investigates the relationship between consumer stress and unethical behavior, with a particular focus on the mediating role of rumination, a self-focused repetitive thought process induced by goal threats.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consumer stress is a widespread issue with significant consequences for organizations and consumers alike. Under stress, people may feel more vulnerable and view their surroundings as increasingly threatening. A loss of control and perception of threat have important consequences for behavior (Cutright, Bettman, and Fitzsimons 2013) because they make individuals prioritize self-preservation and self-interest, thereby placing their well-being above ethical considerations (Kouchaki and Desai, 2015). While emerging literature has explored several outcomes of consumer stress such as saving or impulsive behaviors (e.g., Durante and Laran, 2016; Ruvio et al., 2014), the role of stress in influencing unethical conduct remains underexplored. Therefore, the additional question remains regarding how and under what circumstances consumers engage in unethical behaviors.

Method and Data

We answer our research questions across three studies. In Study 1 (n=215), we conducted a scenario-based experiment to examine the direct effects of consumer stress on their unethical behavior. In Study 2 (n=200), we conducted a survey to examine the effect of consumer stress on rumination. In Study 3 (n=176), we conducted another experiment to test the mediating effect of rumination and the moderating effect of narcissism.

Summary and Findings

Our findings indicate that, when experiencing stress, consumers tend to engage in unethical behavior. This is attributed to the fact that stress prompts consumers to ruminate more on threats and losses, driving them to adopt behaviors aimed at restoring resource losses. In other words, they resort to unethical behavior as it provides immediate rewards. Additionally,

narcissistic consumers, who prioritize their self-interests, exhibit heightened unethical behavior when undergoing rumination after a stressful situation.

Key Contributions

We make several contributions to consumer stress research, unethical behavior research and consumer rumination research. First, we contribute to research on consumer stress that mainly focused on its effect on either decreasing versus increasing consumption (e.g., Durante and Laran, 2016; Ruvio et al., 2014) by providing additional evidence on the dark side of consumer stress by linking it to unethical behaviors. Second, our research extends the current understanding on customer rumination that has primarily focused on its antecedents (Lisjak et al. 2015; Porath, Macinnis, and Folkes 2010; Strizhakova, Tsarenko, and Ruth 2012) by highlighting unethical behavior as an outcome of this internal cognitive process. By so doing, we also answer the call of Rotman, Khamitov, and Connors (2017) for more research on factors driving consumers' unethical behaviors by showing additional situational factors (i.e., stress) and cognitive processes (i.e., rumination) that drive consumers to engage in unethical behaviors. Third, we contribute to research on the effects of narcissim on consumer behaviors (e.g., Bellis et al. 2016; Lambert and Desmond 2013) by showing that it strengthens the relationship between rumination and unethical behaviors.

The Effect of Start/End Temporal Landmarks on

Consumers' Responses to Service Failure

Statement of Key Contributions

Drawing on the literature stream on temporal landmark and service failure, we proposed that compared with an end temporal landmark, a salient start temporal landmark will enhance more negative responses to service failure. However, giving out coupons could lessen the impact of start vs. end temporal landmarks on customers' responses to service failures. Our research contributes to the marketing literature and managerial practice in several ways. First, we extend existing temporal landmark research by examining the effects temporal landmark framing on consumers' responses to service failure. Second, our work contributes to prior research on service failure and forgiveness which has shown that a salient temporal landmark, either standing out naturally on calendar, or framing by marketing practices, can influence consumers' perceptions and responses to service failure. Third, our research demonstrated the consequences of consumers' responses to service failure and provided a marketing strategy to address this negative consequence, which contributes to previous service failure literature. In addition to its theoretical contributions, our research offers valuable insights for marketing managers. Firstly, our study reveals that in industries where service failures are prevalent, increasing the salience of end temporal landmarks could potentially mitigate the impact of service failures on consumers' responses and their subsequent consequences. Furthermore, our

research underscores the effectiveness of utilizing coupons as a recovering strategy in

addressing service failures.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Temporal landmarks refer to those points in time that "stand out more starkly than others on socially shared calendars or personal life timelines" (Dai, Milkman, & Riis, 2014; Shum, 1998). Previous research has shown that temporal landmarks can significantly influence individuals' self-image (Peetz & Wilson, 2014), self-improvement motivation (Dai et al., 2014), and psychological resources allocation (Kouchaki & Smith, 2013). Different from previous research, the current work focuses on start/end temporal landmarks and explores how start vs. end temporal landmarks influence consumers' responses to service failure. A start temporal landmark refers to a point in time that signals the start of a time (such as morning, first day of a month, etc.) while an end temporal landmark refers to a point in time that signals the end of a time period (such as midnight, last day of a month, etc.). We proposed that compared with an end temporal landmark, a salient start temporal landmark will enhance more negative responses to service failure. We provided two reasons to support this hypothesis. First, when a start temporal landmark (for example May 1st) is activated, consumers perceive this time period (the month of May) is brand new and time resource in this period is continuous until the end of this time period. If a service failure occurs at the start temporal landmark, its negative impact will last until the end of the period, increasing consumers' negative responses. On the other hand, if it is an end temporal landmark (for example, May 31st), consumers perceive it as the end of a time period and a fresh time period (the month of June) is coming, offsetting the negative impact of the service failure. Second, people tend to desire self-improvement when a start temporal landmark is activated, making them more sensitive to service failures that could negatively affect their mood. As a result,

consumers have more negative attitudes when experiencing service failure at the start temporal landmark than at the end temporal landmark.

We conducted three studies to examine our hypothesis. In study 1, we examined how different temporal landmarks affect consumer's responses to service failure through a secondary dataset from a Chinese consumer review app "Dianping". We selected top 203 restaurants from Beijing's 16 administrative districts. We collected consumer reviews from each restaurant in the year 2022. We coded the first three days of a month as the start temporal landmark and the last three days of a month as the end temporal landmark. The results showed that compared to the end of a month, consumers wrote down more negative comments at the start of a month ($F(1, 202) = 4.81$, $p = 0.042$).

Study 2 aimed to investigate the effect of start vs. end temporal landmarks on consumer's responses to service failure in a controlled experiment. Unlike study 1, study 2 utilized a different time period (semester). Seventy-six students from a Chinese university were recruited to participate in this study. We presented participants a real news story about the mistakes made by a university president. We asked to imagine themselves as students in the university and evaluate the severity and consequences of the mistakes. The temporal landmark was manipulated by informing participants that the event either occurred at the beginning of the semester or at the end of the semester. Following the PROCESS procedure suggested by Hayes (2017), we found that participants considered the mistakes to be more severe, leading to greater negative consequences if the mistakes occurred during the opening ceremony compared to the graduation ceremony. More importantly, the indirect (mediating) effect was positive and had a 95% confidence interval that excluded zero ($\beta = 0.64$, 95% CI = [0.0271, 1.2514]).

In Study 3, we aimed to examine if giving out coupons could lessen the impact of start vs. end temporal landmarks on customers' responses to service failures. One hundred and eighty-four participants were recruited to participate this study and they were randomly assigned to a 2(temporal landmark: start vs. end) × 2 (recovery strategy: coupon vs. nothing) between-subject experiment. Participants were first asked to imagined that they experienced a service failure in a restaurant at either the last day of August (end temporal landmark condition) or the first day of September (start temporal landmark condition). Then in the service recovery condition, we told participants that the restaurant would offer coupons as the compensation for the service failure, while in the control condition, the restaurant provided nothing. After that, we asked participants to report their likelihood of sharing negative word-of-month (WOM) about the restaurant. Results indicated a significant interaction between temporal landmarks and recovery strategy ($F(1,181) = 4.24$, $p = 0.041$). When the restaurant didn't provide anything to recover the service failure, participants were more likely to share negative WOM at the start of a month than the end of a month, which replicated the results of previous studies ($M_{start} = 4.33$, $M_{end} = 3.54$, $F(1,181)=5.33$, $p < .001$). However, when the restaurant offered coupons as the compensation for the service failure, participants' likelihood to share negative WOM decreased in the both start and end temporal landmark conditions ($M_{start} = 2.98$, $M_{end} = 3.21$, $F(1,181)=0.41$, $p > .05$). More importantly, participants in the start temporal landmark condition were less likely to share negative WOM when they received coupons than those who didn't receive coupons ($F(1,181)=15.13$, $p < .001$).

Our research builds upon previous studies on temporal landmarks and expands the scope of the temporal landmark literature in the context of service failure. Additionally,

we contribute to the temporal landmark literature by examining the impact of temporal

landmarks on consumers' evaluation of negative events. Furthermore, by highlighting the

moderating role of offering coupons as a compensatory strategy, our research provides

important implications for managers who seek to effectively recover from service

failures.

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THE INFLUENCE OF A PERSONALIZED CREDIT CARD DESIGN WITH A FAMILY PHOTO ON CONSUMERS HEDONIC CONSUMPTION

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Keywords: Personalized Credit Cards, Family Photos, Hedonic Consumption, Consumer Behavior, Financial Decision-Making

Description: This study explores the influence of personalized credit cards with family photos on consumers' hedonic consumption patterns.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This research investigates how personalized credit cards featuring family photos affect consumer spending, specifically regarding hedonic consumption. The central question addresses whether the presence of family photos on credit cards influences the tendency to make hedonic purchases. While the impact of credit cards on consumer spending behavior has been widely studied (Feinberg 1986; McCall and Belmont 1996; Raghubir and Srivastava 2008), there is relatively little research on the effects of credit cards' physical appearance on purchasing behaviors. With the importance of the credit card visual design, the current research explores how customized credit cards with photos of consumers families can affect consumption behaviors.

Method and Data

The goals of the first study were two-fold. First, we tested the primary effect that family photo customized (vs. regular) credit cards decrease hedonic consumption. In addition, we tested whether consumer spending behavior moderated the observed effects, such that family photo customized (vs. regular) credit cards decrease hedonic consumption for consumers with low (vs. high) spending. One hundred and forty-one undergraduate participants (74 females; Mage = 22.04, SDage = 2.28) completed the survey for course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to either the family photo or regular credit card condition. Next, Participants reviewed a scenario about a hotel stay, with a choice between two hotels (Roggeveen, Grewal, Townsend, and Krishnan 2015). They responded to the item, "Imagine that you are going on a business trip soon that you will be paying for. Which hotel would you choose out of the two options below for your trip?" (r = -3.08, p < .05). Then, participants responded to a one-item spending behavior measure

on a 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much so) scale: "Would you characterize yourself as a high spender?".
Finally, participants responded to the control question ("Do you have a credit card") and basic
demographic questions.

Summary of Findings

Hedonic consumption was regressed on the credit card type factor (coded as 1 = family photo
credit card, 0 = regular credit card), spending behavior (mean-centered), and their interaction.
Results revealed a negative main effect of credit card type (B = -3.08, SE = 1.44, p = .03). There
was also a significant interaction between the credit card type factor and spending behavior (B=
.14, SE = .16, p = .04). A spotlight analysis at one standard deviation below and above the mean
was conducted. When spending behavior was relatively low, the family photo credit card reduced
the choice of the hedonic hotel option (B = -1.44, SE = .66, p = .03). Conversely, the credit card
type had no significant effect for participants high in spending behavior (B = .26, SE = .52, p =
.61).

Key Contributions

This research contributes to the literature on consumer behavior and financial decision-making by
demonstrating the impact of personalized credit cards on spending patterns. While prior studies
have extensively examined the psychological and behavioral aspects of credit card transactions,
our research introduces a novel dimension by investigating the visual design of credit cards and its
effects on consumer behavior. Using an experimental design, we found that individuals with family
photo customized credit cards exhibit lower hedonic consumption than those with regular credit
card designs. The use of family photos on credit cards may stimulate a salience of family identity.
In particular, this may encourage consumers to make more conservative or responsible purchasing

decisions. our findings hold valuable implications for various non-academic stakeholders engaged with marketing. For-profit firms operating in the financial and credit card industry can capitalize on our insights to develop more effective marketing strategies. Policymakers and governmental agencies, concerned with consumer protection and financial well-being, can ensure that financial products are designed to promote responsible consumption and discourage potentially unnecessary consumption. Furthermore, our research also has the potential to enhance consumer well-being by fostering responsible spending behaviors, reducing financial stress, and creating a more emotionally positive financial experience.

THE INFLUENCE OF PEER PRIVACY CONCERNS ON SNS USAGE PATTERNS: A PRIVACY CALCULUS APPROACH

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Keywords: Peer privcacy concern, self-presentation, active use, passive use, privacy calculus theory.

Description: This study employs a novel dual peer privacy calculus model to evaluate the validity of the privacy cost-benefit tradeoff and its impact on SNS usage patterns.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – Social media thrives on user engagement, but privacy fears can be a roadblock. Users worry about misuse of their data by platforms (institutional privacy) and by other users (peer privacy). Those concerned about platforms might avoid joining altogether, while those wary of other users might limit self-expression. While platform privacy concerns affect adoption, how peer privacy shapes usage patterns is unclear.

This study delves into this gap. Drawing on the idea of weighing costs and benefits, it explores how users decide to actively or passively engage on social media. Peer privacy worries and sensitive information act as costs, discouraging active use like sharing. Conversely, the benefits of expressing oneself and connecting with others motivate active engagement. The study proposes a model encompassing both active and passive use, considering how these costs and benefits influence each type of behavior. By understanding this, we can build platforms that address privacy concerns and encourage meaningful engagement.

Method And Data – To explore the link between privacy concerns and social media use without the noise of age-related factors, this study surveyed university students (n = 394) in Vietnam. Participation was anonymous and voluntary to ensure unbiased responses. Mixed past findings on privacy and behavior could stem from unawareness: if people do not understand the risks and solutions, they may not protect themselves. Prior research suggests older adults might be less familiar with online privacy issues and its implications, potentially influencing their privacy calculus and usage patterns. Focusing on young, tech-savvy students allows us to isolate the core impact of privacy concerns on active and passive social media engagement, independent of potential differences in privacy literacy and technological skills.

Summary of Findings – Our study, unlike past research focused on mere frequency, reveals distinct patterns of SNS use: active (sharing) and passive (consuming). They coexist, not as opposites, but as independent behaviors. Notably, active use thrives on benefits like self-presentation and platform uniqueness, while passive use is driven by privacy concerns like peer scrutiny and data sensitivity. This complexity explains the mixed findings on privacy calculus in

prior research. Our analysis also shows that some users engage in this cost-benefit calculation, while others do not, resolving the apparent contradictions.

Key Contributions – This study sheds new light on the complexities of privacy and social media use. First, it highlights the growing prominence of peer privacy concerns, surpassing generic institutional privacy concerns. Peer privacy concerns, rather than simply discouraging overall use, nudge users towards passive engagement while limiting active sharing. This reveals a nuanced role for peer privacy in shaping behavior beyond simple on/off decisions. Additionally, the study moves beyond gross measures of usage, dissecting active and passive behaviors separately. This unveils distinct driving forces: benefits like self-expression fuel active engagement, while costs like peer concerns steer users towards passive consumption. Notably, passive users are not purely inactive; they selectively engage based on perceived cost-benefits, reflecting the dynamic privacy calculus at play.

The Interaction Effect of Color Tone and Marketing Objectives in Pro-Social Marketing Communications

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Keywords: Color, Tone, Gray, Prosocial

Description: Pure (dull) color tone signals powerfulness (powerlessness), which in turn increases (decreases) self-efficacy and enhances (reduces) prosocial behavior.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Marketers often employ images in prosocial advertisements (Chen, 2020; Septianto & Paramita, 2021). Some images display dull tones (defined as colors mixed with gray), possibly to illustrate the dire condition of the target population, as gray colors are associated with drabness, powerlessness, and depression (Clarke & Costall, 2008; Schauss, 1979). However, other prosocial advertisements portray images with pure tones (pure colors with little-to-no gray). What color tones are more effective in eliciting prosocial behaviors? Given the mixed practices and since the literature so far has not focused on this question, the current research aims to investigate the effect of color tone in prosocial marketing.

We rely on two bodies of research: one suggests that gray color can signal weakness (Clarke & Costall, 2008; Schauss, 1979), the other shows that self-efficacy is fundamental to prosocial behavior (e.g., Kim & Jang, 2018; White, Habib, & Dahl, 2020). Integrating this literature with color theory suggesting that gray is the determinant of color tone (Mollica, 2013; Hagtvedt & Brasel, 2017), we predict that prosocial messages that display pure and grayless (vs. dull and grayed) tones signal powerfulness (vs. powerlessness) and elicit perceptions of higher (vs. lower) self-efficacy, thereby enhancing (vs. discouraging) prosocial behaviors.

Method and Data

Study 1 is an online two-cell (pure vs. dull tone) between-subject experiment. The results showed a significant direct effect of color tone on prosocial behavior, such that pure color tone enhances prosocial behavior (*direct effect* = 5.8805, *SE* = 2.6548, 95% CI [.6449, 11.1160]). The results also confirmed a significant indirect effect of color tone on prosocial behavior via the two serial mediators (*indirect effect* = 1.7508, *SE* = .7470, 95% CI [.5066, 3.3961]).

Study 2 is a field experiment to test that pure color tone leads to an increased pro-social behavior. We collaborated with an animal shelter in an urban town in North America. The animal shelter management was interested in raising funds by using Facebook advertising. We created two types of advertisements, one used dull tone and the other used pure tone. The results showed that the pure tone advertisement elicited higher pro-social behavior than the dull tone color.

Study 3 is a field experiment to test that pure color tone leads to increased engagement of pro-social marketing communication. We collaborated with the same animal shelter with the campaign goal of promoting engagement. Results showed that the dull tone advertisement elicited higher engagement than the pure tone color.

Summary of Findings

An online experiment and two field experiments suggested that pure color tone images increase prosocial behavior actions, whereas dull color tone images increase consumer engagement in prosocial marketing communication. The results also revealed that this effect is mediated by the signaling effect of color tone, such that dull tone signals powerlessness, whereas pure tone signals powerfulness. The findings were robust across various contexts, images, color hues and prosocial behaviors.

Statement of Key Contributions

Color is one of the most powerful elements of sensory marketing (Khalil, Chatterjee & Cheng, 2023). A nascent stream of literature has begun to examine different aspects of color. However, the effect of color tone – the amount of gray in the color – has been so far overlooked. To our best knowledge, this work is the first to investigate the effect of color tone (the amount of gray mixed in a pure color) in marketing. We suggest a link between color tone and a prominent antecedent of prosocial behavior, making color tone an important role player in exploring prosocial marketing design.

This research contributes to the color literature by focusing on prosocial behavior. Prior literature mainly focused on consumer goods (for a review see Labrecque, 2020), but less attention has been devoted to prosocial contexts. The current work paves the way for future investigations into the effect of color in prosocial behavior.

Practically speaking, this research suggests that adjusting the image color tone is an easy, cost-effective, and socially responsible approach to enhance the effectiveness of promoting

prosocial behavior. It also emphasizes that companies should consider the objectives of the

marketing communication when designing the image color.

The Spokesperson-Brand Image Congruency Effect on Brand Evaluation

Statement of Key Contributions

Drawing on the literature stream on stereotype content model and sports endorsement, we theorize a sports endorser - brand image congruency effect. Specifically, for a single athlete endorser, highlighting a competent image rather than a warm image will increase consumers' information processing fluency and brand evaluation. However, for a team endorser, highlighting a warm image rather than a competent image will increase consumers' information processing fluency and brand evaluation. Thus, our research provided a new congruency effect that could influence consumers brand evaluation. This new congruency effect, i.e., sports endorser - brand image congruency, is about two important brand attributes, which indicates a new perspective to explore the variables that influence consumers' brand evaluation. Second, our research contributes to the stereotype content model. Previous research demonstrated that consumers perceive the brand through two fundamental dimensions: warmth and competence. Different from previous research, our paper tests how other brand attributes, such as sports endorsers, moderate the warmth/competence of the brand image in brand evaluation. Third, our research also demonstrates a new antecedent of information processing fluency, i.e., sports endorser-brand image congruency. Expect theoretical contribution, our research also

provided implications for marketing managers. First, our research demonstrated that

the designing brand's image should match its endorser. Also, our research

demonstrated the proposed sports endorser-brand image congruency effect exists for

both women's sports events and men's sports events.

Endorsements play an important role in marketing communications (Steven D'Alessandro & Bill Chitty, 2011). Consumers rely on the endorsers to infer brand image (Batra et al., 2004), brand quality (Özer et al., 2022), and brand attitude (Pradhan et al., 2022). While extensive studies have examined the magnitudes and mechanisms of endorsement effects, little has been understood about how this information influences the impact of other brand attributes on brand attitude. The present research aimed to close this gap by proposing a sports endorser-brand image congruency effect on brand attitude and identifying the underlying mechanism from a processing fluency perspective.

We proposed that a single athlete matches more with a competent brand image, while an athlete team matches more with a warm brand image. Individual athletes emphasize personal abilities. Thus, an individual athlete's exceptional sporting prowess and professional excellence can propel him or her to a leading position. Conversely, team sports prioritize teamwork and collective cooperation. Consequently, fostering a healthy relationship among athletes becomes paramount. Based on the stereotype content model (Kervyn et al., 2012), competence is linked to efficiency, intelligence, and skill; warmth is thus linked to friendliness, sincerity, and trustworthiness. Thus, a single athlete matches more with a competent image, while an athlete team matches more with a warm image. As a consequence, consumers feel more fluent when processing a competent (warm) ad with an individual athlete endorser (or an athlete team endorser). As previous research has demonstrated that

individuals often misattribute enhanced processing fluency to liking (Bi et al., 2021), we suggest that this fluency should increase brand attitudes.

We present three studies to test the proposed spokesperson-brand image congruency effect. Studies 1a and 1b help establish the match between spokesperson and brand image. In study 1a ($N = 140$), we asked participants to imagine themselves as a broker for either a female basketball player or a female basketball team. We asked participants to make a choice between two potential endorsed brands: one brand highlights its warm image, which brings consumers a feeling of warmth, friendliness, and caring; another brand highlights its competent image, which brings consumers a feeling of talent and capability. Results of a chi-square analysis indicated that when imagined as a broker of a single player, participants were more likely to choose the competent brand than imagined themselves as a broker of a basketball team (70.27% vs. 53.03%, $\chi^2(1) = 4.41$, $p = .036$). Study 1b ($N = 200$) further examined the match between spokesperson and brand image. We asked participants to imagine themselves as the marketing manager of a brand with either a warm or competent image. Participants need to choose a sports endorser from two potential options: one is a female track and field athlete, and another one is a female track and field athlete team. Results of a chi-square analysis indicated that when imagined as a manager of a competent brand, participants were more likely to choose a singer-athlete than those who imaged themselves as a manager of a warm brand (63.64% vs. 48.51%, $\chi^2(1) = 4.64$, $p = .031$).

Study 2 ($N = 197$) aimed to test the spokesperson-brand image congruency effect on brand evaluation. Study 2 adopted a 2 (athlete spokesperson: single vs. team) $\times$ 2 (brand image: warmth vs. competence) between-subjects design. Participants read a print advertisement of a fictitious milk brand, either with a warm brand image or with a competent brand image. In addition, we told participants that the endorser of this brand was either a male volleyball player or a male volleyball team. We then asked participants to report their processing fluency for this brand and their brand attitude. A 2 x 2 ANOVA on processing fluency yielded a significant interaction ($F(1, 193) = 9.15$, $p = 0.003$). We found that in the single athlete condition, participants reported a more favorable brand attitude towards a competent brand ($M = 5.49$) than a warm image ($M = 4.87$, $F(1, 193) = 7.64$, $p = 0.006$). However, in the athlete team condition, participants reported a more favorable brand attitude towards a warm brand (M = 5.60) than a competent brand (M = 5.60, F(1,193) = 3.83, p = 0.05). More importantly, bootstrapping analyses suggested that the mediating effect of processing fluency was significantly different from zero (95% CI = 0.2335 ~ 1.1046).

Our research adds to the marketing literatures in several ways. First, we demonstrate the effect of congruency between sports endorsers and brand image on brand attitude. Second, by showing that sports endorsers can moderate the persuasiveness of warmth versus competence images and that processing fluency plays a mediating role in this effect, our research offers a new perspective on understanding the underlying mechanisms of sports endorser effects. In addition to the

theoretical contributions, our findings also provide important implications for firms'

advertising strategies in sports markets.

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TITLE: THE PARADOXICAL ROLE OF WEIGHT STIGMA IN INFLUENCING CHARITABLE GIVING

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Keywords: Weight stigma, donation, deservingness, charity

Description: The paper empirically evaluates the role of weight stigma in influencing the amount of donation a stigmatized recipient receives as opposed to a non-stigmatized one.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT: Weight stigmatization and discrimination are prevalent concerns in contemporary society, leading to adverse psychological and physical consequences for individuals facing weight-related prejudice. This research project aims to explore the paradoxical phenomenon where obese individuals receive financial support while facing reluctance in social association from donors. In three preliminary experimental studies, we show that donors may perceive stigmatized recipients as being accountable for their situation, leading to a decreased perception of deservingness for help or support (Study 1). However, in cases where an overweight individual requires assistance due to an incident where they are not at fault or when pursuing educational opportunities abroad (Studies 2 and 3), we discover that an overcompensation mechanism may be present, where the overweight individual is then considered more deserving of assistance. Despite receiving donations, obese individuals may experience social exclusion and reduced willingness from donors to engage in social interactions, which will be investigated in Study 4. Overall, investigating this paradox is important for understanding the intricate dynamics of weight-based stigma and its impact on interpersonal relationships.

Research Question: Weight stigmatization and discrimination have become pervasive issues in today's society, contributing to negative psychological and physical outcomes for individuals experiencing weight-related prejudice. As both popular media and academic literature increasingly examine the effects of discrimination across multiple areas, one area of

lacking in the scholarly discourse is the influence of stigmatization and discrimination on charitable giving, even though charitable giving is a widely researched topic in and of itself (e.g., Kogut & Rotov, 2007). Understanding the relationship between weight stigmatization and charitable giving is crucial, as it can shed light on the mechanisms underlying this phenomenon and inform interventions aimed at reducing weight bias and increasing charitable support. As such, we predict weight stigmatizations will lead to discrimination in the form of less willingness to donate to those with obese body-types. Further, due to the negative stereotypes associated with obesity, individuals may unconsciously rely on these stereotypes when making judgments about the deservingness of support for overweight individuals. As such, the negative stereotypes of obese and overweight individuals could lead to perceptions that they are not as deserving of support due to weight stigmatization.

Method and Data: To test the hypotheses, we ran three studies using different contexts of giving to either individuals or charities in need. While a weight stigma is commonly associated with larger body types, we also investigate whether underweight individuals are also subject to such similar attitudes. In each study, participants are asked their likelihood to and the recipient's perceived deservingness of support. Study 1 is a 3-factor (body type: obese, underweight, control) between-subject experiment where all participants read about a fictitious health clinic where they read that Community Health Clinic provides medical treatment to those in need due to serious illness (e.g., diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer). To manipulate body-type, we varied the photo of the patient to appear overweight, normal weight, or neither (i.e., no photo provided). Study 2 inolved participants viewing a fictitious GoFundMe page containing information about a woman named Anna (whose weight varied) who was involved in a car accident. Study 3 involved viewing a fictitious GoFundMe page containing information about Anna who wanted to study abroad in Italy. In each study, participants were asked about their willingness to donate to Anna.

Summary of Findings: The results of Study 1 demonstrate that donors are less likely to see obese patients as deserving of support when compared to normal weight patients or when weight is not mentioned. In turn, donors are less likely to donate to obese individuals. Contrary to prediction, donors were more likely perceive the individual as deserving and more likely to donate in the obese condition as compared to the normal weight and control conditions. In situations where an overweight individual requires assistance due to a mishap where they are not at fault, we observe a different dynamic in how they are perceived. In these cases, the stigma associated with their

weight is often mitigated, and there may even be a tendency to overcompensate by deeming the overweight individual as more deserving of assistance. Similar to study 2, we observe a mitigation of weight stigmatization in cases where an obese individual seeks assistance to travel abroad. This overcompensation could arise from donors who are aware of weight stigmatization and discrimination and might intentionally counteract these biases by actively supporting obese individuals. They may feel that obese individuals face unfair judgments and barriers in various aspects of life, including educational opportunities.

Key Contributions: Donors view stigmatized recipients negatively in instances where they are deemed to be responsible for their own condition and therefore less deserving of help or support (Study 1). However, when the overweight (stigmatized) individual requires assistance due to a mishap where she is not at fault or seeks educational opportunities abroad (Studies 2 and 3), we find that the stigma is mitigated and in fact (perhaps through an overcompensation mechanism), the overweight individual is then deemed to be more deserving of assistance. The implications of this research extend to multiple domains, including psychology, public health, and social policy. By shedding light on the paradoxical attitudes towards obese individuals, the study may inform interventions and strategies aimed at reducing weight-based stigma and promoting inclusive behaviors in society. Moreover, it can contribute to raising awareness about the importance of challenging biases and promoting social acceptance of individuals with diverse body sizes. Overall, our findings may demonstrate the importance of recognizing the nuanced impact of stigma on prosocial behavior.

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THE ZERO BIAS IN LINGUISTIC FRAMING

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Keywords: Linguistic framing, zero, free

Description: Individuals connote "zero" to be more definitive and "free" to be more ambiguous.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

People frequently use different words interchangeably to mean the same thing in their daily lives, but these different words can influence individuals' behaviors differently (Pennebaker, Mehl and Niederhoffer 2003). For example, saying "I don't" (vs. "I can't") can help consumers refuse temptation (Patrick and Hagtvedt 2012). Alternatively, using words that represent cognitions and feeling (think vs. feel) can affect message persuasion (Mayer and Tormala 2010).

In this research, we examine whether two words that have similar meaning can represent different meaning to consumers depending on their usage. "Zero" and "free" are common linguistic words used to represent the absence of something. For example, "zero-sugar" and "sugar-free" both describe the absence of sugar in a product.

There is a rich stream of literature on linguistic framing and persuasion (Pennebaker et al 2003; Patrick and Hagtvedt 2012; Packard, Moore and McFerran 2018; Schneider, Ince and Bagchi 2020). Separately, there is much work devoted to studying the implications of the number zero in

a variety of numerical cognition contexts (Kalra, Liu and Zhang 2020; Koo and Suk 2020; Shampanier, Mazar and Ariely 2007; Yan and Pena-Marin 2017). To our knowledge, however, there is very little research studying the implications of a numerically defined word and an equivalent non-numerically stated word. That is, does it make a difference when we use the verbal, "free," or numerical alternative, "zero," to denote the absence of something?

Method And Data

We use experimentation to test the research question. In two studies, we expect to show that individuals connote "zero" to be more definitive and "free" to be more ambiguous. Study 1 tests this association with an IAT and study 2 explores it in an explicit task. Study 1 relied on IAT (Implicit Association Test) to examine the automatic associations that consumers have to our two focal words. The anticipation is that participants were quicker to respond with a click when a compatible condition existed, such as, when we combined "zero" with the definitive attributes or "free" with ambiguous attributes compared to when an incompatible condition was presented, such as "zero" and ambiguous attributes or "free" and definitive attributes. In Study 2, we attempt to examine the link between the definitive and ambiguous associations more explicitly, letting participants evaluate a fictitious company with its future environmental plan framed as zero carbon (vs. carbon free).

Summary of Findings

The results of the IAT indicate that participants were quicker to respond when a matched condition existed than when there was a mismatch. This study provides preliminary evidence that there is an implicit association between "zero" and "definitive," and "free" with "ambiguous

characteristics." In study 2, people rated the company more favorably when the plan was "free" compared to when it was "zero."

Key Contributions

This research delves into the effects of linguistic framing using the words "zero" and "free" on consumer interpretation and meaning assignment. By contributing to the linguistic-framing effects literature, this study sheds light on how consumers process information related to these terms.

At a practical level, marketers, brand managers, and advertisers can gain valuable insights to understand the implications of their language choices for consumers. By exploring the cognitive nuances behind consumer responses to "zero" and "free," this research equips practitioners with knowledge to craft more persuasive and impactful messages for their target audience, ultimately influencing consumer behavior and decision-making processes.

References are available upon request.

THE "MADE IN EGYPT" LABEL EFFECT ON EGYPTIAN CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION

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KEYWORDS

Country of Origin, Purchase intention, Egyptian Consumers, Conjoint analysis, high vs. low durability products

DESCRIPTION

A conjoint analysis to test for the effect of "The Made in Egypt Label" on Egyptian consumers' purchase intention using high durability product, low durability product, and a service.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Hypothesis/ Question

H1: The "Made in Egypt" has no impact on the purchase intention of low-durability products.

H2: The "Made in Egypt" label has a negative impact on the purchase intention of high-durability products.

H3: As the price of the Egyptian product/service decreases, consumers' willingness to buy the product will increase.

Q1: Does the "Made in Egypt" label have an impact on the usage of the services industry in Egypt?

Method and Data

The researchers conducted a survey experiment to test the impact of country of origin (COO) on Egyptian consumers' purchase intention. The conjoint analysis factorial design (3x2) technique was used to analyze how three attributes namely, COO, price, and specs, influence the determination of product choice among consumers in the Egyptian market. We selected the following three products for the analysis: Samsung A13 smartphone (high durability), Levi's T-shirt (low durability), and DHL vs. Egypt Post (service). The experiment tested the consumers' thinking process by looking into how they traded off some product attributes for other ones until the final purchase decision was made.

It's essential to note that all the products studied in the present paper, whether produced internationally or in Egypt, were readily accessible in the Egyptian market. Furthermore, each product included in this study was specifically chosen based on a criterion ensuring the availability of an identical version made in Egypt and another manufactured abroad. The Samsung A13 phone was chosen as a high-durability product because two versions were being sold in the Egyptian market, one produced in Korea and another in Egypt. Similarly, the Levi's T-shirt, as a low-durability product, was available in two versions made in Egypt and the USA. Lastly, for the Services industry, DHL, operating under German management was chosen in comparison to the Egypt Post, which offers an identical service managed by Egyptians.

The research was conducted using a convenience sample of 250 Egyptian respondents. The factorial design (3x2) conjoint analysis used in the survey experiment was developed through an online software called "Conjointly", which facilitates getting all possible combinations of the three attributes and Levels for the three selected products.

Summary of Findings

The results of the study revealed that the "Made in Egypt" label significantly affects purchase decisions across all product categories. For the Samsung A13 phone (high durability), Egyptian consumers consistently chose to purchase the "Made in Korea" version with all possible combinations of attributes and levels which included phone's storage capacity and price, signaling skepticism towards local production for long-term products. The latter supported the second hypothesis, signifying that the "Made in Egypt" label does have a negative impact on the

purchase intention of high-durability products. Moreover, the results indicated that even when "The Made Egypt" product witnessed a 50% price reduction vs. the imported version, Egyptian consumers favored the imported phone which was manufactured in a developed country. This refutes H4 which indicates that high durability products are not price elastic, as there was no positive correlation between the decrease in price and the increase in demand.

For the Levi's T-shirts (Low durability product) the survey experiment result has shown that the sample chose to purchase the "Made in USA" version of the T-shirt in all possible combinations of attributes and levels which included material quality and price, except when the Made in Egypt product was priced much lower than the imported alternative. Egyptian consumers favored the "Made in Egypt" product only when it reflected superior material and pricing. The latter supports the first hypothesis stating that the "Made in Egypt" label has no impact on the purchase intention when it comes to low-durability products. This also supports H4, that low-durability products do get affected by price elasticity; a price decrease is equivalent to an increased demand.

For DHL vs Egypt Post, the COO emerges as the most critical attribute, overshadowing other factors like delivery time or price/KG when consumers select a delivery company. This reflects Egyptian consumers' trust in international more than local services as consumers consistently choose to use DHL. However, when the price/KG of Egypt Post witnessed a price reduction of 25% and 50% vs DHL, consumers' preference for Egypt Post increased due to significant price differences, aligning with the fourth hypothesis on price elasticity in the service industry.

Key Contributions

The present study provides a useful starting point for enhancing our comprehension of developing nations' markets, offering insights derived from the Egyptian Market. By testing the relationship between COO and purchase intention among Egyptians, the study addresses the gap in the research on the perception of local products in developing countries. Previous studies done to test for country-of-origin effects were mainly tested on developed countries.

Crafting customized approaches that acknowledge the significance of COO, in addition to enhancing product quality and offering competitive pricing, stands as a pivotal step toward achieving success in this specific market landscape. By integrating these elements into their strategies, businesses can effectively resonate with the preferences and values of consumers, fostering stronger connections and potentially gaining a competitive edge in the marketplace.

In markets like Egypt, where consumer behaviors are influenced by various cultural, economic, and social factors, understanding and leveraging the COO can significantly impact a company's success. Businesses can tap into consumer sentiments, aligning their offerings more closely with local preferences and values. This alignment creates a resonance that goes beyond the mere features of the product or service, fostering a deeper connection with the target audience.

References are available upon request.

Extended Abstract Template

TIME OVER MONEY WHEN YOU FEEL POWERFUL: AN EXPLORATION INTO CONSUMER PREFERENCES FOR TIME VS. MONEY

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Keywords: Time vs Money, Power, Preferences, Productivity-Orientation

Description: Our research findings show that consumers with high power are more inclined to prefer time over money due to their enhanced productivity-orientation mindset.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – 200 Words

People perceive and treat time and money differently, with time being seen as a more abstract concept than money. Despite these insights, the majority of prior research has dissected time and money in isolation, overlooking the frequent scenarios where consumers must navigate trade-offs between these two resources. Power, characterized as a psychological state denoting subjective control and capability (Anderson et al., 2012), exerts a profound impact on thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Those wielding high power are known to focus their attention selectively on their goals (Whitson et al., 2013), exhibit proactivity in goal pursuit (Galinsky et al., 2003), and orient towards potential gains and desired outcomes (Keltner et al., 2003). In this context, we propose

that productivity orientation—a personality trait or mindset embracing efficiency, progress, and achievement (Keinan & Kivetz, 2011)—serves as the mediator between power and the prioritization of time over money. We articulate that powerful consumers are more inclined to discern the advantages of investing money to save time, culminating in a propensity for time-saving purchases—defined as intentional acquisitions aimed at time conservation. Our hypotheses are twofold: power influences consumers to favor time-saving purchases, and this relationship is mediated by productivity orientation.

Method And Data – 200 Words

In Study 1, a linear regression revealed that participants with higher power were more likely to choose the time-saving option (B = .10, β = .20, p < .05); these results were largely unchanged even after including other potential confounding measures in the model (β = .20, B = .11, p < .05). In Study 2, unlike Study 1, we manipulated participant's power state following procedures adapted from Rucker et al. (2012). A logistic regression revealed a significant main effect of power on participants' preference for time-saving options (β = .47, χ2 = 4.44, p < .05). In Study 3, participant's power state was manipulated following procedures adapted from Galinsky et al. (2003). Then they were asked to indicate how likely they were to outsource the task to save time by spending $30 on 7-point Likert scale. Lastly, participants answered to the productivity-oriented scale developed by Keinan and Kivetz (2011). Our results revealed that high power individuals showed greater likelihood to outsource ($F(273)$ = 5.44, p < 0.05). Next, the PROCESS SPSS macro (model 4; Hayes 2017) was used to test the underlying process. The results showed that participant's productivity-orientation was a significant mediator [95% CI = 0.09, 1.09].

Summary of Findings – 200 words

This paper investigated the relationship between power and time-saving purchases. In three studies, we found supportive evidence that high-power state enhances the likelihood of exchanging money for time. We also demonstrated the mediating role of productivity-orientation. This productivity-oriented mindset, inherent to powerful people, emerges as the driving catalyst behind their preference for time-saving acquisitions. While existing research has predominantly explored the downstream effects of time-money trade-offs—such as the enhancement of life satisfaction through time-saving investments (Whillans et al., 2017) or the elevation of status via time-saving options (Belleza, Paharia, and Keinan, 2017)—our work extends this discourse by uncovering an upstream determinant. We elucidate how social power, as a psychological construct, amplifies the propensity to prioritize time over money.

Statement of Key Contributions – 200 words

In our research, we unravel the intricate relationship between perceived power and time-saving purchases, revealing compelling evidence that a high-power state, whether chronic or situationally activated, augments the propensity to spend money to save time. This preference for time over money manifests across various consumption contexts and is not merely a general tendency among powerful consumers to pursue higher value options but is distinctively related to time-saving products and services. We go beyond identifying this relationship and articulate the underlying theory, substantiated by robust evidence. The impact of feeling powerful on the preference for time-saving options is mediated by the individual's productivity orientation, defined as the efficiency of time utilization (Keinan and Kivetz 2011). The powerful consumer's intrinsic desire for productive time usage drives their affinity for time-saving choices.

Our work fills a critical gap in the existing literature, as no prior study has systematically explored how personality traits or socially activated mindsets influence the prioritization between time and money. Recognizing our findings, businesses offering time-saving products and services can craft strategies that resonate with consumers' sense of power or target segments inherently imbued with confidence and authority.

References are available upon request.

TO CONTINUE OR NOT: HOW MOTIVATION TYPE INFLUENCES CONSUMER GOAL PURSUIT

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Keywords: autonomous motivation, controlled motivation, continuous intention, goal pursuit, product purchase tactics

Description: This paper explores differences in consumers' intentions for sustained goal pursuit and product purchase tactics under different motivational conditions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Companies derive the dual benefits of customer satisfaction and heightened product loyalty by assisting consumers in achieving their goals. Consumer goal-setting can be influenced by autonomous motives, such as individual preferences or principles, or controlled motives, such as societal pressures or expectations (Ntoumanis et al. 2021). These incentives affect how they approach and achieve their goals (Koestner et al. 2008; Ryan and Deci 2000). While previous studies highlight the positive impact of autonomous motivation on goal pursuit (Kolbuszewska, Anderson, and Milyavskaya 2022; Werner and Milyavskaya 2019), it remains unclear whether autonomous motivation continues to positively influence consumers' continual intentions after goal attainment. Against this backdrop, Which types of products are more effective in assisting consumers with diverse motives in attaining their goals? Does autonomous motivation remain

dominant over controlled motivation in consumers' goal pursuit even when the goal is not realized but a significant amount of effort has been expended?

Method and Data

Pilot Study. The study recruited 172 participants from Credamo (62.79% female, 37.21% male, M_{age} = 22.42, SD = 3.64, age range = 18-57 years). The study employed a two-cell (autonomous vs. controlled) between-subjects design.

Study 1. A total of 280 participants were recruited from Prolific (51.22% female, 48.78% male, M_{age} = 33.81, SD = 11.76, age range = 20-73 years). This study utilized a three-cell (autonomous vs. controlled vs. no-motivation) between-subjects design.

Study 2. We recruited 246 participants from Credamo (49.64% female, 50.36% male, M_{age} = 22.30, SD = 2.19, age range = 18-30 years). The study used a 2 (autonomous vs. controlled) × 2 (effort > progress vs. effort < progress) between-subjects design.

Study 3. The study recruited 300 participants from Prolific (59.33% female, 40.67% male, M_{age} = 31.67, SD = 8.04, age range = 19–69 years). This was a 2 (autonomous vs. controlled) × 3 (effort > progress vs. effort < progress vs. effort = progress) between-subjects design.

Study 4. The sample consisted of 172 participants recruited from Prolific (62.79% female, 37.21% male, M_{age} = 29.59, SD = 7.56, age range = 19–69 years). The study used a two-cell (autonomous vs. controlled) between-subjects design.

Summary of Findings

This research investigated variations in consumers' intentions for sustained goal pursuit and product purchase tactics under different motivational conditions across five studies (N=1240). The Pilot Study and Study 1 revealed that autonomously motivated consumers displayed a greater post-goal continuous intentions than those motivated by external control. Studies 2 and 3

verified that consumers' effort input played a crucial moderating role in the relationship between motivation and continuous intention when confronted with unachieved goals. Furthermore, these studies revealed the intermediary function of negative emotions in this moderating association. Study 4 investigated how consumers' purchase tactics for the same product varied under different motivational conditions. The findings demonstrated that consumers under the autonomous motivation condition tended to favor products with goal-oriented tactics, while those under the controlled motivation condition preferred products with temptation-oriented tactic.

Key Contributions

This study makes valuable contributions by expanding the limited understanding of the effects of different motivations on consumers' goal pursuit. It pushes the boundaries of the applicability of motivation theory and complements related research on goal pursuit. In addition, the findings offer a novel perspective that enriches the current understanding of consumer decision-making. Furthermore, this study adds to the established body of knowledge on the complex dynamics of self-control mechanisms in social psychology and related fields.

References are available upon request.

Transforming Grocery Retail:

Exploring Trends and Outlining Strategic Insights for European Grocery Retailers

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Abstract

In recent years, the European grocery retail sector has been subjected to a seismic disruption, driven by shifting consumer behavior patterns and the pervasive influence of digitalization. This transformation is orchestrating a paradigm shift in conventional grocery retail business models,

ushering in a new competitive landscape replete with innovative offerings. This academic exploration endeavors to dissect the burgeoning trends within the European grocery retail realm, with a twofold objective: to decipher forthcoming industry developments and to furnish sagacious guidance for retailers navigating this evolving terrain.

Harnessing the power of unsupervised machine learning, specifically through the implementation of the KNIME platform, this study meticulously analyzes a corpus of more than 65,000 articles culled from 43 eminent journals. The synthesis of this analysis culminates in a cogent conceptual framework that underscores the multifaceted intricacies of the industry. To bolster the credibility and pertinence of the findings, a comprehensive study of the 50 most cited articles from each journal has been executed.

The evidence provided based on this inquiry portends a substantial augmentation in the market share of online grocery retail. Moreover, the study ingeniously appraises diverse business models within the grocery retail sector, evaluating their congruence with the unfolding market dynamics.

As such, this investigation bestows critical insights into the interplay between evolving market trends and the suitability of various business models, fostering an informed decision-making milieu for stakeholders navigating this vibrant landscape.

Keywords: Grocery retail, online grocery, consumer behavior, business models

UNFOLDING THE REASONS WHY CONSUMERS RESIST SOCIAL PRACTICE CHANGES IN THE CONTEXT OF AN ELECTIVE PRODUCT LIKE BEEF

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Keywords: beef consumption, consumer behavior, threats, consumer resistance, social practices

This research investigates how cultural, social, and symbolic meanings associated with beef influence the beef consumption patterns of Brazilian consumers amidst rising prices and inflation, revealing multifaceted consumer resistance rooted in social practices and exploring factors such as threat conditions, routine disruption, ontological insecurity, and moderator variables.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Everyday life is filled with consumer enactments of social practices, some mundane and taken for granted, and others with ritual importance. A social practice represents shared understandings, norms, meanings, practical consciousness, and purposes, all of which count as classically 'social' phenomena" (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson, 2012, p. 16[1]). Consequently, social practices emerge and endure because consumers perceive them as meaningful expressions of social life, and their realization relies on access to both competencies and materials.

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[1] References are available upon request.

As a practice diffuses across time and space, meanings, materials, and competencies shift and change (Akaka and Schau, 2022). Consumers may abandon social practices for various reasons, including that the social practice has become stigmatized, challenging to enact, or displaced by competing alternatives (Shove, Pantzer, and Watson 2012; Nicolini 2012; Sandikci and Ger 2010).

Hence, theories of practice emphasize phenomena like habituation, routines, and traditions, with the primary implication being that shifts in behavior result from the evolution of these practices (Warde, 2015). We enable the Theories of Practice to answer the following research question: How do Brazilian consumers' materials, meanings, and competencies related to beef inform their level and type of beef consumption during a period of rising beef prices and high inflation?

Summary of Findings

Meat consumption intrinsically relates to consumers' identity, involving cultural, social, and symbolic aspects. We aim to explore the motivations for and against reducing meat consumption, including factors such as individual preferences, social norms, and the sensory appeal of meat. It delves into the challenges of changing meat consumption habits, considering habits, routines, and the symbolic nature of meat in Brazilian culture.

Our research context is the disrupted beef consumption in Brazil, where rising prices threaten cultural practices surrounding beef. Our propositions suggest that economic threats impact consumers' ontological security and that perceptions of threats moderate the disruption's impact. Additionally, self-identity and national identity play crucial roles in consumers'

resistance to changes in beef consumption, emphasizing the symbolic significance of meat in personal and cultural contexts.

Therefore, through a qualitative approach involving in-depth interviews with low and middle-income Brazilian consumers, we seek to understand the competencies, meanings, and materials related to resistance against moving away from beef consumption.

Key Contributions

While past research has explored the impact of disruptions on consumers' routines concerning essential elements like water (Phipps & Ozanne, 2017), our study extends this research conversation by investigating how consumers cope when their routines are disrupted and access to elective products becomes prohibitive. We anticipate a paradoxical consumption pattern of red meat in Brazil. High prices may increase demand as the economic threat disrupts consumers' ontological security, influencing their resistance to discontinuing beef purchases.

Additionally, the extent to which beef, as a material, is irreplaceable remains uncertain. Therefore, a deeper understanding of how competencies, materials, and meanings are distributed and contribute to resistance against shifting away from beef consumption can inform efforts to promote healthier eating habits and implement effective sustainability interventions.

Therefore, our research holds significant substantive implications for strategies aimed at achieving sustainable meat consumption patterns and building sustainable food systems. It aligns with the broader goal of "exploring marketing's role in creating a better world" (Madan et al., 2022, p. 2), emphasizing the importance of addressing resistance to change for impactful and lasting improvements in consumer behavior.

UNMASKING EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING ONLINE INCIVILITY: DIVERSE THEORIES AND BRAND-RELATED OUTCOMES

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Keywords: *Online Consumer Incivility, Bystander Perceptions, Brand Moderating Strategies, Conceptual Framework*

Description: This paper applies various key theories to propose a comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding consumers' and bystanders' perceptions and managing online incivility within the digital realm.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the benign violation theory of humor (BVT), fairness (justice) theory, social information processing theory (SIPT), cognitive theory, and with online consumer incivility to identify bystanders' perceptions and manage uncivil behaviors through digital brand-moderated strategies. This study identifies theoretical insights and formulates propositions for brand-related outcomes regarding online incivility.

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital landscape, the surge in online consumer incivility on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. has posed a significant societal problem (Wolter et al. 2023). Online incivility refers to low-intensity uncivil behaviors in the digital space; it encompasses hostile communication, including offensive, insulting, intimidating, or disrespectful comments (Anderson et al. 2014). The increase in harmful and noxious online exchanges demands an exploration of the impact of incivility on brands' use of social media platforms (Bhutto et al. 2022; Kim and Gonzales 2022).

Existing approaches rooted in the benign violation theory of humor (BVT), fairness (justice) theory, social information processing theory (SIPT), and cognitive theory fall short of providing a comprehensive framework for systematically analyzing uncivil consumer behaviors and the resultant reactions of bystanders in online spaces. The term "consumers" refers to individuals directly involved in online interactions, while the term "bystanders" denotes those who observe these interactions without active participation. The literature lacks a holistic examination of how brands can use these theories to guide their strategies for managing and mitigating the negative impacts of online incivility (Lages et al. 2023).

This study addresses this research gap by systematically analyzing the applicability of the aforementioned key theories to understand and manage consumer behaviors related to online incivility and examining brand-related outcomes such as loyalty, engagement, attitude, and electronic word of mouth (eWoM). The study aims to empower brands by providing them with effective strategies for moderating online incivility and to explore unexplored avenues for research and intervention within this context.

The study contributes significantly to enriching the existing literature by focusing not only on consumers directly involved in online incivility but also on bystander exposure in the context.

The work sheds light on the complexity of managing this challenge and proposes unexplored research directions by incorporating the BVT, fairness theory, SIPT, and cognitive theory, which can empower brands by weakening online incivility and improving brand-related outcomes.

CONSTRUCTING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Our conceptual framework, depicted in Figure 1, is the product of various theories—BVT, fairness theory, SIPT, and cognitive theory. These well-established theories collectively offer a robust foundation for understanding and managing the ramifications of online incivility. Each theory contributes unique perspectives and addresses topics such as cognitive processes, humor in violation, online communication cues, and perceptions of justice. In the following sections, we discuss how these selected theories can be used to moderate the impact of online incivility on brand-related outcomes.
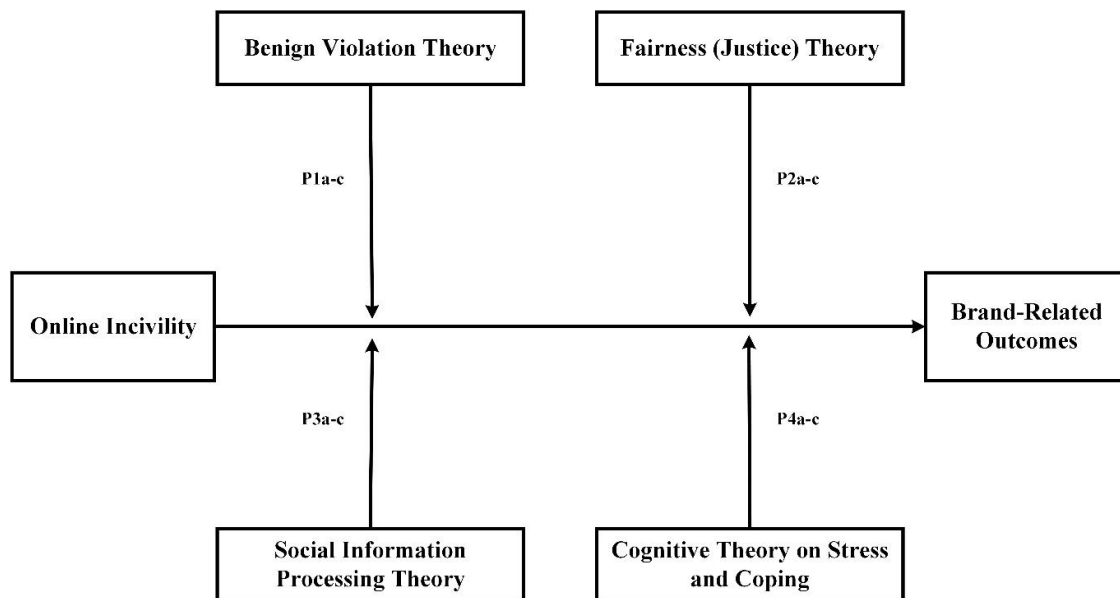
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

LITERATURE REVIEW AND PROPOSITIONS

Benign Violation Theory of Humor

The benign violation theory of humor (BVT) contemplates the scenario in which humor is used as a coping strategy to moderate uncivil situations. Humor can be defined as any form of amusing communication that generates positive emotions and thoughts in individuals, groups, or organizations (McGraw and Warren 2010; Romero and Cruthirds 2006). Furthermore, humor has become a subject of increasing interest within marketing contexts (Béal et al., 2023; Malone III, 1980). However, humor can be a double-edged sword as, depending on how it is used, it can either strengthen or disrupt social connections (Martin et al., 2003). The The BVT posits that humor arises from the interplay between three seemingly contradictory elements, leading to an incongrous and amusing resolution (McGraw et al., 2014). First, a perceived violation occurs through jokes and challenged expectations. Second, the violation must be perceived as non-threatening or harmless so as to avoid discomfort or fear. Finally, the cognitive system then resolves this incongruity, enabling individuals to interpret the situation as humorous. Recent studies (Béal et al. 2023; Kobel and Groeppel-Klein 2021) have applied BVT to analyze consumer reactions to uncivil complaints. These authors found that affiliative humor, as a response to online incivility, is perceived as benign, enhancing audience enjoyment and leading to heightened interactions and positive outcomes such as likes, shares, and purchase considerations.

Brand-related humor often involves actions taken to amuse audiences on social media, with success being tied to the receiver's reaction. Martin et al. (2003) categorized this type of humor into four types: affiliative (positive and other-centric), which fosters brand–consumer relationships; self-enhancing (positive and self-directed), which aids in coping; self-defeating (negative and self-centric), which can potentially harm well-being; and aggressive (negative

and other-centric), which intends to degrade. Each type has distinct functions and impacts and offers varied applications. While affiliative and self-enhancing humor may enhance relationships and well-being, self-defeating and aggressive humor may pose challenges; thus, humor in social media contexts requires a nuanced exploration. Building on BVT, these types of humor can either enhance or alleviate the relationships among the main variables named in the propositions. Thus, we postulate the following propositions:

P1a. Affiliative humor moderates by weakening the negative impact of online incivility on brand-related outcomes.

P1b. Brand representatives' self-enhancing humor moderates by weakening the negative impact of online incivility on brand-related outcomes.

P1c. Aggressive humor moderates by strengthening the negative impact of online incivility on brand-related outcomes.

P1d. Brands' representatives' self-defeating humor moderates by strengthening the negative impact of online incivility on brand-related outcomes.

Fairness (Justice) Theory

Fairness (justice) theory refers to how individuals perceive and respond to fairness and equity in social relationships (Folger and Cropanzano 2001). Rooted in social psychology, fairness theory posits that people strive to maintain a sense of fairness in their interactions and consider both the effort they contribute and the rewards they receive as they interact with others. Previous studies (e.g., Gelbrich and Roschk 2011; Tax et al. 1998) have examined several key factors (interactional, distributive, and procedural justice) and their mitigating effect on WoM, satisfaction, and loyalty, and companies' recovery actions. Consequently, fairness theory has been linked to online consumer incivility through its focus on perceptions of fairness and justice in social interactions (Bacile et al. 2018). In the context of online

consumer incivility, our study can leverage fairness theory to help explain how individuals perceive and react to uncivil behaviors (Kim 2022).

Examining consumer incivility through the fairness theory perspective allows brands to mitigate its effects and shape brand-related results by promoting perceptions of justice amongst their consumer base. Key elements in this context encompass interactional justice, distributive justice, and procedural justice. Responsive and empathetic communication addresses interactional justice, equitable reward systems enhance distributive justice, and transparent decision-making cultivates procedural justice, which all lead to improved loyalty, brand engagement, attitude, and positive eWoM.

Therefore, we propose the following propositions:

P2a. Brands' civil and empathetic communication moderates by weakening the negative impact of online incivility on brand-related outcomes.

P2b: Brands' equitable reward systems moderate by weakening the negative impact of online incivility on brand-related outcomes.

P2c: Brands' transparent decision-making moderates by weakening the negative impact of online incivility on brand-related outcomes.

Social Information Processing Theory

Social information processing theory (SIPT), which originates from Walther (1992), focuses on social cues that influence impressions, judgments, and responses in online interactions. It explores how users on social media platforms process information, form perceptions, and make judgments, particularly in the context of incivility. Walsh et al. (2018) employed SIPT to study the influence of positive leader behaviors on employees' experiences with workplace incivility. SIPT, as outlined by Walther (2015) and Kim (2022), aids in understanding how

uncivil behavior on social media platforms—conveyed through language, tone, and content—shapes judgments about brands, services, and stakeholders engaged in the online environment. The characteristics of the social media platforms themselves can moderate the relationship between online incivility and brand-related outcomes. Platforms may vary in terms of user norms, moderation policies, and interaction styles, which influences each platform's ability to process processing of uncivil behavior and its subsequent impact on brand perceptions (Hawkins et al. 2023). Building on the work of Sakurai and Jex (2012), we suggest that perceived social support plays a crucial role in mediating the relationship between online incivility and brand-related outcomes. Higher perceived social support, other-consumers who comment in favor of brands, who may sumay alleviate the adverse effects of incivility and foster a more positive perception of brands, services, and stakeholders in online environments. Moreover, considering the global nature of online interactions, cultural differences in communication styles and norms may influence how individuals from different cultures process and respond to online incivility, thereby shaping brand-related outcomes in various ways.

In SIPT, the key factors that moderate the relationship between online incivility and brand-related outcomes are prior communication experiences (Frischlich et al. 2021), the platform's own characteristics, perceived social support (Sakurai and Jex 2012), and cross-cultural variances. These factors have the capacity to exert either strengthening or weakening effects on the connections between the core variables introduced in this study. In this context, we present the following propositions:

P3a. Brand representatives' prior communication experience moderates by weakening the negative impact of online consumer incivility on brand-related outcomes.

P3b. The characteristics of the platforms on which a brand posts, such as user norms, moderation policies, and interaction styles, moderate by weakening the negative impact of online incivility on brand-related outcomes.

P3c. Perceived social support moderates by weakening the negative impact of online incivility on brand-related outcomes.

P4d. Cross-cultural variances moderate by strengthening or weakening the negative impact of online incivility on brand-related outcomes.

Cognitive Theory on Stress and Coping

The cognitive theory on stress and coping, rooted in Folkman's work (1984), explores human behavior by delving into cognitive processes involved in learning and comprehension. Consumers evaluate whether events are irrelevant, positive, or stressful. In the realm of online incivility, this induces stress in both victims and bystanders, resulting in disruptions among consumers that affect the extent of disengagement and brand loyalty demonstrated by victims on social media platforms (Bacile et al. 2018). Wolter et al. (2023) utilized cognitive theory to investigate the breaches of civility among consumers in B2C and C2C interactions on social media platforms such as Facebook.

The theory suggests that brands can use confrontational (brand response) approaches and coping strategies to manage incivility. The effective application of confrontational approaches allows brands to actively address the problem of uncivil content being posted online, leading to a positive influence on brand-related outcomes. Consequently, brands employing content moderation strategies will significantly reduce the adverse effects of online incivility on brand-related outcomes, fostering a healthier online environment and positively influencing user attitudes and engagement.

Through a cognitive lens involving brands' use of confrontational strategies, the key factors that moderate the relationship between online incivility and brand-related outcomes are the timely resolution of conflicts and content moderation (Hawkins et al., 2023). We thus propose the following:

P4a. Brands' timely and empathic conflict resolution moderates by weakening the negative impact of online incivility on brand-related outcomes.

P4b. Brands' content moderation positively moderates the impact of online incivility on brand-related outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study seeks to explore efficacious approaches derived from diverse theories aimed at moderating the issue of online incivility within contemporary digital spaces. The online landscape demonstrates a growing pattern in which consumers, including users and observers, are more inclined than ever before to express their dissatisfaction and frustration with brands, leading to detrimental conflicts on various social media platforms. By focusing on pivotal theories such as the BVT, fairness theory, SIPT, and cognitive theory, we have unraveled the complex dynamics of online incivility and its impact on consumers and bystanders in terms of brand-related outcomes such as loyalty, engagement, attitude, and eWoM. Through a comprehensive evaluation of these theories and their potential applications, our study enhances the existing literature by offering deeper insights into the psychological and behavioral aspects of online consumers. The paper underscores the need for brands to understand not only the perpetrators and victims of uncivil behavior but also those indirectly affected—the observers' brand-related outcomes. This unique approach sheds light on the multifaceted nature of managing online incivility.

Theoretical Implications

The current research makes a significant contribution to advancing theoretical knowledge by employing well-established theories—the BVT, fairness theory, SIPT, and cognitive theory—to probe behaviors related to online incivility. Using these diverse theories, we provide a conceptual framework that helps the field understand how brand approaches can be used to moderate online incivility. This framework is subject to thorough scrutiny within the boundaries of each theory and provides original insights into understanding the relational, behavioral, psychological, and social dimensions of both consumers' and bystanders' brand-related outcomes. This fills a research gap by concentrating not only on victims and perpetrators but also on bystanders. Furthermore, the conceptual framework yields actionable insights for brands and businesses to devise effective strategies for mitigating online incivility. This suggests that brand responses should align with the insights derived from these four theories. This alignment empowers brands to navigate incivility in a manner that fosters brand-related outcomes and mitigates the consequences of online incivility.

Practical Implications

The practical implications of this study stem from its foundation in the BVT, fairness theory, SIPT, and cognitive theory, which collectively provide valuable insights into managing online incivility that benefit managers and digital marketers working in this evolving digital landscape. By acknowledging the potential harm of online incivility on brands' reputations, the proactive adoption of strategies aligned with these theories can address underlying concerns and preserve brand integrity. For digital marketers, recognizing the impact of online incivility on consumer brand-related outcomes is important. The conceptual framework reveals how humor and social information processing influence consumer perceptions and enables marketers to tailor strategies to foster positive brand-related outcomes. The study guides brands to apply interactional, distributive, and procedural justice to enhance consumer perceptions of minimizing incivility and move toward a commitment to customer satisfaction.

Overall, a proactive approach informed by the conceptual framework, allows managers and marketers to design strategies that mitigate the impact of online incivility, fortify brands' online presence, foster positive brand-related outcomes (loyalty, engagement, attitude, and eWoM), and contribute to a healthier digital environment.

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UNRAVELING THE THREADS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXPLORING FACILITATORS AND INHIBITORS OF EGYPTIAN HOUSEHOLD FOOD WASTE

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KEYWORDS: Household Food Waste, Consumer Wisdom, Food-related Routines, Qualitative Research.

This qualitative exploratory study contributes to the literature by investigating key wasteful food routines, identifying facilitators and inhibitors, uncovering key emotions, and examining consumer wisdom in relation to domestic food waste.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Food waste is a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses interrelated drivers, barriers, and processes. Hence, the present study has four main objectives to cover existing research gaps. First, it aims to explore key wasteful food-related routines such as planning, shopping, cooking, and leftovers as they heavily contribute to food waste behavior (Stancu et al., 2016; Chen, 2022). Second, it investigates other possible facilitators and inhibitors for domestic food waste. Various socio-cognitive determinants were mentioned in previous systematic literature reviews (Schannes et al. 2018; Prinicipato et al., 2021) Third, it examines the emotions associated with food waste as few studies explored that aspect (Visschers et al., 2016; Russell et al., 2018; La Barbera et al., 2022). Emotions have an impact on shaping

consumers' decision-making processes due to feeling various emotions when thinking about food waste (Attiq et al. 2021; Amato et al., 2019). Fourth, the study attempts to gain a deep understanding of consumers' perception of wisdom in a domestic food waste context. Consumer wisdom can affect consumption routines and decrease food-related misbehaviours (Ganassali & Matysiewicz, 2021). Consumer wisdom is the pursuit of mindful personal resources management rather than using the product for its own benefit (Ganassali & Matysiewicz, 2021). Luchs, Mick, and Haws (2021) developed a reliable and valid 24-item self- report measurement scale of consumer wisdom to provide reframed empirical evidence of their conceptual framework to a six-dimension model. These related but distinct six dimensions of consumer wisdom are Responsibility, Perspective, Reasoning, Purpose, Flexibility, and Sustainability (Luchs et al., 2021). However, consumer wisdom research is still scant and there are multiple research gaps such as exploring if household members who exhibit some consumer wisdom dimensions have less desire to engage in waste related behaviours (Luchs & Mick, 2018). Accordingly, the study has four main research questions as follows:

RQ1: What are the key food-related routines that heavily contribute to household food waste?

RQ2: What are possible facilitators and inhibitors for domestic food waste?

RQ3: What are the emotions associated with domestic food waste?

RQ4: What are consumers' perceptions of wisdom in a domestic food waste context?

2. METHOD AND DATA

A total of 34 in-depth interviews based on a semi-structured guide were conducted. The sample has reached theoretical saturation where further data collection does not offer new insights into the already gathered data (Curtis et al., 2010). The duration of the interview was from 30 to 45 minutes. Interview transcripts were analysed manually using thematic analysis based on a deductive-inductive approach (Krippendorf, 2018). Interview segments tackled several areas of information to satisfy the objectives of the study. These areas pertain to food meaning, attitudes, moral norms, social influence, and food-related routines in the household food waste context. The sample consisted of adults responsible for food-related routines in their households. The sample is Egyptian females ranging from 29-year-old to 60 years old. The selection of the sample is supported by previous literature on domestic food waste that picks out individuals who are normally in charge of planning, shopping, and managing leftover routines (Stefan et al., 2013; Stancu et al., 2016; Chen, 2022). Non-probability snowball sampling was employed.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Majority of respondents' perceptions on their household food waste is below average. The latter finding is influenced by their inability to recall their domestic food waste occurrences (Aschemann-Witzel et al., 2019). Pertaining to food meaning, consumers showed various positive directions including pleasure, relaxation, energy, life essentiality and social bonds that are created through food as it symbolizes generosity, gatherings and celebrations (Hamburg et al., 2014; Castellini et al., 2022). Majority of respondent agreed that planning, shopping and cooking are the main food wasteful routines. These wasteful activities encompass quantity overestimation, impulsive purchases, overspending, neglecting to inventory checking and other practices (Quested et al., 2013; Stancu et al., 2016). Sorrow,

anger, and guilt are the dominating negative emotions linked to domestic food waste; with guilt being a powerful incentive for food waste reduction (Russells et al., 2018; Quested et al., 2013; Qi & Roe, 2016). Moreover, there is dominant theme indicating that religiosity is a driving force behind domestic food reduction as religious teachings prohibit any sort of extravagance (Elshaer et al., 2020). Majority of consumers interviewed perceive their domestic food waste as a social and financial issue, attributing it to loss of money and lack of empathy and compassion for the underprivileged (Graham Rowe et al.,2014). Few respondents connect food waste to environmental concerns (Ferro et al., 2022). Majority of the sample agree on a list of characteristics of a wise consumer in a waste context. A prudent consumer plans ahead, places an emphasis on quality over quantity, refrains from excessive shopping, and adapts to dynamic consumption changing patterns (Luchs & Mick, 2018). Wise consumers advocate for smaller packages to cutdown on waste in parallel to practicing mindfulness, openness and flexibility in their daily food consumption patterns (Luchs et al; 2021).

4. KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

The present qualitative research contributes to the marketing literature on food waste by covering existing gaps. First, it aims to explore key wasteful food-related routines such as planning, shopping, storage, cooking, and leftovers as they heavily contribute to food waste behavior (Stancu et al., 2016; Chen, 2022). Second, it investigates other possible facilitators and inhibitors for domestic food waste. Third, it examines the emotions associated with food waste as few studies explored that aspect (Visschers et al., 2016; Russell et al., 2018; La Barbera et al., 2022). Consumers feel various emotions when thinking about food waste (Amato et al., 2019). Thus, discovering more information about the emotional lens can be promising in communication for alleviating domestic food waste reduction. Fourth, the study

attempts to gain a deep understanding of consumers' perception of wisdom in a domestic food waste context. Consumer wisdom can affect consumption routines and decrease food-related misbehaviors (Ganassali & Matysiewicz, 2021). However, consumer wisdom research is still scant and there are multiple research gaps that need to be investigated in the food waste domain such as exploring if household members who exhibit some consumer wisdom dimensions have less desire to engage in waste-related behaviors (Luchs & Mick, 2018). For marketing communications practitioners, study findings highly suggest tailoring awareness campaigns that educate various target audiences on the know-how of easy and time-efficient planning, meal prepping, shopping, and cooking routines; respectively. Communication messages should revolve around empowering consumers with wisdom mainly embodied in being committed to a mindful planning routine. Religious NGOs and social solidarity governmental entities are advised to invest in tech-enabled and customer-oriented interventions that facilitate sharing leftovers in a hygienic process. Lastly, it is highly suggested that food marketers should work on providing smaller-size packages of their brands, yet with reasonable prices.   *References are available upon request.*

WHAT MOTIVATES CONSUMERS TO BUY PRE-LOVED ITEMS AS GIFTS?

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Keywords: Consumer motives, intention – behavior gap, ethical gift-giving, second-hand gifting

Description: Building on the intention – behavior gap literature, this research examines how economic, green, and recreational motives predict consumer intention to buy "pre-loved" (i.e., recycled second-hand) items as a gift, and how intention predicts consumers' actual purchase behavior of second-hand gifts.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This research examines second-hand gift-giving which represents a manifestation of ethical consumption and refers to the purchasing of "pre-loved" (i.e., recycled second-hand) items as an alternative to gifting something new. Given the existence of green gap in ethical consumption, we build on the intention – behavior literature to study what motivates consumers to buy pre-loved items as gifts. Building on the self-determination theory, the study explores how economic, green, and recreational motives predict consumer intentions and how intention mediates the relationship between consumer motives and second-hand gift giving behavior,

Method and Data

To examine factors that motivate consumers to buy second-hand items as gifts, we deployed a two-phase survey methodology that was implemented online during Christmas season. We performed the 1st wave of our data collection before Christmas using a survey questionnaire that was distributed to respondents asking about their intentions in purchasing second-hands Christmas gifts, together with questions assessing economic, green, and recreational motives explaining such behavior. The 2nd wave of our data collection was targeted at the same respondents after Christmas, when they were contacted again with a follow up survey asking about their actual purchase behavior of Christmas gifts and second-hand gifts specifically. We test our model using regression analysis with a sample of 779 respondents.

Summary of Findings

Results of the study show that search for a fair price as an economic motive, distance from the system and ethics and ecology as green motives, and treasure hunting as a recreational motive, are positively related to consumers' intention to buy second-hand gifts. Further, we find a highly significant relationship between intention and behavior of buying second-hand gifts, with purchase intention as a sole variable explaining 22.6 percent of the variance of purchase behavior. A deeper mediation analysis reveals an interplay where some motives

impact consumer behavior directly, some indirectly via intentions, while some impact both indicating a complementary mediation effect.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our research contributes to the consumer behavior literature in multiple ways. First, we contribute to the scant research of ethical gift-giving by introducing second-hand gift-giving as a concept. Second-hand gift-giving refers to the acquisition of second-hand items and giving them to others as gifts and it represents an alternative manifestation of ethical gift-giving through gifting refurbished and recycled items. Second, we extend the intention – behavior gap literature in ethical consumption to cover ethical gift-giving which consumers conduct with another person in mind, with benevolent intentions and without expecting a direct return. Gifting involves the selection and transfer of something to someone else without expecting a direct compensation and by its profound nature, the act of gift-giving fundamentally differs from self-purchases, which is why it is important to revisit intended versus actual behavior in gift-giving. Building on the self-determination theory, third, we integrate motives with consumer intention and behavior in order to demonstrate how motives operate as antecedents of intended second-hand gift-giving. This targets to learn whether intention mediates the relationship between consumer motives and second-hand gift-giving behavior. We distinguish between economic, green, and recreational motives, to better understand their role in driving consumer intention and behavior.

References are available upon request.

WHEN AND HOW DEEP EXPERIENCES INCREASE PREFERENCES FOR UNIQUE OBJECTS

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Keywords: Experiential Consumption, Souvenir, Conversational Value, Object Uniqueness

Description: We predict and demonstrate that when people consume an experience at a deep (vs. basic) level, they are more likely to materialize that experience with a unique (vs. typical) object due to differential conversational value the object provides.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

From handed-down heirlooms to historical statutes to travel souvenirs, materializing experiences is prevalent across almost all cultures. Indeed, prior research has shown that consumers are motivated to purchase, collect, and keep objects to reminisce and help solidify past experiences into concrete memories (O'Guinn and Belk 1989), establish a relationship with the past (Belk 1988), and foster a sense of lasting continuity (Curasi, Price, and Arnould 2004).For businesses, this sector can be significant too, with 2021 sales in the souvenir gifts market exceeding US$19 billion in the US alone (US Census Bureau 2021). Past research in the domain of materializing experience has advanced important findings that inform about why consumers materialize their

experiences. This research also points to an interesting and mostly unexplored question that is critical for a more complete understanding of this framework—The question of how the the experience may affect the type of experience-related object consumers purchase. In the present research, we theorize for and empirically test the idea that the depth of the experience consumption influences whether people are more likely to purchase unique versus typical objects.

Method And Data

Across three experimental online-based studies, we find converging evidence for the proposed hypotheses. In Study 1 ($N = 200$; Prolific participants), we find that participants who imagined having a deep experience selected a significantly more unique souvenir ($M = 5.58$, $SD = 1.53$) than did participants who imagined having a basic experience ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.60$; $F(1,198) = 6.97$, $p = .009$, $\eta^2 = .03$). In Study 2 ($N = 203$; CloudResearch participants), we find that participants who had a deeper (vs. more basic) experience reported buying a more unique (vs. typical) souvenir ($r = .42$, $p < .001$). Finally, in Study 3 ($N = 203$; students from private university in Europe), we find that participants in the deep (vs. basic) experience condition report significantly greater likelihood of purchasing a unique (vs. typical) souvenir ($M_{\text{deep}}=5.34$, $SD=1.70$ vs. $M_{\text{basic}} = 4.36$, $SD = 1.94$; $F(1,153) = 11.16$, $p = .001$) and that the effect is mediated by conversational value (PROCESS Model 4; 10.000 resamples bootstrap; significant indirect effect (b $= 0.26$, $SE = 0.14$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.55]).

Summary of Findings

We predict and demonstrate that when people consume an experience at a deep (vs. basic) level, they are more likely to materialize that experience with a unique (vs. typical) object. Further, we identify a mechanism responsible for this effect—the conversational value that the object provides for the differential experience depths. We find support for the proposed effects in studies involving hypothetical (Study 1), recalled (Study 2), and actual engagement in consumer experiences (Study 3), as well as two unreported replication studies. This ongoing work advances novel knowledge on how and why experiences of different depths influence the types of experience-related objects consumers acquire.

Statement of Key Contributions

People often purchase objects that are associated with an experience—something we refer to as the materialization of experiences. While the materialization of experiences is a ubiquitous phenomenon and a commercially sizable industry, little is known about how aspects of the experience affect the type of object consumers purchase. In this research, we focus on one aspect—the experience depth. We theorize for and empirically test the idea that the depth of the experience consumption influences whether people purchase unique versus typical experience-related objects. We document evidence from three studies showing that consumers of deeper (vs. more basic) experiences prefer more unique (vs. typical) objects, and that the object's conversational value explains this effect. These findings contribute to the experiential versus material purchases literature by examining how these two purchase types interrelate and influence each other. In addition, our findings on the *type* of experience-related objects people prefer contribute to literature primarily centered on *why* individuals acquire souvenirs to begin with. In addition, our research offers practical solutions for managers providing experiences to

consumers on how to target consumers with the 'right' type of object to materialize their experience.

References are available upon request.

Extended Abstract Template

WHEN BEING SMART TRUMPS AI: AN EXPLORATION INTO CONSUMER PREFERENCES FOR SMART VS. AI-ENABLED PRODUCTS

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Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, smart products, consumer preference, AI anxiety

Description: Our research findings show that consumers prefer products labeled as "smart" over those labeled as "AI-enabled," and this preference is mediated by enhanced learning anxiety related to AI.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – 200 Words

Today's products and services that are available to consumers are yesterday's science fiction. Situations like receiving a notification on your mobile device when your laundry is finished, monitoring your sleep quality with a wearable device, or measuring personal health data are instantly becoming commonplace in modern society. Prior to the rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence ("AI") in the consumer market, both marketers and scholars directed tremendous attention to smart products (Raff et al. 2020). Remarkably, despite the popularity of AI and smart products, there is a discernible gap in the marketing literature where these two phenomena

converge. The major influx in interest generates a set of questions around marketers' framing of these products: Are they "smart" or are they powered by AI? How do consumers' preferences for and perceptions regarding AI and smart products differ, and why? We hypothesize that consumers exhibit greater preference for products when they are labeled as smart (versus AI-enabled) products and that this relationship is mediated by AI learning anxiety.

Method And Data – 200 Words

In Study 1, we selected commonly purchased items (e.g., a watch, a washing machine, a dishwasher, and a refrigerator) as stimuli because of their relevance in consumers' everyday lives. Study 1 results show that participants expressed a significantly higher Willingness to Purchase (WTP) and quality ratings for the products when they were described as "smart" compared to when they were described as "AI-enabled." To control potential effects related to product selection, in Study 2, we used the same product as the experimental stimulus but framed it as either "smart" or "AI-enabled" in nature. Study 2 results revealed that participants indicated a higher WTP when the product was labeled as smart versus AI-enabled. Also, participants had more positive attitudes toward the product when it was framed as a smart product compared to when the same product was framed as AI-enabled. In Study 3, participants indicated a higher likelihood to own the product when it was framed as a smart (versus AI- enabled) product. We also found that differences in AI learning anxiety indirectly mediated the effect of smart (versus AI-enabled) product framing on consumer preferences.

Summary of Findings – 200 words

Studies 1 and 2 suggest that consumers prefer smart over AI-enabled products. First, willingness to purchase the product was significantly higher for products framed as "smart" in each condition. Second, participant perceptions of quality were higher for products framed as "smart," as was participant valence. These findings offer a look at the consumer's perspective of how a product is labeled and how it affects preferences or even invokes uncertainties. Although a hierarchy of definitions of smart and AI products exists, marketers are left with challenges related to how they should frame products that they are releasing to consumers and how they communicate the product's features. While Studies 1 and 2 find evidence regarding the relationship between product framing (smart product versus AI-enabled product) and consumer preferences, Study 3 explores the role of AI-enabled products invoking a certain amount of anxiety based on uncertainty, connecting this relationship to consumers' willingness to own a product. We find that labeling a product as AI-enabled evokes some level of anxiety that may affect the relationship between the product and the consumers' willingness to own that product.

Statement of Key Contributions – 200 words

Prior to the rapid growth of AI in the consumer market, smart products received great attention from marketers and consumers (Raff et al. 2020). Given the recent increase in attention to AI technologies, this research explores consumers' preferences and intentions when products are framed as "smart" versus "AI-enabled." While previous literature has explored AI products and smart products individually, little is known about consumers' preferences between the two products simultaneously. Three empirical experiments demonstrate that consumers show preference for products labeled as "smart" over those labeled as "AI-enabled." This preference was mediated by enhanced learning anxiety related to AI. The findings provide insights for

marketers applying message framing, suggesting that labeling products as "smart" may evoke more favorable consumer behavior compared to the "AI-enabled" label. Moreover, this research contributes to the literature on perceptions and intentions related to AI and smart products by concurrently exploring consumer preferences regarding both smart products and AI-enabled products.

References are available upon request.

WHEN SHOWING OFF IS THE BEST
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MEDIATOR AND MODERATOR VARIABLES FOR STATUS CONSUMPTION OF MAXIMIZERS

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Keywords: maximizing, status consumption, social comparison

Description: This study explores mediator and moderator variables for status consumption of maximizing consumers.

ABSTRACT

We show that maximizing predicts status consumption and that this connection is mediated by social comparison. While self-esteem did not act as a moderator for social comparison, we show that only people with low or medium but not high levels of fear of being shamed engage in status consumption.

INTRODUCTION

One of the defining aspects of maximizing tendency is the goal of wanting to have the best and not settling for a good enough option (Schwartz et al. 2002; Cheek and Schwartz 2016), but it is also argued that maximizing consumers want to be perceived as the best (Weaver et al. 2015). This propensity for superiority makes maximizing consumers especially prone to negative

consequences not only because they feel subjectively worse when they see themselves as inferior (Huang and Zeelenberg 2012) but also because social comparison plays an essential role in their decision-making. They are sensitive to upward social comparison, which can motivate them (Chan 2022) but also leads to more substantial upward counterfactual thinking (Leach and Patall 2013). Prior research has also shown that maximizing consumers care a great deal about how they are perceived in social settings. Luan and Li (2019) showed that maximizing consumers care about the status of products when consumption happens in public but not in private and Brannon and Soltwisch (2017) showed that maximizing consumers care about status signaling product features, which is in line with findings of Luan, Sun, and Li (2023) who report for maximizing consumers a heightened need for status and higher likelihood to engage in conspicuous consumption. However, little is known as to why maximizing consumers care so much about their relative position and communicating a high social standing to others. The current research thus aims to determine the role of social comparison and underlying reasons why maximizing consumers tend to engage in status consumption. Building on Weaver et al. (2015), we investigate if maximizing consumers use status consumption in a functional role to adjust their social views of themselves. Because of the ubiquitousness of social media, where people showcase every aspect of their lives, the opportunity to compare to others is immanent. Because many people share only the best aspects of their lives on social media, the risk of feeling inferior (Appel, Gerlach, and Crusius 2016) and suffering from adverse consequences (Müller et al. 2020) is high, which emphasizes the relevance of this research.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT
Having the best means that it is better than any other option. However, as Weaver et al. (2015) showed, maximizing consumers are not interested in the absolute best but rather in the relative

best. They are less concerned with quality aspects and more with social superiority within their peer group. Thus, they are motivated to acquire a high social status and communicate it to others (Brannon and Soltwisch 2017; Luan and Li 2019; Luan, Sun, and Li 2023). One way to communicate status to others is by consuming products which imply social status and prestige (Packard 1959). Such products represent high social rank to the individual and surrounding significant others (Eastman, Goldsmith, and Flynn 1999). As this seems of particular interest to maximizing consumers, we first hypothesize that:

H1: Higher maximizing tendencies lead to more status consumption.

It is clear from prior research that maximizing consumers engage more in social comparison (Schwartz et al. 2002; Weaver et al. 2015). Social comparison is a behavior of individuals in which comparison to others is drawn to learn about the self (Gibbons and Buunk 1999). Maximizing consumers want to be the best and compare themselves to ascertain if their performance is superior. While social comparison can either be directed to the better off (upwards) or the worse off (downwards), prior research on maximizing found effects for both directions of comparison. Because consumers with maximizing tendencies engage in both upward (Chan 2022) and downward social comparison Ma, Lin, and Ein-Gar 2022), we do not fix on a direction of social comparison but instead investigate social comparison behavior in general, which results in hypothesis 2:

H2: Higher maximizing tendencies lead to more social comparison.

Additionally, self-esteem seems to influence the level and direction of social comparisons. Generally speaking, people who assume they perform poorly compared to others reduce the comparison level or avoid comparing themselves to protect themselves from the pain of being

inferior (Gibbons, Benbow, and Gerrard 1994). Also, people with low self-esteem engage in downward social comparisons when they were successful, while others were not in order to relish in their success (Wood et al. 1994). On the other hand, people with high self-esteem experience fewer diagnostic gains from comparing themselves with others, especially with inferiors (Wood et al. 1994), which makes it less likely that they engage in social comparison. However, individuals with both high or low self-esteem can use downward social comparison to feel better about themselves by establishing their own superiority (Gibbons and McCoy 1991). This shows that self-esteem plays a complex role when and how people compare themselves to others. Because some studies concluded that high levels of maximizing are related to low self-esteem (Schwartz et al. 2002; Osiurak et al. 2015), while others concluded that high levels of self-esteem could be related to strong maximizing tendencies (Cheek and Schwartz 2016), the above-discussed effects of self-esteem on social comparison could also be the case for maximizing consumers. Thus, Hypothesis 3 says:

H3: The effect of maximizing tendencies on social comparison is moderated by the level of self-esteem.

People who often compare themselves to others are more interested in how they are doing in relation to others and what others think of them (Heaney, Goldsmith, and Jusoh 2005). Since status is a form of evaluative judgment (Donnenwerth and Foa 1974), it inherently involves social comparison. Previous research has shown that status consumption is negatively correlated to consumer independence, meaning that people who buy products for status make their decisions in regard of the opinions of others (Goldsmith and Clark 2012). In other words, such people care about their social standing. Consuming status products can convey status to others, which is why we hypothesize that:

H4: Social comparison is positively related to status consumption.

However, because status consumption is a way of attracting attention (Kauppinen-Räisänen et al. 2018), there is also the risk of negative social judgment by others. Such a status conflict can result in shame (Goss, Gilbert, and Allan 1994). Shame is a negative emotion that can arise in a social context from a discrepancy between one's expectations about oneself and the view of others (Gibbons, Benbow, and Gerrard 1994; Allan and Gilbert 1995). People are shame-avoidant, which means that although people are interested in their social standing and inquire about it through social comparison, they could fear being shamed by others and therefore abstain from engaging in status consumption as a mean to upgrade their social status (Gilbert 2000). Thus, only people not afraid to be shamed by others would consume status when they compare themselves to surrounding others. Hypothesis 5, therefore, says:

H5: The effect of social comparison on status consumption is moderated by the fear of being shamed by others.

Because we assume an effect of maximizing tendencies on social comparison and an effect of social comparison on status consumption, we predict that social comparison mediates the effect maximizing tendencies have on status consumption.

H6: The effect of maximizing tendencies on status consumption is mediated by social comparison

METHOD

The hypotheses were tested through an online survey. The constructs were measured with multi-item scales used in previous research. Goal maximizing was assessed with the MTS-7 (Dalal et al. 2015), the recommended scale for measuring the goal component of wanting the best (Cheek and Schwartz 2016). The instrument consists of seven unipolar 7-point Likert-scale items, e.g. "No

matter what I do, I have the highest standards for myself." Social comparison was measured with the Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM, Gibbons and Buunk 1999). In 11 unipolar 5-point items, the questionnaire asks about different aspects of comparison with others (e.g. "If I want to find out how well I have done something, I compare what I have done with how others have done." Self-esteem was measured with the unipolar 10-item scale developed by Rosenberg (1965). For assessing external shame, we used the Others As Shamer Scale (OAS2, Matos et al. 2015; eight unipolar 5-point items, e.g. "I think that other people look down on me."). For status consumption, the unipolar 7-point Status Consumptions Scale (Eastman, Goldsmith, and Flynn 1999) was administered (5 items, e.g. "I would buy a product just because it has status."). The positions of the constructs within the questionnaire correspond to the order of their presentation above.

Participants were sampled through the online platform Prolific. The survey was conducted in the United States. Inattentive and careless responders who failed to pass two attention test items (e.g. "This is an attention check, please choose the leftmost answer 'strongly disagree' for this item.") were eliminated, which resulted in a final sample size of 400. The sample included 200 males and females each. Equal gender distribution was a substantial sampling criterion, in addition to English as a first language. The mean age was 43.3 years (SD = 13.0).

RESULTS

In the first step, the internal consistency of the multi-item scales was calculated using Cronbach's alpha scores. Since all scales showed sufficient internal consistency above .8 (goal maximizing: .89; self-esteem: .94; social comparison: .89; fear of being shamed: .96; status consumption: .91), mean scores for each construct were calculated, with reversed items being recoded. These mean scores were entered as variables in subsequent analyses.

The hypotheses were tested within a conditional process model using the PROCESS 4.2 macro for SPSS (Hayes 2018; model 21, 5000 bootstrapping samples, 95 % confidence intervals, HC4 for heteroscedasticity-consistent estimation, mean-centered variables). Goal maximizing was entered as independent variable, social comparison as mediator variable, and status consumption as dependent variable. The effect of maximizing on status consumption (H1) was tested by calculating the direct effect (c') within the mediation model. The effect of maximizing on social comparison (H2) was investigated using path a, the mediating effect (H6) of social comparison could be determined with the indirect effect (ab). Path b of the mediation model was used to test the effect of social comparison on status consumption (H4). According to hypotheses H3 and H5, self-esteem was assumed to moderate the relation between goal maximizing and social comparison, whereas fear of being shamed by others was entered as moderator between social comparison and status consumption. The level of significance was set to .05 for all analyses. Results of the prediction of social comparison and status consumption are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Prediction of social comparison and status consumption

Predictor	Coefficient b	p	CI (lower; upper)
Prediction of Social Comparison ($R^2 = .096$)			
Constant	.004	.921	-.070; .077
Goal maximizing (a)	.078	.035*	.006; .151
Self-esteem	-.321	< .001*	-.422; -.229
Goal Maximizing x Self-esteem (Mod 1)	-.016	.733	-.109; -077
Prediction of Status Consumption ($R^2 = .135$)			
Constant	2.757	< .001*	2.605; 2.909
Goal maximizing (c')	.265	< .001*	.145; .385
Social comparison (b)	.478	< .001*	.278; .678
Fear of being shamed	-.037	.643	-.194; .120
Social comparison x fear of being shamed (Mod 2)	-.264	.002*	-.433; -.094

Coefficient b: unstandardized estimates; *: significance level $p < .05$;
CI: 95% Bootstrapping Confidence intervals, lower/upper; Mod 1 / 2: Moderator 1 / 2,
a:, b: path a / b within the mediation model; c': direct effect,

Goal maximizing and self-esteem significantly predicted social comparison, but self-esteem did not moderate the relationship between goal maximizing and social comparison. Goal maximizing also showed a direct effect (c') on status consumption. Stronger maximizing tendencies were thus associated with a stronger tendency towards status consumption. Social comparison also had a significant impact on status consumption. The stronger the tendency to social comparison, the stronger the tendency to status consumption. While fear of being shamed by others did not predict status consumption, the construct significantly moderates the relationship between social comparison and status consumption.

To investigate the nature of the moderation, we calculated simple slopes for different levels of the moderator variable fear of being shamed (figure 1). For low (- 1 standard deviation: - 1 SD) and medium (mean: M) levels of the moderator, a stronger relation between social comparison and status consumption could be found, while this relationship was little for a high level of fear of being shamed (+ 1 SD). Thus, for subjects with low and medium levels of fear of being shamed, status consumption seems to be dependent on their level of social comparison (conditional effect for $shame_{-1SD}$: .758; CI_{lower}: .496; CI_{higher} = 1.021; effect for $shame_M$: .478; CI_{lower}: .270, CI_{higher} = .678). For subjects with higher levels, there was no such relationship ($Shame_{+1SD}$: .198, CI_{lower}: -.078; CI_{higher} = .474).

In addition to a pick-a-point approach with simple slopes, the Johnson-Neyman technique (Johnson and Neyman 1936) was used. The advantage of this method is that it provides inferential statistical testing for all possible simple slopes of the independent variables over the full range of the moderator variable (Bauer and Curran 2005). This approach showed significant effects for social comparison on status consumption for centered fear of being shamed values below .854

(77.5 % of cases within the sample). For higher values of the moderator variable, there was no significant relationship between social comparison and status consumption.

Figure 1. Simple slopes for different levels of the moderator variable fear of being shamed by others
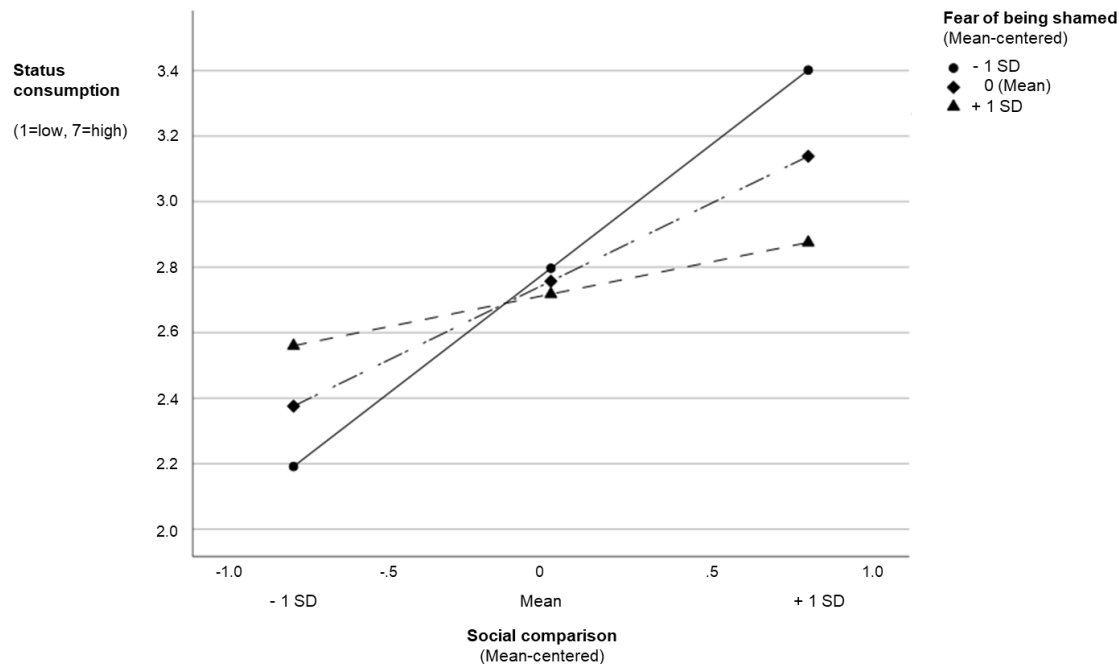
Since self-esteem did not significantly moderate the relationship between social comparison and goal maximizing, the indirect effect within our moderated mediation model was analyzed using only fear of being shamed as a moderator variable (PROCESS, model 14). Self-esteem was entered as a covariate when determining indirect effects. There was a significant effect for the impact of goal maximizing on status consumption, mediated by social comparison and moderated by fear of being shamed (moderated mediation index: -.021; CI_{lower}: -.050, $CI_{higher} = -.001$). Significant indirect conditional effects could be detected for low (shame$_{-1SD}$: .058; CI_{lower}: .003; $CI_{higher} = .123$) and medium levels (shame$_M$: .036; CI_{lower}: .002; $CI_{higher} = .076$) of the moderator variable. No indirect effect could be found for a high level of the moderator (shame$_{+1SD}$: .013; CI_{lower}: -.010; $CI_{higher} = .042$).

DISCUSSION

The majority of our hypotheses could be confirmed. Goal maximizing was found to have a direct (H1) effect on status consumption. Goal maximizing also predicted social comparison (H2), which impacted status consumption (H4). This impact of social comparison on status consumption was moderated by the fear of being shamed by others (H5). In addition to the direct impact of goal maximizing on status consumption, there was also an indirect effect with social comparison mediating the relationship between maximizing and status consumption (H6). Against our assumption, self-esteem did not moderate the relationship between goal maximizing and social comparison (H3).

Our results align with prior research and support that maximizing consumers care substantially about social implications when deciding on an option (Luan, Sun, and Li 2023; Weaver et al. 2015). In addition, it seems that when maximizing consumers think about the best available option, one answer is the option that conveys the highest status to their surroundings.

The notion that maximizing consumers are heavily influenced in their decision-making by social aspects is further supported by moderation through fear of being shamed by others. The moderation was present for low and medium levels but not for high levels of fear, meaning that when maximizing consumers did not or only moderately fear being shamed by others more social comparison lead to higher status consumption. This makes sense since status consumption can lead to envy, scorn and shameful labeling by others (Vinelli 2009) but also dissociation if (the type of) status consumption is not appreciated (Han, Nunes, and Drèze 2010). If someone fears such reactions, they would not put themselves in the limelight through overtly consuming status symbols.

In summary, it shows that social comparison predicts status consumption, which leads to the belief that people compare themselves to others and thus engage in status consumption in a socially adjustive manner. Our results imply that maximizing consumers show off to increase their social standing when they do not fear being put down for such flashy behavior by others. This could be in everyday life among their peers but also online, where self-promotion through conspicuous consumption is a common theme (Taylor and Strutton 2016).

Self-esteem, however, did not moderate the effect of goal maximizing on social comparison. Because prior research could not provide a clear conclusion as to whether maximizing consumers have high or low self-esteem, it could be that both are the case, but that high and low self-esteem maximizing consumers engage in social comparison for different reasons. An interesting direction for future research would be to distinguish between upward and downward social comparison to investigate whether high (low) self-esteem leads to more upward (downward) social comparison in maximizing consumers.

From a practical viewpoint interesting implications can be derived from these results. Because of the inclination to social comparisons from maximizing consumers, it seems sensible to use social networks to target this group. On social network sites, consumers compare themselves with others. Marketing managers can emphasize the status communicating aspects of their products and thus provide additional value to consumers who are comparing and interested in maximizing their social standing. Further aspects of social comparison can be integrated into the promotion material since especially maximizing consumers who are not afraid to be shamed by others seem interested in status consumption.

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WHO WILL HELP? THE EFFECT OF AUTOMATED SOCIAL PRESENCE ON INDIVIDUALS' LIKELIHOOD TO ACT PROSOCIALLY

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Keywords: Automated social presence, robots, agency, prosocial behavior.

Description: In the paper, we theorize and empirically show that people are less likely to act prosocially in the presence of technologies with high (vs. low) automated social presence.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

New technological developments continue to change people's lives in many domains, affecting not only how we perform individual tasks but also human sociability and relationships with others and society. In this technological-evolving environment, the nature of how individuals behave increasingly depends on how they interact with technology. Indeed, technology advancements more systematically and effectively allow people to engage with technology on social levels. The increasing recognition of technology as an entity manifests in what previous literature has called *automated social presence (ASP)*, defined as the extent to which people feel that machines can be perceived as social entities. While recognizing technology as an entity can have different positive effects on consumers' experience, less is known about whether increasing ASP can lead to some negative downstream consequences. In this paper, we propose that technologies that differ in ASP will affect the extent to which people engage in prosocial behavior. In particular, we theorize that people will attribute higher levels of agency to technologies with high ASP (e.g., robots) than to technology with low ASP (e.g., cameras). In turn, if technology can do the task, people will be less likely to act and behave in a prosocial way.

Method And Data

To test our hypotheses, we conducted three studies using multiple methodologies and data. In Studies 1 and 2, we test the effect of ASP on the likelihood of acting prosocially using both lab data with a real robot and online data using a conjoint-based approach. In Studies 1 (N = 181; lab study), we employed 3 single factor (social presence: no technology, camera, robot) between participants' design. The main dependent variable was the extent to which participants picked up papers from the lab floor. In Study 2 (N = 1250; Prolific sample), participants had to choose in

which vignette a person would be more willing to help another fallen on the street. The vignettes varied across different dimensions, including the type of technology present on the scene. Finally, in Study 3 (N = 401; student sample on Prolific), we conducted an online experiment to test the mediating effect of perceived agency. The study employed a 2 single factor (ASP: camera, robot) between participants' designs. The main dependent variable was the extent to which people would clean a room with some leftovers in it. All the studies have been ethically approved and preregistered on OSF.

Summary of Findings

The results show that people are less likely to act prosocially when they experience high (vs. low) ASP. In Study 1, participants left more papers on the floor (i.e., were less likely to help) in the robot condition (M_{robot} = 4.81, SD = .91) than in the camera condition (M_{camera} = 4.33, SD = 1.58; F(1, 121) = 4.228, p = .042). In Study 2, respondents believed that the observer was significantly less likely to help the fallen person when the robot was in the image than when no technology was present (0.09, SE = 0.01, p = 0.00). Interestingly, respondents perceived that the observer was more likely to help the fallen person when surveillance cameras were in the area than when no technology was available (0.04, SE = 0.01, p = 0.01). Finally, Study 3 replicates the effect of ASP on the likelihood of helping. Moreover, a mediation analysis conducted with PROCESS shows that participants attribute higher agency to the robot than to the camera (b = 1.26, SE = .10, 95% CI [1.0531, 1.4742]). Higher agency, in turn, leads to a higher likelihood that someone else should clean (b = .36, SE = .06, 95% CI [.2407, .4876]).

Statement of Key Contributions

Our study provides both theoretical and managerial contributions. Theoretically, we provide evidence of the negative consequences of increased automated social presence through the

introduction of smart technologies that can substitute humans in prosocial tasks. While technology can be beneficial in maximizing efficiency or helping humans in performing tasks, our study shows that people become also less sociable and are less willing to help other humans in the presence of such technologies. Furthermore, the study enriches the literature on the consequences of attributing social presence to machines. Our findings show that higher social presence increases the perception of agency of the technology, which, in turn, increases the likelihood of delegating the responsibility to act to the technology itself. Finally, our study provides also valuable insights for policymakers who are currently designing new smart solutions for increasing societal wellbeing. Specifically, we show that the design of technology (e.g., whether a camera is presented with a robotic shape) can influence the extent to which people transfer the responsibility to act prosocially to the technology itself and attenuate their helping behavior towards others.

"THIS IS USED TO ATTRACT CONSUMERS": EFFECTS OF PASSIVE VOICE ON CONSUMER BEHAVIORS

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Keywords: voice, involvement, crowdfunding, communication, complex decisions

Description: This research proposes that passive (rather than active) voice may be more effective in complex high involvement decision making settings based on the instrumentality heuristic, congruency of syntax and decision complexity.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Background and Questions

Firms have a choice of various language syntax structures and styles to use in their messages to solicit desired consumer responses. Although research on effects of language syntax is still emerging, this line of work demonstrates that readability of a message drives consumer engagement on social media (Pancer et al. 2019) and increases ad recall and recognition in the context of print and broadcast media (Bradley and Meeds 2002; Lowrey 1998).

However, most studies on message readability effects have focused on less complex and low involvement consumer decisions and included metrics, such as clicks, ad recall, or attitudes. We argue that effects of message complexity may be different in the context of complex high involvement decisions due to heuristic instrumentality and congruency in complexity between the sentence syntax and decision making. Specifically, we focus on the use of passive versus active voice in firms' communications as one aspect of message complexity. Our research aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How does passive (vs. active voice) influence consumer behavioral responses to firms' messages in complex high involvement decision making settings?

2. How do other message characteristics (i.e., message emotionality) influence the effect of passive voice on consumer behavioral responses?

Methodology

We conduct two studies to address our research questions. Study 1 uses product descriptions in the technology category on the crowdfunding platform Kickstarter (n = 8,045) and examines effects of the passive (vs. active) voice on solicited funding by these start-up firms. Study 2 uses Twitter posts from the U.K. universities (n = 1,032,086) and examines effects of the passive (vs. active) voice on solicited student applications to these universities.

We used PassivePy developed by Sepehri, Markowitz, and Sadat (2022)to measure use of the passive voice in in the messages (Kickstarter projects or Twitter posts) and "affective" dictionary from LIWC to measure the emotionality of a message as the moderator variable. We employ the fixed-effect estimator regression model and include Gaussian copula term (Becker et al. 2002; Danaher et al. 2011) in both studies to address endogeneity.

Summary and Findings

Our findings of Study 1 show that the effect of passive (vs. active) voice on solicited funding is positive and significant (β = .171; p < .001). This finding indicates that projects using more passive voice in telling their "story" attract higher levels of funding. Also, the interaction effect of the passive voice with the message emotionality is also positive and significant (β = .039; p = .018). This finding indicates that the effect of the passive voice on solicited funding is stronger when it is used in conjunction with more emotional (i.e., affective) language.

The findings of Study 2 demonstrate that the effect of the passive voice on solicited applications is also positive and significant (β = .087; p = .003). Thus, universities that use more passive voice in their Twitter posts attract a higher volume of student applications. The interaction effect between the use of the passive voice and message emotionalism is also positive and significant at $p < .10$ (β = .240; p = .071). When universities use passive voice in conjunction with more emotional language, they are able to increase their students' applications.

Key Contributions

Our research makes several contributions to emerging research on firms' communications, the effects of language syntax, and message content effects (Atalay, Kihal, and Ellsaesser 2023; Meire et al. 2019; Ostinelli and Luna 2022) on solicited consumer responses. First, we

demonstrate that firms' use of passive (rather than active) voice in their communications in complex high involvement contexts increases desired consumer behaviors, such as solicited funding and student applications. We speculate that this effect is driven by heuristic instrumentality and congruency effects related to complexity of the passive voice sentence syntax, on one hand, and decision-making setting, on the other. Second, we contribute by highlighting the importance of the interactive effects of language syntax and message content. Specifically, our findings demonstrate that the positive effect of the use of passive voice in firms' communications is further enhanced by the use of message emotionality, i.e., messages that use affective language to evoke emotional reactions in readers. Finally, our research offers novel insights for firms, entrepreneurs, educational establishments, and public policy makers by emphasizing the importance of the passive voice in communications that demand complex decision making from customers.

"YOU" ARE WATCHING AT ME: IMPACTS OF SERVICE ANTHROPOMORPHISM AND SELF-CONSTRUAL ON CONSUMER SELF-REGULATION

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Keywords: service anthropomorphism, self-regulation, self-construal, watching-eye effect, anticipatory shame

Description: Our results across four studies provide convergent evidence that apps with anthropomorphic characteristics motivate consumers to use the services to improve their self-regulation behaviors by triggering users' perceptions of being watched and then evoke anticipated shame.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Marketers attract potential users to use their app services through anthropomorphism. Will an app with anthropomorphism enhance user behavior that requires self-regulation? In the current research, we suggest that the watching eye phenomenon will occur when people encounter service anthropomorphism (i.e., an app with anthropomorphic design) to improve their self-regulation behavior. We argue that the feelings of being watched by an anthropomorphized app induce a sense of being seen and render human reputation systems salient. Anticipated shame will be then evoked and will then induce the user's self-control and boost the user's self-regulation behavior.

This research further examines self-construal as the boundary condition. People with an interdependent self-construal ("interdependents") perceive the self as relational and interconnected with others, whereas people with an independent self-construal ("independents") see themselves as autonomous and unique (Triandis 1993). In this research, we propose that the advantageous effects of service anthropomorphism may be lowered or even disappear on interdependents. First, interdependents are more likely to activate self-regulation goals than independents due to greater motivation to suppress impulsive consumption tendencies (Zhang and Shrum 2009). Second, it is possible that interdependents may get used to being watched and the watching eye effect will be expected to be weaker.

Method And Data

Four studies using adult consumers, a variety of self-regulation contexts, and manipulations of anthropomorphism offer convergent support for our premises. Study 1 provides initial empirical evidence on apps for improving self-regulation show that apps with anthropomorphic characteristics are more popular than similar ones but without anthropomorphic characteristics. Top 200 apps associated with health/fitness Google Play Store were retrieved and analysis.

Study 2 examined the effects of app anthropomorphism on consumers' self-regulation through experimental design. Second, we examined feelings of being watched and anticipated shame as sequential mediators. Third, the research further ruled out alternative mediators such as self-efficacy enhancement (Tam, Lee, and Chao 2013), perceived social connectedness (Tam et al. 2013), and perceived attribution (Hur, Koo, and Hofmann 2015), which were likely to occur because of anthropomorphism in the prior research.

Studies 3 and 4 considered self-construal as the boundary condition and demonstrate the advantageous effect of apps with anthropomorphism only on independents, not on interdependents. Diet control and personal finance management were used as the test apps in Studies 3 and 4 respectively.

Summary of Findings

Study 1 showed that the anthropomorphic level of app significantly predicted download amounts. The secondary data showed a positive relationship between anthropomorphic level of app and app downloads. We make inferences that app designers include anthropomorphic characteristics because they may believe that consumers exposed to anthropomorphic apps will like them more and download the apps.

Study 2 indicated that individuals exposed to an app with anthropomorphism showed higher intention to use the service than those exposed to the same app but without anthropomorphism. Feelings of being watched and anticipated shame were found as sequential underlying mechanisms.

The results of both Studies 3 and 4 showed a significant interaction between app design and self-construal on intention to use the app service. When primed with the independent self-construal, participants reported higher attitude and intention to use the app service toward the anthropomorphic app than toward the non-anthropomorphic app.

Statement of Key Contribution

This research contributes to extent literature on multiple fronts. It identifies service anthropomorphism as a novel marketing strategy in consumer self-regulation enhancement. Our

results across four studies provide convergent evidence that apps with anthropomorphic characteristics motivate consumers to use the services to improve their self-regulation behaviors. The effects of service anthropomorphism on consumer self-regulation received robust support through empirical data and operationalization of anthropomorphism through visual image of an app in an experiment. Compared with non-anthropomorphized service app, consumers show preferences and stronger intention to use the anthropomorphized service app. The present research also contributes to the literature on the watching-eye effect, showing that the cue of service anthropomorphism induces a sense of being seen and strengthens the intention to use the service app. This research also advances the literature on anticipated shame and shows that the watching-eye effect caused by service anthropomorphism evokes anticipatory shame and then intention to use the service app for self-regulation. Finally, this research contributes to the literature on self-construal. The results produce counterintuitive findings: interdependents are not affected by the differences caused between anthropomorphized and non-anthropomorphized apps. The findings provide managerial implications regarding the service app design when promoting users' self-regulation behaviors.

References are available upon request.

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) and Consumer Well Being (CWB)

HALF A CENTURY OF QUALITATIVE CONSUMER RESEARCH:

A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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Keywords: qualitative consumer research, consumer culture theory (CCT), interpretive methods, historical review, bibliometric analysis

Description: This paper offers a bibliometric analysis of all qualitative articles published in JCR since its inception.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

After more than fifty years of qualitative consumer research, it is an opportune moment to examine and critically appraise the following question: In which directions has the production and reception of qualitative consumer research evolved over time?

Method and Data

To track its impact on academic knowledge production, this article examines the development of

qualitative consumer research through bibliometric analysis of all qualitative articles published to date in consumer and marketing research.

Summary of Findings

This research traces the evolution of qualitative consumer research output over time, documents its far-reaching impact in and beyond marketing, and highlights past and present research themes. It also reveals how qualitative knowledge production changed in terms of gender distribution and internationalization, and which elements of craft and authorship increase impact. In addition to celebrating past achievements, this research highlights several developments that should be addressed to ensure a thriving future for qualitative consumer research.

Key Contributions

The authors provide an overview of emerging consumer trends and respective research over the years. These key themes and patterns can enable marketers to discern patterns of consumer behavior and enhance their comprehension holistically. By identifying influential contributors to the qualitative understanding of consumer behavior, the authors offer an overview of potential collaborators and present an avenue for consultancy. The expansive spectrum of themes that qualitative consumer research has captured in-depth renders insight not only for businesses but non-governmental organizations and policy makers alike.

References are available upon request.

AN EXPLORATION OF CONSUMERS' SLOW FASHION PRACTICES

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Keywords: Slow Fashion, Practice Theory, Temporality, Consumer Culture Theory.

Description: This paper explores the various practices that consumers employ to integrate Slow Fashion into their daily lives.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The global apparel manufacturing is a $836 billion industry that has been seeing continuous growth in the past and is forecasted to continue growing in the future (IBIS World 2023). Between 2000 and 2015, clothing production has roughly doubled, at the same time consumers keep clothing items only about half as long (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2023). In an effort to address the negative aspects, industry and academia have turned to 'sustainable fashion' and largely examined how a respectful clothing production could look like.

More recently, scholars started looking into the phenomenon of slow fashion. Sustainable fashion is "a way of purchasing clothes – not caring for it" (Bly et al. 2015: 132), yet recent research points to the importance of focusing not only on "*what* is consumed but *how* fashion products are consumed" (Busalim, Fox & Lynn, 2022: 1805). Extant work has provided important insights regarding the mechanisms and infrastructure of slow fashion. What is missing from the picture is a better understanding of how individuals practice slow fashion beyond the acquisition of handmade, second-hand, or circular products. To this end, the following question informed our empirical investigation: How do consumers practice slow fashion in their daily lives?

Method And Data

We chose a qualitative methodological approach to explore consumers' slow fashion practices. More specifically, we conducted in-depth interviews with individuals practicing slow fashion and complemented these with insights from ethnographic fieldwork, including the participation in sewing workshops, the active mending of clothes, as well as clothing-related activities organized by non-profit organizations. We sampled our interviewees purposefully and following a snowball logic. First, key informants were identified via social media, in particular Instagram. Our initial interviews focused very much on physical environments for slow fashion consumption, in particular on second-hand and thrift stores. In our subsequent sampling, we made sure to contact individuals who have a broader repertoire of behaviors related to slow fashion. Informal interviews took place during our ethnographic engagement in workshops, swap

parties, or initiatives organized by non-profit organizations. To date, we have conducted 11 in-depth interviews (with an average duration of 91 minutes), which allowed us to gain preliminary insights on consumers' understandings, experiences, and practices of slow fashion.

Summary of Findings

Our interviewees have a very broad understanding of what slow fashion means. Our first interviewees often mentioned thrift- and second-hand stores as starting point of their slow fashion journeys. Thrifting, once they find something they like, gives rise to positive feelings of enjoyment and pride. These sentiments are reminiscent of Machado and colleagues' (2019) argument that second-hand purchases can lead to a virtuous circle of consumer engagement in the circular economy, where buying second-hand leads to buying less, stronger relationships with thrift stores, and generally a more ethical and critical consumption.

Our findings also highlight the central role of temporality in the practice of slow fashion as our interviewees stress the importance of taking time and acknowledge the relevance of their slow fashion practices. Eventually, practices of thrifting, and slow fashion more generally, create a sense of inner peace and mindfulness. This is in line with work Bly and colleagues regarding the positive effects of sustainable consumption. The authors find that "sustainable consumption provides our respondents with an apparent sense of personal growth, well- being and experiential pleasure (Szmigin and Carrigan, 2005), which Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007) term 'enchantment'." (Bly et al. 2015, p. 130).

Statement of Key Contributions

This research contributes to academic literature by expanding the discourse on sustainable fashion consumption by shifting the focus from purchase to post-purchase practices. Extant research on sustainable consumer behavior often prioritizes the buying stage, neglecting how consumers care for products they already own. This study emphasizes the significance of examining actions such as washing, drying, wearing, and mending clothes, to address the sustainability of products already in possession. In addition, we add to the discourse on practice theory by investigating the temporality of consumption practices. Slow fashion practices involve intentionally prolonging the consumption process through mindful care. Although initially not always perceived as enjoyable, this deceleration fosters feelings of empowerment and control, enhancing overall well-being.

For practitioners, this research offers insights regarding sustainable consumer segments. Brands in sustainable fashion can leverage the understanding of consumers' slow fashion practices to tailor communication strategies, emphasizing clear care instructions to support customers on their slow fashion journeys. Brands like Nudie Jeans, offering "free repairs forever," could further engage consumers by helping them acquire repair skills, fostering a stronger connection to both the products and the brand, with potential positive impacts on clothing waste reduction.

BEYOND INGRESS:

ANALYZING AND EXTENDING THE MEANING OF ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

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Based on our argument that continuing to accept current views of healthcare access confines our appreciation of what access involves and restricts our understanding of what is required from marketing to tackle access barriers, we proffer a new marketing model that conceptualizes healthcare access as a journey towards value realization.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Access to quality healthcare for physical, mental, and social wellbeing is undisputed. Yet, about half of the world's population is unable to access needed healthcare (WHO 2017). A well-researched dimension of healthcare access is affordability. However, even in countries like the UK where healthcare is free at the point of delivery, access barriers are numerous and spatial inequities long-standing (Bradshaw, Bloor, and Doran 2018). Researchers tend to use the well-known frameworks of Aday and Andersen (1974) or Penchansky and Thomas (1981) to assess dimensions such as availability, acceptability, adequacy, and geographic accessibility (Saurman 2016). These conceptualize access as relating to consumers' ability or willingness to enter a healthcare system dependent upon properties of the system (appointment availability) and/or the individual (affordability). We argue that continuing to accept this view confines our appreciation of what access involves and restricts our understanding of what is required from marketing to tackle barriers currently hindering the realization of health benefits for many consumers. Drawing on Ribot and Peluso's (2003) work, we redefine healthcare access as 'the ability to derive value' and proffer an alternative conceptualization of healthcare access which identifies individual and systemic barriers and broadens our understanding of what access means.

Method and Data

Our context is a seven-year empirical project of end-of-life care (EOLC) in the UK. Data was collected from 245 consumers who were receiving care from 9 different EOLC units. EOLC focuses on providing holistic care to both patients and family caregivers (Hospice UK 2021).

Consequently, we collected pathographies from patients (83), current caregivers (75), and bereaved caregivers (87). Pathographies are stories of illness experiences; experiential narratives that put the patient at the center (Hunsaker Hawkins 1999). Pathographies were audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Taking our new definition of access as 'ability to derive value' as our starting point, we manually thematized the data utilizing the procedures suggested by Spiggle (1994), and for this paper we searched for themes that constricted people's ability to realize value.

Summary of Findings

Three interrelated sets of contrivances hampering value realization emerged.

Value communications caused barriers, particularly a misalignment between understanding needs and how EOLC could help. Myths surrounding hospice and death taboos (EIU 2015) abounded. Current communication channels were ineffective in breaking down these barriers, while gatekeepers often hindered consumer's access attempts.

Value constellation configurations were highly problematic. Poor collaboration and ineffective institutional arrangements between parts of the system led to perceptions among consumers of a disjointed and poorly connected service. Indeed, we found little evidence of the integrated patient care model much acclaimed by healthcare professionals (Liberati et al. 2016).

Value density refers to actor's resources (Normann and Ramírez, 1993) which, when leveraged, can aid navigation. We found differing levels of health literacy made many encounters difficult, possibly reflecting the relatively low levels of health literacy found in the general population (Hickey et al. 2018). Contrary to the much-acclaimed paradigm of person empowerment (Feder, Akgün, and Schulman-Green 2020), we identified a great deal of power imbalance between

clinician and patient, perpetuating feelings of helplessness for consumers, particularly among patients. In contrast, family caregivers, often exasperated by the system, frequently intervened on the patient's behalf.

Key Contributions

Our contribution is a healthcare access framework that challenges current perspectives. Marketing has no theory of healthcare access: it borrows frameworks originating in health that lack marketing thought. Current models confine appreciation of what healthcare access involves: improving opportunities to enter a healthcare system does not equate to ability to benefit from it. We confront this omission with a new marketing framework that redefines healthcare access from one of system ingress to value realization. Our framework proffers a three-part classification of contrivances that hinder access, each of which are entrenched in the concept of value. Because our model moves from a focus on system ingress to ability to derive value, it lays bare the power imbalances inherent within healthcare services. Hence, it has the potential to kick-start social change. We suggest it is useful for practitioners examining any healthcare service, in full or part, to identify hitherto hidden barriers that hamper a person's ability to benefit from healthcare. Our model encourages examination of barriers not just for the excluded, but also for those who do gain entry but then face barriers to value realization. Therefore, our new perspective is more inclusive.

References are available upon request.

Experiencing Cultural Cringe in the Global South

Through Social Media Cultural Assimilation

Abstract

For a person living in the Global South, a variety of foreign influences shape everyday experience. Given this perspective, we ask, "how is foreign culture assimilated by consumers in the Global South?" We collected data from urban Pakistani informants to empirically examine how these consumers absorb elements of foreign culture while making lifestyle choices. Our informants tell us a medley of different consumer experiences that point towards a spectrum of cultural heterogeneity. We thematize these stories in terms of widespread acceptance and cautious rejection depending on socio-historic backdrops of our informants. Our study has implications of advancing current theoretical offerings by unveiling the complexities of Global South consumer experiences that cannot be explained by individual theories relating to globalization, consumer acculturation, or postcolonial, but perhaps need to partially use existing theoretics to help up better understand assimilation in Global South contexts.

Statement of Key Contributions

While previous research has primarily accounted for immigrant consumers acculturation practices and revealed the tensions that unfold between immigrants and indigenes therein, little theoretical light has been cast on the influence of socio-cultural forces on *non-immigrant* consumers in a

post-colonial context. This is of increasing import in the globalized digital world, especially as social media becomes an integral facet of young consumers' structuring of life. We find the advancement of the conversation on post-colonial and acculturation theory in marketing. We also see the manifestation of the phenomenon of cultural cringe, which distances Generation (Gen) Z consumers from traditional culture and allures them to foreign culture. Our study has implications for advancing current theoretical offerings by unveiling the complexities of post-colonial Global South consumer experiences that forwards the conversation on consumer acculturation and cultural appreciation. Moreover, this research has practical implications for tourism and cultural product marketers as well as governments and policy makers. Tourism marketers would realize how social media consumption is related to tourism and immigration trends. This would also be useful for governments and policy makers related to immigration. Cultural marketers will find it useful to understand how various cultural products arising from global cultural centers are influential in shaping consumer behavior in the Global South through social media.

Paper

American hot chocolate, K-pop, Japanese anime, the British educational system, Bollywood, and the list goes on. For a person living in the Global South, a variety of foreign influences shape everyday experience. While previous research has primarily accounted for immigrant consumers acculturation practices and revealed the tensions that unfold between immigrants and indigenes therein, little theoretical light has been cast on the influence of socio-cultural forces on *non-immigrant* consumers in a post-colonial context. This is of increasing import in the globalized digital world, especially as social media becomes an integral facet of young consumers' structuring of life. Given this state-of-affairs, we ask, "how are foreign cultures assimilated by non-immigrant consumers in the post-colonial Global South?" To investigate this question, we collected data from urban Pakistani informants to empirically examine how consumers use social media to incorporate elements of foreign culture into their practices which enables the shaping lifestyle choices. Our informants report a medley of different consumer experiences that point towards a spectrum of cultural heterogeneity, varying across generations. We thematize these stories in terms of widespread acceptance and cautious rejection depending on socio-historic backdrops of our informants. Moreover, we see the manifestation of the phenomenon of cultural cringe, which distances Generation (Gen) Z consumers from traditional Pakistani culture and allures them to foreign culture. Our study has implications for advancing current theoretical offerings by unveiling the complexities of post-colonial Global South consumer experiences that forwards the conversation on consumer acculturation and cultural appreciation.

Postcolonial Theory and Cultural Cringe

Post-colonial theory examines the aftermath of colonialism and the ongoing impact of colonial

structures on formerly colonized societies (Fanon 1963; Said 1978). It aims to examine and critique the remnants of Western colonialism and understand its implications in contemporary Western and non-Western spaces. Post-colonial theory posits that culture in the Global South perpetuates colonial hierarchies and ideologies, contributing to the marginalization of local cultural practices (Bhabha 1994). Scholars argue that consumer behavior in the Global South is shaped by a desire to emulate the culture of the West (Üstüner and Holt 2010). Relatedly, previous research recognizes neo-colonialism as a continued effect of Western colonialism using political, economic, and cultural means (Banerjee and Prasad 2008) and how the same power relations manifest in myriad ways, especially in delineating the path that the oppressed must take towards development and enlightenment (Jack and Westwood 2006; Prasad 2003).

One result of colonialism is cultural cringe. It is a phenomenon that refers to the feeling of inferiority or self-consciousness that people may experience when compared to others they perceive as more dominant. This causes one to dismiss one's own culture (and culture creators such as art designers, media producers, etc.) as inferior. Coined by the Australian cultural scholar A.A. Phillips (1950), cultural cringe was used to describe an Australian mindset which believed local production of art, theater, and music was lower in quality when to the United States and Great Britain, primarily as a result of a colonial past (Bullock 2012). Cultural cringe is used more pervasively than just the literary or art world and incorporates politics and foreign relations as well (Hesketh 2018). Cultural cringe also inculcates a belief that the quality of local products and achievements should be validated by foreign elites. As a result of cultural cringe, consumers may experience cultural alienation whereby they devalue their own culture, deny their own cultural identity, and crave for experiencing foreign cultures.

Previous Research on Acculturation

Culture is defined as "a set of practices, schemas, behaviors, and symbols treated by everyday actors as having some level of coherence" (O'Brien 2012, p.7). Luedicke (2015, p.111) defines consumer acculturation as "phenomena that occur when consumers (immigrants or indigenes) adjust their established consumption practices, brand relationships, territorial claims, status hierarchies, and (collective) identities to their evolving relationships with consumers from unfamiliar national, social, or cultural backgrounds." Penaloza (1994) reports that immigrants navigate host cultures through assimilation, maintenance, resistance, and segregation. In another study, cosmopolitan consumers experience tensions as they identify with nomadic mobility and cultural adaptability while longing for the familiar and the familial (Thompson and Tambyah 1999). In a mix of opposing cultures, Ustuner and Holt (2007) find that shattered identities are sometimes created when old traditions and values are left behind in search of an idealized, foreign value system. The same authors (2010) report that high cultural capital consumers in a Less Industrialized Country (non-colonial) context may aspire to gain capital by traveling abroad to Western elite countries and retain their status as culture elites in the face of less resourceful locals. As consumers aim to construct cultural identities, ethnic group conflict can be negotiated through marketplace offerings and the interaction between local and immigrant cultures (Luedicke 2015, p. 111). Relatedly, Veresiu and Giesler (2018) observe that resolving ethnic conflicts in host cultures can be handled through institutional mechanism that fetishize strangers and thereby ameliorate inequalities among ethnicities. More recently, Cruz, Seo, and Scaraboto (2023) have considered how consumers balance discourses of cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation to navigate cultural diversity.

While previous theories may be helpful in explaining assimilation of culture in the context of immigration, the dynamics of harmony in inter-ethnic diversity, and the maintenance of cultural

elitism in local/foreign and urban/rural situations, we still await an understanding of how the postcolonial consumer changes and makes sense of extrinsic cultural influences. Departing from the multicultural Global North contexts in previous research (e.g., Cruz, Seo, and Scaraboto 2023; Veresiu and Giesler 2018), the current research aims to understand how consumers from the Global South assimilate elements of foreign cultures in their everyday contexts and explicate the implications for such phenomena for marketing and consumer research.

Methods: Research Site and Data Collection

The data for this study was collected from Pakistan, a South Asian country of more than 240 million people. The area that currently comprises Pakistan was part of India before its independence 75 years ago, which in turn was colonized by Great Britain. Pakistan is a society encompassing different customs, languages, and ethnicities, but nevertheless shares some elements as part of a national culture. The meaning of being a Pakistani is still contested as Pakistan has many different segments within itself (Shaikh 2009). On the one hand, Pakistan is a country which has faced colonization and retains many of the socio-cultural and administrative practices of its colonial past. On the other hand, the country also has different, vibrant ethnic traditions blooming within itself. Moreover, with the increasing use of social media, Pakistani consumers are continually updated with foreign cultural happenings. Hence, in the face of such tensions, it becomes a relevant subject to understand how Pakistanis interpret their and others' cultures.

Data collection and analysis

The informants for this study belonged to the metropolitan cities Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi, and

Quetta. We collected 30 in-depth interviews. This led us to gathering knowledge and intricate specifics about their personal preferences. The research was conducted with two target sets, generation Z (those born between 1990 and 2010 and internet savvy) and generation X (those born between the mid-1960s and early 1980s). These target sets were chosen to see the difference in cultural discourses and practices across two generations. Another rationale of choosing these two generations was to see how the usage of social media impacts adoption of foreign cultural practices.

Twenty informants were selected from Generation Z (age range: 19-22) while 10 were selected from Generation X (age range: 43-58). The samples were generated through snowballing. The average interview lasted about 75 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Additionally, we carried out a four-year (2019-23) netnographic content analysis of relevant pages on Quora, Reddit, Twitter (X) using search terms such as westernization of Pakistani culture, cringe Pakistan, inferiority complex Pakistani, and similar terms. We also used secondary research data by collecting articles from prominent daily English news publications of the country focusing on the foreign/Pakistani cultural mix.

For the data analysis, we conducted open coding. We scanned the interview data to identify key concepts within and across the interviews (Thompson 1997). We then organized the data into distinct categories (Strauss and Corbin 1990). This iterative and cyclical process helped us understand the nature of the issues that arise as a post-colonial cultural assimilation. The second part of the process was to combine the initial concepts into broader categories or themes. Finally, we refined the themes into broader, more abstract dimensions. In the interest of space for this paper, we simplify our findings across generations Z and X.

Findings

Omnovoric Assimilation of Western Culture by Gen Z

Generation Z informants generally followed, accepted, and customized a wide array of foreign cultural offerings and practices. This was typified in the celebration of Global North cultural events (such as Halloween), which were traditionally not celebrated in Pakistan or even at times in the past considered antithetical to Pakistani tradition. For instance, Muslims traditionally do not celebrate Christmas, although Arzu (Gen Z) among others explained that she did:

> Arzu: For the last couple of years, I have been doing it (celebrating Christmas). I also bought a scarf. I'll watch those horror cringey movies and I'll make myself some hot chocolate and really love my American living dreams…I watched a couple of movies that were based around Christmas and then in November Netflix started recommending. I started watching those [and] I see how life transformed Christmas Day around. I just started believing on that Christmas magic.

In the above quote, it is important to note that the phenomena of celebrating foreign cultural events is a relatively new phenomenon that is accelerated by media vehicles such as Netflix. These media discourses are powerful not only in shaping consuming practices such as drinking hot chocolate but also influencing values beliefs such as living the American dream and having faith on Christmas magic.

Our informants also felt comfort in spaces or with people who shared values similar to the Global

North. Mainly, consumers who were educated using a foreign education system expressed aspirations for the West and we believe this contributes to the concept of cultural cringe in Pakistan. The education system often promotes Western ideals and values over those of local culture, leading to a sense of cultural inferiority. One informant, for instance, noted that she felt comfortable in an institution with the British or American educational system, rather than the local, public Pakistani system.

> So I don't know why the environment was so different? I feel like that the people in A-levels (British educational system) are generally more tolerant, kind. I don't know (if) cultured (is) the right word? In matric (Pakistani system of education), for some reason the people were not tolerant at all, and the teacher were perpetuating that. So it was such a very different style and I wasn't used to it...I am currently in my third year (in an American curriculum based-university) of interdisciplinary design and art. And the experience here has been amazing in terms of academics, in terms of the admin.

In the above-mentioned quote, the informant seems to fit in nicely to a foreign educational system and is annoyed by the local one. It is appropriate that the consumer is a student of culture, a domain in which such sensitivities are heightened.

One prominent aspect is the influence of foreign offerings corporations, which promote products and brands, leading to a preference for foreign products over locally produced goods.

As Appadurai (1990) conceptualized, the media also plays a crucial role in perpetuating the influence of neo-colonialism of consumption, as Western media dominates the Global South's media landscape. In this vein, social media seems to be an important driver of this consumer

acculturation.

Our investigation also found that Gen Z Pakistani consumers experience cultural cringe and alienation from their own culture. When asked to explain his views on Pakistani culture, Danial ironically said, "Pakistani culture? The culture that I'm least familiar with despite being here."

The impact of neo-colonialism is also visible in the Pakistani language. The English language is given more importance and status than Urdu, the national language of Pakistan. The use of English in everyday conversation, education, and official communication has led to a sense of cultural inferiority among Pakistanis who are not proficient in the language. Even though Urdu is the language spoken at his home, Danial notes:

> Normally a person is bilingual and the first language that they grasp over here is usually urdu or their own native language. But I, who used to spend a lot of time on TV even as a child, and English was still the first thing that I have grasped. I definitely prefer English being my first language.

Media consumption is a central feature of this adoption of foreign cultural elements. Hafsa agrees with Danial's choice. Noting the hegemonic bias, she says, "I prefer English as colonized as that is." Aamir sees this preference for English as neo-colonial phenomena, a remnant of British rule:

> If you speak English you are educated if you kids don't know how to speak English they do not know how to study …because you know the colonial times we still have that time yes we are not under British rule but the people still have the thinking that they (British) are the elite class.

Aamir's quote above highlights that neo-colonialism persists in Pakistan. Western powers, especially Britain which ruled the sub-continent for more than 200 years are considered leading cultural producers.

This cultural cringe was also evident when consumers thought of citizens of industrialized nations like the US and Australia as friendly while denying that status to their own people. Maham shares the following thought:

> The people (in Australia) are very friendly. I feel like they're also friendly here. I mean I've always heard foreigners say that. I don't know if I had a local say that they're friendly, but there (in Australia) I felt like everyone was just smiling and waving at you.

In the above quote, Maham needs validation of the friendliness of Pakistani people from a foreign source, a typical aspect of cultural cringe.

Our investigation also portrayed an increasingly expanding influence of the global cultural power centers. Traditionally, the United States and Great Britain have been prominent in this regard, but our consumers indicate that gradually Korea, Japan, Russia, China, and India were all sources of consumer culture assimilation. Shiza notes,

> I think our generation sort of is are globalized, we know more things about other cultures rather than our own. For example, American culture, British culture. … The reels (on Instagram) you keep watching mostly, I don't know if it's the number of people, how the algorithm works? Mostly American reels are a lot.

Now my Pinterest, my Twitter, my Instagram, everywhere there is a little bit of Russia. And you asked what difference it made? I write articles about Russia. I write my research papers about Russia. I'm very obsessed with Russia

Above, we see that Shiza's worldview has become Russian-ized as a result of her social media feeds. Hence, she has elements of Russia in her everyday activities. Similarly, Danish and his sister are hooked on Korean culture through anime consumption. Danish explains how Korean lifestyle came into the house:

Just watching anime meant knowing about K dramas for my sister, and from K dramas, she learned that Korean food exists. And now there was a restaurant, Chop Chop Wok, near our house. So we went there and tried the Korean food. Novu is also a restaurant in this area. Their rice is good.

Another issue for Gen Z was the lack of progress made in Pakistan in economic, cultural, and political terms. As a result, some consumers shared embarrassment about their own country.

Cautious Resistance by Gen X and People from Rural Backdrops

Gen X participants and those who came from a rural background expressed their concerns about the Westernization of Pakistani culture. They believed that the influence of Western culture on Pakistani society has led to the erosion of traditional values and norms. These participants noted that the younger generation is particularly susceptible to this influence, and as a result, they are more likely to adopt Western consumer behavior patterns.

Among these participants, our analysis also revealed a growing sense of cultural pride and awareness, particularly among in their connection to their cultural heritage. These consumers expressed a desire to promote and celebrate Pakistani culture, and to challenge the dominant narrative of Western cultural superiority. Some informants were more selective and prefer to keep their local customs. Gurya, one such traditionalist, sees Pakistani food as an entity for bonding:

> Pakistani food is communal. The whole karahi (a local dish) comes and everyone eats it together. It's not separate like burgers. Western foods are individualistic. They are made for lone consumption. But these (Pakistani) things, they're not. They're meant to be shared.

Ghazal indicates cultural cringe in Pakistani people wear they are quick to accept foreign clothing as part of their attire, but she does not see the same power dynamic when it comes to people of the West donning Pakistani cultural or religious wear.

> Do people outside wear shalwar kameez (Pakistani traditional clothing)? Do Non-Muslim wear scarfs? Then why are we adopting their things when they are not wearing our things or even give them importance then why should we run behind them. The English left us here but we are still going behind (following) them so the people who are doing this are target of inferiority complex.

On celebration of foreign holidays by these more traditional consumers, Ghazal noted about Valentine's Day:

> It is not a good thing at all. This will take us to the ruins. The new generation finds it very

nice but this is not nice. According to me, Valentine's Day should be banned.

Religion was also a consideration for our cautious Gen X informants. One view was to tweak cultural offerings before accepting them so they were not opposed to Islamic values. Aslam explains this point:

> According to an Islamic perspective, (our acceptance of foreign cultural offerings) requires some tweaking. You should tweak them then also you can enjoy it. You can do everything. I do not know why we understand that Islam is a very narrow-minded religion. Therefore, we cannot do this and that. We cannot have fun. A lot of things can be done which entertain you. So I feel like we should work within Islamic traditions. And our un-Islamic traditions which we have borrowed from India, or from Hindu culture, we have to leave them. We have to build our traditions using Islamic traditions.

Our Gen Y consumers believe that social media is a primary culprit in this local cultural deterioration and foreign cultural assimilation. Chachi describes how she scolded her daughter for watching Korean pop music icon BTS:

> I would say that they are getting away from the culture … Kids follow people on the Internet. Even my little daughter followed BTS. I scolded her a lot. I hid her phone that no she shouldn't do this. If she sees this, she will be following them. Where will she see her culture?

Frustrated Ghazal thinks the end of Pakistani culture is here. She claims,

Sadly, I think that Pakistani culture does not exist anymore. Sorry to say. Why can I say it? Because I have seen the original Pakistani culture. Maybe, even that was not original because our generation, our parents used to say it has ended now. So maybe this is a natural phenomenon.

Discussion

Our investigation concludes that, in a Global South context like Pakistan, the assimilation of foreign cultural aspects is an everyday battle. Informants from a more engrained habitus of Western values (as experienced through educational systems, traveling, and family) were more ready to experience, experiment, adjust, and accept foreign cultures. However, those with a more traditional upbringing were more resistant in accommodating Western culture offerings. This study adds to previous insights in consumer research by intricately balancing previous understandings in acculturation processes and advising caution to holistic explanations of social changes in the Global South using post-colonial and acculturation theory. Cultural cringe in particular is a phenomenon which aids in divorcing consumers from their cultural roots and inculcates longing for a fascinating Other. Social media is integral in this transformation.

Our study yields practical implications for marketers. One major insight of this research is for tourism marketers. In recent years, countries like Pakistan have seen immigration to the Global North in large numbers. Where they migrate to is related to their aspiring for a foreign culture whose values are conveyed through social media. Hence, tracking popular social media avenues such as Tik Tok, YouTube, and Instagram could reveal potential tourist and immigration venues for tourism marketers to target. Moreover, this study has implications to immigration-related

industries, governments, and policymakers.

For cultural product marketers (food, fashion, etc.), understanding the influence of social media on consumer behavior and cultural perceptions can help businesses develop their marketing strategies, product development, and advertising to meet the demands of the new generation. As Generation Z matures and enters the workforce with increased buying power, industries must adapt to cater to their evolving needs. For some sectors, this change may lead to market decline, while new industries may emerge to fill the gaps created by the integration of diverse cultures.

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HOW CAN MARKETPLACE INCLUSION BECOME EXCLUSIONARY?

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Keywords: Marketplace Exclusion, Inclusion, Brand Inclusivity, Gender, Diversity

Description: This study explores and introduces the concept of Inclusive Exclusion, which covers the inclusive actions that cause the exclusion of consumers, with a focus on consumer experiences of female fans in the Turkish football (soccer) environment.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

1) How can inclusive actions become exclusionary?
2) How does this process (inclusive exclusion) influence consumption experiences?

Method And Data

The Turkish football (soccer) marketplace, characterized by a gendered and commodified environment, serves as the context for examining inclusive actions that transform into exclusionary ones, as we call inclusive exclusion, towards female fans. The football environment has clubs as brands, football federation as a regulatory institution, media, existing fans and female fans who are trying to be included. Our qualitative approach and ethnographic work encompassed participant and online observations, coupled with formal and in-situ interviews. Secondary data sources supplemented our analysis, providing insights into marketplace actors' interactions with female fans. We conducted observations in football teams online and physical spaces (social media, stores, stadiums or other places) to understand the interactions with fans and how marketplace offerings are served. We interviewed female fans who also have different roles in football (club professionals, players, referees, media personalities, journalists, scholars) to capture the consumption experiences from multiple angles and approaches of different actors in this marketplace. We examined the content and discourses in the media and statements of the football federation to understand the image of female fans in football, the actions of different actors and whether their statements and actions are matching. Adopting a hermeneutic approach, we iteratively analyzed the data from the perspective of the foundations of marketplace exclusion and inclusion.

Summary of Findings

The findings show how inclusive actions of marketplace actors have a significant exclusionary influence. While clubs and other actors in football environment engage in inclusive actions, the exclusionary influence towards women can be observed through three distinct features of those actions; 1) assigning predetermined roles to female fans, not aligning with expectations and

consumer roles of that marketplace, 2) providing mismatched and limited consumption pathways based on those predetermined roles, and 3) lacking an understanding and infrastructure for women in the football environment. These processes cause inclusive actions to become illusionary and, subsequently, transform into exclusion. Clubs create concrete or abstract barriers to women, preventing them from adopting the acknowledged consumer role in this marketplace while protecting men's superior access. This damages the brand-consumer relationship and causes a permanent liminality for women, who felt neither included nor detached from their beloved clubs. Consequently, inclusive efforts fall short, perpetuating the exclusion of women and failing to solve problems that they face.

Key Contributions

This study extends the understanding of the dynamics of the marketplace exclusion and inclusion through introducing a novel concept, inclusive exclusion. This concept goes beyond the traditional dichotomy of exclusion and inclusion within marketplaces and demonstrates that the inclusive attempts can drive exclusion to the exact consumer group that is aimed to be included. While existing literature or professional practice often treats exclusion or inclusion as separate phenomena, we underline how actions aimed at inclusion can paradoxically result in further exclusionary consequences, which can be overlooked or ignored by marketing professionals as well.

This study also demonstrates that inclusive exclusion prevents true, authentic or genuine inclusion by causing damage in consumer-brand relationships, permanent liminality on consumers. Therefore, inclusive exclusion prevents having a diverse marketplace and well-established brand consumer relationships as consumers can not go beyond their excluded status.

For marketplace actors, it is important to recognize which marketing actions are inclusive, exclusionary or causing inclusive exclusion. The findings of this study offer scholars and marketing professionals a fresh perspective for assessing or implementing inclusive strategies while emphasizing the importance of avoiding processes that lead to exclusionary outcomes

HOW DO VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS ENDURE SERVICE FAILURES: A STRUCTURAL PATH EXPLORATION

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Keywords: Vulnerability, Coping Mechanism, Crisis Theory, Structural Equation Modelling

Drawing on crisis theory, our path-analytic exploration shows that vulnerable customers adopt certain coping mechanisms to manage the stress created by service failures.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

There is a broad consensus that the occurrence of service failures is inevitable (Mattila 2001) and that such occurrence has a negative impact on customers (Strizhakova, Tsarenko, and Ruth 2012). While certain customers are able to withstand these failures, others are more vulnerable to their occurrence (Cenophat et al. 2023). A failure to recognize the customer's vulnerability and understand their coping responses to service failures leaves customers with deep psychological pain—which leads to unfavorable relationship outcomes for service firms.

Coping mechanisms—that is "the set of cognitive and behavioral processes initiated by consumers in response to emotionally arousing, stress inducing interactions with the environment aimed at bringing forth more desirable emotional states and reduced levels of stress" (Duhachek 2005, p. 42)—have been extensively studied in the marketing literature. Research in this tradition has argued that coping stems from negative emotions such as anger, sadness, disappointment, and from the need for situational efficacy and control (Duhachek 2005; Strizhakova, Tsarenko, and Ruth 2012; Yi and Baumgartner 2004). This argument draws on stress-and-coping theory predicting that negative emotions elicited in response to negative encounters trigger activation of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral resources leading to coping mechanisms (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). While prior research has acknowledged the role of customers' emotions and cognition in coping, research has overlooked how the most vulnerable customers endure service failures. Drawing on crisis theory, the current research seeks to understand how vulnerable customers adopt certain coping mechanisms to manage the stress created by service failures.

Method and Data

We used an online questionnaire including a scenario that describes a banking service failure. The questionnaire was completed by 310 consumers in Germany. Before answering the questionnaire, participants were asked to read the scenario, and answer to the questions afterwards. The scenario and the constructs were translated in the german language. We used constructs that were validated by past research (Cenophat et al. 2023; Duhachek 2005; Ping 1993; Sengupta, Balaji, and Krishnan 2015).

Summary of Findings

We, first, established the direct impact of CRV on vindictive WOM, likelihood of switching, and loyalty. The results indicated positive effects of CRV on vindictive WOM (β = .28, se = .07, p < .001) and likelihood of switching (β = .17, se = .06, p < .01), and a negative effect on loyalty (β = -.37, se = .16, p < .05). Then, we used SEM (maximum likelihood) to examine the mediating role of the coping strategies in the relationship between CRV and rumination. Our model yielded an acceptable fit (χ^2/df = 1.90, TLI = .91, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .05).

The path analysis confirmed that CRV decreases (increases) positive thinking (emotional venting), which results in more rumination. The indirect effect of CRV on rumination via positive thinking and emotional venting further led to unfavorable relationship outcomes such as higher vindictive WOM and likelihood of switching, and lower loyalty. Although we found that CRV significantly influenced the coping mechanisms (except for instrumental-support seeking and avoidance), only positive thinking and emotional venting partially mediated the effects of CRV on rumination and relationship outcomes. Moreover, we found that CRV affects vindictive WOM and likelihood of switching via rumination, action coping, and emotional-support seeking. Emotional venting only mediated the effect of CRV on vindictive WOM. Only emotional-support seeking and rumination mediated the

impact of CRV on loyalty. It is noteworthy that emotional-support seeking reverses the effects of CRV on likelihood of switching and loyalty.

Key Contributions

This study contributes to the consumer vulnerability literature in two ways. First, this study explores coping mechanisms in relation to a phenomenon that has recently been introduced in marketing: the customer predisposition to psychological harm in service relationships (i.e., customer relationship vulnerability). Cenophat et al. (2023) have argued that the concept of CRV assumes that customers with higher CRV become agitated in times of crisis. While vulnerable customers may attempt to adopt coping mechanisms to manage the stress created by crises, these mechanisms may themselves serve as a source of stress (Price et al. 2020; Roskies and Lazarus 1980)—which may exacerbate their struggle to recovery from the harm caused by the crisis in the first place. We are the first to explore the degree to which different coping mechanisms help higher-CRV customers, and which one dominates.

Second, we use a path analysis with a working model of the chain effects of CRV to draw conclusions about coping mechanisms adopted by the most vulnerable customers and the implications for relationship outcomes such as vindictive WOM, likelihood of switching, and loyalty.

References are available upon request.

MINDFUL CONSUMPTION MEDIATES EFFECTS OF MINDFULNESS ON COMPULSIVE BUYING AND HEDONIC BUYING

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Keywords: Mindfulness, Mindful Consumption, Compulsive buying, Hedonic Buying

Description: This research explores the role of mindful consumption in mediating the impact of mindfulness on compulsive buying and hedonic buying.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Practice-oriented magazines as well as marketing gurus suggest use of mindfulness in marketing and the rise of mindful consumption. Existing literature shows negative impact of mindfulness on compulsive buying and hedonic buying, but the mechanisms of these effects are yet to be fully explained. Literature calls for finding mediators on such effects of mindfulness. We aim to explore the mechanism of these effects using a cross-section study.

We conducted this research to evaluate if mindful consumption may help in explaining the effects of mindfulness on compulsive buying and hedonic buying. Using a cross-section study, we identified the mediation role played by mindful consumption. The effect on compulsive buying is explained by mindful consumption but the effect on hedonic buying is reversed when it is mediated through mindful consumption due to its components of awareness and caring both of which act differently from temperance in consumption.

Research Question

Literature calls for finding the mediating variables to explain effects of mindfulness on different types of consumption behaviors (Fischer et al., 2017). Our aim in this study is to evaluate if mindful consumption may be a potential mediator for the effects of mindfulness on compulsive buying, and hedonic buying.

Method and Data

We conducted an online survey (n = 1880) using exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling (Basiouka & Potsiou, 2014). We used existing valid and reliable scales for measuring mindfulness (Brown & Ryan, 2003), mindful consumption (Gupta & Sheth, 2024), compulsive behavior (Ridgway et al., 2008), and hedonic buying (Hausman, 2000). Using, structural equation modelling, we evaluate if mindful consumption acts as a mediator for the effects of mindfulness on compulsive buying and hedonic buying.

The preliminary analysis of the measurement model shows excellent fit to the data. Factor loadings for the indicators on the latent variables were found reliable indicating the validity. The partially mediated model included mindful consumption as mediator and two direct paths

from mindfulness to compulsive buying and hedonic buying. This structural model revealed a good fit to the data (χ^2/df = 3.04, CFI = .95, SRMR = .06, RMSEA = .03, PClose = .42). Mindfulness exerted significant negative direct effects on compulsive buying (-.54, p < .01) and hedonic buying (-.24, p < .01) and exerted significant indirect effects on compulsive buying (-.43, p < .01) and hedonic buying (.32, p < .01) via mindful consumption.

Summary of Findings

The results show that mindfulness directly reduces both compulsive buying and hedonic buying. These results conform to the theoretical propositions found in existing literature. The results also show that the indirect effect of mindfulness on compulsive buying is mediated by mindful consumption. This shows that reduction in compulsive buying due to mindfulness is explained by mindful consumption. Interestingly, the results show that the negative direct effect of mindfulness on hedonic buying gets changed through the mediation by mindful consumption. This is explained by the emphasis on caring for self in mindful consumption. Even though mindfulness directly reduces hedonic buying, the caring component of mindful consumption facilitates pleasure-seeking behavior of hedonic buying. This also means that mindful consumption is not only the application of mindfulness to consumer decision making as indicated in some propositions (Bahl et al., 2016). This may point towards more antecedents of mindful consumption apart from mindfulness.

Key Contributions

Results have important implications as these explain the mechanism of the negative impact of mindfulness on compulsive buying through mindful consumption. In addition, these results also show that the effect of mindfulness on hedonic buying is reversed when mediated through mindful consumption. Theoretically, these results show that mindful consumption is not just application of mindfulness to consumption as suggested in literature (Bahl et al., 2016) due to two possible reasons. First, this may be due to the multiple antecedents of mindful consumption (Gupta et al., 2023) some of which may increase consumption for pleasure seeking. Second, there are three components of mindful consumption – awareness, caring, and temperance (Gupta & Sheth, in press), out of which awareness and caring may promote hedonic buying but temperance in consumption may reduce hedonic buying. This would result in interesting play of different components of mindful consumption and extend current understanding.

Practically, these results may help marketers in two ways. First, marketers may use mindful consumption to their advantage similar to Rent the runway and GoPuff, who integrated mindful consumption in their business models to reach USD 1 billion (Aronson, 2021; Fromm, 2019). Second, the reversal of effect of mindfulness on hedonic buying through mindful consumption may interest marketers of luxury products and tourism since mindful consumption promotes hedonic buying. This would encourage them to promote mindful consumption to their consumers without any apprehension that mindful consumption will reduce hedonic buying.

References are available upon request

REDEFINING BEAUTY IN THE DIGITAL AGE: AFFECTIVE AESTHETIC ATMOSPHERES OF #BODYPOSITIVITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Keywords: Body Positivity, Social Media, Influencers, Aesthetic Atmospheres

Description: Our research analyzes body positive influencers on social media and offers a conceptual framework of how an *affective aesthetic atmosphere* co-creates the space to redefine beauty through foundational communal insecurity.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This research explores how social media content can contribute to reconstructing our cultural definitions of modern beauty. More specifically, this work investigates the following research questions: (1) How do body positive influencers leverage social media discourse to challenge the prevailing beauty standards of society? (2) What emotions contribute to the *affective aesthetic atmosphere* that influencers create to embody the body positive movement?

Method and Data

We leverage a qualitative, visual approach to explore the body positivity movement on social media by analyzing online video content curated by influencers using the #bodypositive hashtag. This online atmosphere offers a space to understand how videos focused on body positivity evoke cultural emotions and aesthetics. Our research aims to trace the consumer experience of users, allowing our work to approach the topic from the emic in addition to the etic perspective. We initially engaged in non-participant observation of body positive content posted on TikTok in addition to Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook to gain an initial understanding of the topic on social media forums. Our work focused on more exploratory-oriented qualitative methods using purposive sampling to engage in visual analysis. Based on initial analysis, we focused our sample to TikTok posts that included hashtags of #BodyPositivity, #BodyPositive, #BodyAcceptance, or #BodyImage, across 34 various influencer types for data analysis. Posts in the data sample were posted initially to the platform from September 2020 - January 2023.

Summary of Findings

Our analysis revealed four affective categories providing an emotional tapestry scaffolded from a cultural foundation of communal insecurity. Building upon this negative expression of cultural

insecurity, we find that influencers express negative (collective angst) and positive (praise and humor) emotions. In turn, these affects reveal #BodyPositive influencers' aim to reframe the cultural meaning of beauty. As such, individual postings and interactions communicate influencers' resistance to beauty standards, and resultantly, a collective resistance is co-created. Findings offer a conceptual framework that explains how an *affective aesthetic atmosphere* co-creates the space to redefine beauty through foundational communal insecurity.

Key Contributions

Our work seeks to offer insights for consumer researchers and marketers in three main areas. First, we offer a conceptual framework for the way the discourse of body-positive influencers unfolds on social media, identifying commonalities that lead to engagement. Second, we extend previous theorization on atmospherics and affective atmospheres, shedding light on the way the meaning of beauty can be redefined and introducing a new theoretical concept: *affective aesthetic atmosphere*. Third, we show that negative sentiment is embedded in influencer messaging towards ostensibly positive changes in body standards. This study expands our knowledge of beauty ideals by gaining a deeper understanding of the way consumers and influencers co-create digital media atmospheres to redefine socially normative beauty standards. By evaluating how beauty is negotiated in social media forums, we provide novel theorization that builds upon the emotions literature. Specifically, these affective aesthetic atmospheres can be textured with both positive and negative emotions with the same overarching aim for the cultural movement.

Rethinking Consumer Acculturation, Privilege, Oppression and Emancipation

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Keywords: Acculturation, Consumer Research, Healthcare, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion

This paper illustrates the fluidity of acculturation and re-acculturation through the lens of a popular multiethnic medical center.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the interplay between acculturation and re-acculturation agents and how consumers oscillate between different identity positions, and also how do concepts of privilege and oppression manifest within their re-acculturation journey?

Method and Data

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty-five inpatients at a major New York-based Medical Center with a a diverse patient population, predominantly comprising immigrants from various ethnic backgrounds such as Chinese, Mexicans, Middle Easterners, Pakistanis, Italians, Russians, Syrians, Haitians, Mixed Caribbean nationalities, and Mixed European nationalities. The Medical Center provides an extensive range of services, encompassing over seventy primary care and specialized programs.

The research employed an adapted version of the seven-point Touchpoint Trajectory Technique (TTT) developed by Sudbury-Riley et al. (2020), a methodology previously applied in palliative and end-of-life care environments. This technique involved various touchpoints, including pre-arrival processes, admission procedures, clinical care, ancillary services, family-shared areas, amenities (chapel, internet, Wi-Fi, etc.), discharge processes, and post-discharge support. The TTT allowed participants to share their narratives from their unique perspectives, providing the researcher with rich and comprehensive qualitative insights.

Participants recounted their service experiences at the Medical Center, guided by key touchpoints. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns in the data, resulting in themes such as 'patient expectations prior to hospital admission' and 'patient hospitalization experience,' with subthemes like 'ethnicity influencing expectations,' 'generalized

expectations,' 'communication and interpersonal relationships – recognition and responsiveness,' 'stereotypical responses,' and 'discrepancy between expectations and experiences.'

Summary of Findings

Due to extended abstract space limits, qualitative quotes are omitted. This paper aimed to enhance understanding of the interplay between acculturation and re-acculturation agents, investigating how consumers navigate varied identity positions and the manifestation of privilege and oppression in their re-acculturation journey. The study, conducted with patients in a medical center, reveals the intricate evolution of acculturation over time. Contrary to linear progression models noted in prior research, the medical center serves not only as a care facility but as a space for dynamic identity negotiation influenced by family, religion, ethnicity, activism, and other institutions rearticulated within market and consumption systems.

Contributing to acculturation debates, this paper aligns with Giesler and Veresiu's call to shift analytical focus towards institutional influences on consumer identities and experiences. Moreover, it extends Veresiu and Giesler's consumer socialization strategies, introducing "emancipation" as a fifth strategy. Emancipation encapsulates positive consumer experiences, such as patient-centered care, where individuals feel liberated from contemporary concerns, embracing cultural closeness through shared spaces and amenities.

Key Contributions

This paper contributes to current consumer research debates by unpicking how consumers reacculturate and the findings also build on Veresiu and Giesler's (2018) work via the emergence of fifth strategy; that of 'emancipation'. By engaging with other service actors, identity positions are challenged and consumers feel emancipated because of the positive

intercultural exchanges that take place. Second, feelings of emancipation help perpetuate re-acculturation by shaping consumer interaction with other service actors (or doctor-patient relationships in the context of this paper). Practically, healthcare and governments would benefit from this paper because there is a pressing need for institutionalized systems such as hospital service providers to put patients first and create an environment that resonates with the wider diversity of clients and not just the privileged majority, and also government to better appreciate the diversity of their local populations. Second, consumer researchers must recognize the importance of operationalizing privilege and oppression in perpetuating re-acculturation. Finally, the trajectory touchpoint technique used here can be applied in the context of other service providers to flesh out deeper insights into the consumer experience, especially those that advocate important life transitions such as motherhood, fatherhood, marriage and healthcare all need to ensure an inclusive consumer experience.

References are available upon request

THE DISABILITY PREFERENCE STEREOTYPE:
PHYSICAL DISABILITY SHAPES INFERENCES OF UTILITARIAN AND HEDONIC PREFERENCES

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Keywords: person perception, disability, ableism, health, utilitarian and hedonic preferences

Description: This research studies societal inferences about the disabled consumers' interest in utilitarian and hedonic products.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consumer research has developed extensive knowledge and expertise in understanding what consumers want. However, this knowledge base leaves out certain stigmatized consumer groups: namely, the over 15% of global consumers (26% of USA) who live with disabilities (CDC 2020). Disability advocates argue disabled individuals feel overlooked, and even invisible, among policy makers and brands (Heumann and Wodatch 2020). In the present work, we try to understand what inferences society makes about disabled individuals, and why they occur.

Disability policy utilizes the *medical model* of disability - the notion that disability is based on one's functional, medically-determined limitations (Siminski 2003; DPI 1982) - instead of the *social model,* which suggests disability is based on society limiting equity and life opportunities for disabled people (Oliver 1996; Siminski 2003). We propose that this reliance on the medical model leads observers to see disability as a signal of a need for support, eliciting the belief that disabled consumers should focus more on needs and less on wants. This results in a "Disability Preference Stereotype," where consumers infer disabled (vs. nondisabled) consumers like hedonic products less and utilitarian products more. We test this across multiple domains.

Summary of Findings

Study 1 shows consumers opt for utilitarian gifts for someone with a disability, whether the cue of disability is visible or verbally disclosed (not visible), despite research that people prefer to give hedonic gifts (e.g., Lu et al. 2016). Prolific participants (n=454) imagined planning the office birthday gift for one of three colleagues (conditions: visible disability using a wheelchair, non-visible disability mentioned by the colleague, nondisabled). After hearing she sometimes gets massages, participants selected between a "therapeutic" (utilitarian) and "luxury" (hedonic) massage (1-therapeutic, 7-luxury). Results revealed a main effect of disability ($p<.0001$): participants opted toward the utilitarian massage for the visible ($M=3.54$; $p<.0001$) and non-visible disability ($M=3.32$; $p<.0001$) conditions versus the nondisabled condition ($M=4.54$).

In Study 2 (Prolific, n=308), we test whether the disability preference stereotype creates expectations disabled influencers are a worse fit to endorse hedonic (vs. utilitarian) products. We showed participants an image of a real fashion influencer and did (vs. did not) note she was disabled. All participants chose between 6 utilitarian and hedonic options they thought she should endorse (e.g., documentary streaming vs. reality television streaming, designer sunglasses vs. comfort sunglasses, 1=utilitarian option, 6=hedonic option). Participants were less likely to see the hedonic options as a good endorsement fit when the influencer was disabled ($M = 3.57$) versus non-disabled ($M = 4.15$; $p<.0001$), suggesting that even in a fashion domain, consumers inferred a lower hedonic fit when she had a disability.

Study 3 examines the process and replicates this effect when participants discern disability using a "thin slice" impression (Ambady and Rosenthal 1992). Undergraduates (n=545) saw a brief video of a young woman who was / was not using a wheelchair, and were asked how interested she would be in two hedonic and two utilitarian gifts, as well as the extent to which they felt she needed additional support in life. We found a disability condition x product type interaction ($p=.0001$) whereby participants saw the hedonic items as worse gifts when the woman was disabled ($M=4.97$) versus nondisabled ($M=5.18$; $p=.028$), but saw the utilitarian options as better gifts when she was disabled ($M =5.40$) versus nondisabled ($M=3.84$), $p<.0001$). Mediation analyses showed that relative to being nondisabled, disability led to a higher perceived need for support, lowering perceived interest in hedonic items (indirect effect: $b = -.15$, $SE = .07$, CI_{95}: -.29, -.01; figure 4)), and increasing perceived interest in utilitarian items (indirect effect: ($b = .19$, $SE = .07$, CI_{95}: .04, .33).

Study 4 demonstrates our focal effect with a consequential variable. Undergraduates (n=419) watched a sales pitch video of a real student for a smart lock system and were asked to critique it. In the video, the student either had crutches (disabled) or not (nondisabled). After the critique, participants were told that the student was being sent a gift bag, and they could select between three different hedonic and utilitarian items to add to the bag. We summed the number of hedonic items as the dependent variable. Participants who saw the disabled student ($M=1.81$) chose fewer hedonic items than those who saw the nondisabled student ($M=2.20$; $p<.0001$). The student was subsequently sent the gift bag selections.

Key Contributions

This research suggests that society stereotypes disabled consumers' preferences toward less hedonic / more utilitarian items due to expectations that they need support. As a result, nondisabled consumers may unintentionally be paternalistically limiting disabled people, cordoning off the everyday enjoyment humans naturally seek.

THE NEXT FRONTIER OF NEW GLOBAL CONSUMPTIONS SPACE

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Abstract

Marketing segmentation has been an essential key to attracting and serving customers efficiently. However, this concept has been challenged within the digitally driven globally converging consumer culture capital spaces within diverse societies. The author speak of the harmonization of concerns, wants, desires, and equally the dimension of global access of the globally connected social actors to diverse sources of capital, which enhances their capacities and thus their rise in social and economic status and impact in accumulating more capital. Tthe authorintroduce Bourdieu's theory of culture capital into marketing for a more profound segmentation and robust market analysis observing this phenomenon. The author's pursuit has also been to extend Bourdieu's theory by introducing another consumption space of global convergence of taste, judgments, and access to accumulation of essential cultural capital needed within the specific cultural and social fields. Understanding this cultural space is essential for marketing, hence it is the foundational organ of not only a field of business but moreover it has social responsibilities that would ensure sustainable organizations and societal implications.

Statement of Key Contributions

Scholars and practitioners of marketing have understood that marketing is the essence of relating the firm to its environment. The concept of market-oriented-ness has emerged by the introduction of the market segmentation (Smith, 1956) which has become a foundational concept in both marketing theory and practice ever since. However, the power of hyper-digitally driven globalization has changed the dimension of market segmentation towards an emerging new space of global consumption. In order to identify this new emerging space of consumption more precisely the author apply the tools of Bourdieu's sociology, however the evolution the new identified space within marketing, which the author has coined as the of the fifth space or possibly similar spaces in the future cannot be explained by the roam of market segmentation analysis alone. Bourdieu's concepts are: "culture capital", "habitus", "field" and "illusio".Tthe authorobserve a marketing transcendence from the roam of business studies towards a new foundation based on the rise of AI and global interconnectivity, with societal changing powers, thus a rapprochement with Bourdieu's theories and constructs opens new paths for constructing

robust marketing theories in the future. The fifth space of global consumption and convergence amplified by ubiquitous technological possibilities has created a market space, where it embraces the integration of the most sustainable ideas and characteristics beyond the previous segmented hierarchical market playgrounds. Bourdieu's holistic theoretical contributions would support marketing scholars and practitioners to design adequate and sustainable marketing strategies enhancing the organizational growth and development by more precise and valid segmentation capabilities.

Introduction

Marketing has become a field of high impact in the evolution of modern societies and its contemporary study cannot only be limited within the boundaries of business administration (BA), but moreover, it has been the engine of growth for transforming the human condition. Scholars and practitioners of marketing have understood that marketing is the essence of relating the firm to its environment. The concept of market-oriented-ness has emerged by the introduction of the market segmentation (Smith, 1956) which has become a foundational concept in both marketing theory and practice, then and now. However, the power of hyper-digitally driven globalization has changed the dimension of market segmentation towards an emerging new space of global consumption. This new emerging space of consumption could be more precisely identified by the tools of sociology, however the evolution of the fifth space or possibly similar spaces in the future cannot be explained by market segmentation alone. In order to understand this new emerging consumption space, I have applied the sociological tools of Bourdieu. These theories are "culture capital", "habitus", "field" and "illusio" to identify and explain the emergence of the emerging new global consumption space. By the application of the theories above, the paper opens a vital and new window of opportunity for marketing scholars to understand and to make an impact within the evolving logic of contemporary and future marketing theory. At this critical point in time within the evolution of marketing we decide either to be driven by the dimension of technological disruptions, which have affected our field, or we introduce robust culture theories to understand consumer behaviour and structural shifts within marketing and the nature of markets. In order to steer our field in the right direction, the author has chosen to pivot towards identifying the next converging consumption culture space we hereby coin as the fifth space.

Methodology

This paper is of conceptual nature and therefore relies on the structure as presented by Vargo and Koskela-Huotari (2020b).

First a brief background and problem statement is proposed, secondly the author outlines the approach the article will take to solve the problem. Furthermore, foundational literature review is conducted. Another step is the reconciliation and synthesis of literature reviewed. And finally, the application of the framework is demonstrated on how the synthesized theoretical framework is applied to the problem.

By reviewing the literature predominantly of Bourdieu, the author has extended Bourdieu's sociological contributions by an essential fifth space where the common concerns and aspirations of the contemporary Zeitgeist coalesce. A reconciliation of his works on Capital and Culture will be synthesized into the framework presented in the following for solving the issues introduced before. Finally, implications and proposals for further research will be discussed.

Point of Departure

Understanding Bourdieu starts with the observation that he was a material structuralist (Mahbub and Shoily, 2016). From a marketing perspective Bourdieu could be established also as a major culture theorist, however, most essential imports of culture theory into management have recognized Geert Hofstede, Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams (Mahbub and Shoily, 2016). This lack within the managerial theorizing complex has had consequences as Bourdieu's major frameworks are not integrated and thus the definition of culture has been adopted in a limited fashion. Managerial culture concepts are more comparative windows, which draw in particularly on Hofstede's culture concepts. Hall as a founding culture theorist observed that from 1950s to 1980s cultural studies as an academic discipline has been mainly framed by moments and raptures embedded within the culture and structuralist theoretical traditions (Mahbub and Shoily, 2016). He, furthermore, suggested that a post-structuralist interpretation of the concept of "culture" may be an adequate path for the evolution of culture theory by the integration of Foucault's "power and knowledge" or Lacan's "psychoanalysis of subjectivity and Gramsci's concept of hegemony" (Mahbub and Shoily, 2016). While, Hall can be regarded as the founding figure of cultural studies, the Bourdieusian concepts e.g. "culture capital" or additional influential theoretical imports of Bourdieu have been absent from his overall oeuvre. A possible reason could be that the contrast in the definition of culture that has embodied the greater work of the early culture theorists in comparison to Bourdieusian definition (Mander, 1987). For Bourdieu culture is the traditional foundation, wherein the foundation of social cultivation, especially the judgement of taste in an artistic sense is cultivated.

Recent developments on dimensions of accumulation of cultural capital in various European nations establish that Bourdieu's original framework of "cultural capital" as famously

constructed in "Distinction" (Bourdieu, 1984a) needs to be revised to account for the decline of 'highbrow' culture which these studies reveal (Prieur and Savage, 2013). While, Prieur and Savage (2013) argue that this shift does not embrace the disintegration of cultural capital as a framework, or the rise of the so called "cultural omnivore", so much as the emergence of a converged embodiment of a "cosmopolitan cultural capital" could be observed. However, this involves an in-depth discussion of the relationships between how Bourdieu has used the concepts of "practice" and "field", hence the scientific object of what was constructed in "Distinction" is not mere consumption per se, but moreover, social judgements and critique of taste, whereby the relationship between consumption and practice needs to be further revealed (Warde, 2016). Practice for Bourdieu contrary to the positivist materialism emphasizes on the objects of knowledge to be constructed and unconcealed and is not passively established. Hence to Bourdieu knowledge is not a record-keeping act but moreover a forward designing and navigating in terms of accumulation of culture goods in the various forms of capital within the field, which is thus governed by forces lex insita in terms of the regularities and structures that give the structuring structures of the agents embedded therein the meaningfulness in accumulating them.

The notion of habitus is a guiding mechanism within Bourdieusian thought, however, one must not forget his contribution to the ubiquity of the terms "doxa" that the authors regard as equally essential in society's taken-for-granted and unquestioned truth. A good example of doxa is the taking of "pure economic rational" in managerial (marketing) discourse or in economics the Smithian concept of the "invisible hand". In the world of corporate business, the term "shareholder value" is the foundational doxa that has been created as an illusio within the universe of the capitalist discourse. Bourdieu (1977) defined doxa as the "quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of an organization in which the natural social order appears as self-evident". The foundation of traditional marketing has been on a structuralist doxa founded in marketing segmentation of the diverse class of people observed by their economic viability and capital portfolio. Segmentation theory in marketing has thus, itself been based on an economic illusio, where capital is much simplistically defines, while Bourdieu's take on capital has been much different and more in-depth. For Bourdieu the social world is understood based on the terms of an accumulated history of capital, beyond the mechanism of equilibria, wherein agents are treated as interchangeable particles (Bourdieu, 1986b).

While there is a general agreement among Bourdieuphiles on his essential role among the pantheon of few individuals, who shaped the foundations of social science in the beginning of

the 21st century (Lamont, 2012), some have taken a part of the concept and adopted them into their academic and managerial mindsets, while others have decided to take the whole oeuvre. We belong to the first group; thus, we have mentioned some of the concepts, which are much intertwined in each-other, however, the main concentration has been on the concepts of culture capital and habitus. The below pages will highlight these concepts and illustrate the necessity of their integration within the marketing discourse, hence the mechanism that have guarded the access to capital goods have weakened, especially now via the ubiquity of the cyberspace they have changed and enable the class mobility among social actors. Furthermore, the material structuralist concepts that have functioned in the old world need also to be changed to fit the new converged realities amplified by the power of the cyberspace. We observe a shift and a convergence in the structuralist tradition of the societal structures and hence we propose a new segmentation policy for marketers.

Culture Capital

Bourdieu has been so far absent from the practice of marketing and especially within the tradition of theoretical contributions, even-though the richness and originality of him, especially that he has been an essential contributor towards understanding the hidden mechanisms of societies, are well known within diverse fields of sciences. While, the intellectual inheritance of being difficult, which lies within the French academic milieu, may have contributed towards this absenteeism, we regard Bourdieu as a source of constructing a robust understanding of the mechanism of society and how the disruptions can be dealt with via the application of superb theories of understanding the essence of culture and behaviour. Christensen and Carlile (2009, p. 1) describe the notion of "theory" very simply – as a body of understanding. It is the nature of the possessed and accumulated capital that distinguishes the social actor's perception of thought and ability to fulfil her/his wants and the degree of freedom s/he enjoys in pursuing it. However, CC must be understood in a normative manner, hence based on this meta-structure, which structures the appreciation of further accumulation of additional forms of capital and the means to achieve them avant la lettre. The actor inertly and by empirical exposure in the process of accumulation of CC, decides the ability to construct social phenomenon and notions of judgement and taste. "The social world is accumulated history, and if it is not to be reduced to a discontinuous series of instantaneous mechanical equilibria between agents who are treated as interchangeable particles, one must reintroduce into it the notion of capital and with it, accumulation and all its effects. Capital is accumulated labour …, which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour" (Bourdieu, 1986a, p. 15). While some

aspects of Bourdieusian thought has been discussed in marketing (Tapp and Warren, 2010), we see the many tools, which he has developed over a very long and successful carrier as a holistic total-construct within his anti-scholastic tradition of bringing philosophy down towards the domain of society and the foundation of analysis of the forces affecting the social actors and making sociology and anthropology highly-driven by empirical evidence. We see the nature of marketing in a legitimacy shift within the developments of the cyberspace and artificial intelligence (AI). We observe a marketing transcendence from the roam of business studies towards a new foundation with societal changing powers, thus a rapprochement with Bourdieu's theories and designs open new paths for constructing robust marketing theory.
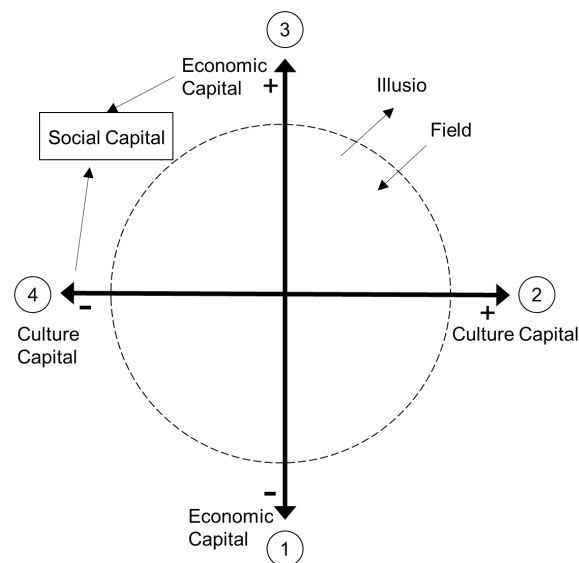
Figure 1: **Illustrating Bourdieu's Culture Capital Theory**

Technically a society is distinguished within the structured structures class and the structuring structures class. Figure 1 displays the model of Bourdieusian social structures, wherein the four spaces are defined; 1) economics capital (-); 2) culture capital (+); 3) economic capital (+) and culture capital (-). A social actor can have a hybrid version of the capitals distributed within a society. A refugee entering a new country as a doctor or engineer and already speaking English, has EC (-), while in CC he has a (+), thus making her/his ability to accumulate the rest of the capitals necessary to attain the a rising social status less difficult. The ability to deliver a critique on literature and key philosophical writings or the taste for vital classical music may be not necessary for an accountant or even a marketing professional, but to be a citizen among the target group for more business generating opportunities, may turn this ability to a very lucrative sources of capital. Thus, this distinguishes a networker and cultivated social actor, who gets invited into the necessary door-opening occasions from a salesman that must push towards opening diverse constraining gates that would exist. Figure 1 further highlights, that the mix

between the EC and CC defines the attainable social capital. We see also the dimensions of field which is mere the playing field for accumulating diverse types of capital, wherein each field is defined by the forces that exist there which are either constraining or amplifying the abilities of individual actors for more progress. Here understanding to play according to the rules is key. The intrinsic understanding of the rules is referred to in a Bourdieusian-speak as illusio and via the concept of habitus, which is regarded as practical efficiency are the foundations of a functioning society.

The Embodied State

From a poet or essayist to a sought-after industry designer or software engineer, they have internalized the foundation for creating meaningful artefacts. This process of internalization will take time and efforts to be accomplished. "Most of the properties of cultural capital can be deduced from the fact that, in its fundamental state, it is linked to the body and presupposes embodiment" (Bourdieu, 1986a, p. 17). The accumulation of cultural capital in this state of embodiment of knowhow such as culture, cultivation and Wissen derives from a process of integration of skills, which embraces the labour of love and patience of time to accumulate the state of culture-competence and expertise beyond delegation, outsourcing or anything else.

The Objectified State

According to Bourdieu (1986a, p. 19): "Cultural capital, in the objectified state, has a number of properties which are defined only in the relationship with cultural capital in its embodied form. The cultural capital objectified in material objects and media, such as writings, paintings, monuments, instruments, etc., is transmissible in its materiality". However, the transferability of this type of CC depends on the embodied state of CC, hence the internalization of means to appreciate the properties of art or advanced technological machines requires its possession. The Steve Jobs, who run Apple in the nineties, then started and run Next Computer, afterwards running Pixar and then coming back to Apple, may have been the same person but something within the embodied state of his CC changed that made him make use of the objectified CC in such a way that he changed actively many industries concurrently.

The Institutionalized State

Bourdieu underpins the institution of cultural capital by the notion of collective magic, in terms of the value that can be transferred as legal guarantees the beholder of a certain qualification possesses. "The objectification of cultural capital in the form of academic qualifications is one way of neutralizing some of the properties it derives from the fact that, being embodied, it has

the same biological limits as its bearer…" (Bourdieu, 1986a, p. 20). This is also the state of possessing a legally binding accomplishment that guarantees a certain qualification for which a certain price and labor must be paid avant la lettre.

Social Capital

As illustrated in Figure 1, "Social capital (SC) is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition — or in other words, to membership in a group — which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively- owned capital, a "credential" which entitles them to credit in the various senses of the word. These relationships may exist only in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain" (Bourdieu, 1986a, p. 21). Furthermore, SC is the ability to mobilize people and a social milieu for an efficient conversion into economic or the acquisition of additional cc. While standardization (tests and entry regulations) is the essential tool in getting into top academic programs, however if an upcoming scholar has visited a conference or has not tried to get the internalization of the academic method in terms of style of writing that differentiates that specific journal or group, the rate of success by own lack of understanding of the SC there, may be reduced. Research, in essence, is a social act and the success in all walks of academic or corporate level depends on this essential capital.

Habitus

Social investment creates the notion of "Illusio", which means investing oneself for a yield of investment conducted at a later stage in life. A social actor is in a constant state of accumulating it. Illusio is not a mere quantifiable property but is all about intensity of commitment within a social gravity a social actor is embedded within, and one wants to be recognized for a major skill hold dear in terms of the (self-)illusion the group accumulates. Habitus, a term Bourdieu borrowed from Aristotle, describes a social actor's dimension and intensity of accumulating efficiency within a certain illusio. It is the mechanism of transferring of passivity into a creative activity. Habitus is the state of internalization externalized for value and patterns of behaviour that guide and navigate the process. It is also the transformation of biologically dispositions into social dispositions, thus the social attunement of a person's capacity to classify and recognize patterns or capacity to foresee. A good example would be the biologically ability of speaking a language such as English etc. But to speak English to whom at which level and how, with which tonality, grammar and wording, distinguishes the habitus of the social actor. (Bourdieu and Nice, 1990, p. 53) states: "A system of durable, transposable dispositions,

structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their out-comes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them." Habitus is the Weltanschauung that one has been given, whereby to observe the world, appreciate the culture tools of meaningfulness of the properties that distinguishes one from another one.

Theoretical Synthesis

The author has described the concept of habitus as the recursive overcoming of the subjective/objective dichotomy, however the dimension of practice involves the interplay between the diverse forms of capitals, the field, wherein the game for accumulation of power/capital is perused, the habitus and the synthesis of the lives, or their practice, hence, the notion of practice involves more than habitus. Thus, "… conceptualizes action as the outcome of a relationship between habitus, capital and field …Practices are not to be reduced to either habitus or field but grow out of the "interrelationship" established at each point in time by the sets of relations represented by both (Swartz, 1997).
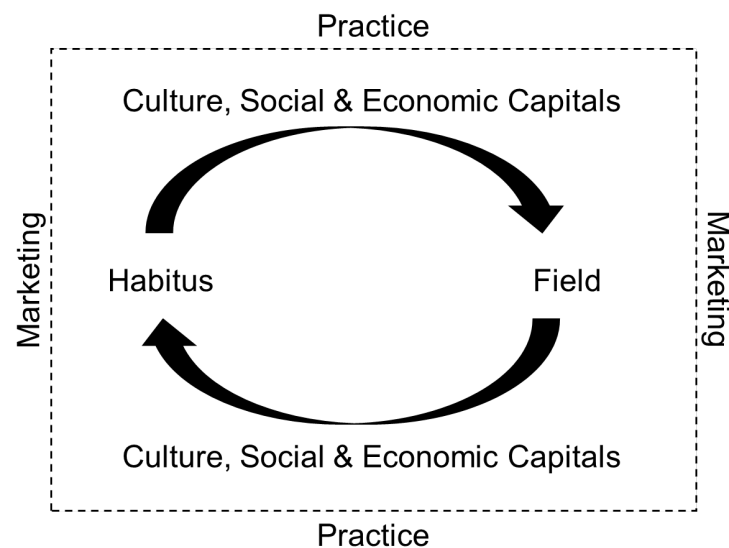
Figure 2: **Describing the Interplay Between Marketing and Bourdieu's Theory of Practice**

Marketing for an organization is the ultimate form of practice of managerial and organizational collective habitus applied in reality of the field/market. Figure 2 describes the interplay of multiple capitals within the interdependence of the interplay of habitus and field. Marketing, hence, is the social practice that defines the practice of marketing in the recursion of influencing

the field. Here the author sees a great chance of how the multiple trends affecting the contemporary society can be affected by marketing. A new dimension of an emerging trend of field is observed as the fifth space.

The Evolving New Fifth Space Marketing

Observing markets from a cultural-economic perspective, there are three strands that are part of a widespread activities in the study of economics (Berndt and Boeckler, 2011): (1) market conceptualization as heterogenous arrangements of people, things, and sociotechnical devices; (2) the insight that multiple frames of reference are mobilized in market activities as an addition to instrumental rationality; (3) approaches that combine diversity and difference in concrete market contexts with an attention to mobility in network capitalism. While, income-inequality is globally rising "… the dynamics of wealth distribution reveal powerful mechanisms pushing alternately toward convergence and divergence…, and there is no natural, spontaneous process to prevent destabilizing, inegalitarian forces from prevailing permanently." (Piketty and Goldhammer, 2014) and populism amplified by social media has created a sense of much separation of class and race within the diverse fabrics of societal classes of the global societies, in contrast to these developments a new type of unified and converged emerging societal order has been sensed. This convergence is shaped by an evolving habitus of this generation stimulated by the possibilities of the ubiquitously connected global world. According to (Bourdieu, 1984a, pp. 170–171):"The habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world is itself the product of internalization of the division into social classes. Each class condition is defined, simultaneously, by its intrinsic properties and by the relational properties which it derives from its position in the system of class conditions…" Many of Bourdieu's insights still hold, however, within his identified conditions of existence of habitus and CC, based on the contemporary technological developments and possibilities within the digital turn of the cyberspace, a fifth space of distinction of values, tastes, preferences, concerns and structuring dominant structures of judgement spheres have emerged that aligns the differences by a set of values that cannot be distinct by class nor by social status or ethnicity. An expensive fur coat, or a lion-hunting expedition, were once observed as a superb display of aristocracy and social class, which were totally accepted and expected behaviours in some Bourdieusian fields, but which are both regarded today as animal cruelty. While the author agrees with Sissors (1966a), as "markets are people", that the nature of market is more than the generic class of products, the eight descriptive classifications, which Sissors distinguished by defining a market as: 1)

size of the market, 2) geographic locations of purchasers, 3) demographic description of purchasers, 4) social-psychological characteristics, 5) reasons why products are purchased, 6) who makes the actual purchase and who influences the purchaser, 7) when purchases are made, and 8) how purchasing is done, may be challenged, within the fifth space.

In today's emerging markets, an ill-judged twitter-feed can cost many celebrities, politicians and even elite-academics losing their positions and the vital sources of social and academic capita; a viral online video of an employee's treatment of customers, can drop the stock value of the firm significantly, and while the training of taste in arts and culture, once acquired with much investments, can be obtained today by an enormous possibilities of the online education by semi-paid or freemiums, making these acquisition possible with less cost to capital and opportunity. Furthermore, the distinctions of class, taste and judgements, which once evolved because of the boundaries of a general lack of access to sources of capital within the lower echelons of the societies (Bourdieu, 1985b, 1985c) are disappearing, hence creating a new space of inclusion, not separation of an emerging new fifth space within the markets. Marketing today can be regarded as a foundation of enhancing the human condition and should not waste this opportunity. Marketing is beyond selling, because it is the part of the organization that ensures viability for the long run. Hence the service lens tends to broaden the perspective of exchange and value creation by implying that all social and economic actors engage mutually in value creation (Vargo and Lusch, 2011a). Marketing is the organizational function that creates and ensures the conditions of existence of the firm and the societal well-being within the resonating back and forth-loop of a meaningfulness recursion between the acting stakeholders. Jeff Hammerbacher the once co-founder of Facebook underpins: "The best minds of my generation are thinking about how to make people click ads," thus, marketing is more than that (Vance, 2017a). Within this new space a unified and a non-zero-sum co-creation and mutually gaining convergence of taste and judgment based on the foundational shifts that have been realized in the holism of access to better education, access to ubiquitous cycles of information, a rising buying and bargaining power driven by social-digital currency, and co-evolved by a new type of brand behaviour and brand raison d'être, which gives equal access to all actors embedded in the four previously defined but separated fields by Bourdieu. The new iconic brands are mega actors as Google, YouTube, Netflix, Apple Inc., and Amazon, Zara, Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn etc., regardless of the buying power or the social class they are either freemium services or semi-freemiums, contributing towards some sort of new form of capital within the digital space. A good example here is, not the sold concert tickets of an artist, which matters, but the number of "views", "likes", "ubiquitously globally trending content" and "shares",

which are the dominant forms of capital emerging today. In addition, the previously mentioned brands are available to almost all social classes, thus redefining, what once was observed as "the brand marketing for the few" to a new situation of "a brand experience of all". As the level of education is rising and different business models even in education institutions are emerging, not only because of the possibilities that the MOOCS offer, but moreover more students are joining top schools in Europe from China and also US, where access to education is mainly available for free. Computer science schools as 42 in France and now also in Silicon Valley have evolved based on the necessity of the markets, to offer free or much attractive tuition payment options, by the modus of the co-creation principle between multiple stake-holding entities that have founded these schools, enhance further the dimension and growth of the new fifth space. The model of this universities is access on merit not social privilege.
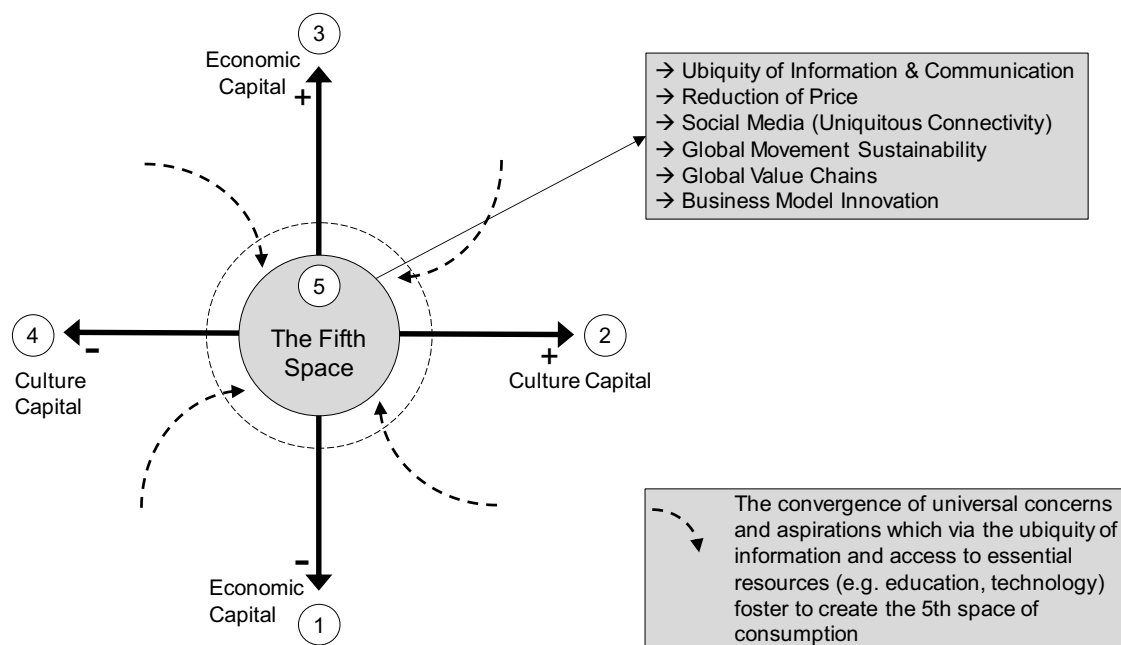
Figure 3: **Defining the Fifth Consumption Space of Global Marketing**

Figure 3 describes the fifth space of a converging societal sphere, that needs to be addressed not only by the distinction of taste and judgement, but moreover by the unification of habitus, perception and socio-political awareness and concerns. According to Bourdieu (1986a, p. 24): "The convertibility of the different types of capital is the basis of the strategies aimed at ensuring the reproduction of capital … by means of the conversions least costly in terms of conversion work and of the losses inherent in the conversion itself…". This convergence amplified by ubiquitous technological possibilities has created a market space, where it embraces the integration of the most sustainable ideas and characteristics beyond the previous segmented hierarchical market playgrounds to which Bourdieu, referred to as: "… in the sense

of illusio, belief, an involvement in the game which produces the game" (Bourdieu, 1986a, p. 86). The digital turn has produced a new culture that can only be understood be the marketer entering this culture, it is not a top down or a bottom-up approach, but moreover a "market-within".

"Culture is a stake which, like all social stakes, simultaneously presupposes and demands that one take part in the game and be taken in by it; and interest in culture, without which there is no race, no competition, is produced by the very race and competition which it produces." (Bourdieu, 1984a, p. 250). The culture of the digital space redefines the logical function of capital in terms of not only the economics, but moreover within the dimensions of cc as systematically structured by Bourdieu, "… as the long-lasting dispositions in the mind and the body" (Bourdieu, 1986a, p. 243). The authors are not purely referring to the emergence of a social media amplified popular culture but actually are giving attention to the fifth, but a foundational shift in terms of a new social space of an emerging dominant market in terms of capital and market dynamism beyond the segmented lens. In order to succeed within this emerging socio-cultural space, the mechanism of control and reproduction and the understanding of behaviour within this social space would be essential for the development of market theory within a global context.

Conclusion

Marketing has moved beyond the roam of Business Administration; it has experienced a transcendental rise towards incorporating societal changing powers. However, marketing finds itself still at the pivotal point of its own transformation of legitimacy. This structural shift within the fields of marketing practice in a Bourdieusian sense also requires a shift in the tools that marketing needs to integrate for a better sense-making and sense-giving for a sustainable future society. Our objective has been here to introduce Bourdieu's concepts and particularly his CC theories as tools of analysis for explaining the emerging a new cultural consumption space and in addition to be used as another robust tool for a better segmentation of a highly digitally connected society. The fifth space of global consumption is driven by common concerns, beliefs, and leitmotifs from the dimension of sustainability to the application of AI, to the notions of effective management of resources for an all-inclusive society.

Contributions

Scholars and practitioners of marketing have understood that marketing is the essence of relating the firm to its environment. The concept of market-oriented-ness has emerged by the

introduction of the market segmentation (Smith, 1956) which has become a foundational concept in both marketing theory and practice ever since. However, the power of hyper-digitally driven globalization has changed the dimension of market segmentation towards an emerging new space of global consumption. To identify this new emerging space of consumption more precisely the author has applied the tools of a Bourdieu'ian œuvré in sociology, however the evolution the new identified space within marketing, which the author has coined as the of the fifth space (or possibly similar spaces in the future) cannot be explained by the roam of market segmentation analysis alone. This is a solid contribution towards defining a new framework imported from sociology for marketing to change and thus mitigate the weaknesses of the segmentation-method within marketing, hence by illustrating a new set of tools. Bourdieu's concepts are: "culture capital", "habitus", "field" and "illusio". This research, furthermore, observes and describes a marketing transcendence from the roam of business studies towards a new foundation based on the rise of AI and global interconnectivity, with societal changing powers, thus a rapprochement with Bourdieu's theories and constructs opens new paths for constructing robust marketing theories in the future. The fifth space of global consumption and convergence amplified by ubiquitous technological possibilities has created a market space, where it embraces the integration of the most sustainable ideas and characteristics beyond the previous segmented hierarchical market playgrounds. Bourdieu's holistic theoretical contributions as highlighted within the context of marketing, would support marketing scholars and practitioners to design adequate and sustainable marketing strategies enhancing the organizational growth and development by more precise and valid segmentation capabilities. Marketing is understanding the habitus of the consumers, while feeling the pulse of the diverse societies and the changes necessary to create a viable global market based on a shared value co-evolved for all.

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THE ROLE OF SELF-EFFICACY IN THE CASE OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS ESAS AND ESA OWNERS: PROTECTING INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This research examines attitudes towards Emotional Support Animals (ESAs) that are becoming popular, and understanding individual perceptions towards such ESAs and ESA owners will help provide beneficial insights to the community as a whole. With the primary goal of protecting the individual well-being of all community members, we explore how and why highly self-efficacious individuals in society are more distrustful towards ESA owners when seen with their ESAs in urban public spaces. Specifically, we explore attitudinal differences towards ESAs perceived as pets versus pets seen in a variety of urban public spaces.

Method And Data

Multi-method studies were conducted. First, qualitative interviews were conducted to explore understanding and knowledge of ESAs amongst campus community members of a university in the northeastern part of the United States. This was followed by two online quantitative studies on an online panel to specifically investigate individual attitudes towards ESAs perceived as pets versus pests, and further explore the moderating role of individual difference variables like self-efficacy on such attitudinal differences.

Summary of Findings

Interview findings demonstrate varying levels of discomfort and acceptability of ESAs in public spaces. Online study results show animals that are perceived as pets (vs. pests) are favorably perceived as ESAs, more so, when seen in psychologically nature-proximal public spaces. Further, the level of nature-relatedness and self-efficacy of an individual influence distrust and skepticism towards ESA owners seen with their ESAs in public spaces.

Statement of Key Contributions

Despite frequent instances of emotional support animals (ESAs) in public spaces like college campuses, restaurants, and airports, there has been a dearth of research to examine how the acceptability of such ESAs by the public be improved. Past research sheds light on human-animal interactions and attitudes towards such ESAs, however much more work is required. As a start, the proposed research enhances prior work by identifying individual difference variables that can explain some of the distrust towards ESA owners, which is also becoming increasingly common across the general population. As a community, we would like to protect the well-being of all our individuals, and understanding individual

perspectives towards ESAs in public spaces will help public policymakers provide information sessions accordingly, both for the general public and the ESA owners themselves. Identifying individuals who are more nature-related as advocates for such sessions might help generate more favorable discussions regarding the acceptability of ESAs. On the other hand, involving highly self-efficacious individuals in policy-making discussions might help comprehend their viewpoints and consequently decide on strategies and policies to establish environments of trust and comfort amidst communities integrated with ESAs.

TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF UNMET HEALTHCARE NEEDS: WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE JOURNEYS WITH CONVENTIONAL VS. COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

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Description: This research explores women's experience journeys with practitioner-based complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) providers and uncovers differences between these journeys and women's experiences with general practitioners of conventional medicine.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Despite the growing trend in CAM consumption, particularly among women, the extant literature in the area is limited and this fast-growing healthcare service warrants further research (Dodds, Bulmer, and Murphy 2014). There is a research gap in our understanding of women's needs that are unmet by conventional healthcare providers, especially that these unmet needs constitute an important driver for using practitioner-based CAM services. It is therefore critical to understand

how women's experiences with conventional healthcare providers compare to those of using practitioner-based CAM services. Our goal is to shed light on how conventional healthcare providers might be failing at meeting the needs of a growing segment of women consumers who are seeking practitioner-based CAM services. We explore women's journeys with healthcare providers and their services by taking a consumer culture approach and examining how women's lay theories of medicine influence and are influenced by their experiences with CAM vs. conventional health care providers (Schau and Akaka 2020; Wang, Keh, and Bolton 2009).

Method and Data

For this research, we used qualitative in-depth interviews with 40 women between the ages of 18 and 49 and who have at least one CAM provider as one of their main three healthcare providers. Four members of the research team conducted the 60-minute interviews via Zoom over a two-months period. The interviews were transcribed using automated software into more than 850 pages of data. We followed established guidelines for qualitative research to collect and analyze the data, using a systematic and iterative process of data coding and analysis based on the Straussian school (Belk, Fisher, and Kozinets 2013; Jones and Noble 2007).

Summary of Findings

Women's unmet healthcare expectations seem to result from a psychological contract violation in their interactions with conventional providers (Meyer et al. 2020). This leads women not only to lower their expectations of care from conventional providers, but also to adjust their lay theories of medicine and beliefs about these providers' intentions and medical approach, which in turn influence their preference for CAM provider services (Wang, Keh, and Bolton 2009). Our

findings extend previous research on marketplace stigma to the context of healthcare services and highlight the role of CAM providers in helping women regain the self-esteem and sense of agency they lost due, at least in part, to their interactions with and stigmatization by conventional providers (Mirabito et al. 2016). Unless they make significant changes to their service delivery processes and how they are perceived and experienced by women customers, conventional healthcare providers, especially PCPs, risk facing decreasing demand for their services by women consumers who have increasing access to practitioner-based CAM alternatives.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research contributes to the marketing literature on customer journeys by taking a consumer culture approach that allows us to understand the social and cultural contexts that shape women's experiences with conventional healthcare vs. complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) providers and how these experiences influence and are influenced by lay theories of medicine (Schau and Akaka 2020; Wang, Keh, and Bolton 2009). It also adds to marketing research on how consumers adjust their expectations when faced with unmet needs by examining changing expectations throughout two parallel experience journeys that influence one another (Tueanrat, Papagiannidism and Alamanos 2021). Finally, our research extends previous research on marketplace stigma to the context of healthcare services and highlights the role of CAM providers in helping women regain the self-esteem and sense of agency they lost due, at least in part, to their interactions with and stigmatization by conventional providers (Mirabito et al. 2016). Conventional healthcare providers, especially general practitioners such as primary care providers, would find value in understanding how women experience their services compared to a much better perceived women's journey with CAM providers. These differences in women's

journeys highlight major areas for improvement in conventional healthcare service design and delivery.

References are available upon request.

"HE SAID I'VE JUST GOT TO LEARN TO BE A SAINT": THE CONSUMER JOURNEY EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR FAMILIES

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Keywords: Consumer Journeys, Vulnerable Consumers, Traveling Companions, responsible research, Dementia.

We examine the consumer journeys of people with dementia and their caregivers who we classify as traveling companions throughout the journey.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Customer journey literature has flourished recently, providing insights into a range of holistic consumer experiences, needs, motivations, decision-making processes, and product and service encounters. However, there are several important omissions to current journey scholarship. In this research, we address three such omissions. First, we examine a consumer journey, rather than a customer journey. The term 'consumer' is broader and more extensive than customer (Hamilton 2016), so consumer journeys are more complex, comprising multiple customer journeys in overall goal pursuit (Betterncourt et al. 2022). Consumer journeys therefore include and transcend consumption experiences, providing insights into a more holistic journey experience than is found when a single consumption situation is examined. Second, we respond to calls for empirical work to examine journeys that include 'traveling companions'. The extant literature incorrectly assumes that most consumer journeys are traveled alone, despite the reality that many such journeys are traveled with a companion (Hamilton et al. 2021). Finally, the bulk of journey scholarship is based on motivated, agentic consumers. We bring these gaps together by focusing on the consumer journeys of a particularly vulnerable type of consumer: people with dementia (PwD) who are accompanied on their journeys by family members.

Method and Data

The research is a collaboration with a hospice unit that until recently focused on palliative care. In recognition of marketplace needs, the hospice has begun to offer a 6-week course for people caring for dementia patients. Advertisements detailing the study were placed in the hospice and these provided details of how to participate. Participants were given a choice of data collection settings (the hospice, their own homes, or Zoom). Interviews were recorded and transcribed

verbatim. To aid systematic data collection, we used the first three sets of touchpoints from the Trajectory Touchpoint Technique (TTT) (Sudbury-Riley et al. 2020). Touchpoints can be physical, sensorial, symbolic, and social and incorporate consumer expectations, barriers, motivators, feelings, and emotions (De Keyser et al. 2015). Participants used the TTT to narrate their journey experiences: we stressed that the aim was to capture their story, viewing their narrative as a journey from the experiences leading up to diagnosis, through to the present day. The final sample (n =33) comprises 5 PwD while the rest are family caregivers. All are White British with most of higher socioeconomic statuses, 45% of participants are male. Manual thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) was used to analyze the data.

Summary of Findings

We uncovered a journey beset by delays, access barriers, power struggles, and fear. Early delays were typically caused by caregivers noticing signs of dementia, but reluctant to do anything official. We also identified a perception that medical professionals did not properly listen to family members. This power imbalance between provider and service user led to significant delays to diagnosis, and to feelings of frustration and vulnerability among caregivers as they struggled alone. Post-diagnosis, feelings of isolation and fear arose partly from contemplation of new role expectations (or demands), and partly from the complexity of the service system they needed to access. Surprise and relief were typical of experiences when people did access the hospice for the caregiver's course. Peer support emerged as a key benefit of the caregiver course and other social groups, helping to mitigate experiences of isolation and being cut off from existing social ties. Nevertheless, overall, we identified major gaps in service provision, both for the people with dementia themselves and a desperate need for support and respite for isolated and exhausted caregivers

Key Contributions

We make several contributions to the theoretical consumer journey literature. Our work enriches consumer journey knowledge by expanding the relatively tiny number of empirical studies pertaining to difficult consumer journeys which incorporate roles that go beyond that of consumer (Nakata et al. 2019 Trujillo Torres and DeBerry-Spence 2019). We provide a rare examination of a consumer journey that transcends usual path-to-purchase consumption journeys upon which much journey research is based (Lemon and Verhoef 2016). We show that sometimes a consumer journey can be arduous and external systems and processes can often cause delays which have profoundly negative impacts on consumers. We show that even though caregivers are not vulnerable in the biophysical sense, they feel powerless in the face on a negative service that is complex and difficult to understand. Our work therefore contributes to the nascent research on consumer vulnerability (Baker et al. 2005). Finally, our work enriches knowledge pertaining to traveling companions in consumer journeys. Overall, we provide rare empirical insights into the consumer experiences of an overlooked population. If we, the marketing academe, are to make the meaningful progress advocated by the responsible research in marketing movement (Haenlein et al. 2022), we need to begin to seek out underserved and in-need populations, not matter how hard-to-reach. This small-scale study is testimony that our marketing community is equipped to do so.

References are available upon request.

Digital and Social Media Marketing

#EVERYTHINGISANAD: THE EFFECTS OF DISCLOSURES ON REGOGNITION AND ATTITUDES

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Keywords: social media influencers, disclosures, social media marketing education

Description: Using a faux Instagram social media influencer (SMI) post, this paper examines the relationships between disclosure language, advertisement recognition, and attitudes towards the brand and explores whether formally learning about social media marketing aids in consumers' recognition of sponsored content.

<div align="center">**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**</div>

RESEARCH QUESTION

Consumers' social media feeds are a mix of personal, professional, and promoted content, many featuring social media influencers (SMI). SMI gain visibility and popularity by sharing self-generated valuable and informative content, leading followers to view the SMI as a highly authentic, trustworthy, and credible expert. As a result, it can be difficult for followers to clearly recognize product endorsements by the SMI as paid advertising. To help consumers make informed decisions by deciphering what is and is not an advertisement, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has set forth guidelines indicating disclosure language must be utilized. The objective of this research focuses on the relationships between disclosure language, ad

recognition, and attitudes towards the brand as well as examine if prior knowledge on social media marketing assists in the identification of promoted SMI posts.

We hypothesize that Disclosure Language is negatively related to Attitude towards the Brand (H1), Disclosure Language is positively related to Ad Recognition (H2), Ad Recognition is negatively related to Attitude towards the Brand (H3), Ad Recognition mediates the relationship between Disclosure Language and Attitude towards the Brand (H4), and Prior Knowledge positively moderates the relationship between Disclosure Language and Ad Recognition (H5).

METHOD AND DATA

Referencing Evans et al. (2017), four identical faux Instagram posts were created consisting of a stock photo of a Caucasian woman holding the product along with the text, "Thanks @cocacola for my morning pick-me-up. I couldn't make it through my day without my #classiccoke" followed by the disclosure or left blank. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four disclosure language conditions (control/no disclosure, #SP, #Sponsored, and #PaidAd). Recruiting from Prolific, our sample contained 249 participants with an average age of 36.4 years old and comprised of 43.7% male, 77.9% Caucasians, and 81.9% Instagram account owners.

Using a single-item Likert scale, participants indicated "the extent to which they thought the Instagram post was an advertisement" ($M = 9.14$, SD = 1.67) (Boerman et al., 2012). To capture attitudes towards the brand, participants indicated how they felt about the brand by using six description pairs and a semantic difference scale: Unpleasant/Pleasant, Dislike/Like, Bad/Good, Negative/Positive, Boring/Interesting, and Unappealing/Appealing ($M = 4.29$, SD =

1.726 α = 0.966) (Bruner & Kumar, 2000). Prior knowledge was measured by asking participants to indicate if they took a social media marketing course while in college, and if so, the percentage (0 to 100) of content they remember from the course(s). Lastly, all participants were asked to rate their social media marketing knowledge level.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Due to the inclusion of both a mediation and moderation variable, PLS-SEM analysis was conducted (Hair et al. 2019). Internal consistency (α = 0.966), composite reliability (CR = 0.998), and average variance (AVE = 0.856) for Attitude towards the brand are above the thresholds of 0.7, 0.8, and 0.5 respectively (Hair et al., 2022). Discriminant validity, assessed via the heterotrait-monotrait method (HTMT), are below the recommended cutoff of 0.85 for all variables (Henseler et al., 2015). Additionally, all variables were below the 3.0 recommended level for VIF (Hair et al., 2022). Ad Recognition and Attitude towards the Brand have weak R square values of less than 0.1. The results of the path analysis indicate three of the five hypothesized paths are statistically significant (p < 0.05). The path between Disclosure and Ad Recognition is 0.54, supporting H2. The path between Ad Recognition and Attitude towards the Brand is -0.13, supporting H3. The mediated path of Disclosure to Ad Recognition to Attitudes towards the Brand is -0.07, supporting H4. The path between Disclosure and Attitude towards the Brand (H1) as well as the moderating effect of prior knowledge on the relationship between Disclosure and Attitude towards the Brand (H5) are not statistically significant.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Our study highlights a potential concern for marketers, namely, that consumers may view all posts containing products as advertisements. If this is the case, influencers who post any

pictures which include products and/or brands may be wrongly accused of deceptive advertising practices when in fact, no purposeful advertising was done. Additionally, our findings suggest prior knowledge of social media marketing does not aid in recognition, thus prompting us to question if other researchers and/or practitioners are seeing similar outcomes when it comes to the robustness of social media marketing training at college. Furthermore, our research is valuable to companies, influencers, and the government. If consumers are viewing both promoted and non-promoted content similarly, negative attitudes may emerge. Products not associated with certain influencers could see a decline simply because an influencer either mentioned or was shown with the product through their attempt to convey authenticity to their followers. Similarly, influencers may be seen as a "sellout" because followers could mistakenly believe their posts as advertisements. These situations should lend support to the continuing efforts of the FTC to update best practices regarding influencer marketing and disclosure language.

AI VS. CREATOR GENERATED MEMES OR ADS FOR BRANDS? AN EXPLORATION OF CONSUMER RESPONSE

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Keywords: AI-generated ad, Meme, Brand Attitude, Intention to like

Description: In this study, we compared the effect of AI-generated ads and memes with creator generated ones on brand attitude and intention to like.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Social media display different ad forms like traditional ad images and memes. Memes are gaining popularity due to their relatable and humorous nature (Wasike 2022). Brands (e.g., Gucci, Netflix, Amazon Prime) use memes due to their higher engagement rate (Malodia et al. 2022). AI-generated ads as a persuasive communication tool (Ford et al. 2023), offers a groundbreaking application in advertising, as seen in Heinz's recent AI-generated campaign (Norris 2023). These ads promise enhanced personalization and efficiency, captivating target audiences (Kietzmann, Paschen, and Treen 2018, Arango, Singaraju, and Niininen 2023). Similarly, advertisers are using AI memes to tap their viral potential (Kim 2021).

Wu and Wen (2021) state that they have only studied AI advertising and suggest further research on different types of AI advertising, investigating consumer responses such as brand attitude to AI

advertising using experimental studies. Therefore, we conduct this study to investigate how AI-generated and human-created ads and memes compare in terms of their impact on consumers' brand attitudes (Sengupta and Johar 2002) and intention to like (Y. T. Chang, Yu, and Lu 2015) the advertisements.

Method and Data

We employed an experimental approach with four treatments to test brand attitude and intention to like posts on social media. We created a fictitious chocolate brand called "Xstacy_Chocolates" on Instagram. The participants were undergraduate students. We informed participants that we are conducting market research on our brand's social media marketing efforts. The participants were shown five posts for each treatment. The posts shown to participants were randomized. They were not informed if the posts were AI-generated or human-created. The treatments are as follows: Treatment 1: AI-generated ads, Treatment 2: AI-generated memes, Treatment 3: Human-created ads, and Treatment 4: Human-created memes. We utilized two websites for generating AI ads and memes (www.wepik.com and [www.supermeme.ai)](www.supermeme.ai) respectively. The prompts used for content generation are: "create an ad for a chocolate company named "Xstacy" and place the tag line below the brand name "it's what you desire"". We got a content creator (10.3k followers, Maximum reach177k) on Instagram to create advertisements and Memes as a part of our Human-created treatments. The content created by both AI and Creator are static 2D image posts. These posts were posted on "Xstacy Chocolates" Instagram page.

Summary of Findings

The usage of AI-generated ads is anticipated to increase soon as brands increasingly adopt it. Our study findings suggest that AI-generated ads have more impact in influencing brand attitude and intention to like brand posts. This implies that Brands can use AI-generated image posts for their

advertising, as individuals will not know the difference between creator-generated and AI-generated advertisements.

We observe that AI-generated memes have garnered better brand attitude than human-created memes. This implies that brands can use AI meme generators to create memes for marketing their brand. Memes differ from ads as memes are replicated from one context to another. In our study, we tested if AI-generated ads are different from AI-generated memes; we found that they significantly differ regarding their ability to create brand attitude and intention to like. We see that Human-created ads can generate a more favorable brand attitude than human-created memes.AI-generated ads and memes, blurring distinctions from human-created content, pose a verisimilitude challenge. In this study with a fictional chocolate brand, consumer responses favored AI-generated content, hinting at an advantage for new brands commencing with AI-generated ads

Key Contributions

Highly creative AI-generated ads and memes are increasingly being used to promote products and services. Using verisimilitude theory, we can say that consumers may be unable to distinguish between human-created and AI-created advertisements. A key issue therefore is whether brand attitude and intention to like are better for human-created or AI-generated ad or meme. Utilizing a fictitious chocolate brand and static 2D images, in this experimental study (control - respondent demographics) we found that responses to AI-generated ads and memes were more favorable than human-created ones. Respondents were unaware of who designed the ads and memes. Ad falsity is therefore possible where content manipulation is easy. New brands therefore starting with AI-generated ads could be better off compared with established brands. Consumers could possibly make out subtle differences between human and AI-created ads and memes for established brands. Ad designers themselves can use prompt engineering to develop ideas and use AI to generate

creative ads and memes. If that is the case, simple 2D image-based ads and memes represent a situation where synthetic, highly creative ads and human-created ads become indistinguishable, leading to a verisimilitude illusion that can lead to falsity very easily.

References are available upon request.

An exploration into the relationship between chatbots, service failure recovery and customer loyalty: a view from frustration -aggression theory

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Key words: chatbot, service failure recovery, customer loaylty, fashion industry, frustration-aggression theory

Abstract

An increasing number of companies are introducing chatbot-led contexts in service failure recovery. Existing studies are inconclusive on whether chatbots humanlike driven service failure recovery enhance customer loyalty. Grounding our work in phenomenological hermeneutics and utilizing frustration–aggression theory, we concentrate on the historical circumstance and the participatory nature of understanding customers' chatbot-driven interactions and loyalty. We conducted 47 in-depth interviews with millennials from four countries (USA, France, Italy and the UK). By analyzing interview data through thematic analysis, our study offers two significant contributions. First, through thematic analysis we define the dynamics occurring between customers and chatbots in a service recovery journey, such as customers' priorities and expectations. Second, we present a chatbot-led service failure recovery CAGG framework that identifies four types of customers based on their interactions with a chatbot and their emotions, specifically frustration and aggression, and the effects of the interactions on their loyalty and intention to use chatbots. The identification of four customer types can help managers shape strategies to effectively turn negative customer experiences into opportunities to strengthen their loyalty, such as making more than one touchpoint available (human and chatbot).

Key contributions to academe and practitioners

The present study adopts the perspective of service recovery journeys as alternative customer journeys (Ozuem et al, 2023; Van Vaerenbergh et al. 2019) that differ from what the customer would have experienced if the service failure had not happened. Consistent with this perspective, chatbots are considered touchpoints and their role of providing interactions between customers and brands could vary from the norm. Substantial differences might arise in consumers' behaviors and attitudes to the brand and the chatbot when using self-service technologies (SSTs) in ordinary circumstances and when encountering these touchpoints as the

first line following a service failure. Our study shows that customers' emotions, specifically frustration and aggression, affect not only customer loyalty but also technology adoption. Customers' retaliation behaviors may in fact be addressed to the company, to the chatbot, or both. In many cases, customers perceive being offered a chatbot to interact with as a statement of disregard from the brand, which is even further aggravated by the context in which the service failure happened. In the luxury setting, which we investigated, customers expect failures to not occur, because of the "flawless" image brands usually promote.

References available upon request

AN EXPLORATORY EXAMINATION OF NFT SEGMENTS: FUTURISTS, AUTHENTICATORS, AND PESSIMISTS

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Keywords: NFTs, Non-Fungible tokens, luxury, digital marketing

Description: The present research takes a qualitative approach to examine young consumers' perceptions and intentions towards non-fungible tokens (NFTs).

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Given the potential for exorbitant pricing with NFTs, an important and unanswered question emerges: do consumers view NFTs like they view luxury products? If so, what are the similarities between NFTs and other luxury products? Conversely, if NFTs are perceived as different from luxury (especially tangible luxury) products, what are those differences? By focusing on consumers' perceptions of NFTs and their views toward them as luxury products (or not), this research answers the call by Dhaliwal et al. (2020) to examine digital luxury and consumers' perceptions (Colicey, 2023). Further, the present research focuses on young adults, the consumer group seen as living online (Joy et al., 2022) and comprising a growing segment of the luxury market (Danzinger, 2019). In doing so, this study addresses Hofstetter et al.'s (2022, p. 708) call to study "how and why NFTs attract new segments, generate revenues, transfer status to consumers, and increase content creation and sharing." Thus, we address two main research

questions. First, what are consumers' overall perspectives of NFTs, and how do they vary, and second, within these different overall consumer perspectives, how do consumers see NFTs in terms of luxury?

Methods and Data

The present research followed an interpretative approach. Thirty-eight students from an introduction to marketing class completed a short individual assignment about their opinions on NFTs (including risk, user profiles, recall, perceptions, intentions, and value provided) and whether they felt NFTs represented a luxury product. The authors developed a code sheet for responses. To ensure consistency in coding across authors and to determine if the coding criteria and respective codes were sufficiently developed, four rounds of pretest coding were conducted with a random sample of five submissions. Each was analyzed by the three coders independently. Once each round of sample judging was completed, the three judges resolved any disagreement until the application of the criteria and interpretation of the code were agreed upon. The fifth version was the final version used to code participants' responses. The responses were then input separately by the three authors along with a representative quote for that respondent. Following the inter-coder reliability procedure by Rust and Cooil (1994), the proportional reduction in loss (PRL) reliability measure was calculated for each coded criterion. The PRL measures for each criterion ranged from a minimum of .88 to a maximum of 1.00, indicating that the categorization process was reliable.

Summary of Findings

The analysis of participants' responses resulted in the identification of three segments representing different perspectives towards NFTs. The largest group, *Authenticators* (42.1% of the sample), perceive NFTs as luxurious digital possessions that are prestigious, have premium

prices, and are high quality. While they view NFTs positively and through a lens of luxury, they are not set on purchasing them. They are most likely to be either innovators/early adopters or early/late majority. The second-largest group, *Pessimists* (39.5% of the sample), hold negative views about NFTs, seeing them as fads, silly, and/or a waste of time and believing that investing in them is risky (46.7% hold solidly negative views, while 53.3% have mixed views; the majority, 73.3% view them as majorly risky). These individuals are most likely to be laggards in terms of adoption. The smallest group, *Futurists* (15.8% of the sample), hold forward-thinking views about NFTs. They are most likely to see themselves as innovators/early adopters and refer to NFTs as the future of asset ownership, investment, and digital life, and do not perceive them as overly risky. NFT marketers must take care in effectively marketing NFTs' value and addressing the risks of NFTs to consumers.

Statement of Key Contribution

Taking a qualitative approach, the authors identify three perspectives (segments) regarding NFTs – Authenticators, Pessimists, and Futurists – and connect their perceptions of NFTs to the luxury domain. The results illustrate that NFTs offer a variety of luxury values (Weidmann et al., 2009), especially financial, functional, and individual. Fewer than a third of all participants saw NFTs as offering social luxury value. This suggests that NFTs may not appeal to those looking to own them to be conspicuous, join the bandwagon, or demonstrate snob appeal (Leibenstein, 1950). In a digital world, luxury may offer different values than traditional luxury products. Managers can utilize the findings to appeal to the segments identified in this study. Futurists appear most concerned with the financial aspects of NFTs, so marketers may wish to emphasize potential returns on investment. While Authenticators may be positively inclined toward NFTs overall, they are mixed in their perceptions and unsure of whether NFTs are worth purchasing. The most

challenging segment for marketers is the Pessimists. These consumers are deeply skeptical of the

value of NFTs and do not see them as luxurious. Our findings suggest that there are several

possible target markets but that care is needed to address their concerns.

References are available upon request.

AUGMENTED REALITY MODERATES THE EFFECT OF WEBSITE QUALITY ON CONSUMER MINDSET METRICS

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Keywords: Augmented Reality, Website Quality, Brand Recall, Trust, Purchase Intention

Description: This research shows the impact of Augmented reality on consumer perception of Website Quality and mindset metrics, along with the boundary of this effect.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Augmented Reality (AR) combines best of real and virtual worlds by letting customers access the brand experience without having to come to a physical store. Our purpose was to measure the impact of Augmented reality on consumer perception of Website Quality and mindset metrics. We conducted three studies. Study 1a gave a list of AR-oriented websites and study 1b (n=84) helped to finalize the marketer having AR-oriented website and its competitor having website without AR. Study 2 collected responses of different consumers (n=266) after visiting AR-enabled website (lenskart.com) and without AR website (coolwinks.com). This study confirmed that the AR-try-on feature significantly increases the chances of customers to recall the brand as compared to the website without AR. Using multiple analytical models, we also found that AR does not moderate the mediation of effects of website quality on purchase intention through brand recall and trust. Post hoc analyses also show that the moderated mediation effects remain similar for all three components of website quality, which are information quality, system quality, and service quality.

Research Question

This research evaluates if AR significantly improves the consumer perception of website quality. This research also ascertains if AR impacts consumer mindset metrics of brand recall, trust, and purchase intention.

Method and Data

We focus on evaluating the impact of AR on effects of website quality on consumer mindset metrics in a retail setting. Broadly, we first determined the most familiar AR-enabled company and then compared consumer responses for this AR-enabled website with those for a competing website without AR.

Study 1a is desk-based research and gives us 21 companies that use augmented reality in their websites. Study 1b is a preliminary cross-section study (University students, n=84, female =

52%, Usage of AR-oriented website = 100%) to assess brand recall. It shows highest recall for Lenskart and shows its competitor as Coolwinks. Study 2 is another cross-section study (n=266) to compare the consumer perception of website quality and consumer mindset metrics of brand recall, trust, and purchase intention for Lenskart (AR-oriented website) and Coolwinks (website without AR).

Summary of Findings

The moderated-mediation model shows that AR increases the effect of website quality on brand recall, which in turn increases trust and purchase intention for the brand. Post hoc tests show that AR does not enhance any other effect in the model and that the effect remains similar for all components of website quality that are information quality, system quality and service quality.

This research shows that website quality is perceived significantly better for AR-oriented website as compared to without AR website. In case of Lenskart and Coolwinks, the customer is buying glasses and goggles. Practically, the AR- oriented website helps in better buying experience as the customer can virtually try wearing the glasses and goggles, leading to long customer engagement (Kliestik et al., 2022).

The results show that consumer recall is significantly more for AR-oriented website as compared to that for without AR website. This may be due to longer engagement with AR-enabled website as compared to without AR website (Jessen et al., 2020). When customer can try-out several varieties of the product, customer inevitably spends long time with the website and experiences higher exposure to the brand name, which may also explain higher brand recall (Rup et al., 2020).

Key Contributions

Theoretically, this multi-study research shows that augmented reality helps in augmenting brand recall, which is important for trust and purchase intention. Furthermore, it also shows that augmented reality does not impact the effects of website quality on trust, website quality on purchase intention, and brand recall on trust. This shows the boundary of effect of augmented reality on customer mindset metrics.

This research has some important practical implications. First, it shows that augmented reality does really help a brand by increasing its recall for the online consumers, especially in retail settings where customers can use AR-oriented try-on features of the brand's website. AR features enhance the online brand experience, which in turn may increase the propensity of consumers to return to brand and word-of-mouth recommendations for the brand. Second, this research also shows that AR-orientation may help only in brand recall and may not translate into deeper engagement metrics like trust and purchase intention. Thus, marketers need not over rely on AR and over expect from AR. This research helps marketers in keeping their customer engagement expectations from such efforts at a realistic level.

References are available upon request

AVATARS IN MARKETING - A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

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Keywords: avatars, metaverse, technologies, systematic literature review

Description: We develop a conceptual framework for classifying avatars and their interactions, and provide a structured literature review for developing a future research agenda on avatars in marketing.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Avatars, defined as digital entities with a visual appearance that are controlled by a human and/or software and mainly used for interaction purposes (Miao et al. 2022), nowadays appear in a broad variety of shapes and have become increasingly sophisticated in terms of design and functionality due to technological advancements (e.g., artificial intelligence). In practice, we can observe that (non)profit organizations (e.g., bands like ABBA, online shops like Zalando, virtual games like World of Warcraft, social media platforms like Instagram) increasingly implement different types of avatars for diverse purposes. However, marketing literature does not holistically account for their variety; to date, it is fragmented and does not

(yet) allow for capturing the diversity of avatars as they appear in practice. To fill this void, we pursue the following three research goals: 1) Develop a framework for classifying avatars across multiple technology-enabled environments, 2) Provide a state-of-the-art overview of avatar research findings in marketing based on the developed framework, and 3) Derive a future research agenda for marketing scholars.

Method and Data

First, we developed a conceptual framework for establishing a structured perspective on different avatar types (i.e., that are controlled by different entities) that may appear and interact in (advanced) technology-enabled environments such as the metaverse; the framework serves as a roadmap for the subsequent organization and classification of the avatar literature. Next, we conducted a systematic literature review to investigate whether and how prior research has studied the different types of avatars and their interactions across diverse settings. Our approach involved selecting top-tier peer-reviewed marketing journals and identifying relevant keywords based on our avatar definition (i.e., digital entities with a visual appearance controlled by a human or software, primarily utilized for interaction purposes; Miao et al. 2022). In June 2023, we performed a time-unrestricted literature search for articles within relevant marketing journals. Our final sample for the structured literature review (i.e., after excluding articles based on predefined criteria) comprises 134 articles, which form the basis for our analysis.

Summary of Findings

Overall, we found an asymmetry in terms of prior marketing research efforts investigating different types of avatars. Our analysis shows, for instance, that previous marketing

research on avatars in marketing has primarily focused on investigating organization-controlled avatars such as virtual sales assistants, and already manages to capture a broad variety of avatars that practitioners employ to facilitate customer-firm interaction. Our literature review on avatars further reveals that the marketing discipline acknowledges different interactions between avatars, however, instead of (empirically) investigating these interactions, prior research often implicitly refers to them. Finally, we found that prior investigations, whether implicitly or explicitly exploring avatars and their interactions, have done so across a variety of technology-enabled environments (e.g., metaverse). Based on our analysis, we provide directions for future research related to the different aspects of our research framework.

Key Contributions

Avatar research represents a relevant and complex field, which is receiving increasing attention in marketing literature. Due to our holistic understanding of the phenomenon "avatar", which includes various types of digital and virtual representations with visual appearance (e.g., social media avatars, service agents, and chatbots), we provide a comprehensive perspective on avatars in marketing. This investigation establishes a conceptual framework to classify avatars based on their controlling entities as well as multiple interaction spaces within technology-enabled (service) environments. The framework serves as a roadmap for the subsequent organization and classification of the avatar literature. Also, we offer an overview of research findings on avatars in the marketing domain and find that, while some aspects of avatars have gained considerable attention, there is still demand for research. We provide directions for inspiring future research efforts.

References are available upon request.

CAPTIVATE YOUR AUDIENCE: SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCING SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT THROUGH CAPTIONS

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Keywords: Caption, Engagement, Social Media, Text Length

Description: We measure the impact of caption features on engagement and find, among others, that captions of around 600 characters can increase engagement by up to 25%.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Social media posts consist of a main content and a caption, that is a short text that accompanies and frames the post. In contrast to the main content, the caption receives little effort from creators, but it could be changed and adapted more efficiently. The question we are investigating is: How to optimize the caption to generate more engagement for a social media post? We study text lengths, emoticons, and hashtags for their effect on average engagement with a post. Based on seemingly irreconcilable findings in previous literature, we conceive the relationship between text length and engagement as an inverted U-shape with an optimal length.

Method and Data

We analyze two field data sets consisting of the social media account and data of a merchandise online store (Facebook, Study 1, larger account with 350,000 followers) and a travel influencer (Instagram, Study 2, medium-sized account with 17,000 followers). In total, our data covers over 1,500 posts with over 80 million impressions.

We measure engagement as standardized likes, comments, and shares, text length in characters (without spaces, hashtags, emojis, and hyperlinks), hashtags, and numer of emoticons. We additionally control for sentiment and reach of the post, as well as a few general main content types.

We estimate the effect of the caption on engagement using OLS regression in both studies, but also conduct extensive robustness tests considering a potential endogeneity bias, using Gaussian copulas and a deconfounder.

Summary of Findings

The results confirm our assumption that the effect of text length on engagement follows an inverted U-shape. The significance of the inverted U-shape is confirmed by the test of Lind and Mehlum (2010). Optimal caption text lengths are at 622 characters for standardized engagement in study 1 and at 616 characters for standardized engagement in study 2.

Emoticons, hashtags, sentiment, and content types show fewer, selective effects, depending on the study and sub-metric of engagement. We find that the results remain largely robust when e.g., using the Gaussian copula to control for an endogeneity bias.

Key Contributions

In contrast to previous research, our results show a non-linear relationship between caption text length and engagement following an inverted U-shape. Potentially, our finding can explain why extant studies showed both positive and negative effects of text length.

Our results show social media managers which specific text length optimizes engagement. Until now, it was assumed that posts should have a lower number of characters, e.g., on Instagram usually a maximum of 150 characters. However, we find that a text length of around 600 characters is optimal for posts from companies as well as from influencers. Using our model estimates, we show that using an optimal text length could increase average engagement by up to 13% for companies and 25% for influencers, compared to their currently used captions.

Follow-up analyses for product advertising posts furthermore reveal a non-linear relationship between text length and likes which recommends either longer or very short texts. Emojis can increase the number of likes for posts about company products. Hashtags increase both the reach of posts through the platform's algorithm and engagement with influencer posts. Therefore, we recommend their use.

CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS OF INFLUENCER GIFTING

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Keywords: influencer marketing, persuasion knowledge, relationship investment, business gifts

Description: This paper examines the impact of simple and elaborate gifts received by a social media influencer on consumer perceptions of the ingredient brand and the influencer.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Many social media influencers promote products they received from brands, sent without any explicit obligations but with the objective of being endorsed voluntarily. Brands increasingly send such products along with additional gifts such as flowers, champagne, or balloons. By offering such elaborate influencer gifts, brands hope to elicit more favorable reactions from both influencers and consumers. However, elaborate influencer gifting has recently raised concerns regarding consumer perceptions. The authors therefore ask: How does influencer gifting affect consumers' trust in influencers?

Method and Data

With four experiments, this research examines the effects of simple and elaborate gifting on consumer perceptions of the brand and influencer.

Summary of Findings

Elaborate gifting evokes higher perceptions of a persuasive attempt by the brand on the influencer, which relates to decreased trust toward influencers who showcased the elaborate gifts voluntarily. The negative effect on perceptions of a persuasive attempt is mitigated though if the elaborate gift is linked to a brand occasion, such as the brand's anniversary. This research extends the scarce literature on influencer gifting and additionally offers a detailed framework for further research.

Key Contributions

Gifts are a "puzzle that refuses to be solved" (Larsen & Watson, 2001, p. 889). Our article explores the enigma of gift-giving, contributing a novel piece to this still barely solved gift-giving puzzle in the context of influencer gifts in the following ways:

1. We contribute to the relatively new and evolving phenomenon of influencer gifting by positioning it as a distinct type of gift-giving, differentiating it from traditional business gifts and other marketing strategies.

2. Further, we delve into the triadic relationship of brands, influencers and consumers, unveiling the effects that the display of different gift types has on consumers.

3. Integrating attribution theory and an economic and social exchange perspective we uncover the underlying mechanism of a detected successful persuasive attempt through

the brand that erodes the consumer's trust in the influencer.

4. Upon our initial insights, we develop a detailed framework for future research directions

    on influencer gifting, building on Larsen & Watson's (2001) gift value model.

References are available upon request.

DECODING LIVESTREAM SHOPPING – THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF EMPATHY

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Keywords: Livestream, Assemblage, Empathy, Co-experience, Dependency, Motivation fit

Description: This research unveils the mechanism influencing the purchase intention of focal viewers in livestream shopping, proposing that empathy plays a pivotal role arising from interactions with both the live streamer and fellow viewers.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Livestream shopping, or simply live shopping, is a fusion of social media and online shopping. Live shopping is an approach to retailing whereby a host, usually a social media influencer or celebrity, sells products through live video, and often combines live audio and video streams with text-based chat communications (Hamilton 2014). Despite livestream shopping's demonstrated growth in China, , only 20% of U.S. customers have participated in livestream shopping, contrasted with the 77% of Chinese customers who have shopped via livestream (*Statistics report on livestream commerce* 2022). Given the lackluster development of livestream shopping in the U.S., it's crucial for marketers to grasp the unique dynamics at play in livestream shopping and understand what drives shoppers' buying decisions across cultures. The current research explores the intricate social interactions within livestream shopping, with a

particular focus on how these interactions shape empathy toward the livestream seller, and ultimately purchase intentions.

Method And Data

Three online surveys were conducted—one in China and two in the U.S. The Chinese survey gathered responses from 202 non-student participants through an online platform, while one U.S. survey obtained data from 178 non-students via Prolific. Additionally, we recruited 101 undergraduates from a Midwestern University who completed the survey in a campus lab. All participants were required to have prior experience with livestream sales viewing for eligibility.

All measures are adopted from previous literature. In addition, except for dependency (Cronbach alpha = .65), all other constructs' Cronbach alpha is above .70. Finally, rigorous tests are conducted, verifying that there are no issues of discriminant validity, multicollinearity, and common method bias.

We tested metric invariance by introducing equal metrics or scale intervals across countries (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998). Results confirmed configural invariance ($\chi2$ = 1897.102, d.f. = 967; $\chi2$/d.f. = 1.962, CFI =.942; TLI =.928; RMSEA =.038) and provided proof for metric invariance in our study (the marginal difference in CFI values (.002) falls below the recommended threshold of .01) in our study. A multi-group structural equation model was generated through AMOS. The fit indices for the structural model were acceptable ($\chi2$/d.f.= 2.269, CFI=.942; RMSEA=.036).

Summary of Findings

In the fully mediated model, independent variables accounted for 57.8% of the variance in purchase intention in the China sample, 62.1% in the U.S. non-student sample, and 38.7% in the U.S. student sample.

Motivation fit of the focal viewer was consistently positively linked to empathy across all three groups. In the U.S. non-student sample, there was a marginally significant and positive relationship between dependency power and empathy, while the China sample demonstrated a marginally significant

but negative association. The need for connectedness significantly influenced co-experience in all groups, and referent power of other viewers positively impacted co-experience for the Chinese and U.S. non-student sample. Co-experience had a significantly positive impact on empathy in both the Chinese and U.S. non-student sample, and empathy significantly influenced purchase intention across all samples.

Our study offers novel insights into cultural variations in the interplay between a live streamer's dependency power and empathy. In contrast to U.S. customers displaying empathic reactions towards live streamers' dependency, Chinese customers exhibit diminished empathy in similar scenarios. Invariance tests across Chinese and U.S. samples reveal a more pronounced impact of co-experience on empathy in the Chinese context, emphasizing cultural nuances in shared experiences during livestream shopping interactions.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study represents one of the earliest explorations into the social dynamics of livestream shopping. Our findings highlight the pivotal role of empathy in shaping consumers' purchase intentions within the fleeting timeframe of a live broadcast. In the context of livestream shopping, where information overload is prevalent, empathy serves as an effective cognitive shortcut for decision-makers (Muramatsu and Hanoch, 2005).

Notably, our research uncovers a divergence in the influence of dependency power on empathy between Chinese and U.S. samples. Contrary to expectations, the U.S. sample exhibits a significantly positive impact, while the Chinese sample reveals an unexpected negative effect. We attribute this disparity to the nuanced influence of subjective social norms embedded in distinct cultures, aligning with extensive literature discussions (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

Our investigation elucidates the underlying mechanism of co-experience in livestream shopping, emphasizing real-time participation and reciprocal reconciliation to establish a shared reality, a critical aspect in highly interactive social media (Lim et al., 2012). We posit, and our findings support, that co-

experience acts as resonating walls, amplifying empathetic emotions within the immersive environment of live streaming. Therefore, co-experience with other viewers becomes a vital conduit, mirroring, resonating, and magnifying empathic feelings, ultimately fostering purchasing intention.

DECODING VIRTUAL (AI) INFLUENCER PERSONALITIES – SCALE DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION

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Keywords: Virtual Influencer, Personality, Scale Development, Influencer Marketing

Description: Scale development and validation for a virtual influencer's personality

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The virtual influencer (an AI-created object) possesses human traits and characteristics and displays human-like behavior. With the rise of virtual influencer-brand collaboration, there is a crucial need to study the personality dimensions of virtual influencers (VI). These unique personality factors differentiate the virtual influencer (computer imagery) from social media influencers (real-life influencers), attracting massive followers. This research addresses the issue by drawing on the big five human personality and big five brand personality to develop a theoretical framework for virtual influencer brand personality dimensions and a reliable, valid, and generalizable scale that measures these dimensions. The aim is to study the comprehensive trait of a virtual influencer who is not an actual human being but a computer-generated and AI-generated being with human characteristics and behavior. The study, hence, answers two critical questions - How is a virtual influencer personality defined? What are the dimensions to measure virtual human personality?

Method and Data

The study follows an inductive approach to item generation suggested by Hinkin (1995) to generate an adequate pool of items. We conducted a Netnography of the 25 VIs on Instagram from January 2023 to June 2023. Netnography developed 48 personality traits. Post Netnography, we conducted free association test, with 100 university students to write personality traits for any two VIs they followed. The free association generated a list of 583 adjectives. Post face, content, and construct validity per Churchill (1995) guidelines a total number of 99 traits remained.

The second stage used a questionnaire of 99 items to collect preliminary data using convenience sampling. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using principal component analysis (PCA) and Promax rotation for dimension reduction was conducted. We confirmed the personality measures 'generated from the scale purification stage. Following Chuchill's (1979) guidelines, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to evaluate and validate the items generated and assess the latent factor structure VI personality. We used the thirty-one refined

items developed from the previous stage to make a questionnaire. The survey questionnaire collected 357 responses. We conducted a second-order CFA for the VI personality model comprising six first-order factors: Attractive, Adventurous, Scary, Witty, Spirited, and Considerate.

Summary of Findings

The study found six personality traits of a virtual influencer: Attractive, Adventurous, Scary, Witty, Spirited, and Considerate. The first factor named Attractive, consisted of seven items: "Cute, Charming, Mysterious, Elite, Artistic, Graceful, and Classy." The second factor named Adventurous, composed of five items: "Passionate, Explorer, Aggressive, Brave, and Bold." The third factor named Scary, consisting of "Creepy, Disturbing, and Spooky." The fourth factor named Witty, consisting of four items: "Comic, Goofy, Funny and Amusing." The fifth factor named Spirited, consisting of five items: "Sassy, Peppy, Vibrant, Dynamic, and Enthusiastic." The sixth factor named Considerate, consisting of four items: "Compassionate, Sensitive, Loving, and Righteous."

Key Contributions

This study focused on creating a personality scale for virtual influencers (VIs). The current study aimed to define virtual influencer personality and identify the unique dimensions that measure virtual influencer personality. The study consisted of three stages using an inductive approach to generate items. The qualitative phase of the study involved free association, and Netnography to generate a pool of items. After several levels of cleaning and screening of the traits identified, the scale was purified using exploratory factor analysis. We used confirmatory factor analysis to measure VI personality and confirm the underlying factor structure. The newly developed Virtual Influencer Personality Scale has six traits: Attractive, Adventurous, Scary, Witty, Spirited, and Considerate.

The study is a significant contribution to the theory of personality traits as it adds to the body of knowledge on personalities by adding to the understanding of human VIs and non-human VIs. We argue that VIs are brands in themselves. The two key VI characteristics of scalability and controllability provide a unique leverage to the brand. VIs is not limited by time and space and hence we argue that knowing the personality perceptions of the VIs can help marketers harness their power in an efficient manner. It can also provide a unique leverage to the brand that decides to associate with the VI. Because of the self-learning aspect of artificial intelligence used in creating VIs, their identity can be adjusted quickly. It can also help manage the negative public image that a social media influencer can face, over a period of time.

References

References are available upon request

DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL INTERPLAY: THE ROLE OF FRANCHISE OWNERS' SOCIAL MEDIA EXPERIENCE ON CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND SALES

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Keywords: Social media experience, customer experience, multi-unit franchising, sales

Description: This study reveals that an owner's social media experience positively influences customer satisfaction and sales at fast food stores, with this effect being moderated by the owner's physical operating experience, highlighting the intertwined relationship between online engagement and traditional business practices.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Whereas an owner's operating experience, a physical experience, has been studied extensively (see Argote et al. 2021 for a review), his or her online experiences through social media remain unexplored. Understanding the performance effect of social media experience is critical for owners, most of whom operate small businesses, because they devote considerable resources towards creating and posting content on social media to enhance customer experience. This raises our first research question. RQ1: How does an owner's social media experience influence customer experience of stores in a market? Second, it is highly likely that an owner's operating experiences at the physical space influence the performance implications of social media experience in the online space since different experiences not only create knowledge independently but also create knowledge by interacting with one another (Levinthal & March, 1993). This raises our second research question. RQ2: How does an owner's operating experience alter the performance effect of social media experience?

Method and Data

We tested the hypotheses using data from a single restaurant chain – McDonald's – to control for confounding factors that arise due to differences in chain configurations. We created a unique and novel dataset of McDonald's FGC on social media, customer engagement, store sales, and target market information from multiple sources. The data were for the years 2016 to 2019 and

aggregated at the store level for each year. First, we obtained store level information such as social media platforms used and location of the store using the Foursquare API. Second, we used Facebook API to collect the posting information from the Facebook pages of all 8337 McDonald's stores. Third, we used Google Maps API to acquire customer review information for each store. Fourth, we used the US Census database to acquire market level information at the zip code level. Finally, we acquired data on store sales from Chain Store Guide for the years 2016 to 2019. We used an instrumental variable approach to test our hypotheses.

Summary of Findings

Our findings show that an owner's greater social media experience enhances customer experience in terms of customer satisfaction and online engagement, subsequently boosting store sales. However, this effect is moderated by the owner's traditional physical operating experience, where greater local experience diminishes, but greater distant experience enhances, the positive effects of an owner's social media experience.

Key Contributions

Our research introduces an exploration into the interplay between social media experience and the physical operating experience of franchise owners, delivering a nuanced understanding of the modern marketing landscape. It bridges a knowledge gap in the extant marketing literature, particularly concerning the online experience of franchise owners and its tangible outcomes in a market characterized by evolving digital touchpoints. Whereas prior studies have focused primarily on the operational experience at the physical space (Argote, Lee, & Park, 2021; Kalnins & Mayer, 2004; Kim, Kim, & Miner, 2009), our study sheds light on the performance implications of experiences accumulated in the online space. This addition to the literature is important in an era where digital customer engagement is as critical as are in-store interactions. Incorporating the dynamics between online and physical experiences, our research suggests an interwoven relationship where one moderates the impact of the other on market performance. Our findings highlight the significance of social media not just as a promotional tool, but as a medium for strategic learning and customer data analysis. Such a paradigm shift in understanding social media's role is invaluable for developing marketing strategies and establishing holistic customer engagement.

DOES VISUAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNICATION RESULT IN HIGHER SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT? AN INSTAGRAM-BASED INVESTIGATION

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Keywords: Sustainability communication, visual communication, social media, green marketing.

Description: This study statistically examines the effectiveness of corporate marketing strategies for the disclosure of sustainability initiatives through visual communication on Instagram.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This study examines the effectiveness of corporate marketing strategies for disclosing of sustainability initiatives through sustainability communication (SC) in visual-centric social media platforms. More specifically, our aims are threefold: 1) Characterizing social media visual SC across industry sectors, 2) examining the effectiveness of visual SC in terms of user engagement, and 3) investigating the role of sustainability topic consistency in generating higher social media engagement.

SC, also known as green marketing communication (GMC), is defined as an instrument to outwardly and strategically demonstrate businesses' concern and contributions toward environmental protection and restoration (Fischer et al. 2016; Godemann and Michelsen 2011). The burgeoning significance of social media for marketing communication and advertising has

elevated them to crucial tools for corporate SC. Consequently, businesses are progressively marketing their sustainability initiatives via social media for legitimacy gains (Crapa, Latino, and Roma 2023; Ju, Dong, and Zhang 2021). However, research exploring the effectiveness of SC in visual-centric social media platforms is still nascent.

Methods and Data

Instagram provides an optimal and realistic backdrop to study visual SC. Using a custom Phyton code to access Instagram API, we extracted 39,400 corporate posts representing 394 brands listed in the Brandwatch Index (2019). We content-analyzed images (and video frames) in each post by relating them to eight United Nations' (2015) sustainability development goals (SDGs) and examined corresponding Instagram audience engagement data – number of likes, comments, and users' sentiment as expressed in comments. Users' sentiment classification was conducted using a Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT) algorithm (Loureiro et al. 2022), which represents a cutting-edge class of machine-learning algorithms for sentiment classification (Alaparthi and Mishra 2021).

Summary of Findings

Our research shows that despite widespread low visual SC frequency, there is considerable between-industry variability on Instagram regarding SC volume and sustainability topics prioritization. Additionally, our results uniquely demonstrate that visual SC's impact on social media engagement is industry-dependent and that when reacting to visual SC, social media users lean more heavily towards the 'heart' button (likes) on Instagram instead of expressing their thoughts via commenting – a finding we explain through the lens of modality congruence and perceptual fluency (Fransen, Fennis, and Pruyn 2010; Lanska, Olds, and Westerman 2013; Leigh 1992). Moreover, organizations concentrating their communication efforts on a few

selected SDGs (topic consistency) can more easily create social media engagement – thus emphasizing that topic consistency is critical for visual SC effectiveness.

Key Contributions

From an academic perspective, this research contributes to the emerging literature on GMC by focusing on the underinvestigated domain of visual communication and providing novel findings concerning the influence of industry sectors in generating an interpretative frame guiding consumers' perceptions and online behaviors toward SC. From a practical standpoint, our study supplies brand managers and public relations professionals with original insights concerning the importance of maintaining a consistent message to drive favorable social media engagement.

References are available upon request.

EARTH IS FLAT: SCANDALOUS CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Keywords: content marketing, social media, scandalous content, firm-generated content

Description: This study investigates how scandalous content influences customer engagement intention, purchase intention, and brand trust.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Social media content marketing literature has investigated firm-generated content (FGC) types of informational, emotional, and transactional content (see e.g., De Vries, Gensler, and Leeflang 2012; Meire et al. 2019; Shahbaznezhad, Dolan, and Rashidirad 2021). Another FGC that is common in practice but less studied by social media content marketing scholars is scandalous content—brands' messages that convey brands' own moral or non-moral transgressions. An example of scandalous content is the one from Burger King. Back in March 2021, Burger King disseminated an X (formerly Twitter) post: "Women belong in the kitchen." The content was popular on social media and became headlines on several online news platforms. Although it seems that scandalous content can be a proper tool to make a brand "the talk of the town," it is still unknown how scandalous content can influence brands' marketing goals. To be more exact, literature has not documented it yet whether scandalous content can improve business performance or instead jeopardize it. Knowledge of this topic is important

both for theory and practice. Building on this, this study aims to examine how scandalous content can impact customer engagement, purchase intention, and brand trust.

Method and Data

This was a quantitative study involving two online experiments on Prolific. Study 1 was a one-factor, two-level (*non-scandalous* versus *scandalous content*) between-subjects design. The purpose was to provide initial evidence of the effect of scandalous content on customer engagement (i.e., likes and shares only), purchase intention, and brand trust. After eliminating the participants who failed the attention checks, our final total respondents were 187 (Male = 102, Female = 80, Others = 5; M_{age} = 35.79) and each received a payment of £0.75. Meanwhile, Study 2 was a one-factor, three-level (*non-scandalous* versus *low scandalous* versus *high scandalous content*) between-subjects design. The purpose was fourfold as follows: (1) to test the effect of the different levels of scandalous content; (2) to improve generalizability by using divergent stimuli, product type, and social media; (3) to evaluate the effect of scandalous content in another form of customer engagement (i.e., comments); and (4) to examine the mediation effects of brand ignorance. After excluding those respondents who failed the attention checks, our final total participants were 250 (Male = 123, Female = 119, Others = 8; M_{age} = 35.19), and each of them received a payment of £0.75.

Summary of Findings

This study investigated how scandalous content influences customer engagement, purchase intention, and brand trust. First, we found that the higher the level of scandalous content, the lower purchase intention and brand trust. Second, the effects of scandalous content on customer engagement intention vary, depending on the types of customer engagement. To be precise, scandalous content reduces liking and sharing intention but increases commenting intention (specifically for comments, the higher the level of scandalous content, the higher customer

engagement intention). Third, our findings revealed the mechanism of how scandalous content impacts our outcome variables. With a low level of scandalous content, the content increases perceived brand ignorance, leading to enhanced commenting intention. In addition, with a low level of scandalous content, the content increases perceived brand ignorance and, in turn, lowers purchase intention. Divergently, with a high level of scandalous content, the content can directly and indirectly (i.e., through brand ignorance) improve commenting intention and reduce purchase intention. Regarding brand trust, both low and high levels of scandalous content, they can diminish brand trust directly and indirectly (i.e., through brand ignorance).

Statement of Key Contributions

We offer three contributions to the literature. First, prior social media content marketing scholarship typically examined the three general types of FGC: informational, emotional, and transactional (see e.g., De Vries, Gensler, and Leeflang 2012; Meire et al. 2019; Shahbaznezhad, Dolan, and Rashidirad 2021). Attempts to investigate specific FGC remain scant. Our research enriches social media content marketing literature by specifically inspecting the FGC of scandalous content. We demonstrated that, depending on the levels of scandalous content, scandalous content can directly or indirectly (i.e., via brand ignorance) influence customer engagement intention, purchase intention, and brand trust. Second, this research also contributes to customer engagement literature. Extant customer engagement scholarship suggested that commenting behavior is harder to activate than liking and sharing behavior (see e.g., Alhabash et al. 2015; Wahid et al. 2023) because it requires the most active engagement through cognitive and physical efforts. Our findings showed polar evidence. Through the FGC of scandalous content, we revealed that commenting behavior is easier to activate than liking and sharing. Third, we extend the scandal theory (Adut 2005) by applying

it to the social media content marketing domain. Practically, we suggest brands avoid including

scandalous content in their social media content marketing strategy.

Effect of Cognitive Bias and Gender on Digital Voice Assistant Shopping

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Keywords: Cognitive Bias, Digital Voice Assistant, Gender, Neuroscience, Voice Commerce.

Description: The present study examines the potential of digital voice assistants (DVA) as recommendation agents in terms of gender bias and cognitive bias, especially social proof.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Advances in speech recognition and natural language processing have led to DVAs being perceived as impartial and not suffering from any gender biases (Costa and Ribas, 2019; Claudy et al., 2022). However, early research on computer voices shows that individuals interact differently with gendered computer voices (Nass et al., 1997). Therefore, gendered voices can amplify stereotypes when customers interact with DVAs, ultimately reinforcing gender biases. However, little is known about how gendered DVAs impact customer choice during online shopping.

Research in social psychology on the similarity-attraction hypothesis (SAH) (Byrne, 1971) suggests that people are more attracted to similar others and consider their opinions more favorable. Given that DVAs have virtual human-like personalities, gender similarity between DVAs and users is expected to lead to better outcomes (Kervellec et al., 2016). However, studies have yielded heterogeneous results and further research is needed to understand how the combination of digital voice assistants' and customers' genders could affect customers' attitudes and choices.

Lastly, scholars have recently highlighted the importance of combining traditional and neuro-marketing techniques (Rancati and Maggioni, 2021). This study thus combines a scenario-based survey and neuromarketing techniques to empirically answer the call to inspect the interaction between DVAs and humans.

Method and Data

In our study, we developed a multidisciplinary research protocol including two studies that address the use of DVAs as recommendation agents and the potential gender bias during online shopping. Thereby, we also answer the call for the combination of traditional and neuromarketing techniques to assess the customer decision-making process. For study 1, we used a scenario-based survey approach to analyze whether potential gender biases originate in the voice of a DVA or the gender of the user. We utilized the technology acceptance framework (Davis, 1989) and adapted this to the use of DVAs for online shopping. This framework allowed us to inspect differences across participants' gender and female/male voices of a DVA. For the study 2, as a neuromarketing approach, we utilized a neuroscientific 2 x 2 experimental approach in a laboratory setting that captured a gender-neutral product decision with female/male DVAs. We included the measurement of the BARTT, FEA, and GSR. To investigate the role of the DVA as a social proof during product recommendations, we utilized the technology acceptance framework (Davis, 1989). Then, we used the similarity attraction hypothesis (Byrne, 1971) to examine participants' differential responses to female/male voices as a function of the gender similarity or difference.

Summary of Findings

This study offers novel insights into the adoption of DVA during the pre-purchase stage of the customer decision-making process in online shopping. First, our findings show that DVAs significantly influence customers as recommendation agents in online shopping, regardless of the product. Furthermore, neuro-tools provide valuable insights.

Secondly, our findings suggest that DVAs' gender alone does not significantly impact the final choice. Accordingly, BARTT findings show that the female DVA elicits more implicit associations compared to the male DVA, and is ascribed to some characteristics traditionally attributed to the male voice, like technical and informative. FEA and GSR results are aligned with BARTT.

Third, our research shows that the combination of the gender of DVAs and the participants' gender has a moderating effect on the relationship between the DVA's recommendation and the final choice. Despite the growing literature on gender similarity (Romero et al., 2021), a preference for the voice of the opposite gender has been observed. The BARTT confirms these findings. The female voice is still perceived with more feminine characteristics (warm, caring) by male participants than by female participants. FEA and GSR results are consistent with BARTT showing a difference in attention and arousal when gender cues are different.

Statement of Key Contributions

The rapid proliferation of DVAs in various sectors, especially online shopping, indicates a paradigm shift in customer behavior and interaction. We contribute to the existing literature on DVAs in multiple ways. First, the study supports previous literature on the role of DVAs as recommendation agents and the idea that customers increasingly rely on and trust these devices for product selection. Second, the study breaks new ground by combining the effects of DVAs with behavioral biases such as social proof. As DVAs make product recommendations based on user-stated preferences, people tend to follow their suggestions rather than traditional evaluations, making these voice systems a new form of social proof.

The study's findings also have implications for practitioners, managers, developers, and other stakeholders. Companies should invest in improving user interface design and ensure seamless purchasing efficiency. While e-commerce platforms already use sophisticated algorithms for recommendation systems, integrating DVAs represents a new dimension of personalized shopping. Given the importance of DVAs as social proof, managers and developers must harmonize these systems with traditional behavioral strategies. Recognizing and understanding the increasing reliance on these DVAs is critical not only for technology developers and businesses but also for government agencies and policymakers.

References are available upon request.

EMBRACING DISABILITY VERSUS NEED FOR UNIQUENESS ON THE METAVERSE

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Keywords: Metaverse, physically disabled consumers, need for uniqueness, acceptance of disability, perceived ad value, place attachment, brand love

Description: This study provides a much-needed insight on the acceptance of disability and the need for uniqueness within the context of the Metaverse.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question:

This research intends to develop the underlying scant knowledge pertaining to how people with disabilities perceive their disability in virtual worlds. It also aims to study the behavioral change of disabled consumers within the context of a potential need for uniqueness, acceptance of disability, and advertisement value on the Metaverse. By delving into their need for uniqueness and acceptance of disability, the research addresses the underrepresented subject of disabled consumers' experiences in virtual worlds and sheds light on their interactions with advertising value, brand love, and virtual place attachment. Accordingly, the suggested model of this study is based on the following eight hypotheses:

- H_1: *Relative place attachment towards virtual places positively affects brand love.*

- H_2: *Relative place attachment towards virtual places positively affects perceived ad value.*

- H_3: *Relative place attachment towards virtual places positively affects the need for uniqueness.*

- H_4: *Relative place attachment towards virtual places negatively affects acceptance of disability.*

- H_5: *Perceived ad value on the Metaverse positively affects brand love.*

- H_6: *Perceived ad value on the Metaverse positively affects the need for uniqueness.*

- H_7: *Brand love positively affects the acceptance of disability.*

- H_8: *Acceptance of disability negatively affects the need for uniqueness.*

Method and Data:

The study adopted a quantitative approach to investigate how physically disabled consumers feel and behave on the Metaverse so as to advise companies on their Metaverse-related marketing strategies. The sample size consisted of 540 Metaverse users with a physical disability who have visited a virtual world (such as Sandbox, Roblox, Decentraland, Metahero, Meta Horizon …) at least once in the past 6-10 months. Validated multi-item scales were extracted from the associated literature. The measured items were Likert-based scales with the following endpoints: 1-strongly disagree to 7-strongly agree. Demographic questions were included in the survey for sample profiling. Validity checks were conducted to warrant face and discriminant validity. Discriminant validity was tested using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. SPSS and LISREL were utilized for data analysis.

Summary of Findings:

Based on the model estimation, the results showed that all hypotheses were statistically significant, hence supported. The findings bridge the gap in the current marketing literature that pertains to the understanding of disabled consumers' need for uniqueness and acceptance of their disability in virtual worlds. The study delves into the associated consumer behaviors in the context of advertising value, brand love, and virtual place attachment, offering deep insights into the interconnections among these constructs. The implications are vital for marketers seeking to create inclusive and effective marketing campaigns that resonate with disabled audiences. Moreover, the findings contribute to the broader societal goal of promoting acceptance and empowering disabled individuals within the virtual realm. Brands are hereby recommended to foster a sense of

inclusivity, by developing ad campaigns which aim to celebrate diversity, highlight disabled individuals' strengths, and promote positive representations of disability. Marketers should design empowering and unique experiences within the Metaverse that allow disabled consumers to express their individuality freely. Finding the right balance between promoting inclusivity and celebrating individuality is key in order to allow disabled consumers to feel a sense of belonging, while enjoying a platform that is conducive for personal expression.

Key Contributions:

This study fills a considerable gap in the nascent literature on the usage of the Metaverse by physically disabled consumers. While there has been a growing interest in the field of Metaverse-related research, its impact on vulnerable segments of the population – particularly those with special needs – is yet to be fully examined. Companies and brands planning to use this upcoming lucrative environment are in dire need to understand the potential impact of their marketing strategies in the Metaverse on this consumer segment in particular. Accordingly, this research develops the underlying scant theoretical knowledge pertaining to marketing strategies that target physically disabled consumers on the Metaverse and their effects on these consumers' sense of inclusivity. The proposed model integrates brand love, perceived ad value, virtual place attachment alongside disabled consumers' need for uniqueness and acceptance of their disability. The findings highlight that attachment to virtual places, hereby the Metaverse, negatively affects the acceptance of one's disability, while positively influencing their need for uniqueness. Furthermore, the study shows that the higher the users' acceptance of their disability, the lower their need for uniqueness. The study hence underscores the complexity of the interplay between virtual place attachment,

disability acceptance, and the need for uniqueness among physically disabled users in the Metaverse.

References are available upon request.

FOLLOWER-INFLUENCER CATEGORY EXPANSION GRID: CONCEPTUALIZATION AND RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

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Keywords: Influencer, social media, personal brand, influencer marketing

Description: This study deviates from the conventional perspective of viewing social media influencers (SMIs) as conduits for disseminating sponsored content, embarking on a comprehensive exploration of SMIs as autonomous brands and presenting a follower-influencer category expansion grid. Based on an exhaustive literature review and the preliminary findings of case study analysis, we outline four distinct strategies, culminating in the formulation of an influencer growth strategy.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Amidst the rapid proliferation of IM, the exigency emerges for an in-depth exploration into managing SMIs functioning as personal brands, nurturing, and expanding their brand identities.

Therefore, this study seeks to address the following fundamental inquiry: What strategies do SMIs employ to expand their reach?

The prevailing Influencer Marketing (IM) literature predominantly fixates on influencers' roles as endorsers, wherein brands harness their personal assets to get the word out of them (Hughes et al., 2019; Park et al., 2021; Torres et al., 2019). While scant studies have ventured into comprehending the implications of SMIs operating as personal brands (e.g., Erz and Heeris Christensen 2018; Lo and Peng 2022; De Vries 2019), there remains a notable paucity in the literature concerning the perspective of influencers functioning as personal brands, involved in managing collaborations with brands, developing content and upholding fan engagement.

This research endeavors to bridge this scholarly gap by articulating an influencer growth strategy that offers a roadmap for influencers, aiding them in evaluating opportunities and associated risks when embarking on avenues of expansion. We construct a robust, comprehensive conceptualization that elucidates diverse growth strategies for influencers in the context of their existing and new categories of expertise and follower networks.

Method And Data

The existing literature, although limited, outlines how SMIs establish themselves and employ strategies for efficacy improvement. However, the multitude of expansion strategies available for SMIs covers diverse domains, lacking an encompassing navigational framework. To this end, we employ a case study methodology to devise a holistic framework guiding SMIs growth based on followers and expertise category.

The selection of cases was based on their anticipated substantial social and economic influence, as well as their potential to offer practical and theoretical insights into marketing-related communications and behaviors (Yin, 2018).

We use the YouTube platform to conduct our study, given its popular use by researchers (Delbaere et al., 2021; Ki & Kim, 2019; Lo & Peng, 2022; Rahman, 2006). High-reach SMIs on YouTube creating short & long form video content were selected as cases. Marketing communications and behaviors are not anticipated to be evenly spread across the high-reach SMIs on YouTube in terms of skill and creativity. Consequently, purposeful sampling was employed, guided by core selection criteria focused on social and economic impact. To this end, in early 2023, we examined the Forbes India "List of Top 100 Digital Stars 2022," which lists influencers with exceptional commercial success across nine categories (Forbes India-INCA, 2022).

Summary of Findings

The conceptualization is based on a preliminary analysis of the cases, based on which we devise a follower-influencer category expansion grid. It lays out the influencer growth strategy and shall come in handy for influencers to plan and assess growth opportunities. It includes four archetypes:

- A synergistic blend: existing followers; existing influencer category

- An affinity blend: new followers; existing influencer category

- A harmonious blend: existing followers; new influencer category

- A trailblazing blend: new followers; new influencer category

Statement of Key Contributions

This study contributes significantly to our understanding of IM by conceptualizing an influencer growth strategy based on the followers and expertise category of influencers. The existing

literature addresses how SMIs establish themselves and use tactics to increase their effectiveness. However, the extensive range of strategies available to SMIs to expand their reach lacks a comprehensive navigation approach. The follower-influencer category expansion grid provides a holistic framework that SMIs can use to guide their expansion as personal brands.

To date, the literature on IM heavily relies on influencers' role as endorsers with few exceptions; however, this study potentially questions this approach and aims to draw a new perspective to the IM phenomenon by amalgamating it with the personal branding literature through viewing SMIs as personal brands engaged in marketing activities.

The study has implications for agencies involved in managing SMIs (Siddiqui & Rahman, 2007) and answers YouTube managers' challenge of building an influencer's career (Business Insider India, 2020) by serving as a roadmap of opportunities (Hassan et al., 2022; Rahman & Bhattacharyya, 2003) available for diversifying influencer's personal brand and securing future collaborations for the influencer. Furthermore, the influencer growth strategy serves as a guiding tool for SMIs vested in managing their personal brands. It shall assist them in discerning brand collaborations that harmonize with their distinctive personal brand attributes in different growth stages and thereby facilitate the augmentation of their influence through such strategic collaborations.

(References are available on request).

FOUR TYPES OF INFORMATION INTERPLAY IN PRODUCT REVIEWS AND THEIR SALES EFFECTS

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Keywords: user-generated content, product review classification, contradictory product review information, concordant product review information, product review sales effects.

Description: With a newly developed typology, the authors demonstrate empirically how on-line product reviews that are confirmatory, conflicting, complementary, or competing affect product sales.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

For user generated online content, both contradictory and concordant information is often available for the same products (goods or services). This information is not only found across different reviews, but also within the same review. We inquire: How do consumers reconcile contradictory and concordant product review information, is there a difference across and within reviews, and what are the effects on product sales?

Our study focuses on the product attribute level of online reviews. We conceptualize two types of contradictory information (confliction and competition) and two types of concordant

information (confirmation and complementation) and empirically examine how the four types affect product sales.

Method and Data

We relied on a dataset consisting of Amazon reviews and sales ranks for tablet computers. The data tracks 54 tablet computers over a period of 24 weeks. We implemented a multi-step analysis procedure: In the first step, each tablet review was text-mined with BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers), a pre-trained language model. Next, all attribute and sentiment pairs identified were rated for similarity using Word2Vec. The sentiment pairs were then classified into the four information interplay types noted above (confliction, competition, confirmation, and complementation). Finally, we counted the instances of the four information interplays and estimated their effects on sales. Observational data modelling issues, such as endogeneity bias and excessive multicollinearity, were controlled for.

Summary of Findings

Our results show that positive confirmation and complementation improve sales, while negative confirmation and complementation decrease sales. Further, complementary interplays have a greater impact on sales than confirmatory interplays. We also observed that positive and negative confliction decrease sales, while positive and negative competition improve sales.

Key Contributions

We introduce a typology that categorizes information interplays into confirmation, confliction, complementation, and competition. With this categorization, we show that it is

possible to predict product review effects on sales. Our algorithm for operationalizing the

typology is scalable and can be applied to other contexts, beyond product reviews. We provide

concrete guidance to practitioners for how to respond to customer product reviews.

References available upon request.

FRAMING INFLUENCER MARKETING IN THE FUNNEL: AN ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL PERSPECTIVE AND A RESEARCH AGENDA

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Keywords: influencer marketing, creator economy, marketing funnel, elaboration likelihood model

Description: This study reviews the extant literature to present a conceptual framework of influencer marketing communication that highlights the role of the funnel stage.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Influencer marketing campaigns are nowadays pursuing a variety of objectives, ranging from enhancing brand awareness to boosting short-term sales, effectively covering the entire marketing funnel. However, limited research considers the funnel stage when investigating the dynamics of influencer marketing effectiveness, and marketers lack an adequate understanding of how to manage these campaigns, in terms of influencer selection and content briefings, to achieve different business outcomes. In light of this, this study aims to examine the current state of knowledge concerning the factors driving influencer marketing effectiveness at different stages of the funnel.

Summary of Findings

By reviewing the extant literature, this study advances a conceptual framework that, grounded on the Elaboration Likelihood Model, provides an overview of the current knowledge on influencer marketing effectiveness, underscoring the role of the funnel stage. The review reveals six key factors that characterize influencer marketing communication, which pertain to both the social media influencer (SMI) attributes and their posts. The identified factors are positioned along the funnel according to the main business outcome they influence. Additionally, this study identifies literature gaps and suggests fruitful future research avenues.

Statement of Key Contributions

This work contributes to the literature on influencer marketing by systematizing the various, often contrasting, findings of previous research within a conceptual framework that underscores the effects of the funnel stage. Moreover, it provides a valuable contribution by identifying directions for future research to address the revealed literature gaps.

From a managerial perspective, this study provides insights on how to manage influencer marketing campaigns to reach various business outcomes. In addition, by emphasizing the role of the funnel stage in influencer marketing communication, this work reminds companies to consistently consider the campaign goals when making any related decision.

HOW TO SELL VIA FASHION HAULS ON INSTAGRAM: SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ACTING AS VIRTUAL SELLERS FOR BRANDS

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Keywords: social media influencer, fashion hauls, virtual seller, influencer role perception, purchase intention

Description: This study examines which design factors of fashion hauls positively influence consumers' purchase intentions and thus provides design guidelines for brands and SMIs.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

On Instagram, SMIs promote products in various ways (Geyser 2022). One special form of influencer advertising, *fashion hauls*, entail short videos posted in Instagram's story function, which disappear automatically from SMIs' profiles after 24 hours. They often contain hyperlinks to the e-commerce product pages of advertised brands, which represent a selling feature that is not available in regular Instagram posts (Alphr 2022). The advertising function of fashion hauls thus differs fundamentally from other brand-related user-generated content (UGC) on Instagram. Whereas products usually are integrated smoothly into UGC (Wies, Bleier, and Edeling 2022), products in fashion hauls are the "stars" of the stories. Rather than highlighting and advertising individual clothing items, SMIs inspire consumers by deliberately styling several items into entire outfits. In this way, they function much like salespeople in traditional retail channels—that is, they

become "virtual salespeople." Accordingly, unlike previous research that focuses mainly on influencer endorsement (e.g., Schouten, Janssen, and Verspaget 2020; Wies, Bleier, and Edeling 2021), we investigate SMIs acting as virtual sellers, in an effort to address two research questions:

1. Do consumers perceive fashion-hauling SMIs as virtual salespeople?

2. How should fashion hauls be designed most effectively to influence consumer purchase intentions?

Method and Data

To answer these questions, we adopt a mixed-methods approach. First, we analyze how consumers perceive fashion hauls through 31 qualitative, semi-structured guided interviews with female Instagram users, which reveal both how consumers perceive the role of SMIs in fashion hauls (RQ1) and which design factors influence consumers' purchase intentions (basis for RQ2). Second, we conduct an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to identify fashion-haul design factors; the results we obtain form the basis for a follow-up quantitative study. Third, we analyze the design factors and moderator using a structural equation model (SEM) (RQ2).

For RQ2 we conducted an online survey to determine which qualitatively identified design factors are empirically significant. We used selection criteria similar to those we used in the interviews, that is, female Instagram users from Germany, 16 to 35 years of age, who use Instagram at least once a week and have medium to high fashion affinity. We based the survey on memory performance, asking each participant to name a fashion haul she could remember well, along with its associated SMI and advertised brand. We collected a sample of 427 data sets.

Summary of Findings

To investigate how participants perceived the role of SMIs in fashion hauls, we asked them to compare SMIs in fashion hauls to traditional retail salespeople. Our finding supports the hypothetical transfer of the salesperson concept to SMIs as virtual salespeople. In the context of fashion hauls, it seems that the sales activities of SMIs are what encourage consumers to buy. Our results also identify five elements, within the overall design factor of SMIs as fashion sellers, that determine the sales performance of SMIs: liking the brand, product need, liking the product as worn by SMIs (product presentation when worn), outfit inspiration provided by SMIs, and product integration into the everyday lives of SMIs. Neither consumers' identification with SMIs nor discount codes have a significant influence on purchase intentions. In this regard, fashion hauls seem to differ from other brand-related UGC on Instagram. Notably, monetary and convenience-based incentives have a negative effect on purchase intentions. We did not find any significant moderator effect of SMI authenticity, probably because consumers decide in advance which SMIs to follow and which SMI content to consume, according to SMI authenticity—making that factor less relevant to the effect of fashion hauls.

Key Contributions

As the elements associated with SMI roles are highly relevant to the effect of fashion hauls, our study provides two essential contributions, showing that (1) consumers' perceptions of the roles of SMIs decisively determine the effect of their respective content, and (2) SMIs as virtual salespeople represent a new, previously undescribed role that complements previous research on the classification of SMIs. Future studies should take these findings into account and consider renewed evidence of the role-specific effect of SMI content.

Our study also provides relevant contribution for practitioners. Brands can use fashion hauls to expand their sales pitches into digital spaces, including social media platforms such as Instagram, where SMIs act as sellers in virtual sales rooms and support consumers' purchasing processes. According to our results, fashion-hauling SMIs can and should consciously assume the role of sellers to offer consumers the greatest possible added value. With regard to the design of fashion hauls, both brands and SMIs can orient themselves to the design factors that we identify. Finally, our study provides a first indication that brands should avoid using discount codes for fashion hauls, as they may adversely affect consumer's perception of product quality (Monroe and Krishnan 1985).

References are available upon request.

I feel it's expensive! After all, it comes from a horse's mouth

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Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Perceived Status, Competence, Price Perception

Description: This paper aims to investigate the influence of follower count on price perception.

Extended Abstract

Influencer marketing is one of the significant elements of marketing strategies devised by marketers these days. Therefore, it is important to understand how influencers will impact their brand apart from creating engagement and increasing purchase likelihood. Using three experiments, this study examines how influencer's indegree, i.e., follower count, will impact the price perception of the product they promote. It also identifies the underlying mechanism and boundary condition for the hypothesized effect.

Research Question:

In this research, we aim to understand how influencers' follower count can cue price perception. Shoppers are known to look for extrinsic cues while shopping, as it is challenging to recall prices. Therefore, we posit that the influencer's indegree, i.e., whether the influencer is perceived as mega or micro, might shape the perception of product expensiveness. We propose that this effect is rooted in the perceived competence and status of an influencer.

Method and Data:

We conducted three online experiments to investigate the proposed hypotheses. We examined the main effect of influencer indegree (mega vs. micro) on price perception of the promoted product. Next, we replicated the main effect in different context and provided evidence for the

underlying mechanism, that is, the perceived competence and status. Lastly, we elucidate the boundary condition for the hypothesized effect.

Findings and Key Contribution:

Overall, through three experimental studies, we provide robust evidence that influencer indegree influences price perception. This research adds to the influencer marketing literature by suggesting that influencers' follower count can cue price perception. It demonstrates that followers perceive that mega influencers have high competence and status, which in turn impacts the price perception of the product promoted by them. We provide evidence that thinking style can moderate the hypothesized effect.

INTERSECTIONAL COMPLEMENTARITY AND CONSUMER

ENGAGEMENT CONCENTRATION

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Keywords: Creator Economy, Sectional Production, Consumer Engagement, Bayesian Models

Descriptions: We investigate the impact of digital narrative, content connection between sections specifically, on the consumer engagement concentration.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Despite the rapid growth of the creator economy, heavy concentration of consumer engagement poses a challenge to content creators and platforms. However, in the presence of great product quality uncertainty with average individuals as producers and serialized production fashion, the formation of concentration and its consequences are under-studied. To fill this gap, we propose a theoretical framework to show how intersectional complementarity, consumers' expected content connection between sections, leads to consumer engagement concentration. As signals for intersectional complementarity, the

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serialized freemium model and update progress have positive impacts on concentration on pre/during-consumption engagement. The presence of blockbuster products consequently crowds out the consumers' post-consumption engagement with other products. This intersectional complementarity effect is more pronounced for more seasoned producers and later-stage products. Using data from a leading online fiction platform in the U.S., we test our framework with a hierarchical Bayesian approach and find support. To identify intersectional complementarity, we construct a measure from book chapter content using a Bayesian-learning textual analysis. This paper offers important managerial implications for user-generated-content platforms and content creators.

Method and Data

We exploit a simultaneous equations model including two-stage readers engagement. The model is estimated using data from a leading U.S. online fiction platform from May 2018 to May 2022, in a hierarchical Bayes framework. Following inequality/concentration decomposition in economic literature, we adopt the Recentered Influence Function (RIF) approach (Firpo et al., 2009) to decompose the overall concentration into individual relative contribution to concentration. The regression is thus implemented in author-book-month level to avoid the downside of aggregate models. Another advantage of the RIF approach is that slope coefficients can directly be interpreted as effects of a marginal change in the distribution of the variable of interest (i.e., serialized freemium, update progress) on the overall degree of concentration. We also directly identify intersectional complementarity, i.e., expected content connection between sections, from book chapter content with a

Bayesian-learning textual analysis.

Summary of Findings

We find that serialized freemium model and update progress, signaling intersectional complementarity, aggravate books' homepage comments concentration. Update progress has a stronger impact than a serialized freemium model. The concentration of homepage comments crowds out chapter-specific comments for most books. These impacts are stronger for authors with longer tenure and later-stage books.

Key Contributions

Our paper makes theoretical contributions to digital marketing literature as well as substantive contributions. Theoretically, first, we propose complementarity between sections of the same product. Intersectional complementarity, differing from conventional complementarity between complete products/services (Gil & Hartmann, 2009; Li, 2019; Zhang et al., 2022), plays an important role in consumer engagement concentration. The impact of digital narrative (Van Laer et al., 2019) on market concentration is new and important. Second, we propose a consumers' two-stage engagement process in the presence of great product quality uncertainty. The layered consumer engagement further addresses the distinctions between attention-based engagement and content-based engagement (Berger et al., 2023). Last, our paper is among the first to analyze consumer engagement concentration in the creator economy, with the focus on serialized digital products. The proposed framework and estimation method can be extended to analyze power law

distributions (Crawford et al., 2015), digital dominance (Barwise et al., 2018) and other emerging cyber income inequality issues (Liao et al, 2023).

Our substantive findings offer managerial implications for content creators and platform managers. Creators should grab consumers' pre/during-consumption engagement (i.e., attention and other short-term engagement metrics) via enhancing intersectional complementarity. To do so, they need well-designed pricing and product strategy-serialized freemium model and expedite update progress. Less-experienced creators can develop skills to manage intersectional complementarity and loyal consumers in some small but good platforms. Platform managers should utilize a portfolio-managing strategy to incentivize creators and manage the risk of heavy concentration. On the one hand, they can use platform front-page recommendation and social media to promote star products, which brings more revenue from paid content and the intellectual property (IP) value. On the other hand, they can help good but non-star products obtain the consumers' attention and feedback for product content.

References, tables, and figures are available on request.

MENTAL LEDGERS AND DIGITAL GOLD: UNRAVELING THE MYSTIQUE OF CRYPTOCURRENCY DONATIONS

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Keywords: Cryptocurrency, Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), Mental Accounting, Charitable Donations, Blockchain Technology

Description: This paper investigates how the Mental Accounting conceptual framework applies to cryptocurrency charitable donations made in exchange for digital or physical rewards, uncovering higher perceived value retention of NFTs vs. physical goods rewards that leads to higher donation amounts.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The study examines how individuals categorize and perceive the value of cryptocurrencies and NFTs in the context of charitable contributions made in exchange for digital or physical thank-you gifts. It explores whether these different asset types are managed within the same mental ledger and how this process influences the willingness to make charitable donations. Specifically, we predict that since

NFTs and cryptocurrency live on the blockchain and, by extension, in the same digital wallet, cryptocurrency holders will value NFT thank-you gifts more than physical items when donating in cryptocurrency. Using concepts derived from Mental Accounting theory, we hypothesized that the digital congruence between cryptocurrency and NFT would balance the "crypto-mental ledger" when debiting a donation in cryptocurrencies and crediting the same mental wallet with an NFT. This leads to a critical question: Does getting an NFT token as a cryptocurrency donation reward make the benefactor more eager to contribute than a physical item? We are curious if charities can leverage the cryptocurrency-NFT connection to take new forms of donations and encourage higher volumes of charitable contributions.

Method and Data

To test our hypotheses, we analyzed individuals' predisposition to make a cryptocurrency contribution to a charity of their choice in exchange for a t-shirt offered by that charity, either in the form of NFTs or physical items.

A Prolific online panel of 199 respondents (50.8% female, 67.7% being between 25 and 44 years old, with at least some cryptocurrency experience) participated in a 2 (Nature of the charity item: physical vs. virtual) x 2 (charity Transaction type: donate vs. buy) between-subjects experiment conducted via an online survey. Participants were asked if they would contribute cryptocurrency in exchange for a customizable t-shirt offered by their preferred charity. The Nature of the charity item was manipulated by offering a customizable physical t-shirt delivered to their home or a configurable virtual wearable NFT they can claim online. Transaction type was manipulated by presenting their contribution opportunity as a donation in exchange for a gift or an item they can buy, with all the proceeds going to charity. Participants were then asked about the Amount they were willing to donate or pay based on the condition in which they were randomly assigned, and about the perceived retention value of the charity item they "received."

Summary of Findings

The analysis confirmed that participants perceive NFTs as having significantly higher value retention than physical goods. This supports the hypothesis that NFTs may balance the mental cryptocurrency account and enhance the likelihood of cryptocurrency donations. Furthermore, the perceived retention value of NFTs fully mediated the relationship between the nature of the item and donation amount, indicating that framing NFTs as value-holding assets congruent with cryptocurrencies increases donation propensity. Finally, the transaction type fully moderates the previous relationship. Specifically, in the donation condition, different perceived retention values of the charity item resulted in similar amounts contributed to the charity. In contrast, in the buy condition, increased perceived retention value resulted in higher amounts donated to the charity.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research advances mental accounting theory and knowledge of donor psychology through several key contributions:

• Shows how cryptocurrencies and NFTs may reshape the modern philanthropy world by exploring how blockchain technologies influence consumers' perception of value.

• Pioneers applying mental accounting frameworks to understand how donors categorize, value, and exchange emerging blockchain-based digital assets for charitable giving, significantly expanding mental accounting theoretical foundations.

• Clarifies how perceptions of cryptocurrencies and NFTs belonging to the same mental ledger may stimulate cryptocurrency donors to engage in larger donations if NFTs are offered as thank-you gifts.

• Demonstrates the efficacy of capturing higher charitable cryptocurrency contributions when using NFTs instead of physical rewards due to NFT's higher potential of retaining future value.

• Recommends activating the perceived value of digital charitable items by identifying the purchase framing as the preferred method of soliciting cryptocurrency contributions.

• Suggests leveraging the high perceived value and low production cost of NFTs to maximize the ROI of fundraising campaigns.

• Dramatically advances knowledge of cryptocurrencies, NFTs, and mental accounting in the charitable domain.

In summary, this work expands theoretical boundaries, unveils new mental accounting phenomena, and pioneers new paradigms for digital asset valuation in charitable contexts.

Note: References are available upon request

NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL BUZZ: UNVEILING RESEARCH FRONTS AND EXPLORING FUTURE RESEARCH AVENUES IN VIRAL MARKETING RESEARCH

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Keywords: viral marketing, bibliometric analysis, intellectual structure, keyword co-occurrences, thematic analysis

Description: The current study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of viral marketing to identify developing research fronts and understand the intellectual structure of the growing field.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions -

In today's dynamic and interconnected digital landscape, there is a need to leverage creative marketing strategies that reach out to audiences exponentially. Despite the growing research, limited focus has been shed on the emerging viral marketing field. The current study upholds two primary research questions. Firstly, to understand: What is the intellectual structure of the field of viral

marketing? Secondly, what are the developing research fronts in the field of viral marketing? These research questions will illuminate the evolving landscape of viral marketing. Consequently, the current study will mark the first attempt to apply bibliometric methods and comprehend the intellectual structure of the field.

Method and Data -

The bibliometric method is used in the current study to explore the field of viral marketing. VOSviewer was employed to process bibliographic records. Science mapping was conducted to detect clusters of interconnected research topics, and emerging trends. Using the technique, authors utilized keyword co-occurrence analysis suitable to understand the intellectual structure of viral marketing.

The bibliometric analysis was conducted using the SCOPUS database. The keyword used for the search in all databases was "viral marketing" as we aimed to review the literature on this construct specifically, and hence similar keywords were excluded to avoid any overlap with allied constructs. A total of 324 documents were received from the initial search in the identification stage. This number was then reduced to 250 documents by reading through the titles and the abstracts of the remaining studies. Further, 160 studies were found when the full text was read by the authors according to the eligibility criteria. Finally, the studies that were included in our review consisted of 137 studies all belonging to published journal articles.

Summary of Findings -

The findings revealed eight emerging research fronts in the field of viral marketing through keyword co-occurrences, offering insights into the formation of distinct clusters. The emerging research fronts were as follows: "viral advertising", "mobile viral marketing", "marketing", "viral

marketing", "electronic word of mouth", "buzz marketing", "Facebook", and "word of mouth". Future research questions were posed according to the current research fronts.

When examining the science mapping, several other keywords were emerged from the prominent clusters. Cluster 1 focused on "viral advertising", with additional keywords in the cluster including "social networks", "internet", "advertising", "sem", and "marketing strategy". In Cluster 2, the emphasis shifted to "mobile viral marketing", accompanied by keywords "technology acceptance model," "consumer behaviour," "market mavenism," and "marketing communications". Moving onto Cluster 3, the focus turned to "marketing", incorporating keywords such as "marketing", "social networking (online)", "commerce", and "social network sites". Cluster 4 centred around "viral marketing", featuring keywords such as "social media", "user-generated content", and "co-creation". Similarly, Cluster 5 highlighted "electronic word of mouth", with additional keywords like "email" and "communication". In Cluster 6, the emphasis was on "buzz marketing", with other keyword in the cluster including "purchase intention". Cluster 7 centred on "Facebook", with additional keyword "social media marketing". Lastly, Cluster 8 also focused on "word of mouth", incorporating another keyword "social influence".

Statement of Key Contributions -

The current study serves as a foundation for researchers contributing to the knowledge on viral marketing through the following ways: Firstly, this is the first attempt to conduct a bibliometric analysis to understand and comprehend the intellectual structure of viral marketing. Secondly, the study identifies the developing research fronts, thus filling a crucial gap in the existing literature. Thirdly, its distinctiveness becomes evident in initiating the sharing of future research directions. Lastly, the current study's unique contribution lies in its scope and focus, fostering a comprehensive viewpoint that enhances understanding of the field.

The study also presents substantial contributions for practicing professionals through the following ways: Firstly, it identifies viral marketing as an emerging creative domain that professionals, organisations, government agencies, and policymakers can leverage to exponentially reach their audiences. Secondly, it

identifies emerging research themes such as "Social media," which act as a catalyst, offering a blueprint to harness social media platforms for audience engagement. Thirdly, it underscores the potential of word of mouth and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) to amplify awareness. Lastly, leveraging strategies like buzz and mobile viral marketing helps stay ahead of competitors. The study's impact extends beyond academia to directly influence the digital world.

SHOULD MANUFACTURERS PUBLISH ONLINE REVIEWS IN THEIR OWN ONLINE SHOPS?

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Keywords: online reviews, manufacturer online shops, perceived manipulation, experimental research

One sentence description: Publishing online reviews in manufacturer online shops can have positive as well as negative effects for manufacturers.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Online reviews can aid retailers, by reducing customers' uncertainty, enhancing conversion rates, and increasing sales. But do such advantages extend to manufacturer online shops? Based on attribution theory, the reciprocity principle and six experimental studies, the current study establishes the distinct effectiveness of reviews posted in manufacturer versus retailer online shops and identifies two contrasting effects of online reviews published in manufacturer online shops. First, online reviews tend to be perceived as manipulated, reflecting customers' sense that manufacturers have a greater commercial interest in endorsing their own products, which leads to diminished purchase intentions. Second, online reviews can increase customers' gratitude toward the manufacturer online shop, which enhances their purchase intentions. This research also offers two remedies to attenuate the harmful effects of reviews posted in manufacturer online shops: independent sources and multidimensional presentations. Reviews with these traits can increase purchases by up to 15%. These results can help manufacturers determine whether and how to publish online reviews in their shops.

Method and Data

We test our hypotheses in three parts using six experimental studies. In Part A (Study 1) we use a 2 (no online reviews vs. online reviews) $\times$ 2 (retailer vs. manufacturer) between-subjects factorial design. Using the PROCESS procedure, we investigate different psychological reactions to online reviews available on the two platform types, which mediate the effect of online review publication on purchase intentions. In Part B, we take a closer look at the differential effects of prominent online review design characteristics in manufacturer online shops (average rating,

volume, and variance). We conduct three studies (Studies 2–4) using a unifactorial between-subjects design and manipulate the average online review rating, volume and variance on three levels each (very positive rating/high number/low variance vs. moderate rating/low number/high variance vs. no online reviews). Then in Part C, we conduct two scenario experiments, each with a 2×2 between-subjects design, in which we manipulate online review source (internal online reviews vs. online reviews from an independent source) or the presentation of online reviews (single-dimensional vs. multidimensional), together with the online shop type (retailer vs. manufacturer) to explore remedy strategies that manufactures can use to alleviate the harmful effects of online review publications.

Summary of Findings

We theoretically derive and experimentally confirm two countervailing psychological mechanisms that explain the effects of online review publication in manufacturer online shops on customers' purchase intentions: perceived manipulative intent and felt gratitude. Customers tend to assume that online reviews in a manufacturer's online shop have been manipulated, because manufacturers have strong incentives to sell and also have manifold opportunities to delete negative or add positive reviews. But online reviews in manufacturer online shops also can elicit feelings of gratitude for providing the review information. We also identify several online review design characteristics that can facilitate or impede the effectiveness of online review publication in manufacturer online shops. The harmful effect of online review publication only exists for very positive average ratings and is independent of online review volume and variance. Gratitude arises, independent of the review characteristics. However, customers' feelings of gratitude depend on online review volume. They feel especially grateful toward the manufacturer if they

encounter many online reviews. We offer two remedy strategies to alleviate the harmful effects of online review publication in manufacturer online shops: independent sources and multidimensional presentations.

Key Contributions

Our research makes three important contributions. First, we establish the differential effectiveness of online reviews in manufacturer versus retailer online shops. Online review publication in a manufacturer's online shop can trigger both of the theorized psychological reactions in customers: reduce their purchase intentions by increasing customers' perceptions of the manufacturer's manipulative intent but also increase their purchase intentions by evoking customers' gratitude and reciprocity for valuable online reviews. Those two effects do not arise in response to online reviews published in retailer online shops. Second, we take a more fine-grained perspective to examine the influence of different online review design characteristics (rating, volume, and variance). The beneficial effect of online review publication through gratitude is always present but particularly strong when manufacturers provide many online reviews. The harmful effect through manipulative intent only emerges for very positive average ratings, independent of volume or variance. Third, we identify two remedy strategies that promise to attenuate the harmful effects of perceived manipulation by online reviews in manufacturer online shops. That is, manufacturers should publish online reviews from independent sources, as well as adopt a multidimensional presentation style. These remedies can increase purchase intentions by 9–15%.

PAPER METADATA

Title: Social Video Advertising Emotion and Duration: An Empirical Analysis of Marketing Managers' Social Media Video Advertising Decisions

Authors: Bryson Hilton, University of Texas at San Antonio. Ashwin Malshe, University of Texas at San Antonio. Richard Gretz, University of Texas at San Antonio

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Keywords: Video Advertising, Emotion, Duration, Return on Ad Spend, Marketing Managers

Description: This poster presentation examines the effect of video advertising emotions and duration on return on advertising spend.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – 200 Words:

Whether video advertising variables related to emotion and duration have an effect on profitable return on ad spend?

Method And Data – 200 Words:

The dataset comprises a sample of 10,190 unique social media video advertisements across a wide variety of industries and brands over several years. We process the transcript of each video advertisement to encode the dominant emotion: anger, disgust, fear, sadness, neutral, joy, or surprise, and the duration. Finally, we perform regression estimations to examine the relationship of emotion and advertisement duration on the number of advertising views, which is a proxy for profitable return on ad spend.

Summary of Findings – 200 words:

While controlling for brand and days since the initial release of the advertisement, the study suggests that anger, disgust, fear, and surprise emotions have a positive effect on advertisement views, and that joy, neutral, and sadness have a null effect on advertisement views. Whereas duration alone has a positive effect on advertisement views, we found mixed results concerning the interaction effect of duration and high-arousal emotions. While longer duration advertisements with the high-arousal emotions of anger and joy have a positive effect on advertisement views, longer duration advertisements with the high-arousal emotions of disgust and surprise have a negative effect on advertisement views. Finally, the interaction effects of duration and the high-arousal emotion of fear and the low-arousal emotions of neutral, and sadness have a null effect.

Statement of Key Contributions – 200 words:

Studies that examine video advertising emotion and duration, and their effects on profitable return on ad spend are largely absent from the literature. Three reasons may account for this – (1) studies typically forefront the advertising viewer or consumer as the main actor rather than the marketing manager, (2) advertising spend profitability metrics are not publicly available and firms are less likely to share that information, and (3) findings often emphasize dependent variables that have a less clear effect on profitable advertising spend. We address this gap by analyzing marketing managers' social media video advertising decisions related to advertisement emotion and duration and their effects on social media video advertisement views. Because social media video advertising conversion tracking enables marketing managers to assess profitable return on ad spend, marketing managers turn off social media video advertisements that are not profitable. Thus, more profitable social media video advertisements should have more views on average. By drawing upon a unique dataset of social media video advertisements across a wide variety of industries and consumer brands over five years, we can better approximate the effects of advertisement emotions and duration on advertising spend profitability.

References are available upon request

TALKING IN THE LIVE-STREAMING: CONCEPYUALIZING LIVE-STREAMING COMMENTS AND ITS IMPACTS ON CONSUMER CONTINUANCE ENGAGEMENT BEHAVIORS

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Keywords: Live streaming comments; Conceptualization; Consumer Continuance Engagement Behavior; Text Analysis

Description: This research established a conceptualization of live streaming comments (LSCs) and developed a framework regarding how to use LSCs to predict consumer continuance engagement behaviors.

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EXTEND ABSTRACT

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Research Question

The past few years have witnessed the trend of e-commerce platforms shifting from image-centric to video-oriented sales. More recently, a new type of technology-driven business model – live streaming e-commerce – has emerged. Live streaming comments (LSCs hereinafter) posts on live streaming platforms have become an important form of user-generated data, but there is still a lack of comprehensive understanding of the conceptualization of the LSCs and its impacts

on consumer continuance engagement (CCE hereinafter) behaviors.

Focusing on the live-streaming scenario, the goal of this article is to provide a comprehensive conceptualization of LSCs and investigate its impacts on the CCE. Specifically, we explore how consumers' "Observation Day 1" (OD1) LSCs affects his/her CCE behaviors (i.e., continuance commenting behavior [CCB] and repeated referral behavior [RRB]). LSCs on OD1 refers to a *dayslong* UGC from a particular consumer's comments that the target firm observes for the first time. We offer the following research question:

RQ1: What is the nature of the LSCs? How does it different from traditional user-generated data like product reviews and social media reviews?

RQ2: When and why do consumers participate in the LSCs on a live streaming e-commerce site?

RQ3: How does LSCs influence the CCE behaviors with streamers?

Method And Data

To answer the above research questions, we collected consumer live comment data from 45 brands on a leading live-streaming e-commerce platform in China for one month. After sorting, a total of 6,805,978 comments were obtained. Next, based on the user ID of each comment, we extracted the live comments of each customer through all 45 live broadcast rooms during the data observation period (i.e., 30 days). Overall, a total of 1,976,402 consumers and their footprint data for all 45 brands' live broadcast rooms was extracted. We first conduct descriptive analyses of LSCs temporal distribution and content analyses of LSCs text, and then empirically test our hypotheses through survival analysis.

Summary of Findings

We found that (1) consumers mainly participate in LSCs on OD1, and (2) consumers participate in LSCs mainly because of their relationship-oriented intention. Based on these empiricisms, we further analyzed three LSCs dimensions—content (i.e., relationship-oriented or transaction-oriented content), sentiment (i.e., the valence of the live comments: positive, negative, or neutral), and quantitative metrics (i.e., volume of live comments and length of live comments) posted by consumers on OD1 to investigate LSCs impacts on CCE behaviors. Findings revealed that, when the average valence of OD1 emotion was positive, the higher the proportion of the relationship-oriented content (PRC) on OD1 led to a higher probability of: (1) a longer duration of CCB and a higher volume of RRB; (2) a short frequency of CCB and RRB. When the average valence of OD1 emotion was negative, the higher the PRC on OD1 resulted in a lower probability of (1) a longer duration of CCB and a higher volume of RRB; (2) a short frequency of CCB and RRB.

Moreover, the interaction between PRC and live comment volume on OD1 had a positive effect on the probability of (1) longer CCB duration and shorter CCB frequency; and (2) higher RRB volume and shorter RRB frequency. The interaction between PRC and average word count of each comment on OD1, furthermore, had a similar positive effect.

Statement of Key Contributions

We contribute to the extant social listening literature by building a comprehensive conceptualization of LSCs. Social listening refers to listening to your customers on social media or e-commerce websites (Stewart & Arnold, 2018), and it focus on the user-generated data including product reviews and social media reviews (Tran, 2021). First, we build a

conceptualization of LSCs by comparing its differences with the product reviews and social media reviews. Further, we address the empirical aspect, or the valence, content, quantitative metrics of LSCs, and their relationships to the CCE behaviors. We review CE framework literature and find that existing frameworks using user-generated text data to predict CE behaviors only include dimensions of text content and valence/quantitative metrics (Hung, Tse, & Chan, 2022; Zhijie, et al., 2021). We advance these frameworks by proposing a framework which incorporate all these three dimensions and their interaction effects to predict CCE behaviors and empirically examined it with our customer-level comment data. Finally, from a managerial perspective, our research provides a useful tool for companies regarding how to predict consumers' continuance behavior by using merely a single day's LSCs data. Such knowledge should help companies identify their potential loyal consumers.

THE AI IS MINE! CONCEPTUALIZING PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP OF AI

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Keywords: Psychological ownership, Artificial Intelligence, Possession, Consumer behavior.

Description: Following a conceptual development approach, this paper analyzes how consumers develop psychological ownership of AI-enabled offerings, factors affecting it (moderators), and its outcomes.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

How do consumers develop psychological ownership over AI-enabled offerings? From a marketing standpoint, consumers' development of psychological ownership is fortuitous because it can enhance importance perceptions (Morewedge et al. 2021), improve evaluations (Song, He, and Jiang 2023), and stimulate engagement (Gineikiene, Schlegelmilch, and Auruskeviciene 2017). Firms incorporating AI in their consumer-facing offerings can benefit through consumers' development of psychological ownership. However, due to AI's digital and autonomous nature,

consumers may perceive less control and thus less psychological ownership over AI-enabled offerings (Atasoy and Morewedge 2018; Smith et al. 2023).

While extant research on consumer-AI relationships has investigated factors such as love or power, psychological ownership is still underexplored, thus representing "an area ripe for research" (Peck and Luangrath 2018, p. 246). To fill this gap, we aim to address these research questions:

RQ1: How do consumers develop psychological ownership of AI-enabled offerings?

RQ2: Which factors affect consumers' psychological ownership of AI-enabled offerings?

RQ3: What are the outcomes of psychological ownership of AI-enabled offerings?

To address the research questions, we follow a conceptual development approach. This entails analyzing constructs, relating them to one another, and building a conceptual framework.

Summary of Findings

By analyzing the antecedents and consequences of psychological ownership, constructs that may moderate its formation, and consumer experiences with AI, we developed a comprehensive framework for consumers' psychological ownership of AI-enabled offering. We clarified that psychological ownership may develop over devices, AI's outputs, consumer data, brand offering AI, and associated firms or services.

Employing the theory of psychological ownership (Pierce, Kostova, and Dirks 2003), our study revealed several product design and development decisions that may facilitate the development of psychological ownership. These antecedents include the AI's authenticity

(Mendes Ferreira, Correia, and Pereira 2021), social cognition (Ruiz-Equihua et al. 2022), and anthropomorphism (Cheng 2022). Because many of these antecedents depend on consumers' perception of them, multiple categories may moderate the development of psychological ownership of AI. These include individual factors such as personality (Pierce, Kostova, and Dirks 2003), contextual factors such as culture (Furby 1976), and target factors such as AI's positive valence (Ye and Gawronski 2016). Finally, our study found that PO of AI leads to various positive outcomes such as increased engagement (Mendes Ferreira, Correia, and Pereira 2021), and negative outcomes such as territorial attitudes (Kirk, Peck, and Swain 2018).

Key Contributions

This study's first theoretical contribution is to the theory of psychological ownership (Morewedge et al. 2021; Peck et al. 2021; Peck and Luangrath 2023) which we extend by explicating its formation in the domain of AI. Consumers' psychological ownership of digital possessions has been investigated (Brasel and Gips 2014; Morewedge et al. 2021), but limited studies have explored psychological ownership of AI (Delgosha and Hajiheydari 2021; Mendes Ferreira, Correia, and Pereira 2021).

Second, we contribute to the emerging literature on consumer-AI relationships (van Doorn et al. 2017; Pentina et al. 2023; Uysal, Alavi, and Bezençon 2022). While a few studies have investigated love (Hernandez-Ortega and Ferreira 2021), and dependence (Xie, Pentina, and Hancock 2023), the psychological ownership of AI is still underexplored which this study addresses.

Our study offers valuable implications for firms incorporating AI in their offerings – from AI service robots in hospitality to AI voice assistants and chatbots. It suggests firms can improve psychological ownership of AI through design decisions (e.g., anthropomorphism) and strategic targeting (e.g., marketing to consumers with personality traits such as self-extension tendency). This approach may yield numerous positive outcomes (e.g., enhanced perceived value), which have positive implications for firms' revenues and profits.

References

References are available upon request.

Time Effects in Attribution Modeling

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Keywords: Attribution Modeling, Channel Impact, Customer Journey, Time Effects.

Description: Through an exhaustive empirical analysis, this study introduces an innovative approach for incorporating temporal effects into attribution modeling. The temporal approach outlines its importance and precise evaluation of advertising impact.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Throughout the customer journey, evolving goals and shifting expectations continually shape customer behavior which generates corresponding data that can significantly impact attribution results. Prevailing attribution models, however, are not able to accommodate these dynamic changes in behavior over time, posing a considerable constraint on the validity of attribution results. Addressing this deficiency, we introduce a dynamic attribution methodology for customer journey analysis utilizing Markov graphs. The presented approach dynamically updates attribution outcomes by iteratively using new recent data.

Through comprehensive empirical scrutiny, we outline aspects that need to be accounted for to enhance the precision of advertising impact assessment. Firstly, we examine the effect of the data collection process (one-time, continuous, and rolling data collection) on forecasting future advertising channel effects. Secondly, we investigate the optimal data collection period based on prediction accuracy. Lastly, we elucidate how the timing of conversion recording within

customer journeys impacts the precise evaluation of advertising impact – especially when current data is integrated into attribution modeling.

Thus, the overarching aim is to enhance the accuracy and predictive capabilities of customer journey analysis, thereby facilitating the determination of advertising channel (contribution) value. Ultimately, this enables companies to optimize their marketing strategies and budget allocation.

Method and Data

The research study considers a comprehensive dataset spanning nine years (2012-2020) comprising 49,371 customer journeys sourced from an undisclosed service company, respecting their confidentiality. This company operated across six distinct channels: search advertising, organic search results, affiliate marketing, telemarketing, recommendations, and referral marketing. Tracking customer activities, the dataset delineates how customers first encountered the company (contact) and subsequently engaged in transactions (conversions).

Employing Markov graphs to chart individual customer journeys based on recorded touchpoints, the graphs, denoted as $M = \langle S, W \rangle$, are characterized by a state set $S = \{s_1, ..., s_n\}$, and a transition matrix W. These graphs encapsulate states like "start" representing the beginning of customer journeys, "conversion" denoting sales, and "null" signifying journeys culminating without conversions. Furthermore, each Markov graph incorporates the six-channel contacts as individual states. Following Anderl et al. (2016), removal effects are used to indicate channel value.

Forecasted removal effects rely on historical transition probabilities from the Markov graph. Evaluating prediction accuracy involves juxtaposing these projections against actual removal effects, quantifying prediction errors through root mean square errors (RMSE), and weighted mean absolute percentage errors (wMAPE).

Summary of Findings

The present study evaluates the importance of continuous data collection by contrasting prediction accuracies among three methods: one-time, ongoing, and rolling six-month data collection. The one-time approach yields an average RMSE of 0.0704 (wMAPE: 33.64%) whereas ongoing collection exhibits enhanced performance with an RMSE of 0.0598 (wMAPE: 28.52%). The rolling data collection method displays superior predictive capabilities, achieving an RMSE of 0.0548 (wMAPE: 26.18%).

We further explore the impact of varying data collection periods on prediction accuracy. Results reveal that a one-month rolling collection period (used as the benchmark) yields the highest forecast error (RMSE: 0.0725; wMAPE: 34.08%). Extending the period to two months significantly reduces errors by 15.81% (RMSE: 0.0610; wMAPE: 28.97%), followed by a substantial 24.65% error reduction at an eight-month collection period (RMSE: 0.0546; wMAPE: 26.00%). Additionally, continuous data collection surpasses most metrics derived from the rolling collection periods (RMSE: 0.0598; wMAPE: 28.52%).

Furthermore, the study explores the impact of incomplete attribution data, termed 'observable conversions', stemming from variations in conversion times on prediction accuracy. Overall, employing observable conversions diminishes prediction accuracy (RMSE: 0.0623; wMAPE: 29.63%) compared to using all conversions (RMSE: 0.0579; wMAPE: 27.51%). With an eight-month data collection period, the discrepancies between all conversions (RMSE: 0.0550; wMAPE: 26.14%) and observable conversions (RMSE: 0.0562; wMAPE: 26.76%) are minimal.

Statement of Key Contributions

Firstly, this study underlines the advantageous impact of adopting a rolling data perspective on attribution accuracy, thereby enhancing the efficacy of marketing mix strategies and budget allocation.

Secondly, the research outcomes fill a gap in the exploration of data selection periods, an area previously overlooked in studies (e.g., Anderl, Schumann, and Kunz 2015; De Haan, Wiesel, and Pauwels 2016). Notably, findings from the current dataset reveal that an eight-month rolling data period notably improves the precision of attribution modeling compared to various data periods and continuous data collection. It is noteworthy that attribution outcomes hinge upon marketing decisions, such as channel selection and budget allocation (Anderl et al. 2016). However, this empirical investigation presents a novel avenue for enhancing attribution modeling concerning data selection.

Thirdly, addressing the divergence between customer decision-making and channel contact (Herrington and Dempsey 2005), this study delves into the unresolved impact of temporal carry-over effects on the accuracy of attribution modeling. The present data suggest that a longer data period captures more of these temporal effects due to the timing of the customer decision-making. Overall, customer conversion times severely distort attribution modeling results in short data periods. Identifying the length of the data period is therefore the central challenge in attribution modeling.

References are available upon request.

UNVEILING PARADOXES: THE UNFORESEEN IMPACT OF CONTENT MODERATION POLICIES IN E-COMMERCE

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Content moderation, encompassing the deletion, removal, or hiding information from a platform based on specific standards or guidelines, has played a significant role in cultivating consumer trust and elevating firm performance (Beck, Wuyts, and Jap 2023; Liu, Yildrim, and Zhang 2022). However, the practice of content moderation is not without its challenges, attracting extensive public scrutiny and regulatory attention. Its implementation stands as a pressing concern for policymakers, academics, and industry leaders (Jhaver et al. 2018; Schomer and McCarthy 2019; Stackpole 2022), sparking a heated and ongoing debate within these circles.

Given its importance to the public, understanding the multifacets of content moderation policies and their impact on various stakeholders becomes imperative. Within the realm of online content moderation, an area of notable interest revolves around the removal of "review bombs." Review bombs are characterized by a heavy influx of negative user reviews targeting products, services, or businesses within a condensed timeframe. Our research aims to address the following research questions: (1) How does the policy of removing review bombs impact e-commerce platform, product, and consumer outcomes? (2) Is the policy's effect heterogeneous across different product and consumer-related contexts? (3) What psychological mechanisms underlie the effects of the policy change?

Method and Data

We conducted three different studies to test the impacts of the review bomb removal policy. In Study 1, we utilized large-scale field data from an e-commerce platform with more than 15 million individual online reviews across 720 different products, and employed a regression discontinuity-in-time approach to examine the impact of implementing a new content moderation policy on users and product-related outcomes. Study 2 followed up on Study 1, focusing on eWOM data about the e-commerce platform to evaluate how the content moderation policy influenced trust in the e-commerce platform. In Study 3, we conducted an experiment with actual U.S. consumers to simultaneously investigate three psychological mechanisms—trust, perceived risk, and consumer control— exploring their role in shaping the relationship between the content moderation policy and product and platform outcomes.

Summary of Findings

In contrast to their intended benefits, these policies yield an unexpected adverse impact on user behavior, the e-commerce platform, and listed product performance, resulting in a significant 27.25% drop in total users for products on the e-commerce platform. Drawing from expectancy disconfirmation theory, we uncover the mechanism underpinning this puzzle – a decline in consumer trust and an increase in perceived risk. Furthermore, the research demonstrates how the effect of the content moderation policies varies across product features, particularly those facilitating greater access, content customization, and complexity, and across consumers.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our research provides several contributions to the e-commerce and online review literature. First, our study contributes to this evolving literature on content moderation by showing that, contrary to their intended benefits, the policy of removing review bombs harms user behavior, e-commerce platform, and product performance.

Second, our study explores nuanced insights into the effects of policy changes. Negative consequences are amplified for products that are widely accessible or encourage heightened user engagement, as well as for those in intricate genres. Furthermore, the content moderation policy prompts weak relationship customers to leave rather than those with a strong relationship..

Third, our research draws from the expectancy-disconfirmation theory to elucidate the theoretical mechanisms behind the impact of review bomb removal policies on platform and product outcomes. Previous research has predominantly used this framework to explain disconfirmations in product or service interactions, whereas our study shifts the focus to a firm-level policy change demonstrating that consumer trust and perceived risk serve as mediating links between review bomb removal policies and both platform and product outcomes. These

insights underscore that the strategic decisions made by e-commerce platforms have far-reaching

implications for multiple stakeholders, including the platforms, third-party sellers, and

consumers.

UNVEILING THE SHADOWS: EXPLORING THE DARK SIDE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING

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Keywords: Influencer marketing, Dark-side, Ethical concerns, Stakeholder Theory

Description: By employing the Stakeholder Theory, this study proposes the Dark Side Ethical Concerns Matrix that delves into the ethical challenges that lie within the shadows of influencer marketing, offering a comprehensive view of the potential negative consequences and their impact on various stakeholders.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question - In exploring the dynamic influencer marketing landscape, this study utilizes Freeman's Stakeholder Theory as a framework to examine the intricate interactions among brands, influencers, and audiences. Stakeholder Theory, centered on recognizing diverse interests, aligns well with the nuanced dynamics of influencer marketing, where ethical challenges resonate across brands, influencers, and the broader audience, demanding a thorough understanding of their relationships. Anchored in Stakeholder Theory, this study delves into the concealed aspects constituting the "dark side" of influencer marketing. The research aims to answer: How can the Dark Side Ethical Concerns Matrix, influenced by Stakeholder Theory, navigate ethical quandaries, authenticity paradoxes, transparency issues,

and mental health concerns? The objective is to cultivate a responsible and sustainable influencer marketing ecosystem prioritizing the well-being and interests of all stakeholders.

Methodology - A comprehensive 'Dark Side Ethical Concern Matrix' is formulated by integrating insights from existing literature (Snyder, 2019) and real-life influencer cases. This approach combines academic discourse with practical instances to address ethical challenges in influencer marketing. The Stakeholder Theory by Freeman (1994) is employed as a theoretical framework to analyze influencer marketing literature, guiding the development of the Dark Side Ethical Concern Matrix. This approach ensures a comprehensive examination of stakeholder interests, ethical considerations, and potential impacts within the influencer marketing landscape. A literature review identifies ethical concerns discussed in academic and industry sources, complemented with real-life influencer cases, selected purposefully. Both sources together contribute to thematic categories forming the proposed ethical concern matrix.

Summary of Findings - The Dark Side Ethical Concerns Matrix is a powerful conceptual framework that offers a nuanced and structured approach to understanding and addressing the complex ethical challenges within the influencer marketing landscape. This matrix systematically categorizes and visualizes key ethical concerns, serving as a comprehensive tool for stakeholders – from brands and influencers to consumers and industry regulators.

At its core, the matrix facilitates a detailed examination of various ethical dilemmas inherent in influencer marketing. This includes issues such as undisclosed sponsorships, authenticity paradoxes arising from over-commercialization, transparency concerns, and the critical consideration of mental health and well-being. By encapsulating these concerns within a visual representation, the matrix allows stakeholders to grasp the interconnected nature of these challenges, fostering a more holistic understanding. One of the matrix's key strengths lies in its ability to guide decision-making. Through a meticulous process of prioritization,

brands can identify and address the most impactful ethical concerns, making informed choices about collaborations and practices within the influencer marketing sphere. Moreover, by visually presenting the intricate web of interconnected issues, this matrix encourages a collective understanding among stakeholders, fostering a shared commitment to responsible and ethical practices within the influencer marketing ecosystem.

Statement of Key Contributions - This study significantly contributes to academia by enriching the theoretical landscape of influencer marketing ethics. It establishes a valuable theoretical framework for marketing ethics researchers and provides real-world insights through case studies, offering concrete data for future analyses. The introduction of the Dark Side Ethical Concerns Matrix aids ethical issue classification, forming a basis for interdisciplinary collaborations across marketing, psychology, and ethics. This cross-disciplinary approach provides insights into influencer psychology and its impact on consumer behaviour.

For practitioners, the study emphasizes the importance of ethical guidelines, enabling brands and influencers to navigate the consequences of unethical conduct. Insights into transparency practices offer practical guidance for building trust between influencers, brands, and platforms. The Dark Side Ethical Concerns Matrix becomes a useful tool for anticipating and mitigating risks associated with specific ethical issues, preserving the reputation of brands and influencers. Additionally, the research sheds light on the mental strain experienced by influencers, prompting brands and platforms to prioritize influencer well-being. Lastly, the study underscores the significance of audience education, empowering practitioners to engage more responsibly by promoting awareness of disclosure practices and ethical considerations.

Reference - References are available upon request.

VICARIOUS TERRITORIAL INFRINGEMENT: OBSERVER RESPONSES TO TERRITORIAL BEHAVIOR WITHIN BRAND COMMUNITIES

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Keywords: Territoriality, psychological ownership, vicarious infringement, brand communities

Description: This research demonstrates that observers of territorial behavior within brand communities can experience vicarious territorial infringement, which leads to emotional and behavioral disengagement with the brand community and the brand.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consumers who perceive psychological ownership of a brand, the feeling that the brand is "mine" (Pierce et al., 2003), sometimes engage in territorial behavior towards the brand (Ashley et al., 2020; Kirk et al., 2018; Micu & Ashley, 2022). Territoriality research has primarily focused on the individuals directly involved in the territory dispute. However, the high visibility of psychological ownership signals within virtual brand communities (Kuchmaner et al., 2019) suggests that territorial behavior is likely to impact observers of the interaction. Observers view territorial behavior negatively (Brown et al., 2014; Brown & Zhu, 2016; Griffiths & Gilly, 2012; Wu et al., 2014), and within a brand community, where psychological

ownership of the brand is perceived to be collective (Chi & Xu, 2022), territorial behavior over the brand is likely to be viewed as a transgression.

Observers experience a variety of vicarious emotions in response to a transgression by an ingroup member, including vicarious embarrassment (Tangney et al., 2007; Welten et al., 2012), anger (Iyer et al., 2007; Sufi et al., 2023), disappointment (Carroll et al., 2007), guilt (Gunn & Wilson, 2011; Lickel et al., 2005), and shame (Johns et al., 2005; Lickel et al., 2005). We suggest that observing territorial behavior within an ingroup, such as a brand community, may lead to a new response: vicarious territorial infringement. The nature of territorial behavior acts as a threat to the victim's psychological ownership (Ashley et al., 2020; Kirk et al., 2018; Micu & Ashley, 2022), which is perceived as a form of identity threat. Previous research has found that observers who perceive ingroup members to have been victimized can perceive vicarious victimhood that heightens their own threat concern (Leigh & Melwani 2022, Zuber, 2015). In particular, since brand communities perceive collective ownership of the brand, a territorial threat could be perceived as a threat to all members, leading the observer to experience vicarious infringement on their own territory. As territorial infringement has been found to decrease engagement with the brand (Ashley et al., 2020; Ashley & Noble, 2014; Kirk et al., 2018; Micu & Ashley, 2022), this research seeks to examine whether the same disengagement will occur for observers of territorial behavior.

Method and Data

We examine these research questions through field experiments among members of two real virtual brand communities, accessed through Amazon MTurk and qualified through screening questions. Participants were shown a fictional exchange that was purported to take place on a social media platform and manipulated to express territoriality through intimate

knowledge of the brand. Along with manipulation checks and descriptors, participants reported their perceptions that the behavior infringed on their own territory and constituted a threat to their social identity as a brand community member, as well as measures of their affective and behavioral engagement with the brand community, their willingness to spread word of mouth about the brand community and the brand, and their loyalty toward the brand.

A pilot study (N = 97) first seeks to establish whether territorial infringement can be experienced vicariously. Participants were members of the Taylor Swift brand community, and the stimuli used a real Twitter post from Taylor Swift's official page and a fictional exchange between two community members in the comments. The territorial comment was perceived to be an infringement on the territory of the fictional community member (Territorial Mean = 4.51, Control Mean = 3.32, $F(1, 95) = 10.18$, $p < .005$) and an infringement on the territorial of the observer (Territorial Mean = 4.08, Control Mean = 3.27, $t(98) = 4.33$, $p < .05$). While the two territorial infringement perceptions were significantly correlated ($r = 0.87$, $p < .001$), a scatterplot revealed that there were more incidents of perceiving infringement on the victim's territory but not on the observer's territory, and fewer in the opposite direction.

Study 1 (N = 95) uses the same context and stimuli to examine the consequences of perceiving vicarious territorial infringement. The territorial comment was again perceived to be a vicarious infringement of the observer's territory (Territorial Mean = 3.16, Control Mean = 2.01, $F(1, 93) = 13.29$, $p < .001$) as well as a threat to their social identity as a member of the community (Territorial Mean = 3.95, Control Mean = 2.01, $F(1, 93) = 35.18$, $p < .001$). Observing territorial behavior was found to have a negative indirect effect on affective engagement with the brand community, mediated by perceptions of vicarious territorial infringement, as well as subsequent effects on behavioral engagement with the brand

community, likelihood to spread word of mouth about the brand community and brand, and brand loyalty.

Study 2 (N =182) replicates Study 1 in the Nintendo virtual brand community with a fictional exchange purported to take place on the subreddit *r/Nintendo* and examines a potential moderating effect of the tie strength between the observer and the community member engaging in territorial behavior. The effects found in Study 1 were all replicated. The results revealed that the perception of vicarious territorial infringement and its subsequent effect on affective engagement with the brand community weakened when the territorial community member was a friend, rather than a stranger, however the perception of a threat to the community's identity persisted regardless of tie strength.

Finally, Study 3 (N = 244), using the same context as Study 2, seeks to determine whether a response to the territorial behavior from either a fellow community member or the brand's official account can mitigate the negative effects of observing territorial behavior and finds that the effect are resistant to interventions.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research extends our understanding of territoriality by showing that in online communities, where interactions are highly visible, the negative impacts of territorial behavior spill over onto observers, suggesting that an incident of territoriality can have wide-reaching consequences for the community and the brand. Specifically, we introduce a previously unresearched response to territorial behavior, vicarious territorial infringement, which we show can lead to disengagement with the brand community and the brand. This research also explores how firms can address territorial behavior within their brand communities, thus mitigating negative responses to the community and the brand by its own loyal customers. We show that

messaging from both the brand and other community members chastising the territorial behavior or reinforcing community ownership of the brand did not mitigate the negative effects of observing such behavior.

<p style="text-align:center">References available upon request.</p>

VISUALLY ORGANIZING ONLINE PRODUCT DISPLAYS TO REDUCE PERCEIVED CROWDING AND INCREASE SHOPPING INTENTIONS

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Keywords: product display, demarcation, crowdedness, aesthetics

Description: Enhancing visual demarcation by distinguishing elements on a webpage from one another through tools such as coloration and highlighting can reduce perceived display crowdedness, increase perceived display aesthetics, and increase shopping intentions, effects that increase with the consumer's aesthetics appreciation.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Online product displays enlist product images and information to help consumers make more informed decisions. Although product descriptions can reduce perceived purchasing risks and promote sales (Folkes 1988; Kahn and Lehmann 1991), too much information risks alienating consumers with crowded displays. To address the crowdedness problem, online retailers often sacrifice the richness of product descriptions by moving product information to product-specific

pages or showing fewer products per screen. Past research indicates that increasing interstitial space among products in a display can reduce crowdedness and increase shopping intentions (Pracejus, Olsen, and O'Guinn 2006; Sevilla and Townsend 2016). However, extra interstitial space takes up room and thus sacrifices the amount of product information "above the fold" on a webpage, requiring more effort from consumers who want to compare products. How can marketers best manage the trade-off between information provision and information over-crowding? This research proposes and tests a subtle method for reducing perceived crowding within information-rich displays: visually demarcating the display by distinguishing display elements from one another with tools such as coloration and highlighting. Building on prior research, improving the visual demarcation of a display's elements is expected to reduce perceived crowdedness, increase display aesthetics, and increase shopping intentions.

Method and Data

Data were collected through a series of lab and field experiments. Four studies (one field) test the conceptual framework. Study 1 establishes the main effect using a Facebook ads field study and shows that improving the visual demarcation of the ad display increases click-through rates. (These ads were viewed 11,469 times by 9,314 unique Facebook users.) Study 2 (n = 367) replicates the effects in the lab in webpages containing only verbal displays of information and demonstrates that visually demarcating a headline and its story better increases online shopping intentions. Study 3 (n = 139) replicates the effect in displays containing both visual (product photos) and verbal (product description) display elements and provides evidence for the proposed underlying process: Increased-Visual-Demarcation → Less-Perceived-Crowdedness → More-Perceived-Aesthetics and rules out a "visual preference heuristic" explanation. Study 4 (n = 263) uses a moderation approach to shed light on the underlying process and demonstrates the

following boundary condition in which the visual-demarcation effect is weak among individuals with lower aesthetics appreciation. Study 4 further replicates the effect in darker backgrounds, controlling for foreground-background contrasts.

Summary of Findings

All four studies provide evidence that visual demarcation can enhance display performance and shopping intentions. In Study 1, higher demarcation between foreground elements in the display ad led to a higher click-through rate. Studies 2 through 4 replicate the demarcation effect on online shopping intentions; enhanced demarcation leads to greater shopping intentions in a variety of contexts. Exploring the process, we find that enhanced demarcation between foreground elements mitigates product display crowdedness, which increases product display aesthetics and generates greater shopping interest. We also find that the visual demarcation effect does not depend on any contamination from differences in contrast between foreground and background elements, and that the visual demarcation effects hold across lighter and darker backgrounds. Finally, we find that demarcation produces positive effects among those higher in aesthetics appreciation, but not among those lower in aesthetics appreciation, thereby supporting a key role for perceived display aesthetics in the visual demarcation effect. This role was fortified with a mediation model in which demarcation's positive effect was mediated by reduced perceived crowdedness and then (serially) elevated perceived display aesthetics, which then increased shopping interest.

Key Contributions

The findings from our research can add to the product spatial arrangement literature, in particular, visual crowding. Prior research focused on adding more white space between and surrounding the displayed elements to increase display evaluations. Our work suggests a subtle

method that can generate positive product display responses without costing additional display space. This research also advances our understanding of visual contrast. Prior research has examined the visual contrast between foreground and background elements in a display page. We explore the visual contrast between foreground elements and find that greater contrast between foreground elements can reduce individuals' perceived crowdedness perceptions and increase product display performance. We piloted a study on small business owners asking them to choose their preference between displays and found that many preferred the less demarcated display to the more demarcated display. Our findings suggest that small business owners may not recognize the benefits of visually demarcating foreground elements. In conclusion, visual demarcation may be an easy and inexpensive method to help marketers and retailers present product information more efficiently and increase shopping intentions.

*References available upon request

WHAT MAKES DIGITAL MUSIC POPULAR? UTILIZING MACHINE LEARNING TO IDENTIFY KEY FACTORS FOR SONG POPULARITY ON SPOTIFY

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Keywords: music popularity, machine learning, Spotify, digital products.

Description: This paper investigates key factors that contribute to a song's popularity on Spotify using machine learning techniques.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This paper investigates: What makes digital music popular on Spotify.

Method And Data

We collected data from Spotify and analyzed each song's popularity by using machine learning techniques to predict song popularity.

Summary of Findings

Our results demonstrate that Random Forest outperforms other models in terms of predictive performance. We also perform important feature analysis of the overall data and in specific genres. Genre-specific analysis reveals that different audio features hold varying degrees of importance depending on the genre.

Key Contributions

1. This paper is one of the first to use machine learning techniques to analyze digital products' popularity.
2. Our results demonstrate that Random Forest outperforms other models in terms of predictive performance.

References are available upon request.

WHY DO YOU LIKE THE POST? AN EXPLANATORY APPROACH OF MICRO, MACRO and MEGA INFLUENCERS' USER ENGAGEMENT STATISTICS

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Key Words: Influencer Marketing, User Engagement, Source Credibility, Influencer Size, Influencer Prominence

Description: The study examines the effect of influencer- and brand-related factors (source credibility, influencer prominence and brand prominence) on the number of likes in brand-related user-generated content and also includes the size of the influencer as a moderator of the aforementioned factors and their effect on the number of likes.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In terms of assessing the success of a campaign, marketers attribute a high practical relevance to engagement metrics such as the number of likes. However, advertisers often do not have a solid understanding of how user engagement is generated, e.g. which influencers most effectively transform advertising budget into more engagement (Linqia 2021). Moreover, the majority of

marketers rate the identification of suitable influencers as moderately difficult to difficult (Geyser 2021). A first clue for the selection of suitable influencers with regard to intended high engagement is provided by a current multi-method study by Wies, Bleier and Edeling (2023), according to which the effect of the number of followers of influencers on engagement can be modeled as an inverted-U function which indicates that engagement first increases and then decreases as influencer's follower count increases. The fact that engagement figures varied for influencer categories with different follower numbers justifies the need for follow-up research to uncover the underlying patterns.

This paper therefore addresses the question of how the number of followers of a social media influencer moderates influencer- and brand-related factors with the dependent variable number of likes. More precisely, source credibility, brand prominence, and influencer prominence were operationalized as independent variables.

Method and Data

A dataset of brand-related user-generated static Instagram posts, related to two different product groups (utilitarian: diapers / hedonistic: makeup), each with two brands, was collected. Posts were searched by brand-related hashtags on Instagram and had to conform lots of criteria, a.o. that they are marked as advertising and that the user engagement activities for the post are largely completed.

The dataset was coded twice by three independent coders to ensure interrater and intrarater reliability. The coders used a coding manual to rate the operationalized independent, dependent and control variables for each post. After correlations checks, the datasets were combined by

creating majority values for nominal items and mean values for metric items and descriptively cleaned in the final step. With the final dataset (n=398 posts from 235 different influencers), an exploratory factor analysis was performed with the items of the source credibility dimensions to summarize them into condensed variables.

To test the research model, a multiple linear regression and the respective interaction effects were calculated. To ensure that all model estimates passed the generally specified model assumptions of linear regression analysis, several statistical tests were run on the model revealing no anomalies.

Summary of Findings

The prominence of a brand on a brand-related Instagram post by an influencer has the expected negative impact on user engagement. For the source credibility dimensions, only influencer attractiveness has an effect on the number of likes. This effect was positively significant in the case of micro-influencers and negatively significant in the case of the other two groups. The fact that no significant influence was found for the dimension's trustworthiness and expertise on user engagement, could be due to several reasons. One explanation might be that due to the simple and quick like function on social media platforms, most followers do not consciously think about the evaluation of an influencer post. When scrolling through the Instagram feed, it is the 'first look' that influences the decision to like or not to like the post. This tends to perceive the presence and attractiveness of the influencer and sees the product in a few seconds. Skills such as expertise and psychological characteristics such as trustworthiness are not as directly present as

visual impressions. The influencer prominence shows only in the split for micro-influencers the assumed positive effect on the number of likes.

Key Contributions

The model demonstrates the robustness of the negative effect of brand prominence on engagement (Jinyoung Yoo, Choi and Song 2022). Here, the follower count is not relevant. The negative impact of attractiveness on the number of likes contradicts previous research (AlFarraj et al. 2021). This might be explained by similarity identification (Burke 1969; Fraser and Brown 2002). Users may not like posts projecting unattainable ideals of beauty. The significant positive effects of attractiveness and influencer prominence found for micro-influencers could be attributed to stronger parasocial relationships with these (Yuan and Lou 2020).

This is the first study examining the number of followers as a moderator for influencer- and brand-related factors explaining engagement. For the first time, the number of Instagram likes is used as a target variable, considering source expertise, attractiveness and trustworthiness. The study addresses the need for research on a distinct analysis of brand and influencer prominence (Schouten, Janssen and Verspaget 2020).

Brands should be visually in the content's background. Companies should work with macro- or mega-influencers representing a diverse range of people rather than conforming to beauty standards to achieve authentic, engaging content. Micros can generate high engagement with attractive looks and high prominence in the post.

International Perspectives

CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISION FOR CULTURAL PRODUCTS OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN IN CRAFT RETAILING CONTEXT

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Keywords: Tourism; crafts; authenticity; value; cultural motivation

Description: The paper examines a consumer decision-making model for cultural heritage crafts resold outside their countries of origin that incorporates the perceived authenticity and value of crafts from marketing and tourism literature.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

A recent report by Grand View Research (GVR), a market research firm, projects the Global Heritage Tourism (GHT) market will grow at a compound annual growth rate of 3.8% from 2022 to 2030. The GVR report, citing a recent report from the United Nations World Tourism Organization, noted that 40% of the Global Tourism market is linked to consumption of cultural heritage products (e.g., handicrafts) and historical travel experiences. Numerous studies have evaluated consumers' dispositions to consume cultural goods in varying tourism consumption contexts (Murphy et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2017). However, the literature is scarce in understanding consumers' dispositions to purchase cultural goods/services resold outside their countries of origin. Kolar and Zabkar (2010) further support this need as they argue that more research is needed to explain the relationship between authenticity and consumers' purchase disposition in unique tourism contexts, such as tourist consumers' perceptions of the authenticities of cultural crafts resold outside their countries of origin. Based on this information, this study aims to investigate the factors that impact consumers' experiences and decisions to purchase cultural products when cultural goods/services are resold outside their countries of origin. Specifically, the research aims to understand the antecedents that motivate individuals to purchase from physical retail stores that sell Mexican-made crafts in the U.S. market.

Method and Data

A questionnaire containing measures primarily from Kolar and Zabkar (2010) and Yu and Littrell's (2003) frameworks, along with fair source authenticity questions, was developed and distributed to a random sample of primarily 166 U.S. tourist consumers visiting the Historic

Market Square in downtown San Antonio, Texas. Market Square is ranked the largest Mexican market in the U.S. and the top destination for U.S. domestic tourists seeking to purchase authentic Mexican-made crafts and clothing (Source: SAT - Community Guide).

A student researcher and the lead author of this paper randomly approached tourists at the Historic Market Square and asked them to complete the survey. The researchers shared a flyer that highlighted a QR code for potential respondents to scan and complete the survey on the go and an incentive of a $100 Amazon gift card for completing the survey. The survey was administered over three months (May to July 2022), and 166 questionnaires were completed and analyzed.

Summary of Findings

SmartPLS (v4.0) was used to test the hypothesized relationships in this study. The data showed that model fit measures provided evidence that the specified model is valid (Hair et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2014), and the path results also reveal support for all proposed hypotheses. Cultural motivation positively impacts atmosphere authenticity (H1) and fair source authenticity (H2). We then find that perceived utilitarian value positively impacts purchase intention (H3). In H4, we find that atmosphere authenticity positively impacted purchase intention, and in H5, we find that fair source authenticity positively impacted intention. We also examined the mediating effect of atmosphere authenticity (H6a) and fair source authenticity (H6b). For this study, the mediating variable had a full mediation effect because the direct effects of cultural motivation on the intention to purchase Mexican-made craft is not significant (Hair et al., 2014). These findings indicate that perceived authenticity of Mexican craft stores' atmosphere and their authenticity on fair sourcing of Mexican-made craft were found to mediate purchase intention as hypothesized in H6.

Key Contributions

Our findings are consistent with the theory of consumer engagement and the theory of authenticity of cultural heritage goods. The data shows that 1) cultural motivation, 2) atmosphere authenticity, 3) fair source authenticity, and 4) perceived utilitarian value are antecedents of intention to purchase Mexican-made crafts resold in the U.S. Market. Furthermore, atmosphere authenticity and fair source authenticity are mediators between cultural motivation and purchase intention. Based on these findings, physical retail owners can benefit by displaying forms of authenticity in the servicescape and creating a servicescape that enhances the perceived utilitarian value.

We find that a consumer must be motivated to engage with an organization (i.e., consumer engagement theory), and implementing processes to enhance the servicescape and authenticity of the atmosphere of a service provider can help facilitate sustained engagement. Therefore, it is essential for an organization to design the servicescape in a way that stimulates both internal and external drivers to encourage engagement (Wang and Mattila, 2015). Likewise, the theory of authenticity of cultural heritage goods informs us that an individual assesses an organization's ability to create an authentic experience in an establishment. Atmosphere authenticity evaluations are made through the feelings and interpersonal experiences that emerge during their visit. Individuals also assess the fair source authenticity by evaluating the commercial reproduction of authenticity with the organization's authentication practices, such as providing certifications (e.g., Chhabra, 2005) or other documents to establish credibility in the origin of the craft.

ENHANCING HIGH-TECH SMES' PERFORMANCE THROUGH METAVERSE TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION: A FOCUS ON INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS AND ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY

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KEYWORDS: Metaverse; international marketing agility; institutional theory; adoption; high-tech SMEs

Description: The adoption of Metaverse Technology (AMT) for international marketing agility (IMA) and firm performance (FP) is still in its infancy, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This longitudinal study aims to identify organizational perspectives on AMT, which might enhance IMA and overall FP.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions:

Considering Metaverse technology's potential to revolutionize marketing operations and the absence of systematic inquiry and preliminary empirical analysis of Metaverse research from an IS viewpoint in SMEs, this study proposes the following research questions: *RQ1:* What key institutional factors influence high-tech SMEs' Metaverse technology adoption? *RQ2:* What is the impact of Metaverse technology adoption on IMA and FP in high-tech SMEs? *RQ3:* What is the effect of SMEs' absorptive capacity to leverage AMT on their IMA and FP?

Method and Data:

A two-wave longitudinal design was applied using structural equation modeling to assess the proposed research model. Data were collected from high-tech SMEs' top executives using self-administered questionnaires (n=226). An online survey form was used for data collection through a Computer-Assisted Web Interview approach.

Summary of Findings:

This study has the potential to fill this gap by aiding SMEs in making knowledgeable decisions pertaining to adopting Metaverse technology in their businesses and accelerating their performance. The results found that institutional factors positively influence high-tech AMT and performance, with absorptive capacity mediating this relationship. By understanding the factors influencing the adoption of new technologies, businesses can better position themselves to exploit Metaverse technologies' opportunities and benefits.

Key Contributions:

This research enhances marketing expertise. First, it helps us understand how SMEs embrace new technologies by identifying the factors that influence them. This fills a gap in the literature on high-tech SMEs, particularly in developing nations, by revealing their challenges and

considerations. Second, the study examines institutional determinants in high-tech SMEs' intention to use Metaverse technology, providing a new perspective on technology adoption. It emphasizes institutional isomorphism and legitimacy-seeking conduct among these enterprises, highlighting the necessity to respond to stakeholder pressures and build strong relationships. Third, the study implies that enterprises can increase adoption intention by persuasively articulating the benefit of the core technology. The study also emphasizes the relevance of absorptive capacity in maximizing innovative technology benefits. These findings can help companies adopt and integrate Metaverse and other related technologies.

EXAMINING THE ADVERSE IMPACT OF POWER DISTANCE BELIEF

ON DIY PREFERENCE

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Keywords: Power Distance Belief, DIY, Cultural Orientation, Power, Consumption Context

Description: This paper investigates the negative effect of power distance belief (PDB) on do-it-yourself (DIY) behavior and explores three theoretically driven boundary conditions that can attenuate this negative effect.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

A growing number of companies have encouraged customers in DIY activities through their product creation process. The enthusiasm of consumers for DIY projects makes the DIY market lucrative worldwide. But the annual per capita spending on DIY varies across countries. Research on user-designed products suggests Power Distance Belief (PDB) induces adverse

responses from consumers (Paharia and Swaminathan, 2021; Song et. al., 2021). This research proposes practical ways to attenuate such effect.

Power distance belief, the degree of power disparity an individual expects and accepts (Oyserman, 2006), influences customer responses, especially those reflecting power disparity (Zhang *et al.,* 2010). High PDB customers tend to dislike DIY, as they are not more powerful than service providers in DIY. We propose three moderators that shifts customers' attention on power to attenuate such adverse effect on DIY. Specifically, when customers focus is on status, are in a low power state, or engage in a private consumption context, customers from high PDB cultures are more likely to prefer DIY. For low PDB customers, such effect doesn't manifest.

Method and Data

We designed three experiments to test our hypotheses. Study 1 aimed to examine the moderating role of power vs. status on the negative effect of PDB on DIY. We recruited 404 participants from the United States. They were randomly assigned to one of the conditions in a 2 (PDB: high vs. low) × 2 (power vs. status) between-subjects design. The PDB and power vs. status manipulation were adapted from previous literature (Blader and Chen, 2012; Zhang, et al., 2010).

In Study 2, we recruited 241 consumers from Germany. The study was a 2 (PDB: high vs. low) × 2 (power state: high vs. low) between-subjects design. The procedure and the manipulation of PDB were similar as Study 1. For the power manipulation, we adopted a recall task from previous research (Galinsky et al., 2003).

In Study 3, our goal was to investigate whether consumption context serves as a crucial boundary condition for the PDB effect on DIY preference. Two hundred and thirty one

participants were recruited from Amazon MTurk. They were randomly assigned to one of the conditions in a 2 (PDB: high vs. low) × 2 (consumption context: public vs. private) between-subjects design.

Summary of Findings

Across three studies, we consistently demonstrate the existence of the negative PDB effect on DIY preference. More importantly, we go beyond identifying the negative effect and delve into understanding the boundary conditions that attenuate this effect. Through all three studies, we reveal that the negative PDB effect is mitigated when high PDB consumers focus on status rather than power, when they are in a low power state, and when the consumption context is private.

Key Contributions

This research makes several contributions. From a theoretical standpoint, this research adds to the DIY literature by introducing new moderators within a theoretical framework to comprehensively examine the impact of PDB on DIY preference. The framework not only clarifies why DIY preference might be low in high PDB cultures, but also suggests ways to increase this preference. From a practical perspective, our findings offer marketing professionals deeper insights into the cultural factors influencing consumers' DIY choices in a global context. For DIY companies operating in a global environment, it offers valuable insights into the cultural factors influencing consumers' DIY preferences. If these companies seek to attract customers from high PDB cultures, they can tailor their promotions to focus on the moderators identified in this paper.

POWER DISTANCE BELIEFS AND THE SEARCH FOR THE BEST: HOW IT IMPACTS PREFERENCES FOR ASSORTMENT SIZE

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Keywords: *Power Distance Beliefs, Assortment Size, Maximizing Orientation*

Description: How Power Distance Beliefs influence assortment size preferences.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

As markets become more competitive and the number of products more varied, retailers, both traditional and online, are often faced with the task of deciding how much assortment to carry. While small or large assortment sizes can lead to disappointment for consumers as considerable research has shown (Chernev et al. 2015; Diehl and Poynor 2010), having a large assortment size also imposes additional costs on the retailers. However, there is limited investigation into the cultural factors that may influence assortment size preferences. One of the most important cultural factors is Power Distance Beliefs (PDB) - the extent to which a person accepts inequality in society (Hofstede 1984;2001). Those high on PDB tend to accept hierarchies and have a greater tendency for ranking (Lalwani and Forcum 2016) and manifests as different consumer outcomes such as price-quality judgments (Lalwani and Forcum 2016), preference for celebrity endorsements (Winterich et al. 2018), and status consumption (Kim and Yang 2014: Gao et al. 2016). Research has also shown that people who have stronger beliefs in hierarchy seek the best product to differentiate vertically from others (Ordabayeva and Fernandes 2018). It can thus be surmised that people high in PDB search for the best product and often use cues to do so. So, how would PDB impact preference for assortment size? We hypothesize that those with high PDB would prefer larger assortment sizes, and this effect is mediated by their maximizing orientation to search for the best product.

Method and Data

In order to test this hypothesis, we ran three studies.

Study 1 (N=228, undergraduate students) provided initial evidence for the relationship between PDB and assortment size choice. Participants were asked to imagine purchasing a pair of jeans and indicated how many different pairs they would examine before making the final decision, using a scale of 0 to 12, which served as the dependent variable (Whitley et al., 2018). Thereafter, following Zhang et al. (2010), PDB was measured by an eight-item scale (e.g., "As citizens, we should put high value on conformity"), with a higher score reflecting a higher level of PDB. A regression analysis on assortment size choice, using PDB as the independent variable, revealed a positive effect of PDB (b = .27, t = 4.13, p < .001), supporting our prediction that high PDB increases individuals' assortment size choice.

Study 2 (N=168, undergraduate students) was designed to replicate the main effect found in Study 1 with a different operationalization for assortment size choice. Participants were asked to imagine that a supercenter would be open, which would offer larger assortments in various product categories (e.g., 24 brands of ice cream) compared to the current store (e.g., 4 brands of ice cream) they used to go to yet would be at a greater distance. Thereafter, participants indicated their likelihood of traveling to the supercenter for future purchases (1 = Not at all and 7 = Extremely), which served as the dependent variable (Briesch et al., 2009). Next, PDB was measured using the same scale as in Study 1. A regression analysis on assortment size choice, using PDB as the independent variable, revealed a positive effect of PDB (b = .17, t = 2.15, p = .03), providing robust evidence for the role PDB played in assortment size choice.

Study 3 (N=200, MTurk workers) was designed to test the mediating role of maximizing orientation. Assortment size choice was measured using the same task as in Study 1, except that the product category changed to headphones. Participants were then asked to rate a four-item state measure assessing their maximizing orientation (e.g., "At that time, I thought about making

sure I choose the best option that is available"; α=.94). Thereafter, participants reported their PDB using the same measure as in Study 1. A regression analysis on assortment size choice, using PDB as the independent variable, revealed a positive effect of PDB (b = .24, t = 3.39, p < .001). Also, maximizing orientation mediated the relationship between PDB and assortment size choice (b = .15; SE =.05; 95%CI [.07, .24]).

Summary of Findings

These three studies provide us initial evidence that those high in PDB tend to prefer larger assortment sizes as they perceive that a large assortment size increases their possibility of finding the best product. This result held across different product categories lending greater validity to the results. Further research will seek to manipulate participants PDB in order to increase the robustness of our findings.

Key Contributions

Managing assortment sizes is a critical challenge for retailers, influencing consumer evaluations of a retailer. While prior research explored preferences for smaller or larger assortments, cultural variables' impact remains underexplored. In the era of globalization and expanding global footprints, understanding the ideal assortment for international markets is crucial. This study examines power distance beliefs (PDB) impact on assortment size preferences.

Through three experiments, we reveal that individuals with high PDB preferences lean towards larger assortment sizes, driven by a maximizing orientation and the need to acquire the best product. This aligns with past research indicating a preference for larger assortments in such states. The findings hold crucial implications for both management and theory. Companies targeting high PDB consumers should offer larger assortments to meet their maximizing

orientation, ensuring access to the best products. Conversely, those targeting low PDB

individuals may not require a vast assortment. The study establishes a novel link between PDB,

maximizing orientation, and preferences for larger assortment sizes, contributing to theoretical

understanding.

References are available upon request.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES: OVERCOMING NON-TRIVIAL PROBLEMS IN EMERGING MARKET FIELD RESEARCH

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Key Words: Better Marketing for a Better World (BMBW), field research, non-WEIRD

populations, emerging markets, pro-social marketing

Description: Using real-life experiences of panelists and roundtable problem solving,

participants will gain skills to overcome the challenges of field research in emerging markets.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Traditional marketing research has been predominantly focused on WEIRD (white,

educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic) populations (Little 2023). However, focusing

solely on WEIRD populations jeopardizes diversity and generalizability (Darling 2017).

Research in emerging markets is one way to bolster study of non-WEIRD populations and

unlocks a pivotal understanding for how marketing can improve lives and the application of that

knowledge globally. The Better Marketing for a Better World (BMBW) initiative, aims to "build

community and support the development and dissemination of knowledge on how marketing can improve lives, sustain livelihoods, strengthen societies, and benefit the world at large" (BMBW Website 2022). However, non-WEIRD BMBW research faces unique challenges, leading to the research question: how can marketing researchers navigate the complexities and non-trivial problems they will face in emerging market field research? We believe that discussing those obstacles and giving researchers skills to work through them will increase interest in broader BMBW initiatives and research on non-WEIRD populations and make future field research more accessible for those researchers.

Summary of Findings

The expert panelists have rich experience working through the unique challenges of emerging market data collection. The following list contains some of the non-trivial field research problems that panelists may address:

- Stephen Anderson experienced challenges in communicating with field staff in Uganda. For example, more native speakers and field workers were needed to manage technology, moderate conversations, and manage expectations in a randomized control trial.

- Nita Umashankar worked with government agencies, hospitals, and a field research team in rural Tanzania to establish telemedicine centers. However, no one used the centers for months resulting in the failure of the operation.

- Ben Beck experienced difficulty working with consumers who did not understand how to complete digital surveys. Consumers in Cambodia, for example, were unfamiliar with rank ordering questions and Likert scales leading to incomplete data.

- Kyli Fox Soug had difficulty implementing culltrally-appropriate compensation for focus group participants in Rwanda. For example, lunch was initially provided however female participants found it inappropriate to eat wtithout their children so then monetary compensation was offered.

- Rajesh Chandy has experienced difficulty in finding the right research implementation partners for various field experiments.

As much of the global south is small business oriented, understanding obstacles for entrepreneurs and how to access and study this difficult-to-reach firm type will be essential.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our special session will contribute to the BMBW research, as it encourages more marketing scholars to take part in research abroad in emerging markets and teaches them skills to work through the non-trivial problems they are likely to face. As marketing for a better world continues to become more readily pursued in academia, it is important to teach scholars and students to overcome barriers early on. The dissemination of this knowledge is not only a tenant of BMBW but also leads to the continued improvement of field research in general. As stated by panelist Rajesh Chandy, marketers today play a crucial role in being either problem solvers or contributors to the growing problems that businesses and societies face (Chandy 2021). Participants from our special session will leave with the understanding of quality field research, an expanded network of emerging market researchers, and skills to create more impactful and empathetic marketing solutions.

References are available upon request.

THE ROLES OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE, FIRM CAPABILITIES, AND STRATEGIC ORIENTATION IN SHAPING EMERGING MARKET PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FIRM SUCCESS

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Keywords: international business, professional service firms, small and medium-sized enterprises, emerging markets, cultural intelligence.

Description: The paper describes cultural intelligence, international orientation, marketing capabilities, and innovativeness as factors driving the emerging market professional service firm's financial success.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

1. What is the role of cross-cultural capabilities (i.e. cultural intelligence or CQ) in helping the professional service firm achieve financial success?

2. What is the role of the firm's international strategic orientation in engendering internal firm capabilities that drive financial success?

Method and Data

We sampled 250 respondents who are CEOs or managers of globally operating professional service small medium sized enterprises (PSF SMEs) from a key emerging market-India. Relationships were examined using structural equation modeling of the survey data. We used well-established scales to measure the variables in the empirical model. All the scales were based on self-report data.

Summary of Findings

The findings show that:

1. The integration of cultural intelligence (CQ) into the firm's knowledge infrastructure positions the firm for financial success; however, the effect of these capabilities on the firm varies with certain CQ dimensions being more impactful.

2. The firm's international orientation drives the development of innovativeness and marketing capabilities in the firm.

Key contributions

This study addresses calls for research into an important, yet neglected area of globally operating emerging market PSF SMEs and the study's findings will have important managerial implications for service firms operating in the B2B and B2C sectors. The study makes several contributions to extant literature. First, the study extends emerging market service SME research by providing a multi-disciplinary perspective - drawing on insights from entrepreneurship, cross cultural studies, management, and marketing - on the factors that service SMEs should focus on to better serve clients and to ensure market success. Second, the study highlights the key role of international orientation in developing internal firm capabilities (i.e., innovativeness and marketing capabilities) that will shape the firm's strategic responses.

Third, the study highlights the role of cultural intelligence – CQ - in helping the firm capitalize on its existing strategic and knowledge-based capabilities to achieve market success.

"References are available upon request."

Marketing Strategy

A LATENT VARIABLE PATH FOR CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND COMPETITIVE LOYALTY

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Keywords: customer satisfaction, ongoing satisfaction, competitive loyalty, behavioural loyalty, self-construal loyalty

Description of paper:

In this paper we examine the nature of customer satisfaction and the nature of competitive loyalty, layout one way of defining the structural determinants of the twin constructs of customer satisfaction and competitive loyalty and demonstrate a single structural equation model that links these two constructs to their structural determinants through a latent variable path.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In this paper we examine the nature of customer satisfaction and the nature of competitive loyalty, layout one way of defining the structural determinants of the twin constructs of customer satisfaction and competitive loyalty and demonstrate a single structural equation model that links these two constructs to their structural determinants through a latent variable path.

Method and Data

Structural equation modelling is used to establish the relationship between customer satisfaction and competitive loyalty, and understand their determinants. The model layout,

specification, identification, and issues of estimation are discussed. The data collection and analysis are beyond the scope of this paper

Summary and Findings

Customer satisfaction measurement and management is a key contributor towards market orientation efforts of a firm. Customer satisfaction is a key determinant of usage value that the firm provides the customer. Improved usage value leads to improved utilities for the firm/ brand in the marketplace. Consequently, customer satisfaction is a positive moderator of brand choice. Customer satisfaction leads to building a customer base and competitive loyalty leads to a loyal customer base that enables the firm take decisions on product development, value delivery processes that are important for delivering superior value to the customer.

A professed expectation could be that customer satisfaction is dependent on functionality, while competitive loyalty being dependent on customer engagement, with customer satisfaction and competitive loyalty being correlated. This would suggest the importance of functionality that includes identification and delivery of usage characteristics, user experience, and good performance, on conformance quality dimensions. Further engagement marketing could become increasingly significant with the advent of the online environment, and impact brand choice that, gets reflected in behavioural loyalty. The moderator of the consumption process on the purchase process is captured through the construct of self-construal loyalty. Both behavioural loyalty and self-construal loyalty contribute towards competitive loyalty.

Key Contributions

The paper 'A latent variable path for customer satisfaction and competitive loyalty' is addressed to both management academicians and management practitioners on the importance of understanding the determinants of these two powerful constructs in marketing literature. Customer satisfaction is a market orientation construct, a consumption psychology construct, as well as related to the customer concept. Competitive loyalty on the other hand is so important

for firms to build a customer base and further an encore for their products and brands. Each reinforce the other, and as such understanding the determinants of customer satisfaction and competitive loyalty helps the marketer in obtaining insight into the moderators of brand choice and category incidence respectively.

Ultimately customer satisfaction as a sole objective of the organization may lead to firm getting entangled with customer emotions and lead to reactionary tendencies by the firm towards the marketplace and technology development. As such, it is postulated that customer satisfaction must be in joint association with another organizational objective such as product quality, technology leadership, performance superiority, product leadership that is a pro-active organizational objective to lead the organization with customer satisfaction processes flourishing the customer relationship and business success.

References

Available upon request.

Back to the Future: Revisiting Porter's Strategy

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

While Porter's typology of the bases for firm competitive advantage (cost leadership

vs. differentiation) continues to dominate both business practice and pedagogy, empirical

research using this typology has dwindled over time and many fundamental managerial

questions remain unanswered. For example, which basis for advantage is most profitable?

How can a firm leverage its choice of strategy into greater firm performance via

complementary capabilities or synergies? Do firms change strategy over time and, if so, why

and with what consequences? Employing a novel text analytic approach, we develop and validate a measure of business strategy (competitive advantage) that is dynamic (over years) and fluid (i.e., allows firms to have a mix of strategies concurrently). Using this new measure, we provide practical managerial insights into which strategy is most profitable and how firms can leverage internal competencies and structural factors that may enable greater leverage of one strategy over the other. Finally, our investigation offers a greater understanding of what may cause changes in strategic emphases over time. By empirically demonstrating that strategy is indeed dynamic, our findings have important theoretical contributions and managerial implications.

RESEARCH QUESTION

In this study, we aim to develop and assess a new measure of strategy by using a text analytic approach, which allows us to obtain a measure of the competitive advantage pursued by a firm that is dynamic (over years) and fluid (i.e., allows firms to have a mix of strategies concurrently). This approach improves on both past and recent measures of Porter's generic strategies (e.g., Hambrick 1983; McAlister et al. 2016) by allowing variance both within and across firms in a single strategic domain. We then assess the new construct's measurement properties and provide evidence that they possess strong face, convergent, and divergent validity. We then test theoretical propositions concerning the types of resources and capabilities that may help to execute strategies to achieve each type of competitive advantage in a large sample of firms over a long time series and find evidence supporting such theorized relationships. These analyses also reveal new insights into the average profit impact of each basis of competitive advantage.

METHOD AND DATA

For the proposed new measure of the bases on which a firm is seeking to complete, we employ a text analytic approach (e.g., Berger et al. 2020) that has been used by strategy scholars to extract

constructs of interest from archival data (e.g., McKenny et al. 2018). We use a computer-aided text analysis package within the R wrapper RapidMiner and company annual reports as the source of firm communication. For the empirical analyses, we combine the textual measures with relevant accounting and financial data from COMPUSTAT.

We employ a panel fixed effects regression, which should partially account for firm- and industry- level heterogeneity and unobserved variables. We also use one-period-forwarded DVs to alleviate reverse causality concerns and an autoregressive component of the first order AR(1) correction to mitigate serial correlation. We partially address reverse causality concerns through our use of one-period forwarded DVs and through the use of relevant instruments.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Findings from our studies reveal that on average, differentiation leads to greater financial performance than cost leadership, although the relationship between both strategies and firm performance is contextual. Our results suggest that cost leaders achieve greater profits when there are synergies with operational capabilities only while differentiators reap greater performance from marketing and R&D capabilities. More importantly, misfits between capabilities and strategy result in a reduction in firm performance, contrary to expectations (as generally capabilities are regarded as beneficial). We find that differentiation is most conducive to leveraging positive gains in performance from market share increases while cost leadership offers an improvement in performance from increases in firm size. Lastly, our investigations also reveal why strategic change may occur as well as the direction in which strategic change is useful depending on contingencies affecting the firm.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

These findings make several contributions to the literature. The first contribution of this research is a new measure of the business strategy that improves on existing measures of the Porter typology of competitive advantage (e.g., McAlister et al. 2016) by allowing variance both within and across firms in a single strategic domain. The second contribution is offering insights

into which strategy is most profitable and what factors enable firms to leverage these strategies into greater profits. Since firms with different strategies may seek to employ distinct marketing actions and leverage their assets differently, our investigation at the strategic level is more fundamental and comprehensive than studies on the direct impact of marketing assets and actions on firm performance. In fact, while generally capabilities and growth in market share and size are considered ideal, our research provides insights into misfits that may hinder profitability. Finally, the third contribution of our research is that our study is the first, to the best of our knowledge, to investigate changes in strategic emphases over time and explore possible reasons and ramifications of such changes.

BRANDED ENTERTAINMENT:

THE SOLUTION TO CONSUMERS DECREASING ATTENTION SPANS

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Keywords: Brand management, branded entertainment, entertainment, marketing, advertising

Description: This paper conceptualizes branded entertainment as a contemporary advertising strategy, provides a specific decision-making framework for branded entertainment content, and derives a research agenda for future endeavors in this field.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Facing customers' avoidance of advertising, marketers increasingly seek to get their brand messages across via branded entertainment formats such as movies, games, podcasts and many more. Yet, in academic literature, most branded entertainment studies focus individually on investigating singular aspects of increasing brand awareness, building a solid consumer-brand relationship, or singular applications and perceptions of specific forms of branded entertainment

(Capelli et al., 2016; Kunz et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2010). Van Loggerenberg et al. (2021) discuss branded entertainment mostly from a narrative perspective and proposes different perceptions about branded entertainment in dependence on the geographic location of the marketing activities. However, academic literature does not provide precise insights on what comprises branded entertainment and how marketers can use it successfully. Thus, we lack a clear conceptualization and managerial guidance on how brands can benefit from this growing marketing opportunity.

To advance research in this field, we, therefore, fill this existing gap in the literature by introducing a contemporary definition of branded entertainment and demarcation to other related research fields, and derive key marketing decision areas for branded entertainment. This has been achieved by investigating various forms and formats, and content distribution strategies from theoretical as well as managerial perspectives.

Method and Data

To determine the key marketing decision areas for branded entertainment, its necessary capabilities as marketing activity, and to unveil the challenges from practitioners' points, we adopt an exploratory, discovery-oriented, grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). We divided the data collection process in two phases. Through an extensive literature review, we established a solid literature foundation for initiating our empirical study and deriving the definition and demarcation of branded entertainment. Those initially retrieved insights were then complimented by 15 in-depth expert interviews to derive the key managerial decision areas as well as the research agenda for the field of branded entertainment. We considered the views on branded entertainment from three different perspectives: agencies, marketing experts from industry corporations, and creative studios.

To identify common themes within the data and to ultimately derive the key managerial decision areas of branded entertainment, we utilized an axial, open, and selective coding process (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman & Pedersen, 2013). During the coding process we then narrowed down our first- and second-order constructs into three aggregate dimensions, each representing one key decision area for branded entertainment. We also conducted a trustworthiness assessment (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The results were constantly triangulated through the input from practitioner reports and additional literature to ensure the optimal coverage of retrieved data as well as data validity (Yin, 2018).

Summary of Findings

After collecting and analyzing the data from our expert interviews and the practitioner reports, we observed multiple phenomena and categorized them according to different strategic recommendations for branded entertainment. Out of those we derived specific managerial decision-making areas and combined them finally in aggregate dimensions in form of three distinct branded entertainment phases. Those three subsequent phases are defined as "Ideation & Strategic Assessment Phase", "Design & Execution Phase", and "Success Evaluation & Management Phase". Within the design and execution of branded entertainment, with our research we summarized various possible forms of branded entertainment and categorized them as "branded entertainment archetypes".

Juxtaposing the insights from the managerial interviews and practitioner reports with current academic research on branded entertainment, several contemporary challenges were identified. For each of the branded entertainment phases, we outlined gaps within the existing academic

literature streams as well as specific challenges in managerial practice and formulated respective questions for future research endeavors.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our research provides the following contributions to research and practice. First, we developed a clear conceptualization and demarcation of branded entertainment from related but adjacent disciplines such as traditional advertising (Teixeira et al. 2014; de Vries et al., 2017), sponsoring (Wakefield et al., 2020; Cornwell, 2019), and product placement (Russell, 2019; Guo et al., 2019), thereby, we illustrate the need to consider branded entertainment as a distinct marketing research field. We propose that branded entertainment requires a distinct investigation in academic research and elaborate on the different managerial capabilities – particularly compared to advertising, product placement and sponsoring – to be implemented and provide a basis for the nascent research on branded entertainment. Second, we contribute to managerial practice by illustrating which key capabilities are needed for marketers to implement branded entertainment campaigns and strategies successfully. Besides, it provides a basis for more nuanced academic research into the success factors and success management of branded entertainment. Third, juxtaposing current challenges in branded entertainment practice with existing academic research, we provide a research agenda for the branded entertainment field and particularly outline opportunities for distinct research streams into branded entertainment. Thereby, we contribute to recent advancement in advertising research to broaden the field.

References are available upon request.

Competitive Segmentation Analysis To Compare Pricing Effects for Competing Brands

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Keywords: Segmentation, Competition, Brand, Price, Method

Description: This research shows how Competitive Segmentation Analysis (CSA) can be applied to compare the performance of competing brands in relation to price changes.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Diverse customer groups often exhibit unique brand preferences and respond disparately to various marketing initiatives. While there exists a substantial body of research examining the impact of marketing variables, such as price elasticities, on revenue generation, it is notable that there is currently an absence of methodologies dedicated to analyzing and understanding segment-specific responses to marketing activities, particularly concerning competing brands. To close this gap, we introduce the Competitive Segmentation Analysis (CSA).

Method and Data

Our study employs CSA to evaluate and compare the revenue performance of three distinct national coffee brands within a single retailer setting. We focus on delineating and contrasting the competitive advantages or disadvantages exhibited by these observed brands concerning previously identified consumer segments. To demonstrate the practical application of CSA, we specifically examine the influence of regular and promotional pricing strategies on the revenue generated by these national brands.

In our segmentation approach, we utilize cluster analysis based on demographic factors to categorize consumers into distinct segments. The dataset used for our analysis comprises extensive household panel data, encompassing approximately 5.5 million purchase records spanning from 2016 to 2022, sourced from German grocery stores. This comprehensive dataset serves as the foundation for our investigation into the market performance and competitive dynamics of these national coffee brands within the retail landscape.

Summary of findings

Our research illustrates the applicability of the CSA as a valuable tool for assessing the performance of rival brands concerning various pricing variables and their impact on market share within a specific industry or market segment. Through our comprehensive analysis, we have uncovered significant insights that highlight the competitive advantage held by a particular coffee brand in contrast to the remaining two brands operating within the same market.

The CSA serves as a robust metric for evaluating and comparing the relative strengths and strategic advantages of different companies or brands in a competitive marketplace. In our study, we employed the CSA framework to gauge the effectiveness of these coffee brands' pricing strategies and their consequential influence on their respective market shares.

Key Contributions

Our study introduces valuable contributions to academia and practical application by demonstrating the effectiveness of utilizing Competitive Segmentation Analysis (CSA) to compare the competitive advantages or disadvantages among different brands. This approach offers a novel method for refining the control of marketing activities within specific market segments. Given that customers hold distinct perceptions regarding various brands, their responses to marketing activities can vary significantly across brands. Despite the widespread acknowledgment of this phenomenon, limited research exists for comparing the effects of marketing activities on revenue performance among competitive brands within diverse consumer segments.

Our research offers a practical-oriented methodology that assists in determining the most efficient strategies, such as price adjustments, tailored to specific brands and customer groups. This is achieved through a combination of brand competition analysis and segmentation analysis. By evaluating and comparing the performance of different brands, this approach enables more precise decision-making. The adaptable nature of CSA allows its customization to suit various market situations, empowering retailers to compare individual brands against the market or directly assess the advantages or disadvantages of multiple brands.

ECO-FRIENDLY MARKETING STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOME: THE ROLE OF LEARNING

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Keywords: Eco-friendly marketing, eco-friendly learning, stakeholders, emerging economy

Description: The study will contend with the unique characteristics of the eco-friendly marketing mix's impact on performance in emerging economies by focusing on unfolding the process of the impact along with the contingencies.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

A renewed focus on pursuing eco-friendly initiatives to enhance sustainability has gained momentum both in developed countries and emerging nations, especially after the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012 (Wright and Nyberg 2017). Firms in emerging economies are not lagging in thinking about environmental stewardship while deploying marketing strategies (Heinberg et al. 2021). Bangladesh is an emerging economy in South Asia with alarming environmental pollution which is driven largely by mass industrialization, energy consumption, economic growth, and lack of local environmental concerns (Chowdhury et al., 2021). Extensive research argues that eco-friendly marketing helps companies enhance performance (Katsikeas, Leonidou, and Zeriti 2016; Leonidou et al. 2015).

The mixed empirical evidence on the eco-friendly marketing–performance relationship (Zhang and Berhe 2022; D'Souza et al., 2015; Leonidou et al. 2013; Dangelico and Pujari, 2010) limits our understanding of the role of eco-friendly marketing strategy in firm success and urges the necessity for more research on how eco-friendly marketing relates to performance. One interesting research avenue unfolds here to investigate the intervening role of other variables in the eco-friendly marketing performance link. The conceptual model posits eco-friendly exploratory learning, eco-friendly exploitative learning, and eco-friendly learning anxiety/pressure as the mediators. Further, as the firms interact with different stakeholders and learn in different ways (Mena and Chabowski, 2015), the study aims to examine the contingencies in the eco-friendly marketing and performance link. Thus, the study focuses on answering the following research questions.

a. Can the eco-friendly marketing strategy-performance link be explained through eco-friendly learning?

b. What factors shape this mechanism i.e., under what condition is a specific learning link enhanced or reduced in strength?

Method and Data

To validate our model, we targeted Bangladesh as an emerging economy. Bangladesh has been classified as a frontier market in the next eleven emerging market middle-income economies (Rashid, 2016). The researcher started the fieldwork with exploratory qualitative interviews based on the TiU approach (Zeithaml et al. 2020). A series of in-depth interviews with marketing managers was conducted using a depth-over-breadth strategy. Insights from the interviews were used to assess the model appropriateness, construct conceptualization, and operationalization. Initially developed questionnaire after having face validity with 10 managers, academicians, and researchers was used to conduct a pilot survey. The pilot study result was analyzed to check the reliability and validity of the constructs. A longitudinal survey with three waves of data collection in different industries is being conducted to test the hypotheses, as multi-industry sampling facilitates rigorous data analysis and enhances generalizability (Spyropoulou et al. 2018). Initially, 1200 firms were contacted to locate the key informants. Managerial personnel as the key informants are considered as the valid group of respondents to collect the data who are knowledgeable, confident, and involved with any managerial activities in the marketing of that firm (Katsikeas, Skarmeas, and Bello 2009). Structural equation modeling by using MPlus will be used to analyze the data.

Summary of Findings

The findings from the in-depth interviews helped the researcher to contextualize the model, redefine the constructs for the context, and devise the measures of the construct. The findings also confirmed that eco-friendly marketing strategies are gaining importance in this context. The researchers gained insights that firms are getting new eco-friendly knowledge to use alternative materials in the production process after being involved in eco-friendly marketing. Further, firms are adjusting their production process to incorporate recyclable materials, to enhance future recyclability and so on. Moreover, eco-friendly marketing strategies sometimes result in tension for the marketers due to novelty in the context that may undermine the performance. Pilot study results helped to have insights about the scale reliability in the context. The survey findings of the research will advance various research streams of eco-friendly marketing to explain the performance.

Key Contributions

By articulating eco-friendly learning as an underlying mechanism, the study will endeavor to extend the marketing strategy literature. Theoretically, we will synthesize different types of learning with motivation creativity theory to position distinct types of learning: eco-friendly exploratory learning as mastery-focused behavior, eco-friendly exploitative learning as performance-focused behavior, and eco-friendly learning anxiety/pressure as avoidance-focused behavior (Elliot and Thrash 2002; March 1991). A novel aspect of learning-eco-friendly learning anxiety/pressure that results in underperformance (Musarra et al., 2023) will further strengthen the marketing strategy literature. Grounded on stakeholder theory, the study will investigate diverse contingency factors between eco-friendly marketing mix-eco-friendly learning, hence, the study will further advance the literature on eco-friendly marketing. Further, as emerging markets evolve

from the periphery of core marketing practices (Sheth, 2011); policymakers, academics, and researchers will have the opportunity to question existing practices and perspectives of eco-friendly marketing strategies that have been developed in industrialized nations. The findings of the study will guide policymakers and stakeholders of diverse nations to have new insights into the impact of an eco-friendly marketing mix on performance.

References

References are available upon request.

ENTREPRENEURIAL MARKETING STRATEGY: UNPACKING THE QUADRATIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIGITALISATION AND FIRM PERFORMANCE

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Keywords: Entrepreneurial marketing strategy; digitalisation; performance; resource-based theory.

Description: To examine entrepreneurial marketing strategy in small businesses, this paper unpacks the quadratic relationship between digitalisation and firm performance under the moderating role of entrepreneurial marketing in a context of high uncertainty and disruption (immediate post-COVID-19 environment).

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Having survived the COVID-19 pandemic, small businesses learned the importance of flexibility when faced with uncertainty. This flexibility extends to the realm of marketing strategy, as businesses were pressed to digitalise their products and services, and in some cases, business models (OECD, 2021), referred to as digital acceleration (Felzensztein & Tretiakov, 2023). Digitalisation enables small businesses to reach new customers, enter new markets, and transform the customer experience (Rosin et al., 2020), partly via the flexibility it offers. However, the impact of digitalisation on firm performance remains largely unexplored (Ferreira et al., 2019).

Theoretically underpinned by the resource-based theory (Barney, 1991; 2018), this research unpacks the digitalisation-firm performance relationship and investigates the extent to which entrepreneurial marketing activities, defined as the "*proactive identification and exploitation of opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches*" (Morris et al., 2002, p. 4), enable businesses to achieve performance gains via digitalisation. Consequently, this research helps small businesses unlock their potential by enabling them to create value for their customers by utilising digitalisation supported by entrepreneurial marketing activities, especially during uncertainty in a disrupted global economy. To this end, the moderating effects of the different dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing are also unpacked.

Method And Data

US wineries were selected as the empirical context to test the conceptual framework as these small businesses actively create value for their customers while being entrepreneurial in nature (e.g., Dana et al., 2013). Wineries face an additional critical global challenge in the form of climate

change (Scott, 2022), which makes them suitable for unpacking the digitalisation-firm performance relationship and studying the moderating effect of entrepreneurial marketing given their need to manoeuvre uncertainty and disruption.

The sampling frame was a purchased database that contained the names and contact details of vineyards and wineries from across the US. An electronic survey containing operationalisations of the conceptual framework's latent variables was designed using Qualtrics. After pre-testing the survey and undergoing a pilot (Bolton, 1993), data was collected in an immediate post-COVID-19 environment from wineries across the US, with a final sample size of 306 small businesses. The data analysis was conducted using SPSS and LISREL. A post-hoc test was used to understand the dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing affecting the digitalisation-firm performance relationship. Hence, the moderating effect of each of the seven dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing was individually tested, which enabled us to examine how the marketing/entrepreneurship interface affects the digitalisation-firm performance relationship.

Summary of Findings

While digitalisation was found to have no effect on the performance of internationalised firms, it was found to bring growth opportunities to businesses via digital disruption (Joensuu-Salo et al., 2018).

> *H1. Digitalisation has a nonlinear (inverted U-shaped) relationship with firm performance.*

The link between entrepreneurial marketing and digitalisation is demonstrated in the latter's ability to transform the way businesses co-create, deliver, and capture value in their interactions with customers, partners, and stakeholders (Autio, 2017). Higher digitalisation enables entrepreneurial behaviour to enhance strategic decisions in foreign markets (Hervé et al., 2020).

> *H2. Entrepreneurial marketing activities positively moderate the nonlinear (inverted U-shaped) relationship between digitalisation and firm performance.*

The results of the main model-testing stage showed that digitalisation yielded a significant quadratic relationship with firm performance, hence H1 was supported. Furthermore, entrepreneurial marketing activities positively and significantly moderated this nonlinear (inverted U-shaped) relationship; H2 was also supported. Control variables (and procedural factors) contributed to explaining the variance in firm performance. The results of the post-hoc test showed that specific dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing significantly affected the digitalisation-firm performance relationship in different ways. Innovativeness positively and significantly affected the quadratic relationship while risk-taking had a negative and significant moderating effect on the relationship.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research examines how small businesses can utilize an entrepreneurial marketing strategy to manoeuvre emerging challenges. First, considering the mixed results of prior studies (e.g., Hervé et al., 2020), this research shows the quadratic (inverted-U) nature of the digitalisation-firm performance relationship, which explains the potential negative outcomes with too little or too much digitalisation. Second, this study unpacks the moderating roles of facets of entrepreneurial marketing (Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2019) on the mentioned quadratic relationship while identifying positive (i.e., innovativeness) and negative (i.e., risk-taking) effects. Third, the study expands the boundaries of the resource-based theory (Barney, 1991; 2018) into entrepreneurial marketing strategy research focusing on value creation in small businesses.

Owner-managers of small businesses can benefit from the practical recommendations of this research. First, careful consideration should be given to the degree of digitalisation applied within the business. Applying too little digitalisation can stand in the way of realizing positive outcomes while simultaneously wasting the invested resources. Similarly, applying too much digitalisation can be problematic as the resulting products, services, processes, or markets served could reduce customer value. Customers might prefer digitalised offerings up to a point, after which reverting to the traditional/legacy offering is preferred.

References are available upon request.

FIRM VALUE DYNAMICS OF MARKET AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION: INSIGHTS FROM 22 YEARS OF DATA

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Description: This study uses computer-aided text analysis of annual reports from 2,844 U.S. firms to examine the evolution of the non-linear relationship of market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation with firm value over a period of 22 years.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Market orientation (MO) and entrepreneurial orientation (EO) are the most prominent strategic orientations investigated in marketing research. While MO relates to the level of which a company dedicates itself to meeting customer needs and outperforming the competition along the way (Narver & Slater, 1990), EO focuses on the decision-making styles, processes, and methods that drive entrepreneurial actions (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

Prior research on strategic orientation focuses on overarching long-term relationships. Many authors have already found positive linear effects of both MO and EO on firm performance. Despite early warnings (e.g., Kohli and Jaworski 1990), only a few studies deal with non-linear relationships on firm performance. Aiding to that this study aims to identify the optimal level of MO and EO and its evolution over time.

Given that market-oriented companies hold high levels of market knowledge, they are able to respond with incremental adjustments to changes in demand at an early stage. As a result we expect the optimum level of MO to be less subject to strong volatility. EO is characterized by a proactive and risky approach that recognizes opportunities faster and utilize them with risky investments. We therefore assume a pattern for EO that reflects short-term "in-&-out" decisions.

Method and Data

We used a variety of sources to collect objective data for a final sample of 2,844 U.S. firms. To objectively measure MO and EO we gathered data via computer-aided text analysis (CATA) using established dictionaries (McKenny et al. 2018) on 10-K reports of all publicly traded companies available at the SEC database. As these reports are standardized, they ensure comparability and provide insights in management perceptions and business strategies (Zachary

et al. 2011) and their objective development over time (Bhattacharya, Misra, and Sardashti 2019). To measure firm value we estimated abnormal return (AR) using Fama and French (2015) four factor model.

To identify short-term developments we used rolling panel regressions of three years with industry-centered variables and estimate the following model:

$Abnormal\ Return_{i,t+1}$

$$= \beta_1 Abnormal\ Return_{i,t} + \beta_2 MO_{i,t} + \beta_3 EO_{i,t} + \beta_4 MOxEO \qquad (1)$$

$$+ \ \beta_5 MO^2{}_{i,t} + \beta_6 EO^2{}_{i,t} + \beta_7 Controls_{i,t} + \eta_i \ + \varepsilon_{i,t}$$

where i stands for firm and t for time (fiscal year), $Controls_{i,t}$ include total assets, marketing expenses, financial leverage, current ratio and return on assets. η_i is the time-invariant unobservable firm-fixed effects and $\varepsilon_{i,t}$ is the random error representing all unobserved influences on future returns.

Based on the results of our rolling models we conducted multiple response surface analyses (RSA) to identify the firm value maximizing combinations of MO and EO.

Summary of Findings

Based on regression outcomes, we found inverted U-shaped relationships for MO and EO with AR in periods [2000-2002] to [2004-2006] as well as between [2018-2020] and [2020-2022] (p<.05). For MO alone we further see inverted U-shaped relations until [2009-2011] after which we observe U-shaped relationships from period [2010-2012] to [2015-2017] (p<.001). EO's relationship with AR between 2005 and 2019 can be described as U-shaped in periods [2008-2010] to [2010-2012] and in [2012-2014] (p<.001). In period [2007-2009], [2011-2013] and from [2014-2016] to [2016-2018] the relationship is inverted U-shaped (p<.05 for EO²).

Based on the RSA we see lower volatility for the optimal level of MO, which is in line with our expectation. The pattern of its optimal level undergoes structural break between period [2005-2007] and [2008-2010] and after period [2018-2020]. Besides these outliers we see a

constant level of MO. For EO we see a structural break in development in period [2008-2010] after which the expected "in-&-out" pattern to utilize opportunities is visible. We see these opportunities in period [2016-2018] as well as during COVID in period [2018-2020] and [2019-2021]. An additional peak is visible between period [2011-2013] and [2014-2016] which connects with high AR in corresponding periods.

Key Contributions

We provide at least four important contributions to theory. First, our results show both inverted U-shaped and U-shaped relationships of MO and EO with firm value. Second, we demonstrate that previously identified effects do not generalize over time. Rather, our results show dynamics in the relationships of MO and EO to firm value over time and suggest more complex and fast changing relationship patterns than previously thought. Third, we observe how these non-linear relationships result in different performance maximizing combination of MO and EO. While prior research assumed that either a focus on one strategy or on both strategies at the same time would maximize firm value, we find arguments that a certain level of MO is continuously necessary, while investments in EO are more and more short-term in nature. Lastly we see unexpected sudden changes from one period to another that are maybe related to major financial crisis.

Overall managers are well-advised to generally follow a market oriented strategy with the temporary aid of EO in cases where resources are available to utilize opportunities and create and sustain firm value.

References are available upon request

FROM VULNERABILITY TO VIGILANCE: DEVELOPING A RESILIENT MARKETING MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK WITH RISK MANAGEMENT

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Keywords: Risk management capability, marketing resilience, firm performance.

Description: This study examines the pivotal role of risk management capability in bolstering marketing resilience and firm performance.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Understanding how organizations tackle disruptive market changes is an important discussion point for both academicians and practitioners. Every substantive marketing decision involves risk management concerns. In this research, we try to conceptualize risk management capability and how it can be developed to improve firm performance.

Methods and data

Using multiple methods (Qualitative Interview and Survey) across studies, the authors uncover the phenomenon and develop key concepts.

Summary of Findings

The results reveal that risk management capability equips firms to handle unforeseen setbacks and enables them to chart strategic paths more effectively. The results of our study validate that risk management capability helps to improve resiliency and firm success.

Key Contributions

The study provides a blueprint for managers to develop risk management capabilities. This finding is insightful because it links the organization's risk management capability to firm performance. This research has another important implication for giving directions to the senior management involved in their organization's strategic and tactical marketing actions.

"References are available upon request."

HOW DO CHIEF MARKETING OFFICERS (CMOS) CONTRIBUTE TO INNOVATION?

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Keywords: Chief Marketing Officers, Upper Echelons, Innovation, Corporate Governance, Market Orientation, Capabilities

Description: This paper studies how chief marketing offers (CMOs) contribute to firm performance by increasing the value of the firm's innovation efforts and identifies conditions that may strengthen or weaken this value-creating CMO role.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The purpose of this study is to explore two main research questions: (1) Do CMOs have a positive impact on the value of firm innovation efforts? and (2) how do BODs and CEOs influence the impact of CMOs on firm innovation? Although innovation has been considered one of the top priorities of BODs and CEOs, we still do not know whether, when, and how CMOs may affect innovation (You et al. 2020). Plus, in practice, innovation is a common responsibility of CMOs' job (Nath and Mahajan 2008) and even when not a formal responsibility it is commonly an expectation that CMOs will contribute to firms' innovation efforts. We adopt an upper echelon theory lens to explore CMOs' role in driving valuable innovations and focus on people above CMOs (i.e., BODs and CEOs) because they will likely have influence over other factors that are more downstream in the process (e.g., CMO power and discretion, firm resources, etc.) by interacting with and evaluating CMOs on a regular basis.

Method and Data

We empirically test our hypotheses using a large representative sample assembled from multiple databases. We integrate five databases: Compustat, ExecuComp, BoardEx, Tech Innovation Dataset from Kogan et al. (2017), and Hoberg-Phillips Data Library. Our final sampling framework includes 14,272 firm-year observations representing 1,520 unique firms between 1999 and 2016. We use a control function approach with peer-based instruments following prior studies with standard practices to address econometric and estimation concerns arising from the panel structure of our data. Importantly, we leverage a new measure of the market value (i.e., dollar value) of firm innovation efforts, which is based on the firm's abnormal stock returns over

the three-day window around the date of patent approval. Although the market value of innovation does not necessarily coincide with its scientific value such as citation-weighted patent counts, the market (vs. scientific) value of innovation would be more closely aligned with CMOs' role and CEOs' priority: enhancing growth and innovation.

Summary of Findings

For our main analysis, we find that firms with CMOs on average create more valuable innovation than firms without CMOs. In other words, firms with CMOs (those put more emphasis on marketing) tend to perform better on commercializing innovation. And with additional analyses, we suggest that CMOs achieve greater performance on firm innovation efforts by making investments and knowledge on innovation more market-relevant and therefore more valuable rather than increasing R&D spending or creating more knowledge (e.g., number of patents). We also find that on the one side, CEO overconfidence and board tenure may work against CMOs' performance. All else equal, more overconfident CEO and longer board tenue may weaken the positive impact of CMOs on firm innovation. On the other side, insider CEOs and marketing-experienced board members may provide better support to CMOs so that their performance on innovation can be enhanced. To provide more understanding on the relationship between CMOs and firm performance, we show that innovation is one channel through which CMOs contribute to firm financial performance.

Key Contributions

This study allows us to make both theoretical and practical contributions. First, this study will contribute to both upper echelon and marketing research by expanding current knowledge of

positive performance outcomes that can be attributed to CMOs and gaining an initial understanding of how upper echelons above CMOs may affect CMOs' ability to improve innovation. Second, this study introduces a new measure of innovation from Finance to Marketing. This new measure is not only empirically meaningful (e.g., providing a linkage between CMOs and firm performance) but also conceptually meaningful compared to traditional measures of innovation, which are number of patents or citation-weighed patents, the new measure suggests that CMOs drive high market-value innovations not just number of innovations or the ones with high scientific value). In terms of practical implications, our findings will support importance of CMOs by further clarifying CMOs' contribution to firm performance. This is particularly important as CMOs have been struggled with gaining recognition within firms, which is reflected in high turnover rates and negative perceptions of their performance from CEOs. Also, the results of our study can provide managerial guidance on how shareholders and BODs may leverage corporate governance to help CMOs achieve superior marketing performance.

How Should CMOs Behave on Social Media Platforms in the Digital Age?

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Keywords: CMO, power, social media content, firm performance, SUR model

Description: This study reveals that in the digital age, the power of Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) is not limited inside of the firm. They may expand such power in a step further via p social media platforms to trigger better firm performance. CMOs are more powerful than you expect.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: Despite the growing academic interest surrounding CMOs, the focal point has predominantly rested on their influence within the organizational framework. Specifically, prior research has centered on the impact of CMO presence in the top management team (TMT) (e.g., Germann, Ebbes, and Grewal 2015; Nath and Bharadwaj 2020), the functional dimensions of CMO roles within firms (i.e., strategic discretion, operational discretion, financial discretion), and the correlation between CMO attributes (i.e., education, personality, and demographic) and firm performance (e.g., Homburg et al. 2014; Wang, Saboo, and Grewal 2015). However, there is limited insight into the influence that a CMO may generate outside of the firm – CMO external influence – via social media platforms. To fill in such research gap, our study aims to investigate CMO's power on social media platforms and answer two key questions: (1) How does CMO's external influence through social media platforms translate

into customer engagement and firm performance? (2) To what extent is this influence moderated by the CMO power within the organization?

Method and Data: To empirically examine the proposed conceptual framework, data from three sources have been integrated into a unified panel dataset. The first set of information was collected via corporate report 10-K, BoardEx, Bloomberg, and LinkedIn. It covers information on variables related to CMO positions and TMT characteristics. To obtain these data, we filter U.S. public firms from COMPUTSAT and selected those with CMOs from 2010 to 2020. This yielded 196 firms. The second set includes firm stock performance-related variables which were collected through Refinitiv and COMPUSTAT. The third set contains the volume and content of CMO generated content (CMOGC) and firm generated content (FGC) from Twitter API. For each of the collected daily tweets, we rely on a supervised deep learning method – Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT) (Devlin et al. 2019) – to classify CMOGC into business-related and non-business. By merging and aggregating the three sets of data on a daily level, we obtain 787, 528 observations. Enabled by the collected dataset, we developed the Seemingly Unrelated Regression model (Zellner 1962) to assess the impact of CMO's external influence on firm performance and how such impacts might vary depending on the CMO's internal power.

Summary of Findings: The results reveal that observe that CMOGC positively affects customer engagement, indicating the importance spillover effects of CMOGC. Moreover, we observe that the impacts of FGC and CMOGC turn out to be weaker when CMOs have higher levels within the TMT. While we are expecting that CMO's power breadth weakens the effects of FGC and CMOGC on customer engagement, we find the opposite relationship. This suggests that CMOGC and FGC guided by CMOs who have multiple functions in the TMT are more likely to trigger customer engagement. Regarding the moderating role of CMO's power depth, the results partially align with our expectations, showing that the effects CMOGC and FGC on

customer engagement are stronger in situations where CMOs have higher power depth. At the same time, CMO's power depth significantly negatively moderates the relationship between CMOGC and customer engagement. Moreover, the same patterns have been captured in the moderating role of CMO power width. This suggests that when a firm has more than one CMO, any content published in social media related to the firm (CMOGC and FGC) is less likely to increase customer engagement. Conversely, nonbusiness CMOGC has a greater possibility of upsurging customer engagement. Finally, the results are consistent with prior research, suggesting that customer engagement increases abnormal returns and reduces idiosyncratic risk.

Statement of Key Contributions: This study presents substantial implications for both academia and practitioners, enriching the discourse on CMOs from different perspectives. Theoretical contributions are twofold, addressing significant gaps in the literature. First, it advances the understanding of CMOs' impact within and beyond organizational boundaries, intricately linking their behavior social media platforms to customer engagement toward FGC and the subsequent firm performance. This timely endeavor responds to recent calls, such as those made by the Marketing Science Institute (MSI), thus fostering a more comprehensive grasp of CMO influence. On a methodological level, our research introduces innovation by employing advanced text analysis techniques, specifically BERT, to decode intricate CMO behavior patterns on social media platforms. Through this, we illuminate the potential of harnessing unstructured data sources for strategic insights. The managerial implications are noteworthy, offering actionable guidance to enhance customer engagement toward the firm and firm performance. By discerning the distinct effects of various content types (CMOGC business and non-business related) in social media platforms, our findings provide essential direction for optimizing communication strategies. That is, firms may refine communication strategies, perceive CMOs holistically, and select CMOs with traits in social media platforms that align with customer engagement and firm performance objectives.

IMPACT OF INFLUENCER AND MICROGRANT IN THE ADOPTION AND VALUATION OF SUBSCRIPTION-BASED SERVICES

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Description: Using an incentive compatible field experiment the present research finds that microcredit provision improves adoption and willing-to-pay for a primary healthcare subscription relative to use of influencer.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) in healthcare is a significant challenge in low- and middle-income countries. Prepayment-based subscription service offers a solution to overcome the debt trap due to OOPE. However, the uncertainty about future usage, provider credibility, and liquidity crunch could present significant challenges in the adoption of such plans. Given these challenges, identifying factors that motivate consumers to overcome their uncertainty and present bias to subscribe to an uncertain future healthcare service is an important marketing question.

In this research, we examine the impact of marketing levers that can help overcome the aforementioned challenges, improving consumer's adoption and valuation of a healthcare subscription. Our exploratory discussion with organizations working in the healthcare domain and patients confirmed that (a) uncertainty of usage and lack of trust in the organization, and (b) severe liquidity crunch are the two most significant barriers to the uptake of a subscription service.

We examine the role of influencers and microgrant in overcoming the above challenges and in promoting the adoption of services where usage is exogenous (not determined by the user).

Method and Data

A non-profit organization (NPO) providing primary healthcare through its clinics in a tribal area of western India was interested in offering a subscription for its services. To enable adoption and understand valuation of the subscription, we designed a field experiment where the villages from the catchment area of the service provider were randomly allocated to three arms: (a) where the baseline information about the subscription service was provided (*Control*), (b) where a local influencer spoke about the benefits and importance of subscription coverage (in addition to the baseline information) (treatment 1 - *Influencer*), and (c) where microgrant was made available to the interested respondents (in addition to the baseline information) (treatment 2 - *Microgrant*). The valuation was elicited from interested respondents and subscription cards were sold, making this study incentive-compatible.

Summary of Findings

We find that microgrant leads to a 22% lift in the uptake of a subscription service compared with the baseline condition. The lift is not statistically significant for the influencer arm. However, we witness a significantly higher valuation of the subscription service relative to the baseline condition for both the influencer and microgrant treatments. We also find that prior users of the clinic adopt more relative to the non-users, signifying the role of prior usage in reducing uncertainty much more than that of an influencer. The results hold when compared against the individual level heterogenous treatment effects, estimated using the machine learning based causal forest approach.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our research contributes to the literature on healthcare by studying influencer's impact on the adoption and, notably, service valuation. Globally, firms spend billions (USD 21.1 Billion in 2023) on influencers to promote their product (*Influencer Marketing Hub* 2022). Whether this translates to increased valuation of the product by consumers is not clear. Our findings highlight that influencers lead to improved valuation. Second, we contribute to the literature on the valuation of subscriptions to services with exogenously determined usage, a gap in the current literature. Third, we extend the conversation around the impact of microgrant by clearly estimating its effect on adoption and valuation in the context of services with uncertain future usage. Our paper also responds to the calls for the use of marketing to better the world by identifying ways of improving healthcare adoption in LMIC context.

Finally, we also contribute to practice, helping healthcare organizations understand how to encourage consumers to adopt subscription-based services for helping them manage OOPE in times of emergency. Such subscription services also help in aggregating demand for the service provider, thereby improving the viability of their own operations.

References are available upon request.

MODELING FACTOR MARKET COMPETITION USING TEXTSPATIAL APPROACH: AN EVIDENCE FROM FIRM MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

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Keywords: TextSpatial, Firm Performance, Factor Market Competition, Spatial Econometrics, Inter-firm similarity

Description: This paper investigates the inter-firm effect of the similarities in firms' factor-market strategies on the firm performance by utilizing an innovative TextSpatial method, combining spatial econometrics with text analytics

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In a competitive environment, firms build their strategies to maximize the shareholder profits through marketing and business models in product markets and by acquiring resources in factor markets (Barney 1986). The strategic decisions made by the competitors also affect a firm's financial performance (FP) (Zahavi and Lavie 2013). Firms generally study the competitors through tangible information in product markets, which is easy because of the tangibility of the product-related aspects. In factor markets however, the firms may find it difficult to understand the competitors' strategies and market their own intents. One way the firms self-market their intents to different stakeholders is through the mission and vision statements (Quigley 1994). In this paper, we study the inter-firm effect of the similarities in firms' factor-market strategies, as stated through the mission and vision statements, on the FP. We answer three key questions using innovative text-spatial method: (i) is there a competitive effect of firms' self-marketing strategy, in the form of its vision and mission statements, on FP, (ii) how much additional FP is explained by such ecosystem effects, and (iii) how do such ecosystem effects act? Do they act through neighbors' inputs, neighbors' outcomes, or both?

Method and Data

We argue that similarity between firms' factor market strategies can be assessed by measuring the similarity between their vision and mission statements. To achieve this, we construct *text-transformation sub-model,* applying text analytics techniques on the vision and mission statements to build a Cosine similarity matrix W (Hoberg and Phillips, 2010), representing inter-firm distances in latent space. We then build *spatial econometric sub-model,* constructing a Spatial Durbin Model (SDM) (Anselin, Florax, and Rey 2004), regressing the FP on the spatially

interacted determinants (W*X) and spatially lagged FP externalities (W*Y) where X denote a set of independent variables and Y denotes the FP. We compare the results of SDM against a baseline model to assess the model's efficiency.

To conduct the study, we use mission and vision statements for 375 firms listed in 2016 to construct W. We extract other relevant details for these firms from Compustat database for financial year 2017. We then run SDM with FP (Y) represented by Tobin's Q and X constructed to represent factor market elements: labor market (employee strength), capital (liabilities to assets, debt to equity, capital expenditure to operating expenses), utilization of capital (R&D expenses to revenue) with Return on Assets as a control variable.

Summary of Findings

To assess the effect of these cross-firm similarities on FP, we run the SDM model and compare its results against the results from the simple, baseline model. We also compute Moran's I statistic (Moran, 1948) to confirm existence of cross-firm spatial externalities in the SDM.

We find evidence that in addition to the firm's own elements, its competitors also affect the FP significantly. The model's adjusted R-squared stands at 0.431, explaining an additional 15% variance over the baseline model. The results show that in the presence of strategic externalities measured through mission and vision statements, higher level of competitors' employee strength and R&D expenses affect the FP positively, while higher level of competitors' capex and liabilities affect the focal firm's FP negatively. Additionally, competitors' FP significantly affects the focal firm's FP negatively. These results intuitively make sense. Higher employee strength of a competitor translates to higher cost and hence benefits the focal firm. Higher competitor liabilities with high capex indicates competitor's focus on long-term investment, which would affect the focal firm negatively. Lastly, fall in a competitor's

performance would benefit other firms operating in the same space, as suggested by the negative direction of weighted FP measures.

Key Contributions

In factor markets, it is challenging to understand the effects of firm externalities on the firm performance, mainly because of the unobservable firm characteristics. We posit that the firms use mission and vision statements as a tool to communicate their strategic priorities to the suppliers in factor markets. We effectively use this textual data to transform firms' strategies into relative firm locations in a latent strategy space and adopt spatial econometrics to assess the effect of firm externalities, measured through the latent strategy space, on the FP. The paper contributes both methodologically and substantively to the literature. In methodological terms, we build a generalizable and scalable model aligned with the established inferential procedures, exhibiting the ability to explain close to 15% additional variance in FP. While our study is restricted to cross sectional data, one can readily extend the model to panel data. In substantive terms, the paper contributes by enabling managers to identify potential competitors in factor markets and assess how and which factor market externalities affect their FP along with their effect sizes. Combined with firm level intelligence around the competitors, such analysis helps managers in designing reactive measures based on the competitor actions.

References are available on request.

PRIVATE LABELS GOING ORGANIC

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Keywords: retailing, organic, private labels, national brands, retailer format

The primary objective of this research is to provide retail managers and academics alike with an understanding of the performance implications of adding organic PLs to the existing product range.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

We aim to address the following research questions:

1. How does the launch of organic PL products affect organic and non-organic PL as well as NB sales performance?

2. How does the retailer's brand strategy for the organic PL assortment (store-banner versus stand-alone) impact the sales performance of existing PLs and NBs?

3. How strongly is the effect of organic PL branding dependent on the retailer's format?

Method and Data

We obtained access to 10 years of German household scanner data from 2013 to 2022, provided by AiMark. Our project aims to focus on the German market for several reasons: The importance of PL in Germany has grown steadily over the last decades, enabling them to obtain a secure position in the market (Steenkamp and Sloot 2019). ALDI and LIDL, two global HDs, are headquartered in Germany and have deep ties to their home country. This is further emphasized by studies showing that discounters account for the highest share of sales (45.4%) within the overall German food retail sector (EHI Retail Institute 2023). In addition, after the United States, Germany is the second largest market for organic food with sales of EUR 15 billion (Willer et al. 2022). Furthermore, around 79% of German consumers indicate that they purchase organic products, and more than 50% buy them regularly (Verbrauchs- und Medienanalyse 2022).

Both the scientific literature and the data available for this work show that two branding strategies can be used to position an (organic) PL, i.e., stand-alone branding and store-banner

branding. It is striking that the discounters in particular almost always pursue a stand-alone strategy, while the traditional supermarkets employ often a mixed strategy.

The given data set covers German scanner data from the period 2013 until 2022. We focus on organic PLs introduced until December 2021, leaving us with at least one year of data after their introduction. In addition, we consider organic PLs at the four largest German food retail groups: 1) ALDI, 2) EDEKA, 3) REWE, and 4) Schwarz (Bundesvereinigung der deutschen Ernährungsindustrie 2023). Except for ALDI, a pure discount chain, all other groups consist of traditional supermarkets and discounters. Each of these four groups has a market share of more than 10% of the German food retail market and a combined share of as much as 76% (Bundesvereinigung der deutschen Ernährungsindustrie 2023). However, the focus of the analysis is on six major retailers, as the study aims to investigate whether there is a difference between HDs and traditional retailers. Thus, the following six retailers are examined: ALDI (ALDI Group), REWE, PENNY (both REWE Group), EDEKA, NETTO (both EDEKA Group), and LIDL (Schwarz Group).

In the next step, the data set is cleaned and filtered for all food categories, including beverages, at the aforementioned retailers. Overall, there are 152,475 unique PL SKUs in the data, versus 519,028 unique NB SKUs across the entire sample period. Within the six retailers, each offers more than 12,000 PLs (ALDI 47,583; EDEKA 18,956; NETTO 18,925; REWE 26,354; PENNY 12,785; and LIDL 27,872).

We adapt the methodology as described by Keller and Guyt (2023). As the dependent variable, we use the volume sales of an SKU at retailer r (r = 1, …, n) in time period t.

Summary of Findings

The preliminary results will be ready for presentation at the Winter AMA 2024.

Key Contributions

From an academic perspective, our study will provide a novel framework to explain how specialty PL products (i.e., organic products), which are horizontally differentiated from existing PL tiers, can be marketed by retailers to maximize value creation. Findings from research on the impact of retailers' PL branding strategies provide only limited guidance as they exclusively focus on conventional products (e.g., Keller, Dekimpe, and Geyskens 2016; Keller, Geyskens, and Dekimpe 2020).

In addition, we will provide new strategic insights into the success factors for marketing specialty PL introductions from a management perspective. There are several reasons why understanding the implications of introducing organic PLs in retail is important:

1. Research on the introduction of organic PLs is scarce, while an increasing number of retailers launch organic PL products. Thus, it is important to provide managers with insights into the relevant target markets, strategies for their branding decisions, and the consequences that the introduction of such organic PLs entails.

2. The emergence of organic PLs poses a major threat to NB manufacturers, and their introduction at HDs could have far-reaching effects on traditional retailers. If HDs are able to offer high-quality organic PLs at substantially lower prices than regular retailers, the competitive environment could noticeably harm businesses of non-discounters (Gielens et al. 2021).

PROMOTING RURAL TOURISM THROUGH THE METAVERSE: A CASE STUDY

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Keywords: social capital, metaverse, rural tourism, destination promotion

Description: This paper investigates how social capital mechanisms can enable new ways to promote rural tourism by leveraging a virtual environment.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This study delves into challenges of community innovation driven by the metaverse in the context of rural tourism. By investigating the nuances of bonding and bridging social capital theory, we highlight how the integration of the metaverse emerges as a strategic cornerstone to amplify rural destination promotion. From a marketing perspective, we explore how the creation of virtual encounters captivates travelers during the initial stages of travel inspiration. As the Metaverse calls for a richer and more complex representation of the territory, investing in this

technology needs a strong commitment among the different stakeholders involved, especially for rural areas, ultimately calling for a collective endeavor. In this context, community involvement and collaboration helps building social capital and promoting the success of initiatives on such territories (Pelissero, 2003). Nonetheless, existing literature lacks in providing guidance on how community social involvement and collaboration may facilitate the implementation of initiatives in the Metaverse to promote rural areas.

Method And Data

We analyze social capital dynamics within an Italian winery consortium which ventured into the Metaverse for local products and territory promotion. Our primary data comprises 16 semi-structured interviews conducted with key stakeholders, including the COO, CEO, and Head Metaverse Architect of the technological provider, as well as the Director of the consortium. Following the data collection, a deductive approach was employed in the data analysis process, utilizing pre-defined theoretical coding. The interviews are drawn upon McGehee (2010) and Soulard (2018) to explore the social capital mechanisms underlying the initiative. Furthermore, to gain deeper insights into the fundamental aspects of the virtual environments and the driving marketing factors that led the consortium to adopt this singular solution, we turned to the travel inspiration theory proposed by Dai and colleagues (2022). Data have been independently analyzed by two of the authors to identify themes within a shared category grid. Subsequently, the coders convened to discuss the findings with the goal of identifying similarities and differences. Through iterative discussions, they refined the coding framework until a common consensus was reached. This process ensured the validity and reliability of the data analysis.

Summary of Findings

Rural environments often lean towards traditional practices and parochial misconceptions, complicating local producer collaboration. Rooted in trust and collective action, bolstered by tradition, cohesion, and innovation openness, the consortium's embrace of the Metaverse entails entrusting the Director with decision-making authority, which is a significant act of communal trust, shifting from individual choices to collective vision. The mutual and fair exchange of ideas within the consortium is another essential factor that bonds social capital. Its crucial role emerges in bridging organizational gaps during technological transitions, nurturing an agile rural ecosystem. This inclusive, reciprocal approach propels innovation toward shared goals. Cooperation in social capital strengthens the achievement of shared goals. Interviews reveal the consortium's Metaverse initiative aligns with their branding strategy as a collective pursuit. The investigation into bonding and bridging social capital underscores the interplay between social relationships, technological possibilities, and stakeholder engagement in shaping innovative pathways. Under this light, the integration of the Metaverse emerges as a pivotal strategy, amplifying destination promotion by creating immersive virtual experiences that captivate travelers during the travel inspiration phase.

Statement of Key Contributions

By conducting a case study analysis, this study contributes to the existing body of literature on social capital theory. It unveils the methods of fostering both bonding and bridging social capital to advance rural tourism through the Metaverse. Therefore, the paper provides strategic insights into building relationships to facilitate the implementation of innovative initiatives within the rural tourism sector. The results underscore the significance of integrating the Metaverse as a key

element within a marketing strategy oriented to inspiring tourists, while underscoring balanced stakeholder engagement and decision-making delegation to implement Metaverse initiatives.

As the Metaverse gains prominence as a medium for representing destinations, our findings can serve as a guiding compass for stakeholders (i.e., wine producers, consortia, governmental agencies) in rural tourism to drive community innovation. These insights empower them to discover novel avenues for visitor engagement and enhance the allure of their respective regions by leveraging the metaverse. While emphasizing the significance of both bonding and bridging social capital in the context of technology innovation within rural tourism settings, it also prompts further investigation into whether the addressed theme embodies a niche character or holds potential for broader applicability across the expansive domain of the tourism industry.

Title: Revisiting the Diversification and Firm Performance Relationship: A Cumulative Study of Segment, Geographical, and Customer Dimensions of Diversification

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Keywords: Corporate diversification, Strategic marketing, Segment diversification, Geographical diversification, Customer concentration

Description: our study seeks to gauge the combined effects of segment, geographical and customer diversification on firm performance

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: Diversification is a strategic instrument that facilitates the growth of firms. However, existing literature fails to definitively elucidate the advantages or disadvantages linked to diversification on a firm's financial performance. We argue that this lack of clarity within literature can be attributed to its exclusive focus on examining the impacts of singular diversification types, rather than considering the potential synergies arising from the three distinct forms of diversification outlined in the literature: segment (SD), geographic (GD), and customer diversification (CD). Our study seeks to gauge the combined effects of these three diversification types on three different indicators of firm performance.

Method And Data: We used data from all S&P500 firms over the period spanning from 1972 to 2019. We use a two-step generalized method of moments (GMM2) estimator for our analyses.

Summary of Findings: Our findings indicate that firms with high SD, combined with low GD and CD, exhibit the strongest performance. Conversely, firms with low SD, high GD, and low CD demonstrate the lowest performance. Furthermore, we observed that both full diversification (high SD, GD, and CD) and full focus (low SD, GD, and CD) are amongst the least advantageous diversification strategies. The most significant finding of our study is that the impact of a particular type of diversification on performance depends on the levels of the other two types of diversification that a firm pursues

Statement of Key Contributions: Our study makes several contributions to the literature on the diversification-performance relationship. First, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study that examines the simultaneous and mutually complementary effects of the three different types of diversification: SD, GD, and CD. Second, while the impact of marketing decisions on firm performance has garnered increasing interest from marketing scholars, the relationship between diversification and firm performance has received relatively little attention within the marketing literature. This is surprising considering that topics such as the distribution of a firm's revenue across customer segments, geographical regions, or industries are crucial in various marketing streams, including strategic marketing and global marketing.

TITLE- ROLE OF MARKETING ON METAVERSE ADOPTION BY FIRMS

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Description: This research investigates the role of marketing in Metaverse adoption, employing a mixed-methods approach to identify key drivers, delineate strategic considerations, and provide actionable insights for firms navigating the evolving digital landscape.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESAERCH QUESTIONS

Businesses must constantly adapt to dynamic changing consumer tastes and technological improvements. The Metaverse, a revolutionary frontier for marketers, is a groundbreaking development in the form of a highly connected digital cosmos expanding into an interconnected realm of virtual realities (Barrera and Shah 2023; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2023; Yoo et al. 2023). Businesses are making significant expenditures to improve their Metaverse infrastructure and technology as this digital world predicts massive growth, with market spending expected to reach $9.4 trillion by 2030 at an excellent annual growth rate of around 23% (Statista 2023). Major brands, including Nike, Zara, Amazon, Apple, Adidas, and numerous luxury brands, have firmly established their presence in the Metaverse, driven by the convergence of technologies that integrate non-human agents into traditionally human-centric spaces (Rodriguez 2022; Statista 2023; Gaines 2019**).**

In view of this changing situation, our research will seek to answer the following critical questions:

RQ1: What are the major marketing drivers affecting organizations' Metaverse adoption?

RQ2: How do marketers perceive the Metaverse's prospects and challenges?

METHOD And DATA

This research adopts a robust mixed-methods approach to comprehensively investigate the role of marketing in Metaverse adoption. The initial qualitative study utilizes the theory-in-use method, tapping into the rich insights of 30 Metaverse managers. This qualitative phase not only identifies significant marketing drivers but also ensures the relevance and applicability of the subsequent empirical investigation. The second study employs a quantitative approach, leveraging a multi-source dataset encompassing the top 100 fashion brands. This dual-method strategy enhances the research's methodological rigor, combining the depth of qualitative understanding with the breadth of empirical analysis. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data allows for a holistic examination of the complex factors influencing Metaverse adoption, contributing to the robustness and generalizability of the research findings. Overall, this methodological approach ensures a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of the research questions, aligning with the study's ambitious goal of advancing knowledge in the emerging field of Metaverse adoption.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Using the theories-in-use approach and gathering insights from Metaverse-involved managers, we investigated the role of marketing factors in the adoption of Metaverse technology. Our findings emphasize the critical importance of ecosystem collaborations and partnerships, emphasizing the importance of collaborating with third-party platforms, marketing partners, and technological collaborators for effective Metaverse technology adoption. Firms profit from accessing these ecosystem partners' experience, resources, and consumer reach, which improves the deployment and utilization of Metaverse technology. Notably, a fundamental aspect, technological preparedness, is attained both naturally and through third-party platforms like

Decentral and Roblox. While the article implies that in-house preparation has a favorable impact, actual results show that third-party platforms are widely used. The research paper brings into focus options such as brand uniqueness, storytelling, and immersive experiences, all of which help to develop stronger connections with audiences. Technological complexity, resource limits, and customer acceptance are all challenges. To realize its full potential, the Metaverse requires a strong technological infrastructure, user education, careful cost assessment, and seamless integration (Puntoni 2023; Koohang et al. 2023; Boutenko et al. 2022; Chiang 2023).

CONTRIBUTIONS

This study contributes significantly to our understanding of Metaverse adoption dynamics by providing a detailed examination of the function of marketing in this revolutionary process. The study not only identifies significant marketing drivers but also sheds light on the intricate interplay between third-party platforms, technology partners, and marketing collaborators by integrating qualitative views from Metaverse managers with empirical data from leading fashion brands. The definition of these characteristics provides a thorough framework for organizations navigating the Metaverse terrain, providing practitioners with usable insights and scholars with a solid theoretical base. Furthermore, the study goes beyond the present Metaverse debate, emphasizing the necessity of strategic issues such as selecting proper hosting platforms and managing alliances in order to increase adoption likelihood. This article contributes to our understanding of the strategic levers that businesses can use to manage the growing digital landscape, filling a vital gap in the existing literature.

SIMULTANEOUS DEPLOYMENT OF QUALITY SIGNALS — A TEST OF COMPETING THEORIES

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Keywords: quality signal, signaling theory, information overload, agency theory

Description: The paper tests three competing theories, namely- signaling theory, information overload and agency theory; in regards to the simultaneous deployment of multiple quality signals.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The simultaneous deployment of multiple quality signals for the same product/service is a common strategy adopted by marketers nowadays. The underlying assumption is that the simultaneous deployment of an additional signal can make-up for the shortcomings of the other one(s) and reinforce buyer perception of quality. Following a signaling theory perspective, signals can be substituted for each other (e.g., reputation and price premium; Rao and Bergen, 1992). Therefore, the simultaneous deployment of multiple signals might not be perceived as

offering any significant benefit compared to the deployment of each signal in isolation. An information overload perspective (e.g., Jacoby et al., 1974) proposes that the simultaneous deployment of multiple signals could be considered as too much information to process and consequently, result in a negative interaction effect. Finally, based on agency theory (e.g., Boulding and Kirmani, 1993), we can argue that when the use of multiple signals indicates both the motivation and ability of the seller to supply high quality products/services, it produces a larger additive effect compared to each signal being deployed in isolation. The current paper attempts to empirically test these three competing perspectives and determine the outcome of simultaneously deploying multiple signals, as viewed from the buyers' perspectives.

Method and Data

Two studies were conducted to test the theories.

In study 1, 404 Amazon Mechanical Turk volunteers (51% females; average age = 37.49) were told to imagine that they have moved to a new town, ergo they are looking to buy new furniture for their house and their focus was on buying high quality furniture. The information about the furniture was then manipulated to create a 2 (strong vs. weak warranty) by 2 (strong vs. weak specific investment in equipment and infrastructure) design and participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. Manipulation checks were significant and in the predicted directions.

In study 2, 400 Amazon Mechanical Turk volunteers (57% females; average age = 37.86) were told to imagine that they have moved to a new town, ergo they are looking to buy a new water purifier for their house and their focus was on buying a high quality purifier. The information about the water purifier was then manipulated to create a 2 (strong vs. weak certification) by 2

(strong vs. weak specific investment in equipment and infrastructure) design and participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. Manipulation checks were significant and in the predicted directions.

Summary of Findings

For study 1, a GLM regression was conducted using information asymmetry as the dependent variable; warranty and specific investment as predictors; and risk aversion as control variable. The study revealed a main effect for warranty and specific investment but no interaction effect between the two. Further analysis showed that the combination of strong warranty and strong specific investment resulted in significantly lower information asymmetry (Strong-Warranty-Strong-Specific-Investment = 2.69) than only strong warranty (Strong-Warranty-Weak-Specific-Investment = 4.49, t (200) = -9.26, p < 0.0001), only strong specific investment (Weak-Warranty-Strong-Specific-Investment = 3.27, t (197) = -2.97, p = 0.003), and weak signal combination ((Weak-Warranty-Weak-Specific-Investment = 5.16, t (197) = -12.59, p < 0.0001). For study 2, a similar GLM regression was conducted using information asymmetry as the dependent variable; certification and specific investment as predictors; and risk aversion as control variable. The study revealed a main effect for certification and specific investment but no interaction effect between the two. Further analysis showed that the combination of strong certification and strong specific investment resulted in significantly lower information asymmetry (Strong-Certification-Strong-Specific-Investment = 2.66) than only strong certification (Strong-Certification-Weak-Specific-Investment = 4.17, t (201) = -7.91, p < 0.0001), only strong specific investment (Weak-Certification-Strong-Specific-Investment = 3.79,

t (201) = -5.95, p < 0.0001), and weak signal combination ((Weak-Certification-Weak-Specific-Investment = 5.42, t (198) = -14.36, p < 0.0001).

Statement of Key Contributions

While simultaneously deploying multiple quality signals is a common phenomenon, the literature has not explained the merits of such strategy nor the underlying mechanism that presumably yields positive outcomes for the signal sender. Since the literature on quality signals has rather developed in silos, there is a need to reconcile the findings and evaluate their joint effect as applied in real life contexts. Following the results of our studies, we find support to suggest that the simultaneous deployment of multiple signals offer an additive effect in decreasing information asymmetry. The underlying mechanism of this strategy is the reinforcement of the buyers' perception about the seller's motivation and ability to offer high quality. As long as an additional signal reinforces the buyer's perception, its combination with the other signal(s) results in a significant decrease in information asymmetry. We argue that most signals weigh on both spectrums (motivation and ability), but to varying degrees. Our research highlights a framework that can be used as the basis for the judicious selection of multiple signals. Managers can verify to what extent certain signals support their ability and motivation to offer high quality, and choose to deploy the right combinations. This strategy can be applied to a multitude of signals across any number of contexts, thus supporting the generalizability of our findings.

References are available upon request.

THE DYNAMIC EFFECTS OF BRAND COOLNESS AND POWER DISTANCE BELIEF (PDB) ON CONSUMER RESPONSE TO PRODUCT FAILURES

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Keywords: Brand Coolness, Product Failure, Power Distance Belief

Description: Through three studies involving a hypothetical scenario focused on an athletic shoe failure experienced by the consumer, this research investigates: (1) the insulating role of brand coolness when consumers experience a product failure (all three studies); (2) moderated by power distance belief (studies 2-3) where PDB is measured (study 2) and manipulated (study 3).

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – a) How do consumers respond to product failures? b) How does brand coolness reduce the negative impact of product failures? c) How does power distance belief (PDB) moderate the impact of brand coolness on consumer responses to product failures.

Method And Data

This research employed a hypothetical scenario across three studies to test hypotheses regarding brand coolness and PDB following a product failure. All three studies used an online panel of consumers with a survey-based hypothetical scenario. The coolness manipulation asked respondents to input the brand name of a pair of athletic shoes with which they are familiar that

are Cool (uncool). The brand name was input into one of three failure conditions: no fail (expectations met); failure (athletic shoes fall apart after one month); and failure with harm (athletic shoes fall apart and are suspected of causing shin splints). Studies 2 and 3 included PDB, either measured and median split (study 2) or manipulated (study 3). Study 1 (n = 150) was a 2 (cool/uncool) x 3 (no fail; fail no harm; fail with harm) design to test the moderating impact of brand coolness following the product failure. Study 2 (n = 252) was a 2 (cool/uncool) x 3 (no fail; fail no harm; fail with harm) x 2 (high/low measured PDB). Study 3 (n = 300) manipulated PDB using a description of a workplace that is extremely hierarchical (high PDB) or egalitarian (low PDB) prior to the shoe failure scenario.

Summary of Findings – 200 words

We argue that brand coolness, introduced by Warren et al. (2019), serves as a buffer during product failures, reducing negative consumer responses. Our proposed hypotheses suggest that brand coolness is effective in mitigating the potential negative impacts, with the power distance belief (PDB) cultural dimension moderating this influence, especially among higher PDB consumers (Hofstede et al., 2010; Datta et al., 2022). In essence, brand coolness proves a significant insulator for firms in high-power-distance cultures, underscoring the importance of maintaining a strong and cool brand. In all three studies, we find that brand coolness mitigates negative consumer reactions (trust, WoM, brand attitude, satisfaction, and repurchase intentions, brand avoidance) to product failures. We also find directional support (study 2, measured PDB) and statistically significant support (study 3, manipulated PDB) for our hypothesis that brand coolness has a stronger mitigating effect within high PDB consumers.

Statement of Key Contributions

Despite firms' efforts to meet and exceed market expectations, product failures still occur. Prior research has investigated firm response strategies and their impact on firm outcomes following a product failure. The current research was motivated by recent research regarding the beneficial effects of being considered a Cool Brand (Warren et al. 2019). This research investigates the impact of brand coolness on consumer response to a product failure. As theory and naive expectation both argue that brand coolness could have different meanings as well as differing effects in various cultures, power-distance-belief is investigated as a moderator impacting the effectiveness of brand coolness as an insulating mechanism when consumers experience a product failure.

This research contributes to prior literature in several ways. First, we contribute to the budding brand coolness research by investigating how brand coolness may insulate firms following a product failure. Second, this research integrates a multicultural perspective by investigating how power distance belief may impact the effectiveness of brand coolness. Thirdly, this research contributes to the product failure literature, which has been dominated by investigations into stock market impacts of product recalls, and notably lacking in research that investigates consumer response to potential failures consumers experience.

"References are available upon request."

THE EFFECTS OF CORPORATE SOCIOPOLITICAL DEBATE STRATEGIES ON CUSTOMER RESPONSES: SOLVING THE CORPORATE ACTIVISM DILEMMA

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Keywords: corporate activism, mediator strategy, source characteristics, opportunism, polarization.

Description: This research experimentally examines the effects of two sociopolitical debate strategies on customer responses and introduces the mediator strategy as a way for companies to meet customer expectations that companies participate in sociopolitical debates without alienating customers and increasing polarization.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Polarization on sociopolitical issues is on the rise worldwide. While companies have been silent on sociopolitical issues in the past, many now act like activists and take a public stand. Companies are in a dilemma as participating in debates as an activist can alienate customers who disagree with the company's stand and increase polarization, but staying out of the debate can also have negative consequences as customers expect companies to take a stand. Resolving this corporate activism dilemma is further complicated by the fact that customer reactions to company behavior depend on boundary conditions, such as their own stand in a debate and the source of a stand. The question therefore arises as to whether and under what conditions there is

a strategy for companies to participate in sociopolitical debates without alienating their customers and increasing polarization? In response, we introduce the *mediator* strategy, where a company participates in a debate, but does not take sides but aims to contribute to conflict resolution by facilitating compromise and/or consensus.

Method And Data

In four experiments in the contexts of cannabis legalization (Germany), gender equality (Great Britain), and racial equality (USA), we test the effects of the activist and mediator strategies on polarization in customer responses.

We examine the strategies' effects dependent on a customer's stand in the sociopolitical debate (change vs. maintain status quo) and are interested in whether the mediator strategy is a solution to the corporate activism dilemma. In Study 1, we investigate the effect that the activist vs. mediator strategy have on customers' attitude toward the company. In Studies 2 and 3, we additionally examine the strategies' effect dependent on the source's inferred stand in the debate based on source characteristics. Study 3 investigates the strategies' effect on customers' donation to a company's foundation as consequential variable to expand our previous findings from attitudinal to behavioral customer responses. We also examine perceived opportunism as the underlying psychological process of the strategies' effects. Study 4 tests whether the mediator strategy's detrimental effects when customers infer that the source wants to maintain the status quo can be mitigated with information about the company's past strategy as an additional cue.

Summary of Findings

In our studies, we find that the activist strategy leads to a polarization in responses for customers wanting to change vs. maintain the status quo of a sociopolitical issue. Customers who disagree with the company's stand have a significant worse response than customers who agree. This polarization does not occur for the mediator strategy. We find this effect for customer attitude and customer donations.

The effect of the sociopolitical debate strategy and customers' stand in the debate (change vs. maintain status quo) on customer attitude toward the company is bounded by characteristics of the source of the stand. The polarization reducing effect of the mediator strategy only occurs for a source taking the supposed stand wanting to change the status quo. Customers infer this supposed stand from source characteristics (e.g., spokesperson sex in the gender equality debate, spokesperson race in the racial equality debate, past strategy) and engage in motivated processing to interpret them in line with their stand and expectations toward the source. We find that perceived opportunism mediates this moderation.

Therefore, the mediator strategy offers a solution for companies to the corporate activism dilemma, but they must consider source characteristics to not be perceived as opportunistic.

Statement of Key Contributions

We introduce the mediator strategy as a corporate sociopolitical debate strategy to marketing theory and conceptualize it as a way for companies to meet customer expectations that they participate in sociopolitical debates without alienating customers and increasing polarization. We compare the effects of the mediator with the activist strategy on the polarization of customers' attitudes toward the company in different contexts, depending on the customers' stand in a

debate. We replicate our results using customers' donation behavior as a consequential variable.

This contribution is equally important for research and practice as both are interested in ways out

of the corporate activism dilemma. Analyzing ways how company sociopolitical debate

strategies can reduce polarization is also important for society, as too much polarization threatens

democratic institutions.

We also examine characteristics of the source of the stand and their moderating effects on the

effectiveness of different strategies. We consider spokesperson characteristics and company past

strategy from which customers infer whether a company pursues a strategy seriously or out of

self-interest and examine perceived opportunism as the underlying mechanism. This helps

research and practice to better understand the complexities of polarization in customer reactions

towards companies' sociopolitical debate strategies.

THE EFFECTS OF NATIONAL CULTURE AND CUSTOMER-INITIATED CONTACTS ON ONLINE REVIEW SHARING

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Keywords: individualism, national culture, b2b online reviews, uncertainty avoidance

Description: We investigate how online review generation is affected by individualism and uncertainty avoidance and how the effect of CICs with firms on review generation varies across these two dominant dimensions of national culture.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Prior studies have provided inconclusive findings regarding the role of national culture in online review generation. We propose that those contradictory findings may come from the use of intentional data and the limited number of countries. Unlike most of the prior studies that utilize intentional data, our study employs behavioral data obtained from real customers. In addition, while many earlier studies compare the impact of national cultural dimensions on online review generation between a mere two countries, our study draws upon a sample of customers from over 200 countries and territories worldwide. We also investigate the complex effect of national culture on customer-initiated contacts (CICs) with firms to obtain information and share online

reviews with other customers. Specifically, we investigate how the effect of CICs with firms on review generation varies across the two dominant dimensions of national culture, namely individualism and uncertainty avoidance.

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

Consistent with our hypothesis, the empirical result finds that the higher the uncertainty avoidance, the less likely they will leave an online review. However, individualism doesn't have a significant effect on online review sharing. We also find the moderating effect of national culture on the relationship between customer-initiated contacts and leaving online reviews.

Specifically, customers from high individualism cultures are less likely to initiate CICs and the positive effect of CICs on review generation is weaker for customers from such cultures. On the other hand, customers from high uncertainty avoidance cultures are more likely to initiate CICs and the positive effect of CICs on review generation is stronger for customers from such cultures.

Key Contributions

Theoretically, our research contributes to the extant literature by providing more insight into the complex role of national culture in online review generation. Managerially, our findings recommend that companies should adopt distinct strategies for customers from countries with different individualism and uncertainty avoidance scores. For customers from highly individualistic countries, providing diverse sources of information such as blog posts, video tutorials, or frequently asked questions is advisable, enabling them to learn about the product or service independently. For customers from countries with high uncertainty avoidance scores, companies should facilitate easy initiation of contact with the company, as this will likely encourage review generation.

References are available upon request.

THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTARY DISCLOSURE OF CUSTOMER INFORMATION ON FIRM VALUE

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Keywords: disclosure, customer information disclosure, marketing information, marketing-finance interface

Description: This paper draws on the signaling theory to explore the marketing-finance interface by studying the impact of customer information disclosure on firm value.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In 1976, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) issued SFAS No. 14 to require all public firms in the U.S. to disclose sales to major customers that account for more than 10% of the selling firm's consolidated sales. The purpose of disclosing information on major customers is to help financial statements users analyze and understand the financial statements and thus help them on their investment and lending decisions. However, disclosing sales to minor customers that account for less than 10% of the sales and disclosing customers' names are voluntary. Research on voluntary disclosure in the field of accounting has documented firms' two motives for strategically disclosing or not disclosing marketing-related information to achieve product-market and capital-market goals (Botosan and Harris 2000; Berger and Hann,

2007; Ellis, Fee, and Thomas, 2012). One is the financial-market valuation motive. Firms tend to disclose information that can reduce information asymmetry between firms and investors (Botosan and Harris 2000). The other one is the proprietary cost motive. Firms tend to withhold information that reveals competitive secrets (Ellis, Fee, and Thomas, 2012). Against this background, this research explores three research questions: (1) What is the impact of voluntary disclosure of customer information on firm value? (2) What factors can influence this effect?

Method and Data

The sample of this research includes original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) from two-digit Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes 35, 36, 37, and 38. We assembled the data set from two secondary sources. First, we collected firms' annual financial information from the Standard & Poor's Compustat database. Second, we obtained data about the disclosure of customer information from firms' 10-K filings. Finally, our original sample consists of 1,097 firms and 10,818 firm-year observations over a 21-year period (2000-2020). After dropping the observations that have missing values in one or more than one variable, the final sample consists of 857 firms and 8,634 firm-year observations over a 21-year period (2000-2020). We use Total q to measure firm value and voluntary disclosure of customers' names, voluntary disclosure of sales to minor customers as independent variables, firm's marketing capability, industry concentration, and customers characteristics as moderators, liquidity, leverage, existence of major customers, R&D intensity, profitability, and firm size as control variables. There exists an endogeneity issue because voluntary disclosure of customer information is a firm's strategic decision. To reduce the severity of the endogeneity issue, we add firm fixed effect and year fixed effect in our model.

Summary of Findings

Results of the model with main effects only show that disclosing customers' names has a negative effect on firm value (β = -0.11, p <.05). Disclosing sales to minor customers has no significant effect on firm value. Results of the model with firm's marketing capability and industry concentration as moderator show that disclosing customers' names is likely to increase firm value when the firm's marketing capability is strong (β = 0.01, p <.05). We also find that disclosing sales to minor customers is likely to increase firm value when the industry concentration is high (β = 2.82, p <.05).

Key Contributions

This research integrates research on voluntary disclosure of customer information with research on marketing actions and firm value. Thus, it contributes to topics from both research streams. Primarily, it is new in investigating how voluntary disclosure of customer information influences investors' estimates of future earnings and thus influences firm value. Prior research has found the impact on competitors' and investors' uncertainty in forecasts, leaving the impact on the direction of investors' estimates of future earnings unexplored. Yet, figuring out the direction is an important research question because investors' estimates of future earnings precede firm value. This research thus contributes to answering this research question. Secondly, it contributes to adding a new marketing activity that can influence firm value. Ultimately, we propose that investors' interpretations of this signal as positive or negative are dependent on contingencies of the signaling environment. We document that marketing capability and industry competition intensity can influence the impact. Thereby this research offers empirical insights for managers on when to disclose customer information beyond mandatory requirements.

THE LOYALTY EFFECTS OF REFERRAL PROGRAMS:

A DUAL-DIMENSION INVESTIGATION

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Keywords: Referral program, loyalty, NPS, word-of-mouth, account balance

Description: This paper investigates the impact of customer referrals on attitudinal and behavioral loyalty in the context of a European fintech, revealing a positive relationship between referrals as acquisition channel and both loyalty dimensions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Our study addresses the evolving landscape of marketing strategies, acknowledging the increasing importance of customer loyalty amid rising marketing budgets. Focusing on acquisition channels that inherently foster loyalty, we delve into the often-overlooked aspect of whether being referred amplifies both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. Leveraging real customer data from a European fintech, we seek to provide nuanced insights into the loyalty outcomes associated with referral programs, contributing to a holistic understanding of customer loyalty.

To operationalize our exploration, we formulate two research questions: (1) How does being referred impact customers' attitudinal and behavioral loyalty? (2) How does customers' total account balance moderate this relationship? These questions guide the derivation of four hypotheses, grounded in established theories such as better matching and social enrichment. Hypothesis 1 posits that referred customers, influenced by better matching theory, exhibit heightened attitudinal loyalty, reflected in elevated net promoter scores. Hypothesis 2 builds on social enrichment theory, suggesting that referred customers demonstrate higher levels of behavioral loyalty, manifested in an increased propensity to make referrals. Hypotheses 3 and 4 suggest that these positive effects are strengthened further for customers with a positive account balance compared to ones with a negative account balance.

Method and Data

For our research, we utilized a dataset from a European fintech, covering customer data from November 2018 to May 2023. The dataset included over 3.4 million sign-ups, totaling 16,939 relevant observations of active users who participated at least once in an NPS surveys.

Customer demographics indicated an average age of 45, with a 20.4% female share. The fintech employed an app to inform customers about their referral program, which featured two incentive models. Referral success was determined by initial deposit or transaction completion. The study used NPS for attitudinal loyalty and the number of referrals for behavioral loyalty. The binary referral variable distinguished customers acquired through referral. Total bank account balance served as a moderation variable, and various control variables were incorporated. Among all relevant observations, 3,882 were referred, with an average NPS score of 8.5 and users referring 0.8 new users on average. The study employed OLS and negative binomial regression for the dependent variables and hierarchical regression to refine the model. The data indicates moderate relationships between variables, with robust checks conducted to address collinearity concerns.

Summary of Findings

Findings from the OLS regression support H1, revealing a significantly positive connection between being a referred customer and customers' NPS ($\beta = .1168$, $p = .00$). This indicates that referred customers, in line with better matching theory, exhibit higher attitudinal loyalty, as reflected in their elevated NPS. Empirical findings from the negative binomial regression affirm H2, demonstrating a substantial and positive link between a customer being referred and their likelihood to refer others ($\beta = .4589$, $p = .00$). According to social enrichment theory, referred customers display enhanced behavioral loyalty, being more inclined to make referrals. However, H3, proposing a positive moderating effect of a positive account balance on the relationship between being referred and attitudinal loyalty (NPS), is not statistically significant ($\beta = .38$, $p = .1957$). Consequently, H3 is rejected due to the lack of significant evidence supporting a positive effect. On the other hand, H4 indicates a significant positive moderating effect of a positive account balance on the relationship between being referred and

behavioral loyalty, measured by the number of referrals (ß = .39, p = .0982), confirming that a positive account balance enhances the connection between being referred and behavioral loyalty

Key Contributions

Our study significantly contributes to research and theory by exploring the effects of referrals on customer loyalty in both attitudinal and behavioral dimensions. Unique to our approach is the incorporation of the net promoter score (NPS) as an indicator of attitudinal loyalty, providing a tangible measure of customer allegiance. Additionally, we introduce the number of referrals as a meaningful metric, particularly relevant in the fintech context where traditional loyalty indicators may fall short. The joint consideration of attitudinal and behavioral loyalty, a rarely operationalized aspect in word-of-mouth research, enhances our understanding of how customer sentiments translate into real actions, exemplified by actual referrals.

On the practical front, our research serves as a valuable guide for industry professionals, particularly Chief Marketing and Chief Growth Officers. By offering robust empirical evidence, our findings validate the cost-effectiveness of referral initiatives in expanding the user base. Marketing managers can leverage these insights to enhance their referral programs, capitalizing on the heightened loyalty exhibited by referred customers, as measured by NPS and the frequency of referrals. Our study aligns with the contemporary business focus on reducing costs and increasing profits, emphasizing the strategic importance of fostering loyal customer relationships for revenue growth

UNCOVERING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND BOUNDARY EFFECTS OF COGNITIVE CUES IN PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION

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Keywords: Public Health Policy Promotions, Social Media Influencer, Persuasion Knowledge Model, Deep Learning (Transformer), COVID-19

Description: This study focuses on the effectiveness of government agencies using social media platforms for public health policy promotion.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

A growing number of governmental agencies have started using social media for public health policy promotions. However, the outcomes are mixed. Similar mixed results are also observed in academia. Drawing on the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM), we propose that there is a significant link between the use of cognitive cues in public health policy social media promotion and the effectiveness of a public health policy social media promotion. This link, however, is either

beneficial or detrimental, dependent on the public's varied levels of trust in the message senders. At this point, the relative differences in the embodiment of empathetic elements in the message enhance the benefits and attenuate the damages of the link. In this study, we identify three types of senders, namely, national, local government agencies, and social media influencers. We aim to address the following two research questions: First, are there any differences in the effectiveness of public health policy promotion between national and local governmental agencies with the use of cognitive and empathetic cues in the persuasive message? Second, to what extent does social media influencers' opinion matter the effectiveness of the discrepant uses of cognitive and empathetic cues between local and national governmental agencies?

Method And Data

We set our research context in the COVID-19 vaccination policy promotion launched by the U.S. federal government from December 1, 2020, to December 31, 2021. This is due to the profound impact of the pandemic on public livelihood and people's varied perceptions of the vaccination policy promoted by the government. Moreover, it is by far the most comprehensive dataset available in the public health realm, which is easily accessible and verifiable by the public and our academic fellows. Specifically, our dataset comprises vaccination adoption rate data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention vaccination, posted text tweets collected from Twitter, COVID-19-related policy indexes from the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response tracker (OxCGRT), and states' economic and demographical indexes from multiple credible sources (for

instance, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis). Methodologically, we employed a state-of-the-art machine learning technique (DistilBERT) for the natural language processing of collected tweets from government agencies and social media influencers. Fine-tuned by pre-labelled datasets, our pretrained DistilBERT model provides estimations of the persuasion tactics embedded in the collected tweets. The final panel data random intercept model with Heckman selection endogeneity correction gives us robust results.

Summary of Findings

The difference in the promotion message configurations between the state and the federal government agencies' promotions leads to opposite effects in terms of the configuration for cognitive cues and empathetic elements: compared to the federal government agencies, the greater amount of cognitive cues used by the state government agencies hampers the effectiveness of vaccination policy promotion; nevertheless, the state government agencies could drive the promotion's effectiveness through using more empathetic elements relative to the federal government agencies in the promotion messages. However, the moderating effect of social media influencers may also affect the consequence: If social media influencers show positivity towards the vaccination policy, the negative effect of the use of cognitive cues by the state government agencies (relative to the federal government agencies) would be relieved while the positive effect of the use of empathetic elements by the state government agencies (relative to the federal government agencies) would be mitigated.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study makes both theoretical and practical contributions. First, the authors extend the use of the PKM theory in the public sector of public health policy promotions. The authors recognize the limitation of using cognitive cues in public policy promotions on social media to affect the effectiveness of the promotions. This limitation is due to the public's different levels of trust towards different promotion message senders. Second, this study's findings are executable by government agencies in the public health sector to better coordinate the promotions and improve the effectiveness of policy promotions. Local government agencies are closer and therefore more trustful to the public than national government agencies; therefore, local government agencies should use more cognitive cues (for instance, factual statements or real-time statistical figures that prove the policies' effectiveness) and less empathetic elements (for instance, empathetical encouragement for the public or emotional stories related to the policies) in their persuasion messages than local government agencies. Finally, since the public trusts influencers the most, local government agencies should monitor the influencers' positivity related to the policy promotions and ensure that more cognitive cues and less empathetic elements would appear in their messages on social media than in influencers' messages.

What are the Financial Market Impacts of CMO Departures?

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Keywords: CMO departure, TMT diversity, causal forest, financial performance

Description: This study uncovered a negative financial market response to Chief Marketing

Officer (CMO) departures and further revealed a heightened negative impact when the

departing CMO possesses diverse characteristics.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: The importance of the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) position has

been well-established in the marketing literature. However, this position is characterized by

high turnover rates and abbreviated tenures, particularly when compared with other executive

positions within organizations. While existing research has delved into the influence of the

CMO position on firm performance across various stages, including their appointment,

tenure, and participation within the Top Management Team (TMT), a notable gap persists in

comprehending the aftermath of CMO departures. As such, this study is poised to fill this

research gap, focusing on the conclusive phase of the CMO's career trajectory, and aims to

address two central research questions: (1) What are the financial market impacts of CMO departures? (2) What characteristics of the departing CMO moderate the impacts?

Method And Data: We identified 117 instances of CMO departures occurring between 2010 and 2020 across 87 US public firms. We formed a treated group of these 117 firm-CMO pairs, encompassing data from the four quarters leading up to the CMO's departure and the subsequent four quarters, during which we observed the impact of the CMO's departure. At the same time, we constructed 2,104 control units representing firm-CMO pairs observed over an eight-quarter period.

We used causal forest to adaptively find the best control counterpart, a "clone," where firm-CMO pairs exhibit similarity in their observable characteristics, with the only difference being their treatment status for every firm-CMO pair in the treated group. This matching process facilitated a robust comparative analysis to discern the effects of CMO departures on financial market performance to answer our first research question. Moreover, causal forest provides individual-level estimates of treatment effects, which allows for exploring heterogeneous treatment effects at a granular level. We answered the second research question with a second-stage regression using the individual-level estimates of treatment effects.

Summary of Findings: Our analysis uncovers a significant decrease in buy-and-hold abnormal return (BHAR) of 6.773% during the initial quarter following the CMO departure, the corresponding effect size is 1,887 million US dollars. Furthermore, we obtained

heterogeneous treatment effects of how the effect varies as a function of the departing CMO characteristics. We found that the departure of a female, non-Caucasian, or a female non-Caucasian CMO catalyzes an even more pronounced negative effect on BHAR.

Statement of Key Contributions: This study provides contributions in both marketing literature and practical applications. Within marketing literature, our study addresses a significant gap by examining the consequences of CMO departures. The study offers empirical evidence on the negative impact of CMO departures on financial performance and identifies moderating features, thereby enhancing the existing knowledge on the dynamics of the CMO role.

Within practice applications, this study contributes to the understanding of the enduring influence of CMOs on firm performance even after their departure. Given the inherent volatility of the CMO position and increasing turnover rates, these findings provide insights for firms to prepare for and mitigate the impact of CMO departures. In addition, this study enhances comprehension of the impact of TMT diversity on firm performance through the lens of CMO departures. Consequently, it aids organizations in recognizing the strategic imperative of cultivating and sustaining a diversified TMT.

Product and Brand Management

A NEW SCALE FOR BRAND COMPETITIVENESS

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Keywords: Brand competitiveness, Scale development, Signalling theory, Competition, Relativity

Description: Drawing on signalling theory, this study introduces customer-based brand competitiveness (CBBC) as a customer's evaluation of a brand's outperformance of competing brands, develops a seven-item scale to measure CBBC, and empirically investigates brand equity and purchase intentions as consequences.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Brand competitiveness as a brand's outperformance of competing brands is a vital signal influencing a consumer's response to a brand's marketing, i.e., customer-based brand equity. Existing research investigates brand competitiveness differently depending on the varying research perspectives, such as strategic branding (Winzar et al., 2018; Xia et al., 2020), strategic marketing and management (Gupta et al., 2020), and place branding view (Foroudi et al., 2020; Gupta et al., 2016). Regarding the conceptualisation of brand competitiveness, none of the previous studies offers an in-depth discussion on the conceptualisation of the construct

in terms of its perspective or discuss its theoretical underpinning. Previous studies have not yet outlined or investigated specific consequences of brand competitiveness. The divergence in brand competitiveness investigations has led to the measurement approaches varying significantly, with only ad hoc scales developed so far. Addressing these gaps in existing literature, this research aims to refine the definition and conceptualisation of brand competitiveness and to follow a scale development process to develop and validate a new scale to measure the construct.

Method And Data

This study offers a customer-based conceptualisation and defines customer-based brand competitiveness (CBBC) as a customer's evaluation of a brand's outperformance of competing brands. Following the scale development process, this paper distinguishes three fundamental stages. The scale construction stage generates scale items from two sources, i.e., a literature search using academic databases to identify relevant items for the new CBBC scale, and 20 online interviews conducted with Australian consumers. The scale refinement stage assesses the scale items for content validity (representativeness), redundant items, and clarity. This stage involved expert interviews and surveys with 21 academic branding experts. The scale validation stage comprised three quantitative consumer surveys for the pre-test (N = 151), exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (N = 497), and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (N = 509), with respondents recruited by a professional panel provider. To develop a generic scale, the study selected five industries (FMCG, financial services, telecommunications, retailers, and automotive) and the top three brands per industry, resulting in a total of 15 brands from five industries. Each respondent was randomly allocated to two industries, resulting in total case numbers for the pre-test of 270, EFA of 900, and CFA of 908.

Summary of Findings

An initial pool of 36 items was generated in the scale construction stage from a previous brand competitiveness scale and consumer interviews. The scale refinement stage resulted in retaining the seven items that were rated by at least 80 per cent of the experts as very representative of the construct (Zaichkowsky, 1985). In the scale validation stage, the pre-test did not result in the deletion of further items. The EFA resulted in a one-factor solution, with factor loadings larger than the threshold of 0.70 and an excellent Cronbach's α value larger than 0.90, supporting factor reliability. The measurement model of the CFA had a good fit to the data. The composite reliability and average variance extracted values were larger than the thresholds of 0.70 and 0.50, respectively. The nomological validity was tested by establishing significant, positive correlations with the previously used brand competitiveness scale (Gupta et al., 2020) and customer-based brand equity (Yoo & Donthu, 2001) as an outcome of CBBC. The superiority of the new CBBC scale over the existing brand competitiveness scale was validated through structural equation modelling by comparing the performance of both scales in explaining customer-based brand equity and purchase intentions.

Statement of Key Contributions

This paper advances the relative perspectives of brand performance measures. A customer's evaluation of a brand's outperformance of competing brands ultimately determines a brand's success. CBBC's uniqueness results from the consideration of the relative perspective evaluated at the individual customer level, where the actual comparison of brands should be conceptually modelled and empirically measured. This research offers a theoretical underpinning for the relevance of brand competitiveness, drawing on a signalling theory. It is a vital signal that relates to a brand's competitive position in relation to competitors, which helps reduce the perceived risk associated with brands, facilitating customers' decision-making and affecting their responses to a brand's marketing. Additionally, this paper suggests

customer-based brand equity as an outcome of CBBC, extending previous research into the nomological network. This study advances the empirical perspective of the construct by applying a scholarly scale development process to develop a valid and reliable, unidimensional seven-item scale to measure CBBC. The scale can be used by academics in subsequent studies to investigate further the construct and its relationships with potential antecedents and consequences and by practitioners to understand their brand's standing in relation to competitors.

References are available upon request.

A PARSIMONIOUS EXTENSION OF THE BASS DIFFUSION MODEL FOR CONSUMER DURABLES TO INCORPORATE POPULATION AND INCOME GROWTH

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Keywords: New Product Diffusion, Bass model, Innovation**,** Nonlinear Least Squares

Description: This research proposes a revision to the Bass (1969) model that incorporates the effects of income and population growth on market potential without adding additional parameters, yielding improvements in model fit and forecasts.

ABSTRACT

We propose a revision to the Bass (1969) model that incorporates effects of income and population growth on market potential *without adding parameters*. Empirical results show significant improvements in model fit and one-step-ahead forecasts. Furthermore, the classic Bass model underestimates the coefficient of innovation and overestimates the coefficient of imitation.

INTRODUCTION

The Bass (1969) diffusion model for consumer durables is one of the most commonly used marketing models (Mahajan, Muller, and Bass 1990). Introduced over 50 years ago, this model "has proven to be foundational in modeling and predicting the diffusion of innovation not only for marketing researchers but also for practicing managers" (Lee et al. 2020, p.190-191). In part, its enduring popularity comes from a simple three-parameter model that can be calibrated with very few years of data, and used for forecasting.

Since its publication, an extensive body of research has followed to extend and refine the original model, to incorporate additional influences, and to explore alternative estimation approaches (Mahajan, Muller, and Bass, 1990). In this research, we demonstrate how to incorporate population growth and income growth without adding *any* parameters to the Bass model. We

show that the model fit as measured by mean squared error (MSE) is improved by 13-25%, and one-step ahead forecasts are better by 14-22% in terms of MSE, compared to the classic Bass diffusion model, both estimated by the state-of-the-art estimation method.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Bass model assumes that over the life of the product category, there will be m initial purchases (Bass 1969). Yet, there is no theoretical basis to assume a constant market potential (m). For example, population growth and/or income growth are two factors that are likely to lead to changes in the market potential for consumer durables. Mahajan, Muller, and Bass (1990) note the limitation of assuming a constant market potential and review extensions to the Bass model that consider market potential as a function of various exogenous and endogenous variables.

Sharif and Ramanathan (1981) proposed diffusion models with a dynamic potential adopter population. By assuming the market potential can be described by a continuous, well-behaved algebraic function, they evaluated alternative functional forms across several case studies. They found that a dynamic adopter population yielded improved results as measured by the lowest residual sum of squares and best forecasts. However, that these dynamic formulations included additional parameters. This would be a problem when there are only a few years of data.

Mahajan and Peterson (1978) found the assumption of a constant market potential "inconsistent both with regard to theory and practice"(p. 1590), and proposed a diffusion model with a dynamic market potential. Their model allows market potential to vary as a function of all relevant exogenous and endogenous factors, but their empirical illustrations considered just one factor, population size. Specifically, for washing machines, they used the number of U.S. housing starts to define the relevant social system population. In their model, they incorporated

the growth in market potential as a function of the number of housing starts. They conclude that the dynamic market potential formulation showed considerable improvement over the static model, and that the long-term forecasting performance was high. Their model also involves additional parameters to be estimated.

Other researchers modeled market potential as dependent on variables such as price (Chow 1967, Jain and Rao 1989, Kalish 1985, Kamakura and Balasubramanian 1988), or growth in retailers (Jones and Ritz 1987). Horsky (1980) tested multiple diffusion models incorporating multiple influences including price, population growth, and income/wages. Horsky concluded that the Bass model improves, for color TV data, when population growth is taken into account. He also found that models in which price is assumed to impact market potential are superior to those in which price shifts the purchase probability. Horsky's full model requires five parameters.

To summarize, both theory and prior empirical analyses show the benefits of incorporating additional influences in diffusion models. Yet that has been accomplished by including additional parameters. Since a key benefit of the Bass model is the ability to estimate it with relatively few years of data, including additional parameters is a drawback. Next, we show how to include population and income growth in the Bass model without additional parameters.

MODEL

We start by considering population growth. Because the Bass model is an aggregate model, the m parameter (the eventual number of adopters or market potential) should be proportional to the population size, so that if the population grows 10%, we should expect the m parameter to be also 10% higher. Next, we consider income growth. If household incomes increase, more customers will be able to afford the product category so that m will increase. Let RDPCI denote the Real (after adjusting for inflation) disposable per capita income. Denoting income elasticity

as α, we posit that the market potential will vary as a function of both (i) population at time t compared with population at the time of product category introduction (time 0), and (ii) the RDPCI at time t compared with the RDPCI at time 0:

$$m = m_0 * [Pop(t)/Pop\ (0)] * [RDPCI(t)/\ RDPCI(0)]^{\alpha}. \qquad (1)$$

where m_0 denotes the market potential as of time 0. The income elasticity parameter α is interpreted as follows: if per capita income increases by 1%, then the market potential increases by α percent. For the consumer durable product categories we consider in the empirical section, the null hypothesis that $\alpha = 1$, i.e., market potential is proportional to per capita income, is not rejected.[1] When $\alpha = 1$, the above expression reduces to:

$$m = m_0 * [Pop(t) * RDPCI(t)] / [Pop(0) * RDPCI(0)]. \qquad (2)$$

We further note that $[Pop(t) * RDPCI(t)] = RGDPI(t)$, where RGDPI is the Real Gross Disposable Personal Income. Consequently, $m = m_0 * [RGDPI(t)/RGDPI(0)] = m_0 * RGDPIR(t)$, where RGDPIR = RGDPI ratio relative to the base year 0.

In addition to Real Gross Disposable Personal Income (RGDPI), two similar measures of the economy and consumer spending ability are Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP) and Real Gross Domestic Income (RGDI). Data from the 2022 U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis finds them to be highly correlated: r (RGDPI, RGDP) = .9947, r (RGDP, RGDI) = .9997, and r (RGDPI, RGDI) = .9938. Given these very high correlations, we use the more commonly used

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[1] In two out of three product categories, the null hypothesis that $\alpha = 1$ was not rejected at the 5% level; in one product category (clothes dryers), the null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 level, but the estimated income elasticity of 5.262, with 95% confidence interval of (1.929, 8.596), appears implausible. (An income elasticity of 5.262 would mean that a 10% increase in income would lead to a $((1.1)^{5.262} - 1)= 65\%$ increase in market potential!) This may be due to the large standard error for the estimated alpha, due to multicollinearity. Over the three product categories, the average standard error of α is 2.70, which means that it is not practical to estimate this parameter for new product categories with very few data points. For these reasons, we proceed with the assumption that income elasticity =1.

RGDP, which the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) regards as more reliable. More

specifically, the BEA states that "Gross domestic income is an alternative way of measuring the

nation's economy, by counting the incomes earned and costs incurred in production. In theory,

GDI should equal gross domestic product, but the different source data yield different results.

The difference between the two measures is known as the 'statistical discrepancy.' BEA

considers GDP more reliable because it's based on timelier, more expansive data." [2].

Similarly, we define RGDPR as the real gross domestic product ratio = RGDP(t)/RGDP(0) and

use the following expression:

$$m = m_0 * [RGDP(t)/RGDP(0)] = m_0 * RGDPR(t). \tag{3}$$

This formulation allows for a parsimonious way to capture changes in population and consumer

disposable income, without requiring additional parameters relative to the classic Bass model.[3,4]

We do not include the evolution of marketing variables such as price level or cumulative

advertising. As shown by Bass, Krishnan, and Jain (1994), the three-parameter Bass model

captures the net impact of these decision variables adequately well. Capturing them explicitly

will increase the number of parameters of the Bass model, which would be a problem when there

are only a few years of data. There are also measurement issues with respect to how price and

advertising are to be measured because those numbers vary across brands in the product

category, and the difficult problem of needing to forecast price and advertising for future year(s).

DATA AND ESTIMATION

We focus on consumer durables as the market potentials for these product categories are likely to

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[2] U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Real gross domestic income [A261RX1Q020SBEA], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/A261RX1Q020SBEA, October 17, 2022.
[3] We should point out that the original model of Equation (1) does have an additional parameter α, which has been assumed equal to 1 for the reasons stated earlier (see footnote 1).
[4] Although we describe the models in terms of population and income growth, they would also capture population or income reductions over time. More generally, the models capture population and income changes over time.

vary as population and income varies.[5]   Specifically, we use the yearly data on number of adopters of clothes dryers (1949-1961), color TVs (1963 – 1970) and room air conditioners (1949 -1961) from Mahajan, Mason and Srinivasan (1986). These data have been used in multiple published diffusion research papers by various researchers, thus allowing a direct comparison of the proposed model with previously published results. RGDPR, was computed from historical RGDP data reported at U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Real Gross Domestic Product [GDPC1], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/GDPCA . Over the time series for these consumer durables, the RGDPR increased significantly: by 58.7% for room air conditioners and clothes dryers, and by 33.7% for color TVs. As a result, these data afford a good test of the potential value of accounting for income and population growth.

Of the different estimation options, NLS (Nonlinear Least Squares) estimation (Srinivasan and Mason 1986) is the state-of the-art for estimating the Bass diffusion model (Putsis and Srinivasan 2000; see also Appel and Muller 2021). Furthermore, Mahajan, Mason, and Srinivasan (1986) empirically demonstrate that NLS is better in terms of one-step ahead forecasts compared to the OLS (Ordinary Least Squares) estimation method suggested in Bass (1969), and the MLE estimation method (Schmittlein and Mahajan 1982). Thus, we use NLS estimation for the classic Bass model from Srinivasan and Mason (1986) and for the proposed model with the incorporation of RGDPR for the three product categories.

The NLS formulation of the classic Bass model (Srinivasan and Mason 1986) expresses the number of adopters $X(i)$ in the ith time interval (t_{i-1}, t_i) as:

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[5] This would be expected if the price of the consumer durable is sufficiently high. If the price of the consumer durable is low, then an income adjustment would not be needed and the population growth adjustment would be sufficient.

$$X(i) = m*[\{(1-exp(-(p+q)*t_i))/(1+(q/p)*exp(-(p+q)*t_i))\} - \tag{4}$$

$$\{(1-exp((p+q)*t_{i-1}))/(1+(q/p)*exp(-(p+q)*t_{i-1}))\}] + u_i.$$

The model incorporating RGDPR is:

$$X(i) = m_0*RGDPR(t_i)*[\{(1-exp(-(p+q)*t_i))/(1+(q/p)*exp(-(p+q)*t_i))\} - \tag{5}$$

$$\{(1-exp((p+q)*t_{i-1}))/(1+(q/p)*exp(-(p+q)*t_{i-1}))\}] + u_i$$

where m or m_0 denotes the market potential, p the coefficient of innovation, q the coefficient of imitation, and u the error term. Table 1a presents the in-sample results for the parameter estimates and three goodness of fit measures (Mean Squared Error MSE, Mean Absolute Deviation MAD, and R-square) with and without the incorporation of RGDPR for the three product categories. For all three durables, the model incorporating RGDPR yields improved MSE (13% to 25% lower), MAD (7% to 12% lower) and R-squared (1% to 2% higher).

In comparison with the parameter estimates of the classic Bass model, the model incorporating population and income growth has higher values for the p parameter, and lower values for the q parameter. More specifically, the estimates for p are 23% to 26% higher when RGDPR is included, and the estimates for q are 3-5% lower. The m_0 parameter for the extended model is 20% to 30% less than the m parameter of the classic Bass model.

We provide an intuitive explanation why two parameters of the classic Bass model undergo major changes in the extended Bass model. The parameter m_0 for the extended model denotes the market potential at time 0. The market potential is increasing over time as a result of population and income growth, as is the case in our datasets. By contrast, the classic Bass model incorrectly assumes that the market potential remains constant at value m. Thus the estimated m in the classic Bass model can be thought of as the average value of market potential over the time periods in the data. This explains why m is greater than m_0. The sales in year 1 in the classic

Bass model is m times p. Because m overstates the true market potential in earlier time periods,

p is estimated to be lower than its true value in order to fit the sales data in earlier time periods.

OUT-OF-SAMPLE ONE-STEP AHEAD FORECAST RESULTS

To assess out-of-sample one-step-ahead forecast performance and enable direct comparisons

with prior findings, we use the same approach as in Mahajan, Mason and Srinivasan (1986).

Following Heeler and Hustad (1980), we use data up to and including the peak period to get the

parameter estimates which results in the following number of one-step-ahead forecasts:

Product Category	*Number of one-step-ahead Forecasts*
Room Air Conditioners	3
Color Televisions	2
Clothes Dryers	3

To make one-step ahead forecasts, we first need to forecast RGDPR(t+1). Define G(t) as the

corresponding annual growth in the ratio, i.e., G(t) = RGDPR(t) - RGDPR(t-1). We note that G

will be negative in a recession.

We consider two different approaches to forecasting RGDPR. We begin with a naïve forecast in

which we predict RGDPR(t+1) = RGDPR(t) + G(t). That is, we assume the (t+1) period's

growth in RGDPR is the same as that for period t. For our second approach, we note that the G

series has error, so we smooth the series. Define H(t) as the exponentially smoothed values for

G(t). For the one-step ahead forecast for the RGDPR using exponential smoothing, we use

RGDPR(t+1) = RGDPR(t) + H(t) in place of the naïve RGDPR(t+1) = RGDPR(t) + G(t).

Table 1b presents the out-of-sample one-step-ahead forecast results across the three measures

(MSE, MAD, and mean absolute percentage deviation (MAPD)) and three product categories.

We compare the OLS based estimation of the classic Bass model (1969), the Srinivasan and

Mason (1986) NLS estimation of the classic Bass model, and the NLS estimation of the proposed

formulation incorporating RGDPR, using (i) a naïve forecast for RGDPR and (ii) the exponential smoothing based forecast. From Table 1b we see that, in some instances, the naïve approach to forecasting RGDPR yields the best results, and in other instances, the exponential smoothing approach was best. However, the differences are small and, in every case, the forecasts using the NLS model incorporating income and population effects outperform the OLS estimation of the classic Bass model and Srinivasan and Mason's (1986) NLS estimation of the classic Bass model. Compared with the Srinivasan and Mason (1986) NLS estimation of the classic Bass model, incorporating population and income provides better one-step-ahead forecasts across the three durable categories and two approaches for forecasting RGDPR. The forecasts are better by 12-15% for MAD, 14-22% better for MSE, and 11-17% better for MAPD.

CONCLUSION

The Bass model is one of the most popular and enduring models in marketing. Its formulation is intuitively appealing; it can be calibrated with a few years of data because of its three-parameter formulation, and then used for forecasting. While a prolific body of research has extended and modified the Bass model, virtually all have done so at the cost of adding additional parameters to the model, which is a problem because often there are only a few years of data.

Our approach overcomes a limitation of the classical Bass model that assumes a constant market potential over the life of the product. We demonstrated a way to incorporate income and population growth in the Bass model without additional parameters. Empirical results on consumer durables data used in prior research show significant improvements in both model fit and one-step-ahead forecasting performance. Our results also show that failing to incorporate population and income changes would substantially underestimate the coefficient of innovation (p) parameter, and slightly overestimate the coefficient of imitation (q) of the Bass model. As

noted earlier, there was a large increase in RGDP (Real Gross Domestic Product) over the time horizon for the durables considered in our study. Had there been only a minimal change, incorporating RGDP in the model would not be expected to impact results.

Practical implications of our model are more valid parameter estimates and improved forecasts. Additionally, findings of diffusion model meta-analyses (e.g., Sultan, Farley and Lehmann 1990) would change if based on estimates using our proposed model. Since a key use of meta-analysis is for forecasting the diffusion pattern of newer products (Sultan, Farley and Lehmann 1996), this would impact forecasts for those new products. It would also alter managerially useful predictions for maximum yearly sales and the predicted number of years to that maximum.

In applying our proposed model to other consumer durables, we recommend first conducting an analysis similar to that in Tables 1a and 1b to verify that goodness of fit and out-of-sample forecasts are better (or at least as good) for the proposed model compared to the classic Bass model, and compared to a model that just takes into account population (but not income) growth.

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Table 1a. NLS In-Sample Results for the Two Competing Formulations Using All Available Data[a]

	p	q	m(10^3)	MSE	MAD	R-square
Room ACs						
Classic Bass Model	0.0094 (0.0020)	0.3748 (0.0402)	18,713 (1,411)	26,267	144.60	.933
Model with RGDPR	0.0117 (0.0025)	0.3644 (0.0390)	13,050 (884)	22,920	134.62	.942
Clothes Dryers						
Classic Bass Model	0.0136 (0.0023)	0.3267 (0.0364)	16,497 (1,234)	16,367	101.56	.918
Model with RGDPR	0.0172 (0.0027)	0.3136 (0.0330)	11,609 (715)	12,296	89.49	.939
Color TVs						
Classic Bass Model	0.0185 (0.0032)	0.6159 (0.0542)	39,659 (2,267)	119,474	276.84	.969
Model with RGDPR	0.0228 (0.0038)	0.5851 (0.0526)	31,725 (1,717)	103,501	258.82	.974

[a] p, q, and m are parameters of the Bass Model; MSE = mean squared error and MAD= mean absolute deviation. Standard errors for the parameter estimates are given in the parentheses. For the model with RGDPR, the column for m provides the values of m_0.

Table 1b. Out-of-Sample One-step Ahead Forecast Results

Product Category	Mean Absolute Deviation				Mean Squared Error				Mean Absolute Percentage Deviation			
	OLS Classic Bass	NLS Classic Bass	NLS w/RGDPR – Naïve	NLS w/RGDPR- ESM	OLS Classic Bass	NLS Classic Bass	NLS w/RGDPR – Naïve	NLS w/RGDPR- ESM	OLS Classic Bass	NLS Classic Bass	NLS w/RGDPR – Naïve	NLS w/RGDPR- ESM
Room ACs	791.3	334.3	283.80	287.27	648,993	129,326	111,530	101,501	48.3	20.3	16.91	17.27
Color TVs	2,523.0	1,083.8	958.07	955.24	7,099,978	1,548,310	1,255,990	1,277,662	46.5	19.0	16.98	16.87
Clothes Dryers	401.7	296.0	251.86	255.11	171,583	97,662	82,582	76,648	30.3	22.3	18.78	19.14

a Abbreviations: OLS = Ordinary Least Squares Multiple Regression; NLS = Nonlinear Least Squares Estimation; RGDPR = Real Gross Domestic Product Ratio; ESM = Exponentially smoothed growth data series

ANALOG'S DIGITAL DIVE: HOW AUGMENTED REALITY ENHANCES CONSUMER BRAND ENGAGEMENT AND BOOSTS BRAND EQUITY

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Description: This study examines the impact of augmented reality (AR) on consumer brand engagement and brand equity in analog products, focusing on how AR enhances consumer perceptions and influences repurchase intentions, while also considering the negative impact of consumer irritation.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The primary focus of this research is to explore how augmented reality (AR) integration in analog products impacts Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) and, consequently, consumer-based brand equity. The study delves into understanding how AR-enabled products influence consumer perceptions in terms of informativeness, entertainment, and interactivity. Additionally, it examines the role of these perceptions in shaping post-purchase behavior, particularly repurchase intentions, while acknowledging the potential negative impact of consumer irritation on the AR experience. This research seeks to enrich the body of knowledge on AR applications by exploring how augmented reality integration in traditional products affects consumer perceptions, CBE, and brand equity, while also assessing the balance between innovative AR features and user-centric design.

Method And Data

To investigate these effects, an empirical study with a single-factor between-subjects design was conducted. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups, experiencing either an AR-enabled or a traditional analog product. The product used was a wine bottle from a German producer. The AR group interacted with the product through an AR-augmented label, while the control group experienced a standard label. The survey garnered 355 valid responses, which were analyzed using a seemingly unrelated regression (SUR) model with bootstrapping, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the interrelationships among variables.

Summary of Findings

The findings underscore that AR-enabled products significantly enhance consumer perceptions of informativeness, entertainment, and interactivity compared to analog products. These enhanced perceptions positively influence CBE, which in turn fosters an increase in consumer-based brand equity. Elevated brand equity is found to be a strong predictor of repurchase intentions, highlighting the importance of AR in driving long-term consumer engagement and loyalty. However, the study also reveals a critical insight: increased levels of consumer irritation can dampen the positive effects of AR on perceived informativeness, entertainment, and interactivity. This suggests that while AR can be a powerful tool for enhancing brand engagement and equity, its efficacy is contingent on the quality of the user experience. The study emphasizes the need for brands to prioritize user-centric design in AR applications, balancing innovation with user comfort and ease of interaction. This approach is vital for minimizing irritation and maximizing the positive impacts of AR on consumer engagement and brand equity.

Statement of Key Contributions

The key contribution of our research is multifaced. *First*, we are unveiling AR in analog domains, as our research pioneers the exploration of AR-enabled analog products, bridging the literature gap by melding augmented reality insights with hybrid product integration. This nuanced focus provides a deeper understanding of how AR intersects with everyday consumer products. *Second*, we are giving a new lens on the interplay between the AR User Experience

(UX) and Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE). In our exploration of AR-integrated analog products, we discern that the informative and interactive facets have a pronounced influence on CBE. In contrast, other AR contexts predominantly emphasize the advantageous aspects of AR's affective dimensions. Thus, we illustrate the contrast between "enduring constructs" and "ephemeral responses" and call for a reassessment of the role of hedonic attributes in long-term brand strategy. *Third*, by positioning AR within the post-purchase narrative, we underscore its influential role in shaping future buying behaviors, urging brands to consider the enduring impact of their AR interventions. *Lastly*, we are spotlighting user-centric design in AR, by identifying irritation as a key facet in AR interactions, our research advocates for designs that balance technological prowess with genuine user comfort and practicality.

References are available upon request.

BRAND ACTIVISM ACTIVATING EMOTIONS: EXPLORING THE NEXUS BETWEEN CAMPAIGN FREQUENCY AND EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS

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Description:
The present analysis addresses the impact of the frequency of campaign exposure on brand relatability and emotional connections by garnering qualitative insights, presenting a matrix and identifying thematic dimensions that propel robust theoretical development for advancing future research.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The transcendent media experience provided by brand activism advertising is hinged on perceived relatability and connectedness with the brand message, surroundings and causes beyond themselves (Oliver et al. 2018). To examine the degree of emotional connectedness, the frequency of advertising exposure and consumer response needs to be ascertained (Tellis 1997). However, the assessment and evaluation of the role of frequency of campaign exposure is missing in the extant brand activism literature. Frequency, in terms of long-term or short-term campaigns, is an integral part of brand strategy as it impacts the relevancy, effectiveness and impact of the brand campaign. The overarching theory underpinned in the study to explain the phenomena with further clarity is The Theory of Effective Frequency (Tellis 1997) comprising three significant aspects namely, Brand Familiarity, Message Complexity and Message Novelty. Thus, the present study attempts to evaluate the role and significance of the frequency of advertising exposure in influencing the way brand activism campaigns emotionally impact consumers. Hence the research question the study addresses is:

RQ: *How does the frequency of exposure to brand activism advertisement campaigns influence consumer-brand emotional connections?*

Method and Data

The aim was to capture how campaign frequency as a factor enhanced or reduced relatability to the brand activism campaign thus impacting the degree of emotional connection between brands and consumers. The study was conducted with a sample of 114 participants who were a mix of both Millennials and Generation Z, the ages ranging between 22 to 28 years. Two specific brand activism campaigns by two brand powerhouses Apple and Nike were selected as part of the study. The objective was to manipulate the frequency of exposure of both campaigns by showing one campaign daily for a longer period and the other just once. Thus, the comparative analysis helps ascertain the impact on variables like campaign relatability and emotional connection.

The participants were first shown an Apple advertisement campaign designed to propagate inclusion and diversity. The advertisement shared an inspiring portrait of 68 Apple employees who revealed who they are, where they come from and what they believe. The Apple campaign was shown to the participants for 10 days to ensure consistent and long-term exposure to the brand content. The second advertisement on brand activism selected for the study was by Nike highlighting the power of equality with an undertone of the #BlackLivesMatter campaign. To understand the short-term impact of a brand activism campaign, the Nike-Equality advertisement was shown once on the 10th day to all participants. Post viewing the campaigns, a short questionnaire was shared with all respondents to capture their thoughts on whether they could adequately relate to the campaign and why. Additionally, we asked the respondents to state whether they were able to emotionally connect with each of the campaigns and give reasons for the same. The questions were open-ended to allow a free flow of expression. The responses were collected and qualitatively examined by conducting a thematic analysis of the content captured.

Summary of Findings

The insightful findings emerging from the qualitative study in the form of participant responses led to the creation of a matrix. The study reveals that the frequency of brand activism campaign exposure influences the level of campaign relatability through familiarity, message novelty (Tellis 1997) and inspiration (Zhou, Lou and Huang 2023) and as a result, the degree of emotional connection between the consumer and the brand campaign is affected.

The qualitative analysis is the first phase, wherein the key dimensions are identified for further empirical analysis. Some dimensions arise from the long exposure to the campaign and some from the short-term exposure. Hence brand practitioners can select a short-term or long-term campaign basis the kind of dimensions they wish to target. As seen in Table 1, the brand activism campaign (Nike) with a lower frequency of exposure invoked two themes namely, Music and Celebrity Presence. Both themes are external, hence brands can manipulate, alter and control such dimensions. The dimensions emerging from the campaign shown that had a higher frequency of exposure (Apple) include Self-referencing, Consumer Interests, Consumer Life-Stage, Aspirations and Nostalgia. All of the dimensions are intrinsic, thus it is difficult for brands to control them. The present study can thus state that the campaigns with a higher frequency evoke deeper and internal dimensions that are consumer-centric, whereas campaigns with a lower frequency evoke dimensions that are external and brand campaign-centric.

Statement of Key Contributions

The present study is a novel contribution to the realm of brand activism research as it addresses a pertinent research gap. Delving into the past literature, it is observed that assessing the influence of frequency of brand activism campaign exposure is a missing link in the brand activism research domain. Thus, the study attempts to discern the significance of campaign frequency of brand activism advertising in engendering emotional connections. To the extent of our awareness, the present study is a pioneering research project that strives to qualitatively examine the impact of campaign frequency of brand activism advertisements on generating emotional attachments. The findings of the study are manifested into a proposed matrix that can serve as a guiding force to current and aspiring brand activists. The matrix explains four distinct scenarios showcasing the impact of the interplay between campaign frequency and relatability on emotional connections. The study lays the foundation for future research in the upcoming domain of brand activism by setting down insightful thematic dimensions that emerge from the qualitative analysis. The thematic dimensions are the robust groundwork for warranting further theoretical development. Identifying and reporting a nuanced platter of thematic insights will inspire future researchers to further analyse and empirically test the influence of each dimension in isolation or all of them collectively. The study carries significant managerial implications as the aim of every brand manager is to create and sustain a positive relationship with the consumer. The proposed matrix and thematic dimensions act as a roadmap to marketing practitioners as they provide strategic clarity in the planning and execution of effective brand activism campaigns considering the frequency of campaign exposure.

Brand activism: Deepening our understanding through experts' insights

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Keywords: Brand Activism, Delphi Method, Positive Marketing

Description: This research examines brand activism from the perspective of experts from academia and advertising agencies, to provide an initial understanding of the nature, issues, and consequences of brand activism from a different perspective.

Statement of key contributions (total word count = 299)

This research examines brand activism from the perspective of experts from academia and advertising agencies. Using the Delphi consensus-building method (Bonnemaizon et al., 2007), the objective is to provide an initial understanding of the nature, issues, and consequences of brand activism from a different perspective—that of established activism experts. As most studies have focused on consumer viewpoints (e.g., Mukherjee and Althuizen, 2020), this research offers an important contribution to the emerging literature by focusing on perspectives on brand activism that have not yet been studied. Studying expert viewpoints provides nuanced, rich and well-founded opinions on important societal topics (e.g., Jahan et al. 2022; Spillas et al., 2022).

The results show consensus among experts on some issues, notably: 1) the importance—to the point of necessity for some—of brand activism in a society marked by strong awareness of social, political and environmental issues; 2) the need for activism to be authentic, which according to experts pertains to activism backed by strong values and more importantly, concrete actions; 3) the new roles that brands must embrace in society to stay relevant; and 4) the increasing power held by consumers through their influence on brand decisions. The results also suggest points of disagreement that should be studied in future research.

This research will interest several stakeholders. It provides a vision of marketing that is positive and transformative (Gopaldas, 2015). It suggests that social transformation can be achieved by viewing organizations (e.g., for-profit/non-profit organizations) as agents of change in the marketplace, since the aim of activism is to influence mindsets (e.g., raising awareness of racism). It is thus important to increase the understanding of brand activism from a strategic perspective to optimize future actions and create positive impacts. This study offers an initial exploration and opens the door to future research.

Extended abstract (total word count = 999)

Introduction

Brand activism is increasingly observed in the marketplace, but remains understudied, especially from a professional perspective. This study explores the views of industry/academic experts on the main issues surrounding brand activism. Results suggest consensus on some themes—e.g., activism as a fundamental shift—but reveal areas of dissensus among experts, driving future research.

Theoretical background

The current context is tinged by citizens' increasing awareness of societal and environmental issues (Lesnes, 2020). Relatedly, brands increasingly position themselves as agents of social transformation (Hammett, 2020). Brand activism—the appropriation by brands of opinions on controversial sociopolitical issues to create positive social change (Vredenburg et al., 2020)—takes place in this context. In the literature, activism has been studied from several perspectives, but research remains limited to the consumer point of view, either empirically (e.g., Mukherjee and Althuizen, 2020) or conceptually (e.g., Vredenburg et al., 2020). The literature is marked by a lack of industry and academic expert perspectives. As activism campaigns proliferate in the commercial and communication spheres, what do experts in the field think about the nature, issues, and impacts of such campaigns? This study focuses on this perspective using the Delphi method.

Methods

The Delphi method is a structured qualitative technique used to establish expertise on a subject by aggregating expert opinions to reach consensus (Bonnemaizon et al., 2007). Its validity is based on three principles: anonymity, iteration, and feedback. Twenty-four experts in brand activism from academic (university professors) and professional (strategists/advertisers) backgrounds were selected (criteria included relevance of expertise/years of experience). Seven open-ended questions related to brand activism (e.g., "Is brand activism a fundamental shift?") were sent to experts, who were asked to answer each question in detail and explain their vision. Their responses—totaling 39 pages of text—were coded (Saldana, 2011) to identify the main themes and transformed into 5 to 7 statements for each question. In the second round, experts indicated their agreement with each statement (Likert scale; 1 to 5). Each statement was accompanied by the frequency of agreement among experts (e.g., 20% agreement). Twelve of the 24 experts completed the process. The analysis identified points of coherence/divergence and provided a portrait of brand activism from an industry and academic perspective. Consensus/disagreement scores were calculated (e.g., score of 12 to 19 = high consensus).

Results

Nature of activism and key examples

Participants unanimously agreed on the definition of brand activism: a brand takes a position on socio-political or environmental issues—often controversial ones—without aiming solely for marketing success (in the latter case their "activism" would be perceived as opportunistic). This is consistent with the academic literature (Vredenburg et al., 2020). A high degree of consensus emerged regarding the Patagonia brand and its significant and

credible efforts according to the experts (Patagonia is a brand that has frequently been cited in the literature [Moorman, 2020]). In contrast, Starbucks and PepsiCo were prominent examples for reasons related to their lack of authenticity.

Factors explaining the growth of brand activism

According to the experts, brand activism is increasingly observed as consumers ask brands to go beyond their primary function and become agents of change (Koch, 2020). For example, one expert explains: "Activism arises for a few reasons. A main one is in response to stakeholders seeking corporate support for socio-political causes, in particular consumers. Activism thus is in large part driven by consumers." Many experts also believe that the younger generation has distinct expectations of social commitment from brands. The experts further note that companies now have new roles that go beyond their products and services. These roles are essential for brands to differentiate themselves: "[This] suggests that brands must engage in activism in order to remain relevant in the marketplace."

Impact of activism

The ability of activism to raise awareness on important issues and create impact garnered less consensus. The experts nonetheless point out that society is not indifferent to brand activism. This is consistent with the academic and managerial literature (Key et al., 2021). Some experts believe that brand activism is powerful enough to become an institutional force that can influence governments on some issues. However, other experts note that because people consider their own moral beliefs superior, they are unlikely to change their position to align with a brand's stance. Authenticity was also discussed by all experts. One expert stated that to be effective, an activism strategy must be coherent, backed by actions and intrinsically motivated: "Authentic brand activism aims to create social change and marketing success. Inauthentic brand activism may only seek to create marketing success (echoing notions of virtue signaling)."

Activism: a passing trend or a fundamental shift?

The experts believe that activism is a fundamental shift that will evolve as concerns change. They also believe that the digital context (e.g., social media) acts as a facilitator. Activism is thus bound to migrate according to social issues; however, for some, this is a sign of opportunism. For example, one expert explains that a brand that adapts its discourse according to social concerns lacks depth, authenticity and consistency. Referring to Gillette and its denunciation of toxic masculinity, one expert explains: "the brand clearly wanted to capitalize on this 'popular' issue".

Discussion

This study offers an initial understanding of brand activism based on academic and professional expert perspectives. This view is absent from the literature but is important to study, as there has been a fundamental shift that continues to expand (Moorman, 2020). The results indicate some consistency in the experts' views, particularly regarding the need for brands to transcend their primary function, and the power of today's consumers in driving brand strategies. This observation is consistent with the branding literature (Romani et al., 2015). The study also offers points of dissent that open the door to future

studies. For example, the experts' opinions are equivocal regarding the essential factors driving impact as well as the concrete influence of such brand strategies. Is brand activism able to drive social change, and if so, how? This research opens the door to further research.

References available upon request

BRAND DIVERSITY AND SIMILARITY EFFECTS ON BRAND PERCEPTIONS

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Keywords: brand diversity, brand similarity, brand evaluation, broad brand, narrow brand

Description: this research advances brand research scopes by examining the impact of brand diversity, jointly with brand similarity, upon brand evaluations.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Extant brand research has documented the impact of brand similarity on brand evaluations. Product portfolios of brands with similar categories (or narrow brands) are more favorably evaluated than those with dissimilar categories (or broad brands). Additionally, broad brands with early (vs. late) introduction of dissimilar extensions are more favorably evaluated. Experiments normally presume that product portfolios are of similar and good quality. However, quality levels of product portfolios can be inconsistent. In addition to brand similarity, it is unknow if consumers evaluate product portfolios with various levels of quality differently. If the impact of quality-variance on brand evaluations exists, narrow or broad brands with various quality-variances are likely to be evaluated differently, which infers that the findings of the extant research will be conditional. Additionally, social cognition research depicted that group perceptions (e.g., groupness) depend on the richness and variety of traits of group members (i.e.,

group diversity). As with social groups, brand perceptions are likely to be affected by quality diversity in addition to brand similarity. Therefore, this research advances brand research scopes by examining the impact of brand diversity, jointly with brand similarity, upon brand evaluations. This research proposes that both brand diversity and brand similarity moderate brand evaluations.

Method and Data

The hypotheses were examined using a 2 (brand similarity: high vs. low) × 2 (brand diversity: high vs. low) between-subjects experimental design. An ANOVA on quality changes yielded main and interaction effects of brand diversity and brand similarity. Further, simple-effects tests were performed to probe the interaction of brand diversity and brand similarity. The analyses revealed that low-diversity information enhanced the generic brand, whereas high-diversity information weakened the generic brand. The high-similarity information enhanced the generic brand, whereas the low-similarity information weakened the generic brand. For high-diversity brands, the high-diversity and low-similarity information more saliently weakened the generic brand than did the high-diversity and high-similarity information. Contrarily, for low-diversity brands, the low-diversity high-similarity information and low-diversity low-similarity information identically enhanced the generic brand. Additionally, for narrow brands, the high-similarity high-diversity information weakened the generic brand, whereas the high-similarity low-diversity information enhanced the generic brand. For broad brands, the low-similarity high-diversity information weakened the generic brand, whereas the low-similarity low-diversity information slightly enhanced the generic brand.

Summary of Findings

The results revealed that both brand diversity and brand similarity moderate brand evaluations. Low-diversity brands are favored over high-diversity brands. Contrarily, high-similarity brands are favored over low-similarity brands. Interaction effects of brand diversity and brand similarity on brand evaluations were also identified. High-diversity narrow brands are favored over high-diversity broad brands. Contrarily, low-diversity narrow and broad brands are identically favored. Additionally, low-diversity narrow brands are favored over high-diversity broad brands, whereas low-diversity broad brands are favored over high-diversity narrow brands. By comparison, the impact of brand diversity on brand evaluations is more pronounced than the impact of brand similarity on brand evaluations.

Key Contributions

This study contributes the research domain of brand evaluations by examining the moderation of brand diversity on brand evaluations. Extant research has examined the impact of brand similarity on brand evaluations and unveiled that narrow brands are favored over broad brands. However, when brand diversity is considered, this research finding turns to be conditional. Additionally, the impact of brand diversity identified in this study also potentially contributes to the research domain of reciprocal effects between parent brands and extension brands. None of the extant brand research has ever included brand diversity to examine the reciprocal effects. Future research may include brand diversity to examine the reciprocal effects. Based on the findings of this study, the findings identified in the extant research are likely to be conditional when brand diversity is considered.

(References are available upon request)

CAN NAPA VALLEY WINE PRODUCERS CAPTURE MARKETING VALUE FROM THE VINEYARD? A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF PLACE CO-BRANDS

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Keywords: Co-branding strategies, terroir and wine production, wine marketing, place branding, resource-based view (RBV), scarcity marketing

Description: This study examines the impact of co-branding strategies on wine marketing and pricing in Napa Valley, exploring how terroir, appellation branding, and single-vineyard designations influence consumer perception and create a competitive advantage in the luxury beverage market.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

At the heart of this study lies the inquiry: How do co-branding strategies, particularly those involving single vineyard and appellation in the Napa Valley wine industry, influence market positioning, consumer perception, and pricing dynamics? This research delves into the nuances of place-based co-branding, seeking to understand the differential impact of single-vineyard versus appellation co-brands within a highly competitive luxury beverage market. I investigate the extent to which the specificity and scarcity of a vineyard's location, as reflected in its terroir and appellation, contribute to the perceived value and pricing of the wine. The study also explores how these place co-brands affect a producer's overall brand, probing into the interplay between geographic uniqueness, wine quality, and market demand. By examining these dynamics, the research aims to elucidate the strategic advantages Napa Valley wine producers gain through specific co-branding practices and assess how these practices influence consumer behavior and price premiums in the context of luxury wine marketing.

Method and Data

This study employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth insights into the co-branding strategies in the Napa Valley wine industry. The choice of this method was driven by its ability to facilitate flexible and comprehensive data gathering while ensuring consistency in approach. Sixteen experienced industry professionals representing various facets of the wine industry, including grape growing and direct-to-consumer sales, were interviewed. These participants, selected through a comprehensive winery list and referrals, provided over thirty hours of rich, detailed feedback.

Data collection was guided by an interview guide developed with input from industry experts, focusing on themes such as terroir, labels, price, quality, and appellations. The interviews were conducted in person, capturing verbal cues, and transcribed using Sonix AI for accuracy. Subsequently, the transcriptions were subjected to qualitative coding to identify and analyze recurring patterns and themes. This process allowed for a nuanced interpretation of the data, aligning with the study's focus on the promotional significance of place-based co-brands in the wine sector.

Summary of Findings

The study revealed that the distinctiveness of the sixteen appellations and individual vineyards in Napa Valley is critical in sustaining a competitive edge, aligning with the resource-based view of strategic advantage. Participants universally acknowledged the significance of 'terroir' - encompassing geological, climatic, and human cultivation factors - in defining the unique character of wines from specific vineyards and appellations. This uniqueness contributes to the region's reputation and value in the luxury wine market.

Labels were identified as crucial in communicating the quality and scarcity of wines. There was a clear trend where single vineyard co-branding targeted premium market segments, emphasizing site-specific qualities. However, there was a noted lack of awareness about the substantial price premium of single vineyard wines over appellation wines, challenging the assumption that price directly correlates with perceived quality.

Co-branding with appellations and, more notably, with single vineyards was seen as a strategy to convey the rarity and uniqueness of the wine, resulting in higher prices. Carrillo's 2020 research corroborates this, indicating a price premium for single vineyard co-brands. Overall, the study

underscores the importance of place co-branding in enhancing the perceived value and market positioning of Napa Valley wines.

Key Contributions

This research significantly contributes to understanding the context of co-branding strategies in the Napa Valley wine industry. Firstly, it elucidates the role of terroir via the single vineyard and appellation in creating a sustained competitive advantage, aligning with the resource-based view. The study demonstrates how the distinctiveness of vineyards and appellations underpins wine's market positioning and pricing.

Secondly, it provides insights into the strategic use of wine labels to communicate quality and scarcity, particularly highlighting the nuances between single vineyard and appellation co-brands. This aspect of the research challenges existing perceptions about the correlation between wine prices and quality, revealing complexities in consumer perception and market dynamics. Thirdly, the study contributes to understanding luxury marketing principles in the wine industry. It showcases how the specificity and scarcity of a place brand, from broad appellations to specific vineyards, enhance the perceived value and appeal of wines among discerning consumers.

Overall, this research offers a comprehensive analysis of place-based co-branding strategies, providing valuable insights for academic research and practical application in the luxury beverage sector, particularly in understanding market differentiation and consumer behavior.

CONSUMER PERCEIVED BRAND ACTIVISM: SCALE DEVELOPMENT

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Description: This paper draws on four studies to develop and validate a 13-item scale to measure consumer perceptions of brand activism and establish its positive effect on purchase intention.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consumer expectations of brand activism is a prominent contemporary trend exerting a significant impact on the practice of marketing on a global scale. Despite the increasing relevance of brand activism as an emerging marketing practice with the potential to benefit brands and societies, both academics and practitioners lack robust tools to capture such perceptions. In response, this paper develops and validates a scale to measure a new construct "consumer perceived brand activism" (CPBA).

Method and Data

Following established scaling procedures, we drew on four studies in the UK to develop and validate the CPBA scale. Study 1 conducted 32 in-depth interviews to explore how consumers perceive brand activism and inform item generation. Study 2 conducted an expert judgment survey ($n = 5$) to examine the items for their quality and representativeness. Hence, study 2 also administered the items to an online consumer survey ($n = 324$) for exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Using a sample of 711 consumers, study 3a assessed CPBA's convergent validity based on confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, predictive validity for brand-related outcomes using regression, and known-group validity using independent t-tests. 40 days after participation in study 3a, participants were invited to take part in a replicate study 3b ($n = 143$) for the purpose of examining the test-retest validity using paired t-tests. Using a nationally representative sample, study 4 ($n = 1,042$) examined the nomological validity of CPBA with structural equation modeling (SEM).

Summary of Findings

Study 1 revealed three dimensions of CPBA, namely, activist branding, transformative influence, and empowering agent, based on which 45 initial items were generated. In Study 2, the results of the expert judgment survey and EFA reduced the items to 20 and confirmed the three-factor structure. Study 3 supported the three-factor higher-order structure with 13 reduced items and established discriminant validity regarding CSR and brand symbolic attributes, as well as the predictive power of CPBA for brand-related outcomes (e.g. purchase intention). Study 4 established the nomological validity of CPBA by showing its positive relationships with purchase intention in a broader conceptual model.

Key Contributions

Both academics and practitioners lack robust tools to capture consumers' perceptions of brand activism. Addressing this gap, this paper presents initial results validating a 13-item "consumer perceived brand activism" (CPBA) scale and reveals its positive effect on purchase intention. Theoretically, our work makes a three-fold contribution via: 1) validating CPBA as a representation of consumer perceptions of brand activism; 2) empirically evidencing the potential of brand activism as a prospective branding strategy that drives purchase intention; and 3) advancing our understanding of consumer-brand relationships in a social-political context. Managerially, the CPBA can enable brand managers to identify current positionings, market opportunities, and competitions in relation to brand activism.

E-COMMERCE Q&A ENHANCES CONSUMER TRUST

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Keywords: trust, website design, e-commerce, Q&A

Description: This research investigates the effect of incorporation of the Q&A feature by websites on consumer's trust of the website.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The e-commerce question and answer (Q&A) feature, becoming widely adopted by websites, is commonly presented alongside reviews (Banerjee et al., 2021). The Q&A feature enables two-way communication by permitting users to pose and respond to questions (Khern-am-nuai et al., 2023). Using this feature, consumers can ask for particular product details and may receive responses from other users (Banerjee et al., 2021). Integrating chat agents into a website enhances perceived interactivity (Sundar et al., 2016). We propose that websites incorporating the Q&A feature can also enhance perceptions of website interactivity. Enabling direct interactions between website visitors and firms using features like chatbots can indicate social presence and informativeness (Bleier et al., 2019). Much like chatbots, we expect that the integration of Q&A feature will

facilitate direct interactions between users and firms, which will enhance the website's ability to convey social presence, i.e., direct or indirect human contact (Gefen & Straub, 2004), along with informativeness, i.e., the website's capability to provide access to information (Chakraborty et al., 2005). This research explores the effect of incorporation of the Q&A feature by websites on consumer's trust of the website.

Method and Data

All the data were collected from Prolific. Study 1 was a 2 (interactivity: low vs. high) x 2 (purchase verification: present vs. absent) between-subjects design with 329 participants. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the conditions and saw website screenshots. In the high interactivity condition, participants viewed a product review with the Q&A feature, while in the low interactivity condition, they saw a product review without the Q&A feature. Participants assigned to the purchase verification present condition were shown a review with the purchase verification badge, whereas those in the purchase verification absent condition were not shown the badge. To examine whether the direct effect applied to websites that do not utilize a purchase verification mechanism, 124 participants in Study 2 were randomly assigned to see a product review either in the high interactivity condition or the low interactivity condition. We showed 154 participants in Study 3 a restaurant review. They were randomly assigned to either the high interactivity condition or the low interactivity condition.

Summary of Findings

In Study 1, we investigated a fictitious e-commerce website featuring a review of an electronic product, offering an optional purchase verification mechanism. We analyzed scenarios with and without the purchase verification badge and the presence or absence of the Q&A feature. Findings

indicated that purchase verification moderated the direct effect from interactivity to trust of website, with social presence and website informativeness acting as mediators. The direct effect's magnitude depended on the presence or absence of a purchase verification badge. In the second study, we examined a fictitious e-commerce website that did not support a purchase verification mechanism. The direct effect of interactivity on the trust of website was not significant. The results supported the mediating role of social presence and website informativeness. In the third study, we analyzed a fictitious restaurant website. We explored conditions with and without the Q&A feature, revealing support for the mediating roles of social presence and website informativeness. Moreover, interactivity predicted social presence and website informativeness, both influencing trust of website, which subsequently positively influenced purchase intention.

Key Contributions

Our study contributes to the scarce research examining the e-commerce Q&A feature. By exploring the behavioral aspects of the Q&A feature, we uncover the mechanisms that shape consumer's trust in a website and its subsequent influence on purchase intention. Building on the model proposed by Bleier et al. (2019), we investigate the Q&A feature underscoring the importance of both social presence and website informativeness in influencing consumer trust of website. Though there is a possibility that the Q&A feature could add to information overload for consumers (Banerjee et al., 2021), our results reveal a favorable perception of the Q&A feature in the form of enhanced trust of website and purchase intention. Our research provides positive insights for websites that have not yet incorporated the Q&A feature, suggesting potential of the Q&A feature as a valuable tool.

References are available upon request.

EXPLORING THE INTERPLAY OF CUSTOMER JOURNEY, BRAND AUTHENTICITY, AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT: A CYCLICAL PATTERN FOR MARKETING SUCCESS

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Keywords: Customer Journey, Brand Authenticity, Customer Engagement, Brand touchpoints

Description: This paper explores the thematic cohesion, consistency, and context sensitivity of touchpoints within the Customer Journey; credibility, continuity, integrity, and symbolism of Brand Authenticity; and their collective influence on customer engagement.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

The consumer marketplace has undergone a significant transformation over the past few decades. More than ever, understanding the mechanics of customer interaction is critical to ensuring business survival and growth. This paper explores three core constructs that have emerged at the forefront of modern marketing research: the Customer Journey, Customer Engagement and Brand Authenticity. Specifically, it elucidates upon thematic cohesion, consistency, and context sensitivity of touchpoints within the Customer Journey; credibility,

continuity, integrity, and symbolism of Brand Authenticity; and their collective influence on customer engagement.

These constructs interlink and influence each other, forming a cyclical pattern that drives marketing success. Gaining a grasp of how customers experience their journey can help establish the brand identity, which in turn leads to more active involvement from customers. When customers are engaged, they can offer feedback to enhance the customer journey and uphold the authenticity of the brand.

This paper aims to delve into these concepts, examine how they interact, and create a framework for implementing them in the marketing field.

METHOD AND DATA

Two separate surveys were designed for each brand (DS and Renault). We gathered data from 316 participants (130 respondents for DS and 186 respondents for Renault) to understand how the brand touchpoints' coherence, consistency, and context sensitivity along the Customer Journey contribute to brand authenticity.

The measurement scales are adapted from established measurements. Customer journey dimensions are measured with the scale developed by (Kuehnl, Jozic, and Homburg 2019), brand authenticity measurement is based on the scale of Morhart et al. (2015), and customer engagement is evaluated with the scale developed by (Pansari and Kumar 2017). All the items are evaluated with a seven points Likert scale.

The analysis of the psychometric properties of the measurement scale figures out their good reliability and validity. Both internal consistency and composite reliabilities of the measurements were found to be satisfying, with Cronbach's alpha and Dillon-Goldstein's Rho

values being above 0.9. Furthermore, the study's convergent validity was also deemed satisfactory for all measurements.

In addition, based on the criteria of Fornell-Larcker, all the constructs demonstrate a satisfying discriminant validity since the square root of their average explained variances are higher than their cross-constructs correlations.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings shed light on how the properties of the Customer Journey value the customers' perception of Brand credibility, integrity, and symbolism and, subsequently, the level of engagement towards the brand. They figure out their key role in valuing the perception of the brand authenticity's facets as its ability to deliver on its promises, its honesty, the congruity between its claims and actions, and its ability to represent certain values that resonate with consumers. The results show the mediation of brand authenticity between the customer journey and consumer engagement toward the brand. Brand Authenticity seems to be a good leverage to boost customer engagement. These findings have implications both for researchers and marketing professionals.

STATEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Theoretical Implications

On the one hand, brand authenticity plays an indispensable role in mediating the relationship between the customer journey and customer engagement. Credibility, continuity, integrity, and symbolism collectively shape the consumer's perception of the brand's authenticity (Carsana

and Jolibert 2018; Morhart et al. 2015), thereby influencing their journey and engagement (Lemon and Verhoef 2016).

On the other hand, considerable advances have been made in Customer Engagement research (Brodie et al. 2011; Harrigan et al. 2018), and more empirical investigations are needed to unpack this construct's dynamic nature further.

The findings suggest a cyclical pattern, offering valuable insights for both academics and practitioners.

Practical Implications

Successfully navigating the customer journey leads to outcomes such as satisfaction, advocacy, and increased word of mouth. When customers are more engaged, it fosters their satisfaction. Customers prefer brands that can meet or exceed their expectations regarding authenticity. Practitioners and managers must consistently ensure that their brand communication, actions, and values genuinely reflect authenticity, as it ultimately determines long-term success.

For practitioners and managers, understanding and implementing brand authenticity is not merely a strategy but an essential tactic for business survival. Increases the likelihood of customers continuing their journey with the brand.

References are available upon request.

FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES? THE EFFECTS OF BRAND SCANDALS ON PREMIUM AND NON-PREMIUM BRAND COMMUNITIES

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Keywords: brand community; brand scandal; social identification; group under threat

Description: This paper investigated how participation levels, membership duration, and brand status impact a member's propensity to exit the brand community after a scandal by using large scale online data from the Volkswagen brand community.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

How will brand community members respond to the community itself following a scandal?

Method and Data

The Volkswagen TDI emission scandal was chosen as the study context considering its relevance to this study and the impact to the brand. Longitudinal data created by 15,418 members from January 9, 2015 to February 26, 2016 was collected from its online brand community VWVortex (https://www.vwvortex.com/forums). Using September 18, 2015 (when

the scandal was publicized) as the cut-off, the pre-scandal period was defined as the time frame from January 9, 2015 to September 17, 2015; and the post-scandal period was from September 18, 2015 to February 26, 2016. The resulting dataset included members' participation records across the entire community (31,694 posts in total), the date on which a member joined the community, the time when a member created a post, and the last day when a member participated. Cox proportional hazard (PH) models were used as they are the preferred approach to analyzing time series event data (Cleves, Gould, and Gutierrez 2004; Cox 1975).

Summary of Findings

In general, when a brand scandal occurs, the likelihood that brand community members exit the community is increased. However, compared with their pre-scandal counterparts, members with higher levels of participation within the brand community are more likely to stay, while those with longer membership duration in the brand community are more likely to leave.

Compared to members of unaffected brands, members associated with brands directly implicated in the scandal show a higher propensity to exit. This tendency, however, is moderated by brand status. Specifically, members of premium product brands demonstrate greater loyalty, being less likely to abandon the community, even when their products are involved in the scandal.

Key Contributions

This paper is the first to investigate the extent to which brand communities can mitigate

the adverse effects of brand scandals. Using large scale online data from the Volkswagen brand community, we reconcile competing predictions from research on group behavior and social identification by revealing that the impacts of scandals can vary based on the study focus. Given the diverse study focus in the existing brand community literature, our findings suggest the troubling possibility of variations in the findings. In addition, contrary to prior research on branding and brand scandals, we discover that premium brand community members are less likely to abandon the community than those of non-premium brands.

For businesses, this paper confirms the strategic importance of brand communities in shielding them against scandal repercussions. However, this protection is not absolute. Our findings indicate that if non-premium product brands are implicated in a scandal, their community members are likely to leave the overarching brand community. This exodus could alter the community's composition and necessitate strategic changes in the firm's future product mix and branding strategies.

References are available upon request.

EXTENDING THE VALUE-BASED ADOPTION MODEL: CAPTURING THE MARKETING EFFECTS OF CONSUMER-BRAND INTERACTIONS THROUGH THIRD-PARTY VOICE ASSISTANT SKILLS

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Keywords: Voice Marketing, Voice Assistants, Value-based Adoption Model, Marketing Effects

Description: In this study we conducted qualitative expert interviews and a quantitative online survey to investigate whether the Value-based Adoption Model can be applied to measure marketing effects leveraged through voice assistant Third-Party Skills.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

A fast-paced world full of information evokes consumers' desire for applications and technologies that make their lives simpler and more convenient. Voice assistants (VA) address this need by answering consumers' requests and providing information quickly via voice to support them in decision-making and to help them to organize their daily lives (Moriuchi 2019; Smith 2020). Beyond that, VAs enhance the convenience of consumers' lives by offering several applications that are known, for example, as Alexa skills or Google Actions. These applications can also be developed by companies and brands, called Third-Party Skills (TPS). An example is Gymondo, a fitness company that enables consumers to access daily five-minute workouts through the Gymondo Alexa skill.

Marketers benefit from the interactive communication that TPSs enable. However, they need a proper understanding and tools to measure whether the development and deployment of their TPSs actually contribute to their marketing goals. As the medium of voice interactions continues to evolve, established theories may not capture the unique characteristics of TPSs. Therefore, this research addresses the research gap by using the Value-based Adoption Model (VAM) as a theoretical foundation and adapting it to TPSs.

Method and Data

We conducted qualitative expert interviews with experienced executives in the field. These interviews were instrumental in shaping our understanding of the key marketing outcomes of TPSs. Based on these insights, we then integrated the concept of loyalty into our theoretical framework. This integration was informed not only by the expert interviews, but also by an extensive review of existing literature. Furthermore, this process led to the identification of

additional focal constructs that companies tend to target, such as brand experience, which we additionally included in our theoretical framework.

Summary of Findings

We tested our theoretical framework using a quantitative research design and analyzed the data using structural equation modelling. We confirmed data quality criteria such as reliable scales and discriminant validity. Analysis results show acceptable model fit indices and support all hypotheses. We found that consumers' attitude toward a specific VA has a positive effect on the perceived value and the behavioral intentions to use TPSs on this VA. Furthermore, we showed that when consumers use TPSs it has a positive influence on various marketing outcomes, such as brand experiences or brand loyalty. Thus, our results reveal that VAs, in particular TPSs, can contribute to managers' anticipated marketing goals.

Key Contributions

Our study provides multiple contributions to theory. Most importantly, we developed and tested an extended VAM specifically for TPSs that enables scholars and practitioners to understand and measure the success of voice-based brand-consumer interactions. The findings are relevant to managers since they underscore TPSs' effectiveness as a marketing tool. More research is needed to improve the generalizability of the findings and to extend them to further emerging technologies.

References are available upon request.

HALO PRODUCTS: SIGNALS SENT, NETWORK CONNECTIONS MADE, AND CUES RECEIVED

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KEY WORDS: Halo Products, Conceptualization, Qualitative Research, Secondary Research, Experimental Research

DESCRIPTION: This multimethod research investigates the effects of the introduction"halo products" by a brand on other products under that brand's umbrella.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

When an expansion in the number of products under the umbrella is being planned, managers can develop incremental incremental innovations, market breakthroughs, technological breakthroughs, or radical innovations (Chandy and Tellis 1998). The effects of the introduction of radical and incremental innovations on the umbrella brand and vice versa is a mature and well-studied area of research (e.g., Milberg et al. 2022; Pina, Riley, and Lomax 2013; Reddy et al. 1994). However, firms often introduce new products that are referred to as "halo products". This research investigates (a) if the introduction of a halo product has a signaling effect on the marketplace perception of the least performing product (what we call Focal Product in this research) in the brand's portfolio, and (b) how the perception changes unfold at the consumer-level.

METHOD AND DATA

We present four empirical components of this research; (1) qualitative study to develop a definition and conceptual framework of halo product relationships, (2) test of the model using secondary data, and (3) a two behavioral studies.

Qualitative Study: In order to better understand what halo products are and how they are used in practice we conducted an extensive search of key words "Halo", "Halo effect", and "Halo products" on several academic and news search platforms (e.g., Ebscohost, ABI/Inform, EconLit, Lexis Nexis, etc.) from 1994 to 2020. Following past recommendations (e.g., Stigliani and Ravasi 2012), for qualitative data analysis to combine the information gathered from our qualitative data and compared it with the published literature.

Secondary Data Study: In the first study, we investigate the existence of the halo product phenomenon in the marketplace using the largest database of prepurchase automotive information available in the U.S. market. By merging data from product level survey responses with brand level data, we are able to regress a specific brand perception with the 12-month lagged halo features of a halo product is set up below:

$$
\begin{aligned}
\text{Feature Perception of brand}_{it} \\
= \alpha_0 + \beta_1 \text{Environment Friendly of halo product}_{i,t-12} \\
+ \beta_2 \text{Fuel Efficient of halo product}_{i,t-12} + \beta_3 \text{Feature Perception of halo product}_{i,t-12} \\
+ \beta_4 \text{age group}_{it} + \sum_{k=1}^{K} \gamma_k \text{Light Vehicle Brand}_k + \varepsilon_{it} \qquad (1)
\end{aligned}
$$

Behavioral Study 1: This study was designed with the purpose to investigate if the halo product phenomenon can be observed at the consumer level. More specifically, it investigates if the introduction of a halo product into a brand's portfolio can trigger a consumer perception change of a low performance product (focal product) in the brand's portfolio.

Behavioral Study 2: In this study, beyond exploring the so called halo product effect in a different context and using consumers (as opposed to students), our main goal was to understand

if and what role brand-level perceptions play in the relationship between the halo product and other non-performing/focal products in the brand's portfolio.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

We find that perceptual measures of performance are often accompanied by errors in that the perceived values are often different from observable values. We provide a classification of these terms based on two dimensions whether or not the measure is distorted and the extent to which two products, features, or entities are perceived to be associated within a whole. Please note that the table also includes the valence of the distortion as a sub-dimension in scenarios where there is a distortion.

Classification of measurement distortions caused by the presence of other products, features, or entities

		Perceived performance of features/products/entities		
		No Distortion	Distorted	
			Positively	Negatively
Extent of perceived association between features/products/entities within a whole	High	Significant but true correlation	Halo effect (Burton et al. 2015)	Horn Effect. (example Burton et al. 2015
	Low	Non-significant but true correlation	Halo error or Positive Spillover. (e.g. Ailawadi et al. 2006)	Horn error or Negative Spillover (e.g., Lei et al. 2008)

We develop a clear definition of the Halo Products construct and explain how it differs from other related terms such as radical innovations and line extensions: *new product introductions that showcase the brands capability to develop cutting-edge products, and that positively affect perceptions of other products under the umbrella brand but are expected to be low sales volume products*

We demonstrate using empirical evidence from three different product categories (automobiles, coffee makers, and backpacks) and multimethod studies how halo products can act as signals of performance of other products in the brand's portfolio. Our mathematical model demonstrates how these effects of halo products can be captured using marketplace perception data while parsing out the effects of other confounding variables. The behavioral studies show that the halo products can independently (independent from the umbrella branding) affect the perception of a low performing product in the brand's portfolio. We show that in this is a halo effect as the focal products performance perception is inflated by the presence or absence of halo product in the brand's portfolio. More specifically, it demonstrates that halo products can be a powerful tool to generate halo errors in consumer perceptions.

References available on request

INVOLVING CONSUMERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA: STRATEGIC COMPASS OF CONSUMER ACCEPTANCE OF BRAND INFORMATION

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Description: The paper examines the extent to which brand management can incorporate consumers' social media involvement to capture value for high-value brands. By examining diverse social media characteristics, this paper offers valuable insights into practical applications of social media brand management and advances the current theories in areas of sociology and strategic marketing.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The rise of the social media involvement of customers and social networks has diminished the importance of brands and brand information generated by brands. This has led to challenges in

enhancing brand value through online social media interactions with customers, which were till recently considered a significant way to improve brand perceptions. Nevertheless, brands have adapted by crafting social media marketing strategies albeit not yielding the anticipated benefits, which focus on prioritizing meaningful customer relationships and retaining value for investors and marketers. This research utilizes modern sociological theory to construct a conceptual framework centered on the effectiveness of social media involvement of customers with brands in improving the reception of brand information generated by brands themselves. This research centers on one primary research question: How does customers' social media involvement of brands impact the acceptance of brand information?

Method and Data

The data was collected from a consumer survey conducted online, which included 504 responses related to the retail sector, and the measures for constructs were adapted to suit the study's context. In order to investigate the hypotheses, seemingly unrelated regression technique was used.

Summary of Findings

In this empirical study, this study aimed to propose and demonstrate the impact of social media characteristics and involvement of customers with brands on social media are central to improving acceptance of brand information in the marketplace. By offering fresh insights into a particularly challenging aspect of brand management strategy, this study guides managers to understand and leverage prominence in social networks that impact a greater level of acceptance of brand information. The online social media environment provides researchers and marketing

professionals with a direct observation of social media dynamics. We demonstrate that heightened prominence within a network correlates with increased acceptance of brand information. Therefore, this research is essential for comprehending the efficacy of social media in fostering a favorable reception of brand information.

Statement of Key Contributions

Contemporary investigations into social media primarily center around comprehending the consequences of consumer-generated content, sidelining the exploration of factors pivotal in elucidating marketing efficacy. Through this comprehensive analysis, we offer more profound insights valuable for firms striving to comprehend optimal strategies for shaping customer perceptions and behaviors, ultimately amplifying brand acceptance. Our research yields a substantial contribution to the realm of social media marketing, specifically by firmly establishing the enduring significance of consumers' social media networks and their involvement with brands in shaping and influencing brand acceptance. This study merges theoretical viewpoints from relationship marketing literature with contemporary sociological insights rooted in network theory to comprehensively assess the conceptual framework concerning acceptance of brand information. By offering pragmatic guidance to brand managers, this study vividly underscores the pivotal role that customer involvement plays in underpinning a brand's successful trajectory. Within this study, we showcase a compelling implication that both social media involvement and network characteristics expressed by customers tangibly contribute to enhanced brand acceptance.

MITIGATING PERCEIVED RISK IN PRIVATE LABEL BRANDING: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PERCEIVED SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND DISCLOSURE OF MSME COLLABORATION

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Keywords: private label brand, MSME, perceived social responsibility, perceived risk

Description: This study explores consumer responses to one specific partnership between retailers and small businesses, i.e., the appointment of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) by convenience store chains as contract manufacturers (suppliers) for their respective Private Label Brands (PLBs). This study contributes to PLB literature by exploring a specific context in emerging countries where mandated collaborations with small businesses offer branding opportunities for large chain retailers.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Given the significance of the retail sector, the government understands retail's strategic role in further stimulating the local economy by supporting small businesses. Disclosure of partnerships with MSMEs potentially allows convenience store chains to build goodwill, i.e. consumers' awareness of retailer chains' empowering collaboration with small businesses, may generate a positive image among consumers and society. Yet, given the general perception that MSMEs are small-scale, less professional, under-resourced businesses (Gilmore, Carson, and

Grant 2001), revealing MSMEs as suppliers also presents possible perceptions of low product quality, which is already the common perception of PLBs when compared to national brands (Boyle, Kim, and Lathrop 2018; Vaidyanathan and Aggarwal 2020). These possibly divergent outcomes suggest the critical need to investigate the impact of disclosing the type of supplier on consumers' attitudes toward purchasing private-label products.

Thus, our research question is: will disclosing a partnership with MSME elevates or mitigates the general perceived risk of purchasing private-label brands? More specifically, we explore if consumers' general perception of the convenience store's social responsibility interacts with such disclosure. In this study, we define perceived social responsibility broadly, to refer to a consumer's perception regarding the company's inclination to achieve any positive social impact in society.

Method and Data

We implement a quasi-experiment to identify whether disclosure of the type of suppliers (i.e., large contract manufacturers vs. MSMEs) impacts consumer attitude towards purchasing PLB snack products. Non-probability purposive sampling was implemented by administering an online questionnaire to Indonesian consumers who have visited a convenience store in the past three months. Participants were asked which of two popular convenience store chains they visited more frequently. The two retail chains were considered in this study because they are the most significant players in the industry.

Respondents completed questionnaires based on the convenience store chain they visited most frequently. They were then randomly exposed to one of two images of the chain's PLB with descriptions depicting supplier type: (1) large-scale producers supplied the product, or (2) local MSMEs supplied it as part of the chain's effort to support the local economy. Respondents were asked to report measures of perceived functional risk adapted from Mieres,

Martin, and Gutierrez (2006). Respondents also rated the extent to which they perceived the convenience store chain to display social responsibility. Lastly, brand attitude was measured using a bipolar scale (Liang, 2015). Data was checked for completion and meeting of screening criteria, resulting in 316 usable data points.

Summary of Findings

Independent samples t-tests revealed no significant differences in perceived risk, perceived social responsibility, PLB attitude, snack familiarity, and shopping frequency based on supplier type. The study reveals that perceived risk impacts PLB attitude negatively and that perceived social responsibility positively moderates this relationship. However, the effect is only evident in cases where large manufacturers supply PLB. Meanwhile, perceived social responsibility cannot suppress the negative impact of perceived risk on PLB attitude when the supplier is revealed to be an MSME. Due to their small-scale under-resourced stereotype, we argue that MSMEs make issues of production capability and product quality salient, thus increasing rather than decreasing perceived risk. Consequently, unlike the case for large firm suppliers, perceived social responsibility is not able to attenuate the negative effect of perceived risk on attitude when PLBs are supplied by MSMEs.

Unlike the benefits Rahman and Susilo (2018) revealed with the disclosure of national brands as contract manufacturers for PLBs, our study finds no immediate benefit to revealing the role of MSMEs as PLB suppliers. However, since stronger perceived social responsibility generates a more positive PLB attitude, retailers, regardless of supplier type, are better off promoting their more general social initiatives that may have less direct impact on the quality and risk perceptions of their PLB offerings.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study contributes to private label branding literature by exploring a specific context in emerging countries where mandated collaborations with small businesses offer branding opportunities for large chain retailers. In Indonesia, when retail chains reach a significant scale, one collaboration alternative is to work with MSMEs to contract manufacture for their private retail brands (PLB). We investigate the impact of disclosing such collaborations on PLB attitudes. In particular, we explore perceived social responsibility's role in moderating the negative relationship between perceived risk and PLB attitude when contract manufacturers are large companies vs. MSMEs.

While product quality concerns may not be prevalent for large manufacturers, perceptions of resource constraints, grounded in a (financial) resources lay theory, may lead consumers to question MSMEs' ability to fulfil quality products. However, retailer collaboration with MSMEs to empower the local economy may also create positive associations that boost PLB attitudes. The study thus aims to understand whether disclosing MSME partnerships benefits or harms consumer attitudes toward purchasing PLBs. Findings indicate that in cases where consumers are made aware of large manufacturer suppliers, increased perceived social responsibility attenuates the low brand attitude driven by higher perceived risk. However, such effects are not evident for MSME suppliers.

"References are available upon request."

PRODUCT PERSONALIZATION AND THE DILEMMA OF INNOVATION

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Keywords: Product personalization, exploitative innovation, explorative innovation,
Description: This study investigates the consequences of product personalization on exploitative and explorative innovation.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: How does product personalization affect exploitative and explorative innovation? What are the roles of marketing and technological capability in product personalization and types of innovation?

Method and Data: We collected data on all publicly traded pharmaceutical firms from a list of US pharmaceutical companies located and incorporated within the United States from Fentel. We applied a two-stage-least square instrument approach to analyze our data for hypotheses testing.

Summary of Findings: We demonstrate that conventional wisdom about the benefits of product personalization is not universally beneficial to different types of innovation and can be detrimental to explorative innovation. Marketing capability and technological capability at high levels reinforce the impact of product personalization on exploitative innovation. Critically, product personalization leads to positive explorative innovations only when marketing capability and technological capability reach high levels.

Key Contributions: Our empirical study is among the first that empirically demonstrate that product personalization is unlikely to offer silver bullets for resolving the tension between exploitation and exploration dilemma optimistically suggested by theorists, management executives, business media, and business consultants.

TITLE- RECONCILING IDENTITY-BASED APPROACHES FOR EFFECTIVE BRAND EQUITY STRATEGY

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Keywords- Brand Equity, Brand Identity, Corporate Identity, Organizational Identity

Description- This research systematically integrates literature on three key identity-based strategic approaches - corporate, organizational, and brand identity - with the goal of developing a comprehensive framework for a robust brand equity strategy, reconciling the similarities and differences among these approaches, and providing practical guidance for both researchers and practitioners on developing effective brand equity strategies.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Brand equity remains foundational to marketing, continually prompting researchers and practitioners to explore strategic approaches for enhancing the effectiveness of brand equity. While the historical emphasis of brand equity research is on financial and customer-centric perspectives, the significance of an identity-based approach has surged in recent decades. Therefore, our research seeks to reconcile and integrate three pivotal identity-based strategic approaches - corporate, organizational, and brand identity - to develop a comprehensive, brand identity-centric framework for a robust brand equity strategy.

METHOD

This research systematically reviews 213 articles that delve into the nuances of the three identity-based strategic approaches. By synthesizing insights from corporate, organizational, and brand identity research streams, we develop an integrative framework that incorporates the similarities and distinctions among these approaches. This framework encapsulates critical process variables - antecedents, attributes / characteristics of identity, consequences, mediators, and moderators - presenting a holistic' perspective on an identity-based strategic approach for brand equity.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Our research advances marketing theory and practice by clarifying how one can go about an identity-based approach for brand equity. The integrative framework serves as a theoretical foundation that brings together the distinct identity-based approaches prevalent in marketing and management research. The framework characterizes the synergistic interconnectedness of corporate, organizational, and brand identity research streams, and provides opportunities for empirical investigations and deeper exploration into the implications of identity-based strategies for brand equity.

Further, our research offers a pragmatic tool - the integrative framework - to guide the development of brand equity strategies. Practitioners can craft consistent, relevant, and compelling brand narratives by leveraging insights from our identity-based framework. Indeed, this framework characterizes the focal role that brand identity can play in fostering differentiation, competitive advantage, and consumer engagement.

SAME SAME, BUT DIFFERENT!

WITHIN-COUNTRY CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON CONSUMER RESPONSES TO

BRAND AUTHENTICITY

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Keywords: Brand Authenticity, Brand Identification, Cultural Values, Survey Research

The current article investigates the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer

responses, and the moderation effect of culture on this relationship.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consumers' quest for authenticity has been considered "one of the cornerstones of contemporary marketing" (Brown et al. 2003, p. 21) and consumers increasingly search for authenticity in brands (Arnould and Price 2000; Morhart et al. 2015). It therefore comes as no surprise that the concept of brand authenticity has been growing vigorously in the marketing field over the past 25 years. Brand authenticity reflects consumers' perceptions of a brand's faithfulness toward itself, credibility, integrity, and ability to support consumers in being true to themselves (Morhart et al. 2015).

Prior brand authenticity research has largely neglected possible cultural influences. While extant brand authenticity research has often mentioned the importance of culture for understanding brand authenticity (e.g., Beverland 2005; Moulard et al. 2021; Napoli et al. 2014), this research has not explicitly investigated cultural influences related to brand authenticity so far. As a consequence, this research suffers from at least two important deficits. First, it remains unclear whether cultural dimensions affect consumer responses to brand authenticity. Second, previous brand authenticity research, like most marketing research, has treated culture as a country-level phenomenon. This stands in sharp contrast to prior research suggesting that societies have become less homogeneous (e.g., due to migration) and resulting within-country cultural heterogeneity may influence business outcomes (Lenartowicz and Roth 2001; Steenkamp 2001).

Our research addresses these important deficits and investigates possible within-country cultural influences on important consumer responses to brand authenticity. Specifically, we investigate whether the relationships of brand authenticity to brand identification, purchase intention and word-of-mouth are moderated by Hofstede's (1984) cultural values and cultural involvement.

Method and Data

The sample includes 300 U.S. consumers (average age: 38.7 years, 58.7 % females, 44% university degree). We conducted an online survey to collect data on five brands (Amazon, Apple, Coca-Cola, Microsoft, and Ikea) via Prolific. Participants were recruited and randomly assigned to one of the brands and were able to take part in the survey only if they knew the assigned brand. Respondents answered measures of the independent and dependent variables, the moderators and demographics.

Summary of the Findings

H1a, H1b and H1c suggested positive relationships of brand authenticity to brand identification, word-of-mouth, and purchase intention, respectively. The results of our moderated regressions showed positive relationships for the three consumer responses (brand identification, standardized estimate: .70, p<.001; word-of-mouth, .67, p<.001; purchase intention, .54, p<.001), in support of our hypotheses.

In H2, we proposed a positive moderating effect of power distance. Our results (brand identification, -.02, n.s.; word-of-mouth, .11 p<.05; purchase intention, .03, n.s.), only provide support for the word-of-mouth model. H3 suggests a negative moderating effect of uncertainty avoidance. Our results support our hypothesis (brand identification, -.07, p<.1.; word-of-mouth, -.26, p<.001; purchase intention, -.15, p<.01). With H4, we proposed a positive moderating effect of collectivism. We found a positive moderator effect for the relationship between brand authenticity and brand identification (.07, p<.1), in support of H4a. The estimates for the moderation were non-significant in the word-of-mouth and purchase intention models. In H5, we suggested a positive moderating effect of masculinity. We found positive effects in the purchase intention model (.13, p<.01) and no effect in the word-of-mouth model and the brand identification model. H6 proposed a positive moderating effect of culture

involvement. Our results support our hypothesis (brand identification, .08, p<.1.; word-of-mouth, .10, p<.05; purchase intention, .10, p<.1).

Key Contributions

While brand authenticity has been gaining popularity over the past few decades, the role of culture for brand authenticity has been largely neglected. This research is the first to focus on the important role of culture for brand authenticity. Specifically, with our focus on culture and investigating its role below the layer of national culture, we investigate whether within-country cultural influences affect important consumer responses to brand authenticity. Based on a sample of 300 U.S. consumers with different cultural background, we analyze whether Hofstede's cultural values and culture involvement affect the relationships between brand authenticity and brand identification, word-of-mouth, and purchase intention, respectively.

Overall, in line with our rationale, our results demonstrate within-country cultural influences on the three important consumer responses to brand authenticity investigated in this research. The pattern of the moderations, however, is more complex than we hypothesized. Our results provide important first insights in the role of culture for brand authenticity and stress the need to investigate the phenomenon of culture on a more fine-grained level—as sub-cultures within a country rather than the culture of a country.

References are available upon request.

SIMPLE NAME, SIMPLE LOGO, STRONG SELF-BRAND CONNECTION

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Keywords: self-brand connection, processing fluency, brand name, brand logo

Description: As evidenced in three studies, fluently processed brand logos and brand names lead to more robust self-brand connections by creating a sense of brand familiarity and allowing for easier integration of the brand into personal narratives.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Brands that become integrated into consumers' self-perceptions through strong self-brand connections (SBC) enjoy numerous advantages, such as more favorable assessments, heightened purchase intentions, and increased customer loyalty. Over one-hundred works have been published on self-brand connection (SBC) since its introduction as a construct in 2004 (Escalas). The present work expands on foundational research on SBCs by investigating three heretofore unaddressed issues. First, this work considers whether fundamental brand elements, brand names and logos, influence self-brand connections. Second, this study represents the first attempt to consider how a fundamental psychological facet of information processing might facilitate self-brand connections. Specifically, we investigate whether the fluency with which brand elements are processed affects consumers' capacity to associate brands with themselves. Given that SBCs arise from experiences with a brand, it raises the question of whether the sensation of brand

familiarity resulting from processing fluency can prompt stronger SBCs. Third, despite SBCs being initially conceptualized as evolving through a narrative process (Escalas 2004), empirical evidence for this process remains quite limited. Thus, this study directly explores the narrative process believed to precede a robust SBC.

Method and Data

Study 1 participants (n = 89) engaged in a task in which a focal logo appeared zero, four, or twenty times and then completed Escalas' (2004) seven-item SBC scale (α = .971) and a single-item measure of brand familiarity. Study 2 manipulated the perceptual fluency associated with a logo by making the name in the logo more or less difficult to visually discern via background contrast (e.g., Reber and Schwarz 1999).While viewing the stimulus, participants completed the SBC scale (*alpha* = .977) and a four-item ease of processing scale (*alpha* = .867). Study 3 manipulated brand name fluency by mixing a high-fluency (promise, solution, insight, and secure) or low-fluency (covenant, algorithm, acumen, and tether) word with a high-fluency (20, 50) or low-fluency (17, 53) number (e.g., Acumen-20). While viewing a picture of the brand name and its affiliated products, participants (n = 156) described a time they would have used the focal product and then indicated how difficult (scale point 1) to easy (7) it was to relate the brand to their life. Autobiographical thinking was operationalized as the percentage of words in each participant's narrative that are self-referencing (I, I'm, I'd, I'll, me, my, mine).

Summary of Findings

Study 1 results indicate positive effects of exposure frequency on brand familiarity (t = 2.07, p = .04) and brand familiarity on SBC (t = 8.20, p < .001). Supporting full mediation, the

indirect effect of exposure frequency on SBC (*LLCI* = .005, *ULCI* = .576) is significant while the direct effect is not ($t = 0.64$, $p > .50$). Tests of Study 2's data reveal a significant direct effect of logo fluency on SBC ($t = 2.77$, $p < .01$); an effect that is partially mediated by perceived processing ease as evidenced by significant direct effects of logo fluency on perceived ease of processing ($t = 5.07$, $p < .001$) and perceive ease of processing on SBC ($t = 10.15$, $p < .001$), and the significant indirect effect of fluency on SBC (LLCI = .260, ULCI = .641). Study 3 results include significant word fluency by number fluency interactions for ease of relating the word to a life event ($F_{1,146} = 6.13$, $p = .014$) and autobiographical thinking ($F_{1,150} = 5.93$, $p = .016$). These interactions are driven by names with a high-fluency word and high-fluency number being easier to associate with one's life and prompting greater autobiographical thinking than brand names with high-fluency words and low-fluency numbers.

Key Contributions

The connection between processing fluency and self-related thinking has rarely been observed. Thus, Studies 1 and 2 findings that fluent processing of brand elements induce a sense of brand familiarity and, in turn, foster a meaningful connection between the brand and the consumer offer a unique contribution. Since its introduction, the topic of self-brand connection has garnered over a hundred peer-reviewed publications, but few have delved into the narrative process held to be behind SBCs. Study 3's results provide meaningful support for this process. A managerial implication of this work is that managers should select fluent brand names. This may seem obvious advice, yet clothing brands alone include Uniqlo, Etnies, Echhaus Latta, and Brujas. The results reported here suggest that such brands are, at least initially, disadvantaged by their names. Regarding logos, Study 1 suggests that managers should aim for consumer self-

brand connections by repeatedly exposing consumers to the logo, yet this can be quite expensive. Alternatively, as observed in Study 2, offering simple, fluently processed logos spurs self-brand connections more cost-effectively. The research more generally implies that simplicity should be the norm across marketing messages, including fonts, images, and language in ads, to strengthen SBCs.

THE ANTECEDENTS OF BRAND PERSONALITY: A META-ANALYTIC REVIEW

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Keywords:

Brand personality; Brand strategy; Cultural differences; Meta-analysis

Description:

This research employs meta-analysis to synthesize previous research on brand personality antecedents and investigate potential moderators related to product-strategy and cross-country differences.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Brand personality is a differentiation tool for symbolic value (Bairrada et al., 2018). Several reviews have been published (e.g., Radler, 2018), including two meta-analyses (Eisend and Stokburger-Sauer, 2013a; 2013b). However, three key issues persist.

Firstly, the current review lacks an up-to-date perspective as the latest meta-analysis only covers studies up to 2010, omitting 71.74% of subsequent research. Furthermore, heterogeneity still exists and previous meta-analyses have overlooked a new antecedent.

Secondly, it remains unexplored whether these antecedents are consistent across product-strategy contexts. Prior analyses, limited by small subgroup sizes, ignored moderating effects (Eisend and Stokburger-Sauer, 2013a). While some evidence emphasizes product-strategy factors (e.g., Ang and Lim, 2006), aspects like product self-signaling potential need further investigation. These elements influence consumer evaluation (Nelson, 1970), but their role in brand-personality development remains unclear.

Thirdly, it's unclear how cultural factors differentiate brand personality antecedents. Recognizing culture, especially individualism-collectivism, helps marketers tailor brand messages by country (Aguirre-Rodriguez, 2014).

Therefore, this research provides a meta-analytic review of brand personality antecedents, focusing on the strength of these relationships, variations across product conditions, and cross-country influences on brand personality perceptions. By exploring the three sub-questions, this study builds on prior meta-analyses, by adding newer data and moderator analyses.

Method and Data

To allow comparison with previous meta-analyses in the same field, we applied the

framework from Eisend and Stokburger-Sauer (2013a). Extension fit is introduced as an additional antecedent due to its rising prominence in recent research. We examined whether brand personality drivers differ depending on product self-signaling potential, service (vs. goods), experience (vs. search) products. The study concentrated on individualism as it's crucial in brand personification (Aguirre-Rodriguez, 2014). We also assessed three methodological moderators.

For literature search, we conducted a five-stage search from August 1997 to December 2022. This identified 3371 papers, from which 92 papers across 38 countries were selected based on four inclusion criteria. Constructs and coding were clearly defined, achieving 86.06% agreement.

Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was used as the effect size (Lipsey and Wilson, 2001). Publication bias was assessed using Egger's regression, while heterogeneity was managed with the Q-Statistic. Large sample relationships were prioritized in moderator analysis and we consolidated similar drivers (Maas and Hox, 2005). Due to limited effect sizes for individual dimensions, they were combined as in prior studies (e.g., Lee and Kim, 2018). This allows us to assess the effect of five antecedents: branding, product design, advertising, consumer personality, and prior experience.

Summary of Findings

Comparing the current analysis with Eisend and Stokburger-Sauer's (2013a), both studies highlight consumer personality's positive effect on brand personality perception. Yet, with twelve more years of research, antecedents like advertising complexity and prior attitude have shifted from non-significant to significantly positive ($r_{complexity\_Eisend}$=.153, p> .05; $r_{complexity}$= .265, p< .001; $r_{attitude\_Eisend}$= .330, p> .05; $r_{attitude}$= .339, p< .001). These differences

underscore the need for updated research.

For moderator analysis, results indicate that brand personality drivers differ depending on product self-signaling potential, service (vs. goods), experience (vs. search) products, and individualism (vs. collectivism). Specifically, branding effects are stronger for experience (vs. search) products and collectivism (vs. individualism) culture ($\beta_{experience}$ = .615, p < .001; $\beta_{individualism}$ = -.007, p = .003). Consumer personality is a stronger determinant for products with a high (vs. low) self-signaling potential and collectivism (vs. individualism) culture (β_{self} = .654, p =.005; $\beta_{individualism}$ = -.009, p =.043). Additionally, product design is a stronger driver for products with a high self-signaling potential (β = .209, p = .048).

Methodologically, sample type affects product design's impact on brand personality perception more in students than in the general population. The study design and journal discipline had no significant effect on the findings.

Key Contributions

This research contributes to brand personality literature in several ways. First, it provides an updated summary of the literature on brand personality drivers by synthesizing empirical findings. An earlier meta-analysis in the field only included 26 papers (Eisend and Stokburger-Sauer, 2013a); this study analyzes 92 papers, providing more robust findings. We also introduce extension fit as a novel antecedent in brand personality research, incorporating an extra 12 years of literature. This provides a broader understanding of brand personality's relationships with key constructs, aiding in generalization and future research guidance.

Secondly, this study broadens brand personality research by exploring unexamined product-strategy moderators, addressing main effect inconsistencies. Theoretically, it examines strategy-related moderators like high vs. low self-signaling products, goods vs. services, and

experience vs. search products, enhancing understanding of brand personality drivers. Practically, these insights help marketers develop more effective brand personality strategies, enabling tailored approaches for different markets and ensuring consumer resonance.

Third, this study enhances international marketing by establishing how individualism moderates brand personality antecedents. Despite its global use, cross-country comparisons in brand personality are scarce. Our findings reveal cultural variations in brand personality drivers. Also, by assessing methodological factors, it guides future research design and minimizes bias.

VERIFICATION OF TIME SETTING TO IMPROVE SHARE ESTIMATION ACCURACY IN CONCEPT TESTING

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Description: This study showed that the attractiveness of limited time, which has been extensively accumulated in the literature on consumer behavior, also fits in the context of quality in concept testing.

ABSTRACT

Focusing on the accuracy of estimating sales share in the concept testing, this study reveals that compared with a no-time constraint environment, in a limited-viewing environment, the confirmation time is longer and the share estimation accuracy is improved. However, even if the concept confirmation time is increased by the forced-viewing environment, the response quality does not improve.

INTRODUCTION

Product concepts are product-specific abstract meanings or values that differentiate a product from its competitors. Concepts form the basis for decision-making in many corporate activities, such as product development and marketing communication. For instance, in marketing promotions, a creative concept builds a consistent brand image based on consumer perception (Zenker, 2014). For a concept to permeate an organization, evidence of its effectiveness should be presented at an early stage of product development (Van Kleef et al., 2005). Concept testing plays

an important role in marketing, as it estimates customer demand before resources are committed to developing a physical prototype.

Therefore, improving the quality of concept testing is essential. However, enterprises maintain high confidentiality with concept testing (Antikainen et al., 2010), while practitioners prefer to keep their findings proprietary. Hence, despite the large number of concept tests performed each year, little is known about desirable survey designs (Peng & Finn, 2008). Consequently, despite the amount of concept testing performed in day-to-day business, there is surprisingly little academic literature addressing quality factors. Literature on factors that improve the quality of concept testing is limited and mainly focuses on the extraction of respondents (Heiskanen et al., 2007; Li et al., 2017; Peng et al., 2012) and information. In other words, it corresponds to who and what is involved in concept testing.

However, there is almost no knowledge on how to present concepts (method). Therefore, this study focuses on time, which is the main method for detecting inattentive respondents, and tested two hypotheses. First, based on the finding that fast responders have low data quality (Wood et al., 2017), an increase in concept confirmation time due to the forced viewing environment (lower time limit) may improve test quality. Second, as consumers tend to be attracted to limited time (Chen et al., 2021), the limited viewing environment for concept confirmation may improve test quality. Targeting the Japanese skincare market (facewash and lotion), we conducted randomized controlled trials (RCTs) to verify the effectiveness of the above time settings in increasing the accuracy of market share estimations in concept testing. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to apply the idea of scarcity marketing to concept testing. This study expands academic knowledge on concept testing and provides meaningful suggestions for researchers and practitioners.

FACTORS FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CONCEPT TESTING
Extraction of respondents (Who)

In concept testing, it is assumed that the respondent understands the content of a concept and provides an appropriate answer. Conducting concept testing on

consumers who lack the necessary product knowledge may compromise the validity of the test results. Hence, it is desirable for respondents to have experience in purchasing or using the target product. For unfamiliar product categories, respondents should employ professional reviewers (Li et al., 2017). Consumers may unexpectedly resist innovative product concepts due to difficulties with comprehension (Heiskanen et al., 2007). As a countermeasure, we expect to obtain high quality results by inviting consumers seeking high innovation and change to the survey (Peng et al., 2012).

Information to present (What)

The most basic information presented in academic research on concept testing comprises a concept. However, because the concept alone is abstract, consumer understanding is limited. Thus, it is common to attach a main function or feature to facilitate a concrete understanding of the concept (Van Kleef et al., 2005). For instance, in the concept testing of wine, the country of origin, ingredients, and alcohol content are relevant (García-Milon et al., 2019).

Even with information such as features, the concept still relies on parts that are invisible to consumers (Lanseng & Olsen, 2012). Information that provides a more specific image of the concept is necessary for improving survey accuracy. The following three types of information are commonly used. The first is the product design, which is a source of product competitiveness and a significant driver of purchasing behavior (Canto Primo et al., 2021). Furthermore, visual explanations are crucial in concept testing (Grunert et al., 2011). Second, product and corporate brands influence consumer perception. For unknown product brands, the sound of the name and its consistency with product features also influence consumer perception (Zamudio & Jewell, 2020). Although the product brand is equally vital, the corporate brand has a greater impact on the concept test. This is because, even with an excellent product concept, consumer reactions differ depending on the company that provides it (Kato et al., 2023). Third, price is used by consumers to judge quality (Lee & Chen-Yu, 2018). Practitioners are aware of this characteristic, and a survey of managers of

new product development shows that concept testing includes pricing (Peng & Finn, 2008).

Concept presentation time (How)

Thoughtless and under-effort responses pose a significant threat to the validity of inferences drawn from data (Roberts et al., 2019). The response time is the primary method for detecting inattentive respondents; a certain duration is required to understand the question items and evaluate them appropriately (Ulitzsch et al., 2022). Respondents who do not make an effort to read the concept produce poor quality responses. There are two possible ways of using time to increase the attention to concepts. The first is a forced-viewing environment. Responders who are extremely fast, generate poor data quality (Wood et al., 2017); hence, establishing a compulsory environment ensures that the respondent confirms the concept within a certain duration. Limited-viewing environment is the second; consumers tend to be persuaded due to the time limit (Chen et al., 2021). A limited-time product strategy contributes to increased sales during the relevant period (Ishihara et al., 2023), for example, promotions with expiration dates such as "40% off for a limited time" (Hmurovic et al., 2023). Therefore, setting an upper time limit may attract the attention of respondents. Hence, the following hypotheses were derived:

H1: In concept testing, compared with a normal environment without a time setting, a limited-viewing environment (upper time limit) increases the concept confirmation time.

H2-1: In concept testing, compared with a normal environment without a time setting, a forced-viewing environment (lower time limit) improves share estimation accuracy.

H2-2: In concept testing, compared with a normal environment without a time setting, a limited-viewing environment (upper time limit) improves share estimation accuracy.

METHODOLOGY

Concept Sheet

We conducted RCTs in an online survey environment to verify the hypotheses. In business practice, concept testing is performed for new products or to update existing products. If a product has not already been sold, the accuracy of the market share estimation cannot be calculated. Therefore, in this study, we targeted the latest versions of existing products. As shown in Table 1, the target products were the top five sales shares in the Japanese skincare market (facewash and lotion). The sales share was calculated using points of sales data from January to December 2022 by the research firm GfK Japan.

Concept sheets were created using information obtained from the official websites of these products. As the concept itself is abstract and difficult to understand (Lanseng & Olsen, 2012), the following information was covered based on existing literature: features/ingredients (García-Milon et al., 2019; Van Kleef et al., 2005), designs (Grunert et al., 2011), corporate/product brands (Kato et al., 2023), and prices (Peng & Finn, 2008). As shown in Figure 1, the concept sheet displayed this information in three pages for each product.

Survey

The RCTs were conducted with 1,200 people in Japan from May 15 to 19, 2023. The survey was distributed to a panel (consumers) of the Japanese research firm Cross Marketing Inc. The basic attributes of the 1,200 people were as follows:

- Gender: Male (50.1%), Female (49.9%)
- Age: 20s (20.9%), 30s (18.8%), 40s (20.5%), 50s (20.0%), 60s (19.8%)

The RCTs comprised 3 groups of concept testing time settings: (normal, forced-viewing environment, and limited-viewing environment) × 2 product categories (facewash and lotion) × 200 people = 1,200 people. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the three groups, and as shown in Figure 1, five concept sheets were checked at the corresponding time setting. The normal group did not have any time settings. The forced-viewing environment was set to a minimum of 30

seconds per concept, and the limited-viewing environment was set to a maximum of 30 seconds per concept. The participants for this experiment had the following three conditions: (a) age range from 20 to 60 years, (b) use of skincare products at least once a week, and (c) checking five concept sheets within 10 minutes.

The survey consisted of five questions: (1) gender, (2) age, (3) frequency of use of skin care products, (4) confirm five concept sheets, and (5) purchase intention. Based on the results of (2)–(4), we collected data from 1,800 people, after excluding respondents who did not meet conditions (a)–(c). For Question (4), after presenting an explanation, "From now on, you will see five concepts of facewash/lotion," each group was presented with concept sheets with each time setting. The order of presentation of the products was randomized for each respondent to eliminate order bias. In Question (5), we asked "Assuming the purchase of the next facewash/lotion, please select one product that you would like to purchase." We used a single answer for each product.

Verification

The verification comprised two parts. In Verification 1, we verified H1 for concept viewing time. We adopted the Mann-Whitney U test to verify whether there was a difference in the median viewing time of the five concepts between the normal and limited-viewing environment groups. This test is used when normality cannot be assumed in two unpaired groups. The null hypothesis was "there is no difference in concept-viewing time between the two groups." A level of 5% was considered statistically significant.

In Verification 2, we verified H2-1 and H2-2 for share estimation accuracy. The control group (true value) is the actual sales share shown in Table 1 (POS data from January to December 2022 owned by GfK Japan), and the treatment group comprises the normal group without time setting, forced-viewing environment and limited-viewing environment in concept testing. The chi-square test was applied to the matrix of group × actual sales share/share of the selected products in concept testing. The null hypothesis was "there is no difference between the actual sales share

and the share of selected products in concept testing." When significant differences were detected, pairwise comparisons using the chi-square test were used to identify the groups in which differences occurred. P-values were corrected using the Bonferroni method. The statistical analysis software R was used as the analysis environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Verification 1: The confirmation time per concept in each group was as follows: normal environment:10.874, forced-viewing environment:43.779, and limited-viewing environment:16.918, in seconds. As the minimum duration in the forced-viewing environment was 30 seconds, the confirmation time was over 40 seconds. Compared with the normal environment, the viewing time was approximately 6 seconds longer in the limited viewing environment. As a result of applying the Mann-Whitney U test to the viewing time of normal and limited-viewing environments, the p-value was < 0.000. Accordingly, the null hypothesis was rejected and H1 was supported.

Verification 2: Table 1 shows the actual sales share/share of the selected products in concept testing. The chi-square test detected a significant difference at the 5% level for both facewash and lotion. In other words, there is a gap between the concept testing results and market reality. The results of the pairwise comparisons for the chi-square test identify where divergence occurred, and the normal and forced-viewing environment groups had a p-value of < 0.05 for both product categories. This result indicates that there is a gap between the actual share and the estimated results of the survey. Therefore, compared with normal concept testing, the forced-viewing environment group did not improve share estimation accuracy. However, no significant difference was detected at the 5% level in the limited-viewing environment group, that is, the results obtained were in line with the actual share, and the estimation accuracy was improved compared with that of concept testing (normal group). Therefore, H2-1 was not supported, but H2-2 was supported.
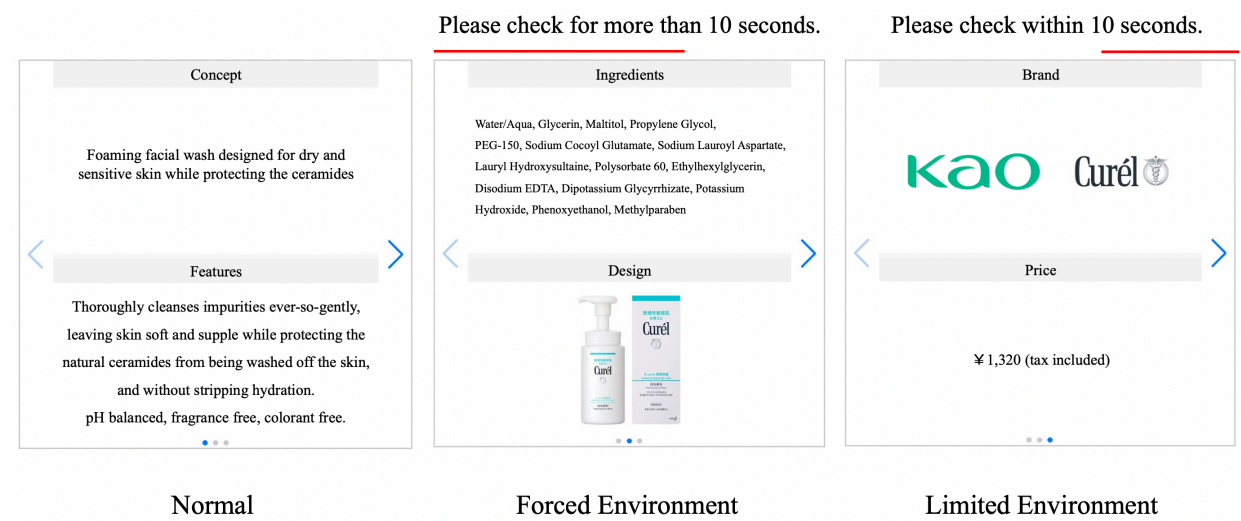
Figure 1. A screen of the concept in the concept test at each time setting.

| | Share (Actual market and concept testing) | | | | | | p-value | |
Group	Rohto Melano CC	Fine Today Senka	Rosette Face Wash Pasta	Kao Biore	Kao Curel	Total	chi-square	pairwise
Actual Share	29	23	18	16	13	100		−
Normal	14	20	9	40	17	100	0.008**	0.005**
Forced	13	21	11	35	21	100		0.016*
Limited	17	24	8	32	19	100		0.065
	Share (Actual market and concept testing)						p-value	
Group	Immu Naturie	Kose Carté	Kao Curel	Rohto Melano CC	Shiseido Elixir Superiel	Total	chi-square	pairwise
Actual Share	36	23	19	17	5	100		−
Normal	26	7	22	24	23	100	0.002**	< 0.000 ***
Forced	26	7	20	27	21	100		0.002 **
Limited	28	15	17	22	18	100		0.175

Note: Chi-square denotes the chi-square test; pairwise denotes pairwise comparisons for the chi-square test (Bonferroni-adjusted p-values); ***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.05.

Table 1. Results of the chi-square test to examine the deviation from the actual sales share.

Practical Implications

The practical implications of this study are as follows: First, concept testing should be conducted in a standardized manner based on the factors that improve data quality. As this study shows, practitioners should be cognizant that setting time constraints can change data quality. Second, limited time should be actively introduced to improve concept testing quality; it has no survey cost. Moreover, practitioners should abandon the simplistic perception that "fast responses = lack of attention" in surveys. As shown in this study, forcing respondents to watch concepts for longer durations did not improve data quality. Some participants respond slowly and inattentively (Read et al., 2022). Third, practitioners should avoid requiring survey respondents to participate in a compulsory environment. People experience great psychological stress when forced into any setting (Seitz & Smith, 2022), which is similar to that in marketing research.

Limitations and Future Work

This study had some limitations. First, generalization is limited because the results are restricted to skincare in the Japanese market. Thus, the target product categories and countries should be expanded in future. Second, existing products were used to evaluate the deviation from the actual sales share; hence, the results would differ for new products that have not been introduced into the market. A similar survey should be conducted before launching a new product and the discrepancies with actual sales verified after the product is put into the market. This study requires close cooperation with companies.

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WHAT MOTIVATES USERS TO SHOW LOVE AND EVANGELIST BEHAVIOR TOWARDS BRANDED APPS? A BRAND ATTACHMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP PERSPECTIVE: A MULTI METHOD APPROACH

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Following the rapid expansion of the smartphone, the number of smartphone-specific apps has increased. Smartphone apps boost device functioning and allow users to do particular tasks. Mobile apps increased demand by $318 billion in 2020. Revenue is expected to rise across numerous categories in the coming months, reaching 613 billion US dollars by 2025 (Statista, 2022). Mobile apps provide customers a simple and gratifying experience, making them alternative advertising tools (McLean et al., 2018). The number of firms interested in building branded apps to communicate with potential consumers and meet their goals has increased. This tendency will certainly continue as people rely more on mobile phones. Smartphone apps, which display brand recognition through the app title and product brand or symbol during user interaction (Gao et al., 2021), have attracted the attention of customers, businesses, and marketing scholars. Because of their share and importance in virtual marketplaces, merchants' smartphone applications play a significant role in this integration. Through applications, customers may easily, quickly, and satisfactorily connect with retailers to obtain data and make purchases (van Noort and van Reijmersdal, 2019). Apps can also encourage repeat purchases and higher spending than non-app users (Liu et al., 2019).

Even while more consumers are utilizing merchant apps to place orders, most only download and use a few, typically those from large firms (Molinillo et al., 22). Customers often deactivate the app after buying the goods, viewing the material, or receiving the offer. Thus, the influence of apps on merchant-customer relationships is being questioned (Chen and Qasim, 2020). Several researchers have studied the drivers of branded app attachment and its outcomes (purchase intention, brand love, brand evangelism, and continuance intention). Tran et al. (2022) examined what drives and enhances consumers' value, which increases their brand love and intention to buy. Li and Fang (2019) examined brand app continuation intention antecedents by integrating brand attachment into the expectation confirmation model. Tran et al. (2021) examined branded app attachment drivers and outcomes as continuation intention, purchase intention, and word of mouth.

However, research on merchants' branded app use has focused on why customers use them or why they keep using them. To clarify, we want to study how branded mobile apps (BMA) affect motivation, brand attachment, and brand love and evangelism. Customer attachment to a brand is their personal involvement with a product or service. Customers that have a profound connection to a brand feel connected, affectionate, admiring, and enthusiastic. Because it is well known that smartphone apps can increase brand attachment and that these pathways also motivate desirable outcomes, we introduce a conceptual framework centered on brand attachment, which is motivated by factors like self-congruity, utilitarian, hedonic, and social motivations and desired consumer outcomes (brand evangelism and brand love).

Hedonic and utilitarian drivers of branded app attachment are higher-order constructs with several dimensions in our study. We suggest measuring hedonic and utilitarian motivation constricts in many dimensions since they are challenging to grasp holistically. By examining branded self-congruity in branded app environment, which is understudied, we add to the literature. Researchers say self-relevance is crucial to the customer-brand connection (Hew et al., 2017). Instead of using theories like Expectation

Confirmation Model (Li and Fang, 2019), or Service Dominant Logic (Tran et al., 2021), this study uses Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model to understand the systematic nature of associations in the proposed study. SOR also helps us understand how suggested drivers (hedonic, utilitarian, social, and self-congruity) affect brand love and brand evangelism through branded app attachment and psychological ownership. Using the S-O-R model, consumer attachment to branded applications and psychological ownership are suggested as essential "organism" to improve results. SOR also addresses the necessity to utilize a different theoretical approach (Tran et al., 2021) to better comprehend users' love and evangelism of branded applications.

Design/methodology/approach: This study sample is gathered from 430 respondents from Malaysia. This study used multi method for analysis. Symmetrical analyses were performed using partial least squares structural equational modelling (PLS-SEM). Along with that, whereas to complement the net effect/symmetrical modelling, this study used configurational approach through the use of complexity theory from fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA).

Findings: Both symmetrical and asymmetrical findings reveal significant findings for brand evangelism and brand love. In addition to symmetrical findings, asymmetrical results also revealed significant configurations for both outcomes. Symmetrically, all relationships were significant except the insignificant effect of branded app self-congruity towards psychological ownership of branded apps and the insignificant effect of both social and utilitarian motivation towards brand attachment. Asymmetrically findings presented several configurations for the proposed outcomes i.e. brand evangelism and brand love.

Originality/Value/Implications: Our study extends the literature with branded app self-congruity and utilitarian, social, and hedonic motivation to explore consumer branded app attachment. In our study, hedonic and utilitarian causes of branded app attachment are multidimensional. Hedonic and utilitarian motivation are difficult to understand holistically, hence we recommend assessing them in several ways. Branded self-congruity in branded app environments is understudied, therefore we add to the research. This study uses S-O-R model to understand the systematic nature of associations in the proposed study instead of Expectation Confirmation Model (Li and Fang, 2019), or Service Dominant Logic (Tran et al., 2021). S-O-R also explains how branded app attachment and psychological ownership effect brand love and evangelism through recommended drivers (hedonic, utilitarian, social, and self-congruity). The S-O-R model suggests client attachment to branded apps and psychological ownership as crucial "organism" to boost results. S-O-R highlights the need for a novel theoretical approach (Tran et al., 2021) to understand consumers' love and evangelizing of branded apps. The findings can help branded app merchants identify the factors that increase users' branded app attachments, psychological ownership, brand love, and brand evangelism, which are vital to their success. This study can also help businesses integrate branding and platform elements to build holistic customer experiences that encourage online consumer-brand interactions.

Keyword: BRAND EVANGELISM; BRAND LOVE; MOTIVATION; PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP; BRAND SELF-CONGRUITY; PLS-SEM & fsQCA.

Paper Type: Research paper.

Sales Management and OFR

AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF ETHICAL CONTROL ON SALESPERSON JOB PERFORMANCE

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Keywords: Ethical climate, ethical control, job performance, work attitude, perceived controllability.

Description: This study identifies the contributing factors to the claimed adverse effect of a firm's ethical climate on salespeople's job performance with the theoretical model, calling for a meaningful investigation of the relationship.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

This study questions: *Is a persistent ethical climate favorable for salespeople's job performance?* The question is critical for practitioners and researchers because they have constantly emphasized the positive impact of ethical climate on business performance. However, this study claims that firms' persisting practices for a more robust ethical climate may deteriorate performance. We find supporting evidence from the literature and the National Business Ethics Survey (Ethics Resource Center, 2014) that a strong ethical culture may not necessarily indicate employee compliance with organizational ethics or more robust employee performance. This is probably because the sales force can fear an increased focus on an ethical work environment that will result in heightened punishment for ethical violations. With a strengthened code of ethics, disciplinary enforcement may be limiting for salespeople, especially when they perceive the

potential for more disciplinary enforcement from firms' persisting practices. Accordingly, salespeople may experience higher levels of role stress from the pressure and feel they have reduced control over their work performance. Despite the controversial impact of the claim, there has been a lack of theoretical development and empirical investigation thus far. This study attempts to fill the gap by revisiting the known relationship.

Method and Data

We used a sample of salespeople working in various industries in the United States to ensure variation in ethical climate and employee responses. We gathered the sample using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). In total, 307 salespeople correctly responded to the survey. We conducted a hierarchical multiple regression analysis to test whether salespersons' internalization of ethical codes and work variables (work attitudes and motivation) alter the relationship between ethical environment (climate regarding ethics: CE) and job performance (JP). The ethical environment measure was used to measure climate regarding ethics (CE) and was composed of 10 items rated on a 7-point scale by Valentine and Barnett (2002). The internalization of the ethical codes (IN) contained three items from Schwepker and Hartline (2005). Organizational commitment (OC) was measured with nine-item scales developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979). Job satisfaction (JS) was measured with four-item scales developed by Comer, Machleit, and Lagace (1989). The self-efficacy (SE) measure contained three items adapted from a salesperson's measure of self-efficacy (Sujan, Weitz, and Kumar 1994). Perceived control (PC) was measured with five items from Schulz et al. (1995). Finally, job performance (JP) was measured with the five-item scales developed by Pettit, Goris, and Vaught (1997).

Summary of Findings

CE and IN were both found to be significant predictors of salesperson job performance. A complete moderation occurred, with the main effects being insignificant. CE negatively influenced JP when the work motivation variables were considered together with CE. However, the positive impact of CE on JP remained when the work attitude variables were considered. Our findings support the argument that the change in organizational practice to enforce climate regarding ethics of the organizations generated an unexpected adverse effect on salesperson's job performance. These findings indicate that as a firm keeps focusing on its ethical climate in sales practices, salesperson job performance is negatively affected. Our findings also support the claim that climate regarding ethics, such as perceived organizational disciplinary enforcement, plays a limited role for salespersons when the organization puts too much attention on adherence to disciplinary enforcement. Namely, persistent control, coupled with salespersons' perceived lack of support or an unbalanced expectation of commitment exchange, causes a magnification effect on the salespersons' processing and leads to lower behavioral output than expected with the given input level. Therefore, it is very plausible for strong ethical controls to backfire and, instead of improving job performance, negatively affect it.

Key Contributions

This study theorizes that the proven positive relationship between ethical climate and salesperson job performance may not be permanent, and a persistent ethical climate can adversely affect a salesperson's job performance. Our findings provide valuable insights for incorporating ethics into strategic planning. By understanding factors that affect salespeople's

code internalization and how ethical controls affect salespersons' job responses, management can take steps to improve their firm's climate regarding ethics, improve salesperson performance, and provide their firm with a competitive advantage.

There has been a lack of theoretical development that explores the new relationship thus far. Its impact on firms will be substantial for sales managers because they have constantly emphasized their ethical claim to meet a profit maximization goal. This study identifies the contributing factors to the claimed adverse effect of a firm's ethical climate on salespeople's job performance with the theoretical model, calling for a meaningful investigation of the relationship. We acknowledge that research is needed to understand better how ethical training and enculturation should be undertaken in such a way as to increase the ethicality of the sales force while also improving job productivity.

References are available upon request.

ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF UNETHICAL SALES BEHAVIOR

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Keywords: Unethical Behavior; Performance; Sales Manager; Negotiation;

Description: This paper assesses the antecedents and consequences of unethical sales behavior.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – Despite numerous studies, a comprehensive understanding of the factors leading to unethical sales behavior and its consequences remains elusive. Specifically, the investigation into performance outcomes has not been thoroughly explored in empirical research. We thus examined what are the antecedents and consequences of unethical sales behavior.

Method And Data – We developed and validated a comprehensive framework by examining 310 sales professionals in the UK.

Summary of Findings – We found that unethical sales behavior is significantly influenced by factors such as self-deception, salesforce obsolescence, perceived organizational politics, creativity and risk-taking, and learning orientation. However, it is not affected by ethical climate and performance orientation. We further found that unethical sales behavior has a negative impact on behavioral performance and value creation competence but does not affect financial performance.

Statement of Key Contributions – Unethical behavior is widespread, and the literature has made significant advancements in identifying factors, but there are still important questions that warrant further empirical studies. First, we do not yet know if unethical behavior affects performance. Second, the literature indicates the need to examine multiple layers of influence to understand the origins of unethical behavior, but these approaches are still rare, making it difficult to understand the specific role of variables in shaping unethical behavior. We demonstrate that unethical sales behavior does not improve financial performance but rather hurts relationships with customers.

COMPENSATION FOR OPTIMIZATION: INCENTIVIZING AMBIDEXTROUS FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES

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Keywords: frontline ambidexterity, employee performance, compensation, service quality, productivity

Description: Through a combined use of theory, experimentation, and survey, we investigate how incentives affect the performance of ambidextrous frontline employees, who are evaluated based on both quantity and quality outcomes.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

We focus on how managers should design incentive plans for ambidextrous frontline employees, who are evaluated based on both quantity and quality outcomes. In particular, we consider the efficacy of quota-bonus plans over commission plans and the potential ramifications of adjusting metrics to align ambidexterity.

Method and Data

We adopt a multimethod approach entailing a theoretical model, experimental tests of employee behavior, and a cross-industry survey of managers.

Summary of Findings

We show theoretically and empirically that quota-bonus plans have advantages over commission plans and that the incentive alignment of quantity and quality through metrics can offer considerable benefits for firms.

Key Contributions

We contribute to the literature by studying which compensation plan should be preferred by managers when employees are tasked with performing on both quantity and quality. Additionally, we show that incentive alignment through metrics may be one way to improve the ambidexterity of frontline employees.

FEELING LIKE AN IMPOSTOR: CONSEQUENCES ON B2B SALESPEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH

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Keywords: Impostor phenomenon, Burnout, Mental health, B2B sales

Description: This research examines the impact of impostor feelings on three burnout stages and ultimately turnover intentions, providing evidence that managers can help salespeople overcome impostor feelings, while customer feedback may be detrimental when burnout has already taken hold.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The impostor phenomenon is defined as the attribution of successes to external factors (Clance &

Imes, 1978). Individuals experiencing impostor feelings are more stressed and have negative

emotions going until the state of depression (Vergauwe et al., 2015, Mcgregor et al., 2008).

While salespeople are facing successes and failures daily, and high pressure due to high expected

results, we believe that the business-to-business (B2B) sales context gives potential arousal to the

impostor phenomenon, and this could further affect salespeople's mental health. Therefore,

identifying how external parties (manager, customer) can help salespeople internalize such accomplishments and reduce these impostor feelings is crucial. Therefore, our research questions are the following: How do salespeople's impostor feelings affect their mental health and intention to leave the firm? To what extent can managers and customers influence salespeople's impostor feelings?

Method and Data

To test the hypotheses, a survey was conducted among 223 B2B salespeople in France. All measures were adapted from previous studies. For example, the impostor phenomenon was measured using seven items adapted from the Leary Impostorism Scale (Leary et al., 2000). To test our model, we used partial least squares - structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).

Summary of Findings

Impostor feelings affect the 3 steps of burnout by reducing (1)personal accomplishment and increasing both (2)depersonalization and (3)emotional exhaustion. When burnout achieves a level of high emotional exhaustion, it increases salespeople's turnover intention. Our findings highlight that manager's support can reduce the effect of the impostor phenomenon on emotional exhaustion. Customer feedback is particularly interesting among impostors, on the one hand, when salespeople experiencing impostor feelings have high customer feedback, they will maintain a high level of personal accomplishment (compared to salespeople with low customer feedback). On the other hand, when salespeople experiencing impostor feelings receive high customer feedback, the higher their impostor feelings, the more emotionally exhausted they will be.

Key Contributions

We contribute to sales literature by introducing the impostor phenomenon in the growing mental health sales literature. We further demonstrate the specificity of impostor feelings among sales professionals showing that their customer interactions play a moderating role to reduce (vs increase) the effect of impostor feelings at different steps of burnout.

References are available upon request.

GRITTY SALESPEOPLE AND UNETHICAL SALES BEHAVIORS: ONLY IF EVERYBODY ELSE IS DOING IT TOO

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Keywords: grit, sales ethics subculture, unethical sales behaviors, prosocial rule-breaking, relational sales performance, integrated ethical decision-making theory

Description: This study explores the interaction of the sales ethics subculture with salesperson grit, unethical sales behaviors, and relational sales performance.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The current literature on grit and sales ethics display grit as having both positive and negative relationships to ethical behavior and do not include situational factors such as the sales ethics subculture. The integrated model of ethical decision-making proposes that both individual and situational factors work together to determine the decision-making process used by a person confronted by an ethical dilemma (Schwartz 2016). As such, researchers cannot fully understand individual factors (like grit) without understanding how situational factors (like the sales ethics subculture) interact with or potentially change any related outcomes. One motivation for this research is in response to recent studies promoting the need to investigate the joint interaction of

individual salesperson variables and sales team drivers of sales outcomes (Claro, Ramos, Gonzalez and Palmatier 2020; Claro, Ramos and Palmatier 2023).

Method and Data

Consistent with extant sales research (Chaker, Nowlin, Walker, and Anaza 2021; Lussier et al. 2022) and in collaboration with Prolific which is a well-recognized market research firm, the survey instrument was administered to an online panel of salespeople. The final sample includes 197 responses from qualified front-line salespeople. SmartPLS 4.0 was used to execute the structural equation model and analysis (Ringle et al. 2022).

Regarding explained variance in the dependent variables, grit and unethical sales behavior combine to explain 37% of relational sales performance. Salesperson grit explains 9% of the variance of a salesperson's tendency toward prosocial rule-breaking but only explains 6% of the variance in unethical sales behaviors. However, when we include the effect of the sales ethics subculture, the explained variance of unethical sales behavior jumps from 6% to 28% and the total effect from grit on relational sales performance is reduced.

Summary of Findings

The results highlight how the influence of situational circumstances interact with individual salesperson factors to shape salesperson ethical decision-making and behavior. Our research begins to suggest that routine behaviors within a sales ethics subculture are a more dominant factor than internal salesperson grit with regard to salesperson ethical decision-making and behavior. According to theory and in line with the evidence from this study, a salesperson

may exchange their normal internal, deliberative process of ethical decision-making for an irrational approach based on sales team peer behavior.

Statement of Key Contributions

Ethical studies relying on individual salesperson factors, without including at least one situational aspect, could be suffering from unobserved heterogeneity in their research models. We find that grit is a positive force associated with lower amounts of unethical sales behavior, but that relationship is significantly weakened by a negative social influence from the sales ethics subculture. We observe that gritty salespersons cannot depend on their grit alone to endure the poor influence of an unethical sales team. For the gritty salesperson who is sensing or directly observing the presence of routinized unethical behavior among her peers, she should be aware that this type of behavior can be contagious.

Sales managers could benefit by studying, discussing, and reinforcing the situational factors that drive healthy teams and positive group momentum. In this way, sales managers can redirect the focus away from individual salesperson traits, hiring/firing, and toward long-term, relationship building through value-adding activities within the firm and with buyers, rather than short-term deal-making and individual goal achievement (Jaramillo, Mulki and Solomon 2006; Lussier et al. 2021).

References are available upon request.

HIS AND HERS: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTRASTING EFFECTS OF SALES MANAGER FEEDBACK ACROSS GENDER

Abstract

With diversity, equity, and inclusion at the forefront of business priorities, interest in gender-based research within the field of personal selling and sales management is growing. However, research has yet to examine how gender affects the impact that sales manager feedback has on different salesperson outcomes. The present study takes a two-study approach to understand how sales manager feedback can influence burnout and objective effort and performance, and if differences exist between males and females. Study 1 examines 429 B2B salespeople, finding sales manager positive and negative feedback exhibit different effects on burnout across genders. Study 2 then examines 139 salespeople and observes salespeople in their work environment, with objective effort and performance records provided by the company. I Study 2 finds positive (negative) feedback results in enhanced (reduced) performance in females(males). Theoretical and managerial implications are provided, with limitations and future research avenues discussed.

Statement of Key Contributions

The present study presents multiple contributions to theory, focused on better understanding the differing impact sales manager feedback on key salesperson outcomes across genders. Firstly, study 1 demonstrates that sales manager feedback disproportionately influences males, compared to females. This highlights the discrepancy in the usefulness of feedback as a sales manager tool. Secondly, study 2 somewhat contradicts the effectiveness of sales manager feedback, in that feedback has exacerbating effects on effort and performance for females, with positive (negative) feedback resulting in enhanced (reduced) effort and performance for females. In sum, it seems that feedback is less effective in influencing emotional outcomes within females, but more effective in driving behavioural outcomes. Such results highlight the importance of taking a tailored approach to sales management.

The present study also provides numerous findings of interest to practitioners. First, the work demonstrates that feedback is a tool that sales managers can use to reduce burnout

symptoms, however feedback is presently more effective at reducing burnout symptoms for males, as opposed to females. Sales managers should also be cautious when providing negative feedback, since this can enhance burnout symptoms, with the effect significantly stronger within male subordinates.

Additionally, the results show that women are considerably more responsive to both positive and negative feedback compared to males. Greater levels of positive feedback motivate females to a greater extent, as well as helping to further enhance their performance. At the same time, negative feedback is also more pronounced in its effect on females, reducing their effort and performance significantly more. Although feedback can influence both males and females, it seems that female salespeople are more responsive to feedback compared to males. Accordingly, the results provide significant implications in the management of the salesforce, given the increasing gender diversity within the sales role.

Main Paper (3,189 words)

Introduction

Recently, there has been a shift in the composition of the sales force, with women now occupying 48.7% of sales positions, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022). Despite this increase, academic research on gender differences and potential biases remains limited. Existing gender-based research to date examines different topics including motivation (Good et al. 2022; Schul, Remington, and Beri 1990), role stressors (Siguaw and Honeycutt Jr 1995), commitment (Russ and McNeilly 1995), and role satisfaction (Comer et al. 1995). Additional work provides evidence that women may be disadvantaged within the salesforce, and that biases may exist (Lane and Crane 2002). More recently, research has begun to examine how relationships differ across genders (e.g., Macintosh and Krush 2017; Rutherford et al. 2014; Wood et al. 2014). However, research has yet to examine the impact of different types of manager feedback (both positive and negative) across genders.

Statistics demonstrate that female are disproportionately affected by burnout in the workplace (Anders 2021). Moreover, past research conveys that feedback is a positive job resource that can reduce burnout (Bakker, Demerouti, and Euwema 2005). However, less is known about the differential impacts of feedback on salesperson mental health, job effort, and sales performance. Does gender affect the way feedback is received and interpreted? If so, how? And with what impact? We begin our research by asking the following three research questions:

RQ1. Does feedback influence salesperson burnout differently across genders?

RQ2. Does feedback influence salesperson effort differently across genders?

RQ3. Does feedback influence salesperson performance differently across genders?

These questions are important to address considering feedback is a key sales management activity. Moreover, popular press reveals that women are more likely to experience burnout in the salesforce (Future Forum 2023), alongside being less likely to be promoted (Somers 2022). This is despite women being equally capable in sales, bringing unique skills to the table (Zoltners et al. 2020). Diversity in the salesforce is a serious issue receiving a great deal of attention, but a big gap in knowledge remains. Both research, and the state of practice, suggests that organizations are not doing enough to create sales cultures that support women to thrive (Clarke 2023)

Hypothesis Development

Providing feedback is one the key activities of a successful sales manager (Kruse 2019). Early research in sales sought to understand the effects of sales manager feedback on various salesperson-level outcomes, including performance, satisfaction, and motivation (e.g., Jaworski and Kohli 1991; Tyagi 1985). More recently, feedback has been discussed within literature in relation to its differing presence across sales manager control systems (e.g., Darmon and Martin 2011; Miao and Evans 2013) or leadership styles (Shannahan, Bush, and Shannahan 2013), by further examining feedback's relationship with salesperson performance (Chakrabarty et al. 2008), or by understanding feedback attributions (Harmon et al. 2002). Studies have shown that feedback aids salesperson performance (Chakrabarty, Oubre, and Brown 2008) and job satisfaction (Jaworski and Kohli 1991), among other outcomes.

Nonetheless, some evidence suggests that this tool is largely used ineffectively, with over 50% of employees believing managers fail to adequately conduct performance reviews (Cespedes 2022). Indeed, sales managers' feedback may face some inherent biases. For example, Harmon et al. (2002) demonstrate that the outcome of sales effort can subsequent influence the feedback provided to salespeople, and that feedback can be provided without concern for the bigger picture (Huffman and Cain 2000). While a wider range of tools exist that can be used to help provide valuable feedback (Darmon and Martin 2011), studies reveal the feedback is not always effective (DeNisi and Kluger 2000).

In addition, individuals can respond differently to feedback, and managers must take this individual variability into account when considering, and delivering, feedback. In earlier years, the profession of sales was predominately male; however, presently, 80% of leading sales organizations present their sales teams as diverse, with lower performing sales teams averagely less diverse (Forrester 2021). Existing research looking into the impact of feedback in the salesforce is generally conducted within this era of non-diverse sales teams, and given the recent drive for diversity in the salesforce, this research may be somewhat outdated.

Moreover, outside the sales field, some research hints that women may respond differently to feedback (LaPlante and Ambady 2002), with women responding better to positive feedback, and men responding better to negative feedback. Given the old-fashioned sales culture, it may be that feedback is not being tailored to suit the needs of saleswomen, and the subsequent effects of the feedback provided on key salesperson outcomes are unknown.

To better understand the nuances of feedback related to gender, socialization theory may provide a useful lens. Socialization theory suggests how males and females learn masculinity and femininity is in early childhood development through primary group interactions (families, peers, schools, and the media), which serve to socialize individuals into dichotomous "traditional" gender roles (Carter 2014; Good et al. 2022). According to the theory, social contexts both reflect and perpetuate gender roles and gender inequities in the larger society (Leaper and Friedman 2007). Research shows that females are generally oriented toward communal activities and goals, whereas males are oriented toward achievement and individualistic goals (Sharma et al. 2012). Past studies on socialization suggest that men place more emphasis on power, independence, assertiveness, and individual rewards while women tend to display nurturance and compassion and value belongingness within a community (Leaper & Friedman 2007). Hence, some evidence exists that men may be more oriented toward feedback based on performance and power while women may be more oriented toward belongingness and nurturing feedback that is geared toward compassion and process. Given the perceived ego-dominated and competitive culture typically associated with the sales role (Gilbert et al. 2022; Glazer 2016), it may be that the feedback provided is better suited to males, being more output based, focused on performance achievement, rather than empathetic and community based. This may have repercussions across genders, which can affect subsequent salesperson behaviours and emotions.

Three key salesperson-level outcomes are examined within the current study are effort, performance, and burnout, which itself consists of three independent dimensions: emotional exhaustion; feelings of diminishing personal accomplishment; and depersonalization (Rutherford et al. 2014). These outcomes are chosen since they are key outcomes that sales managers are looking to influence when providing feedback (Lin 2017; Montgomery 1996; Shin, Hur, and Moon, 2023). However, studies are yet to systematically examine gender differences in salesperson response to managerial feedback. Overall, based on socialization theory, we predict:

> **H1**: Gender moderates the relationship between positive feedback and a) emotional exhaustion, b) depersonalization, and c) feelings of diminishing personal accomplishment, such that it is stronger when respondents are male.

> **H2**: Gender moderates the relationship between negative feedback and a) emotional exhaustion, b) depersonalization, and c) feelings of diminishing personal

accomplishment, such that the relationship is stronger when respondents are male.

H3: Gender moderates the relationship between positive feedback and effort, such that it is stronger when respondents are male.

H4: Gender moderates the relationship between negative feedback and effort, such that it is stronger when respondents are male.

H5: Gender moderates the relationship between positive feedback and salesperson performance, such that it is stronger when respondents are male.

H6: Gender moderates the relationship between negative feedback and salesperson performance, such that it is stronger when respondents are male.

Abbreviated Method & Data (All Studies)

The present research uses a two-stage approach. For Study 1, we collected data via an online panel company. A total sample of 429 B2B salespeople responded to the survey, with 58% of the total sample being male, and 42% female. A priori measures to reduce common method variance were included, utilizing different scales and anchors. Specifically, four items were used to measure emotional exhaustion (Bande, Fernández-Ferrín and Jaramillo 2015) (Cronbach's alpha = .95) and negative feedback (George and Zhou 2001) (Cronbach's alpha = .88). In addition, 3-item scales taken from Rutherford et al. (2011) were used to measure depersonalization (Cronbach's alpha = .90) and diminished personal accomplishment (Cronbach's alpha = .88), and from George and Zhou (2001) measuring positive feedback. (Cronbach's alpha = .94).

Importantly, to mitigate concerns regarding common method bias, we test interactions, which past research conveys are not artifacts of common method variance (Siemsen, Roth, and Oliveira 2010; Lussier, Hartmann, and Bolander 2021; Fehl, Good, and Arnold 2023), alongside including a priori methods, such as changing response style format and including reverse coded scales. While much work is being done on gender identity presently, we specifically asked about gender at birth, which in theory should be an exogenous moderator (i.e., gender is not chosen by participants at birth, and thus is not an artifact of data collection). We analysed the data using structural equation modelling.

For Study 2, we partnered with a single division of a large sales firm based in the United States. The company provided a list of names and email addresses for its salespeople as well as objective measures of effort and performance data from company records.

Participants did not receive incentives to participate as in the first study; however, the company contact did encourage the salespeople to take the time to respond. Out of 189 surveys; 139 were completed. Both positive (Cronbach's alpha = .89) and negative (Cronbach's alpha = .86) feedback were measured using three item scales (Mackenzie, Podsakoff, and Rich 2001) (Cronbach's alpha = .89). Once again, we analysed the data using structural equation modelling and graphed the interactions.

Abbreviated Results (Both Studies)

In total, the present study identifies some key differences in the impact of sales manager feedback across genders. In Study 1, we discover that the impact of feedback on reducing burnout significantly differs across genders. Specifically, positive feedback is negatively related to emotional exhaustion within male salespeople (T = -4.13), but did not significantly influence emotional exhaustion for female salespeople (T = .72). In addition, positive feedback is negatively related to depersonalization for both male (T = -6.07) and female (T = -4.28) salespeople, although the impact of positive feedback is significantly stronger for men. Finally, positive feedback did not significantly impact feelings of diminished personal accomplishment for neither males (T = -.42) nor females (T = .42).

Turning to negative feedback, similar trends were evident. Specifically, negative feedback is positively related to emotional exhaustion for both male (T = 5.57) and female (T = 2.39) salespeople, but the impact is significantly stronger for males. A similar story emerges for the relationship between negative feedback and feelings of diminished personal accomplishment, with the impact of negative feedback being significantly stronger for males (T = 7.12), whilst also significant for females (T = 3.64). Negative feedback is not significantly related to depersonalization for neither males (T = -1.06) nor females (T = -1.19).

Following this, study two looked to understand whether the types of feedback had a significant impact on objective effort and performance of salespeople, and once again whether differences existed between genders.

Table 1 shows a detailed overview of the results of study 2. However, the results presented some unexpected findings. We find that objective effort is positively related to objective performance for salespeople, as could be expected, however, although gender has a significant interaction with both positive and negative feedback, the results are in the opposite direction to that which was expected, in that the results were stronger for females, as opposed

to males. Overall, across the two studies, gender played a significant role in impact key salesperson outcomes. The burnout hypotheses were largely confirmed (with the exception of the positive feedback X gender-diminished personal accomplishment, and negative feedback X gender-depersonalization relationships), whereas the effort and salesperson performance hypotheses were significant in the other direction.

Abbreviated Discussion

The present study looked to understand the current state of affairs regarding the impact of sales manager feedback on salesperson outcomes across genders. Findings from two studies reveal distinct differences in the impact of feedback on salesperson burnout, effort, and performance, across genders. Study 1 shows that the positive feedback by sales managers is less effective in reducing two components of burnout in salespeople, specifically emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Sales manager positive feedback significantly reduced feelings of emotional exhaustion for males, but did not influence females. Additionally, although positive feedback significantly reduced feelings of depersonalization in both men and women, the effect was significantly stronger for males.

Interestingly, negative feedback from the sales manager also demonstrates a significantly greater effect on burnout symptoms for males, although on different burnout symptoms. Here, negative feedback significantly impacts emotional exhaustion and feelings of diminishing personal accomplishment to a greater extent for males compared to females, although no differences were found in regard to depersonalization. These significant findings may be explained by the differing orientations of men and women. For example, men are typically most achievement-oriented and individualistic (Leaper and Friedman 2007; Sharma et al. 2012).

An alternative explanation could be provided by in-group vs out-group theory, in that the majority of sales leadership positions are held by males (Zippia 2023), and that people respond stronger to feedback from an in-group member (Hunt and Gonsalkorale 2014). Thus, males are significantly more impacted by the feedback provided by their sales managers, as feedback is coming from someone they most likely identify more strongly with. Of course, not all hypotheses were supported, in that positive feedback did not significantly impact feelings of personal accomplishment for either gender, nor did negative feedback impact depersonalization. The former may be explained by the performance-based nature of sales, in that performance is the ultimate determinant of accomplishment, and positive feedback may

be given even when performance has not been achieved, meaning such feedback is perceived as less authentic (Qian, Lin and Chen 2012). In latter may be explained by that fact that negative feedback can help some people to engage within the sales role, acting as motivation to maintain their work focus (Alzyoud, Othman, and Isa 2015).

Concerning study 2, again clear differences of the impact feedback across genders is apparent in relationship to its impact on salesperson effort and performance. However, in contrast to feedback's impact on burnout, the effects are more pronounced for females, as opposed to males. More specifically, regarding effort, the impact of positive (negative) feedback was significantly more positive (negative) for females that it was males. Although it may be assumed that given male ego, positive feedback would be more impactful, again such findings may be explained by in-group vs out-group. Female salespeople may value positive feedback from their sales managers to a greater extent, since they often work in male-oriented environments, and accordingly, positive feedback motivates them to a greater extent. In regard to negative feedback, this may exacerbate the out-group feeling for females, alongside knocking their confidence, resulting in significantly less effort being put forth. Figures 1a and 1b provide the interaction plots for positive and negative feedback, respectively.

Similar effects across gender are also apparent for the feedback-performance relationships, in that positive feedback demonstrates a significantly more positive impact on salesperson performance for males, whilst negative feedback demonstrates a significantly more negative effect. Here it seems that positive feedback motivates females to a greater extent, increasing their confidence (Brown, Peterson, and Yao 2016), resulting in greater performance levels. At the same time, females may be further demoralised by negative feedback, reducing their confidence to a greater extent, negatively impact upon their performance.

The present study is consistent with other studies finding significant differences in relationships across genders (e.g., Macintosh and Krush 2017; Rutherford et al. 2014). In doing so, the present study presents significant contributions to theory. First, it is demonstrated that feedback is less effective in impacting salesperson burnout for females. This could be part of the explanation as to why females are disproportionately reporting being susceptible to burnout (Anders 2021). Second, the present study demonstrates that feedback has exacerbating effects on effort and performance for females, with positive (negative) feedback resulting in enhanced (reduced) effort and performance for females. The study is the first to highlight how feedback can influence salesperson outputs differently across genders. Third, it is demonstrated that feedback results in contrasting effects across key salesperson

outcomes for females vs males. Such results highlight the importance of taking a tailored approach to sales management, something not common within sales practice (Lizzio et al. 2003).

Several managerial implications are also noticeable. First, given the high proportion of females influence by burnout in the sales role, feedback is one tool that sales managers can use to reduce burnout symptoms. However, the results show that there is scope for feedback to become further impactful. Perhaps providing greater empathy and support within feedback, sales managers would be able to further enhance the impact of feedback on burnout (Bakker and Demerouti 2007). Sales managers should also be cautious of the negative feedback they provide, especially to male subordinates, since the effect on their mental health may be more pronounced. Feedback provided should look to be provided in a more constructive format, rather than purely negative in valence (Roebuck 1996).

Additionally, sales managers carefully consider their role in influencing the effort and performance of different genders within their salesforce. The results show that women are considerably more responsive to feedback that males. Greater levels of positive feedback seem to motivate females to greater extents, helping them to perform to even greater heights. Thus, it is imperative that sales managers are providing such feedback. Positive feedback may be even more valuable in male-dominated sales teams, helping females feel more at home in their sales role, ultimately leading to greater retention (Badrinarayanan, Gupta, and Chaker 2020). Finally, managers should be especially cautious when providing negative feedback to females, since this can reduce their effort and performance to greater extents compared to males. This may reinforce the out-group feelings of saleswomen and reduce their confidence to perform, as well as their motivation. Feedback provided with empathy, that is constructive and development will likely help to reduce these negative effects.

Several limitations are apparent with the present research. First, the present study only examines the valence of feedback, and not the content of the feedback. It is entirely possible that different content within feedback could alter the results of the present study. Future research should look to understand how feedback with different forms of content would influence these key outcomes across genders. Second, the present study only examined salespeople's perceptions of the feedback they received. Future research could examine the feedback managers perceive to provide, and the rationale for their decisions. Third, the present study only examined between-person differences in how feedback influenced salesperson outcomes. Future research could look to understand how feedback changes burnout, effort, and performance differently for male and female salespeople (Childs et al.

2019), providing a more thorough analysis of how feedback can impact key salesperson outcomes across genders.

The current study seeks to provide more nuanced managerial implications regarding how impact can influence key outcomes across salespeople. Clear differences between males and females have emerged, demonstrating that feedback is showing contrasting effects for different salesperson outcomes across genders. The present study hopes to act as a platform for sales researchers to begin to more thoroughly explore further gender-based research in the field of sales management.

Figure 1a. Gender interaction plot for Positive Feedback on Effort
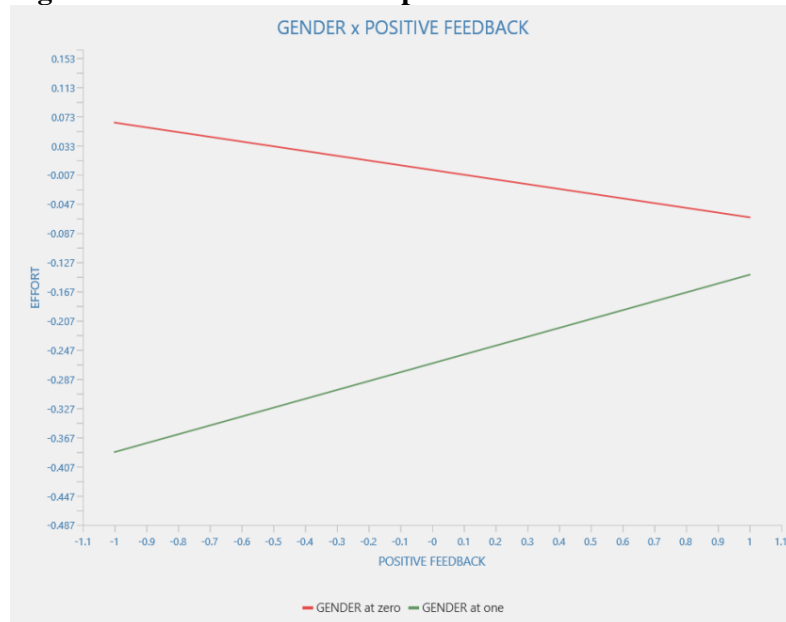
Figure 1b. Gender interaction plot for Negative Feedback on Effort
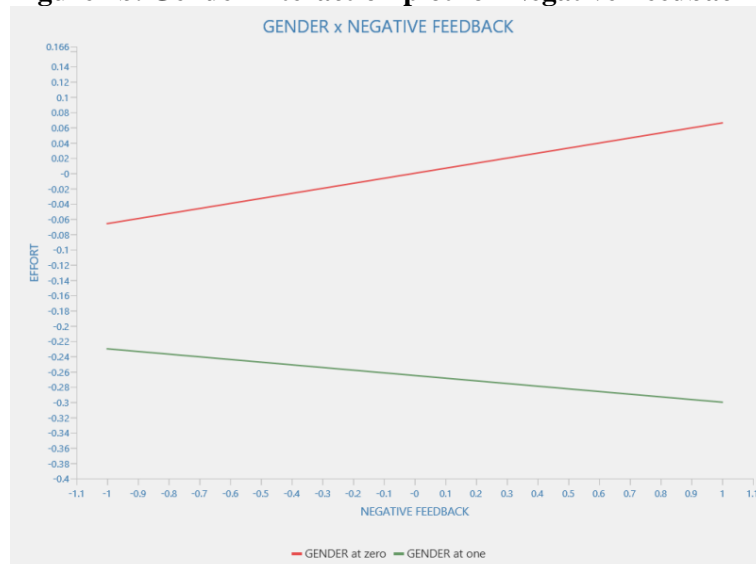
Table 1. Study 2 Results

	Value	Standard deviation	T-value	P-value
EFFORT -> PERFORMANCE	0.31	0.02	15.20	0.00
GENDER -> EFFORT	-0.27	0.05	4.89	0.00
GENDER -> PERFORMANCE	-0.12	0.06	2.14	0.03
NEGATIVE FEEDBACK -> EFFORT	0.07	0.03	2.16	0.03
NEGATIVE FEEDBACK -> PERFORMANCE	-0.08	0.02	4.00	0.00
POSITIVE FEEDBACK -> EFFORT	-0.07	0.03	1.90	0.06
POSITIVE FEEDBACK -> PERFORMANCE	0.10	0.02	4.39	0.00
TENURE(CONTROL) -> PERFORMANCE	0.21	0.02	13.58	0.00
GENDER x NEGATIVE FEEDBACK -> EFFORT	-0.10	0.05	1.98	0.05
GENDER x NEGATIVE FEEDBACK -> PERFORMANCE	-0.03	0.02	1.94	0.05
GENDER x POSITIVE FEEDBACK -> EFFORT	0.19	0.06	3.27	0.00
GENDER x POSITIVE FEEDBACK -> PERFORMANCE	0.06	0.02	3.18	0.00

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IMPROVING INNOVATION VIA FRONT-LINE EMPLOYEES: THE IMPACTS OF SELF-CONSTRUAL ON INNOVATION CAPABILITIES

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Keywords: Front-line employees, Innovation capability, self-construal, identity threats

Description: The current study develops a conceptual model of self-construal, inherent tendencies, and perceptions of innovation capabilities under the perceived threats.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Literature in the field of Front Line Employees (FLEs) has widely focused on understanding dimensions to enhance innovation and its processes within organizations (e.g., Engen and Magnusson 2015). While past literature provides insights on understanding FLEs, however, there remains room for further research. First, there is limited research in marketing that has specifically addressed innovation at the employee level (Cadwallader et al. 2010). Second, although past literature has recognized the critical role of front-line employees in innovation, we believe that more exploration is needed into the determinants of innovation capability. In this research, therefore, we aim to answer the following question: How do the personal characteristics,

self-construal, of FLEs exhibit different innovation capabilities between incremental and radical innovation?

Method And Data

The main goal of the three studies is to help greater understanding of innovation capabilities by suggesting self-construal. A set of two empirical tests are conducted to determine the effect of self-construal on innovation capabilities. Study 1 demonstrates the impact of self-construal on innovation capabilities. We also explore how self-construal affects the perception of an organization's capabilities through different motivations: problem-solving and knowledge-sharing. In Study 1, we recruited one hundred and thirty participants (58% female, median age 32) from Prolific for our experiment. Building on the findings from Study 1, Study 2 focuses on replicating these results by manipulating self-construal and providing evidence of how perceived threat can interact with the findings from Study 1. In Study 2, we recruited one hundred and eighteen participants (45% female, median age 35) from Prolific for our experiment.

Summary of Findings

Throughout two studies, we find that front-line employees with an independent (vs interdependent) self-construal are motivated towards problem-solving (vs. knowledge sharing) resulting in radical (vs. incremental) innovation capability. Interestingly, under threatening environments from coworkers or consumers, problem-solving tendencies are increased for individuals with an independent self-construal, while knowledge sharing tendencies are reduced for those with an interdependent self-construal.

Statement of Key Contributions

First, this research expands innovation capability literature by introducing a self-construal on innovation capabilities. While existing literature has emphasized the role of FLEs in product and service innovation, there remains a gap in understanding how individual characteristics can influence their innovation capabilities. Second, in response to the research call, this study delves into the impact of threats on the innovation performance of FLEs. Many FLEs have faced external threats from consumers, with instances like the challenges encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic when dealing with impatient and impolite consumers. Practically, this paper offers valuable insights for marketing managers seeking to improve FLEs innovation capabilities. For firms aiming to enhance radical innovation capabilities, we recommend that marketing managers prioritize fostering a culture of independence among FLEs.

LETTING THE CUSTOMER OFF THE HOOK: A NOVEL INFLUENCE TACTIC FOR ESTABLISHING TRUST

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Keywords: sales management, sales influence tactics, trust, customer orientation

Description: We conducted one field experiment and one laboratory experiment to show that Unhooking has a positive effect on building trust in the salesperson, with the light version of Unhooking being the most effective.

<p align="center">EXTENDED ABSTRACT</p>

Research Question

The core task of a salesperson is to convince the customer to buy the product or service that is offered by the seller's company. This essential duty of salespeople is becoming more and more challenging against the backdrop of selling complexity, buyer skepticism, and increasing resistance to sales efforts (Mikolon, Alavi, and Reynders 2021). To successfully pursue this challenging task, salespeople may rely on influence strategies to convince customers of their product and build trust. However, McFarland and Dixon (2019) highlight the necessity for further research on how salespeople can establish a basis of credibility and trust. This paper aims to answer the research question and provide actionable implications to salespeople and sales

managers: How can salespeople build a solid foundation of trust with their customers to influence them without compromising their credibility?

We define Unhooking as a salesperson's explicit statement to the customer that the salesperson seeks to support the customer's decision autonomy, such that the customer can optimally satisfy his or her needs.

Importantly, in this paper, we differentiate between four variants of Unhooking: Unhooking light (UHL), Unhooking intensive with high frequency (UHIF), Unhooking intensive with high concreteness (UHIC) and Unhooking without search advocacy (UHW).

Method and Data

Following a two-study approach, we investigate the effectiveness of Unhooking communication in increasing customer purchase intention and building a foundation of trust. In study 1, we designed a scenario experiment with a between-subject design in which participants experienced one of four experimental groups: (1) control group, (2) UHL, (3) UHIF, and (4) UHIC. We distributed the treatments randomly among 245 participants. In study 2, we conducted a field experiment with a retail company for clothing and accessories. We trained the sales staff to employ *Unhooking* in sales conversations. Further, we created sales conversation guidelines for the salespeople. In the guideline, we introduced one of three variants for ending the conversation: (1) they end the conversation after the recommendation phase, (2) *UHW,* e.g., "It is your decision whether you want to buy this product from us or not", and (3) *UHL,* e.g., "It's your decision. Feel free to look around somewhere else. I want you to find the product you are 100% satisfied with." After the sales conversation, customers completed a survey. 299 customers participated in this field experiment.

Summary of Findings

This paper sought to underline the effectiveness of Unhooking and identify guidelines for the application of Unhooking to establish trust while influencing customers.

In the first study, we identified that the positive effect of Unhooking (UHL, UHIF, and UHIC) on a customer's purchase intention is fully mediated by trust in the salesperson. UHL is more effective than other forms of Unhooking in establishing trust toward the salesperson.

In the second study, we analyzed the effectiveness of omitting the search advocacy message in comparison to UHL. We confirmed the findings from Study 1, which is that the relationship between UHL and the customer's purchase intention is fully mediated by trust. Furthermore, we found no mediating effect of trust between UHW and customers' purchase intention. Nevertheless, UHW influences customers' purchase intention positively. The results of our studies show when and which form of Unhooking is effective for influencing customers.

Statement of Key Contribution

McFarland and Dixon (2019) highlight the necessity for further research on how salespeople can establish a basis of credibility and trust. Our paper directly addresses this research gap by proposing a novel influence tactic for establishing trust. Most sales influence tactics set trust as a prerequisite for effective influence (van Dang, Pham, and Wang 2021). By applying *light* and *intensive Unhooking*, salespeople can influence customers effectively while building a foundation of trust with them. The results of our studies perfectly align with the findings of Payan and McFarland (2005). Besides contributing to the academic sales literature, our research results are also especially relevant for practitioners. Salespeople must identify the type of customer relationship needed. If salespeople want to build long-term relationships with customers, they need to establish a foundation of trust to influence them (van Dang, Pham, and

Wang 2021). In this case, salespeople need to integrate *UHL* into their influence communication. Furthermore, salespeople can apply further sales influence tactics which require customers' trust in them. If salespeople do not aim to establish a foundation of trust before influencing customers, they should avoid integrating search recommendations in their influence communication. For this case, salespeople should apply *UHW*.

NAVIGATING SALESPERSON DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR:
UNVEILING THE INFLUENCE OF INFORMAL AND FORMAL CONTROLS

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Description: This research examines the effects of informal and formal controls on salesperson dysfunctional behaviors.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Research finds that sales management controls can also result in undesirable work behaviors (Agarwal 1996). For example, Choi et al. (2004) find that certain types of formal controls increase salespeople's dysfunctional behaviors. Although first advancements have been made in this regard, we find that there is still a lot to learn about the effects of formal and informal controls on dysfunctional behaviors. Our research aims at filling this gap by focusing on the effect of informal controls on dysfunctional behaviors and investigating how formal and informal controls interact and *jointly* affect dysfunctional behaviors. Further, we investigate the role of organizational commitment in mediating the effect of informal controls on dysfunctional behaviors.

Method and Data

To test our conceptual model, we used an online survey to collect data from salespeople working in Germany. Our final sample consisted of 219 participants. Participants had an average of 9.3 years of experience in sales, were predominantly male (56.3%), and between 21 and 64 years old, with a mean of 36.8 years. Most scales were adapted multi-item measures from the literature and assessed on a seven-point Likert scale. All measures show good reliability and validity statistics: all Cronbach's alphas were above Nunnally's (1978) recommended level of 0.70 and the composite reliabilities were greater than the accepted cut-off value of 0.70 (Gefen et al. 2011). The average variance extracted was higher than the recommended level of 0.50 for each construct (range: .65–.85) (Fornell and Larcker 1981). All constructs showed strong discriminant validity; the average variance extracted exceeded the squared correlations between all pairs of constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981). We used regression analysis to test the hypothesized relationships and tested the mediating effect of organizational commitment using PROCESS (Hayes 2022, Model 4). In all analysis we used standardized values of the variables and controlled for age, gender, sales tenure, and tenure in the company.

Summary of Findings

Our results show significant negative relationships between self-control, professional control, cultural control, and dysfunctional behavior, with organizational commitment mediating the effects. We further find that capability control strengthens the positive effect of the three informal controls (i.e., self-control, professional control, and cultural control) on organizational commitment. In contrast, we find input control to weaken the positive effect of professional and cultural control on organizational commitment and activity control to weaken the effect to self-control on organizational commitment. We did not find a significant moderating effect of output

control on the relation between the three informal controls (i.e., self-control, professional control, and cultural control) and organizational commitment.

Key Contributions

We show the relevance of different types of informal controls in reducing dysfunctional behaviors and are among the first to show how formal and informal controls interact. Further, we are among the first to investigate the role of input and cultural controls in the context of dysfunctional behaviors. We also show that informal controls can boost salespeople's organizational commitment, an attitudinal outcome that has been largely neglected in the context of informal controls.

From a managerial perspective we provide managers with insights in the positive and negative sides of formal and informal controls. Specifically, our findings add to managers' understanding of the benefits and costs of formal and informal controls. Further, we urge managers to understand the different control systems that are in place and provide structures to foster informal controls within the organization. This is especially important as remote work is on the rise and employees might not be as connected to an organization has they have been in the past. We suggest that organizations establish a shared understanding of expected behaviors and performance standards.

References are available upon request.

RED FLAGS IN SALES: USING BIG DATA AND PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS TO IDENTIFY SALESPEOPLE'S UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR

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Keywords: Sales management; compliance; machine learning; predictive analytics; ethics

Description: Employing an empirics-first approach and machine leaning, the authors identify key determinants of salespeople's unethical behavior using multi-source secondary data on 1,082 salespeople from a major insurance company.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Salespeople's unethical behavior is a widespread phenomenon in practice. Such behavior poses risks to a company's reputation, relationships, and performance, jeopardizing a company's survival. Sales managers often uncover such behavior only once harmful consequences become apparent. Nevertheless, we believe that there are patterns in salespeople's conduct that allow sales managers to detect the risks for unethical behavior preemptively. We strive to identify red flags—early warning signs of salespeople's unethical behavior.

Scholars have explored the role of both individual-level and organizational-level factors in influencing salespeople's ethical conduct. While these studies have contributed many pieces of the puzzle, they are constrained by data limitations: Past research relied heavily on survey and

experimental data due to challenges associated with detecting unethical behavior. However, measurement in laboratory settings and self-reported information entails methodological issues. We align with calls for exploratory research to determine the key determinants of salespeople's unethical behavior and employ an "empirics-first" approach. This approach emphasizes the study of behaviors in the field to draw insights from real-world phenomena.

Thus, we have two objectives. First, we strive to identify red flags for salespeople's unethical behavior. Second, we aim to expand theory on salespeople's unethical behavior by leveraging insights from machine learning.

Method And Data

We cooperated with the compliance department of a major global insurance company to collect objective data on salespeople's unethical behavior and based on archival company (big) data, investigate potential drivers that may serve as red flags. The firm deliberately tracked whether a salesperson engaged in actions that violate company policies and have legal implications, such as embezzlement or document forgery.

Our analysis is based on longitudinal data on 1,082 salespeople from the insurance firm over six years. We then employed a two-step procedure to investigate the data: In the first step, we test multiple machine learning classification models for their ability to correctly predict salespeople's unethical behavior. Comparisons reveal that a stacked ensemble model (which combines a logistic regression with a decision tree approach) best fits our data. In the second step, we then analyze the variables that the stacked ensemble deems the most important for the prediction of red flags in a conventional cluster analysis. This allows us to gain theoretical insights from machine learning.

Summary of Findings

The results of our study reveal that salespeople's unethical behavior is primarily influenced by the external situations in the work environment rather than innate characteristics of salespeople, adding a situational account on causes for unethical conduct. We find two key dimensions that can act as red flags for salespeople's unethical behavior, (1) salespeople's performance level and, (2) salespeople's relationship building orientation (i.e., salespeople's effort to build enduring customer relationships). With decreasing performance levels, salespeople's likelihood of unethical behavior increases. Further, with decreasing levels of relationship building orientation, salespeople's unethical behavior becomes more likely.

Additionally, we find that the interplay of the two dimensions further influences salespeople's unethical behavior: Decreasing performance levels and relationship building orientation appear to exacerbate salespeople's unethical behavior. Importantly, our machine learning approach reveals the previously unknown influence of salespeople's relationship building orientation on their unethical behavior.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our approach generates novel insights beyond existing theory, satisfying the goal for empirics-first research. Utilizing our methodology, we contribute to marketing research and practice alike by establishing a more comprehensive understanding of predictors of unethical behaviors within the sales domain. These contributions enable sales managers to make informed decisions and implement strategies that prevent and mitigate misconduct.

To mitigate salespeople's unethical behavior, sales managers should assist salespeople in improving their performance while ensuring that the induced pressure is not overwhelming. Individualized goals and constructive feedback can reduce stress related to performance expectations. Further, sales managers can foster salespeople's relationship building orientation to reduce unethical behavior. Sales managers should elevate the significance of retention-based goals for salespeople and sensitize salespeople to the negative outcomes of jeopardizing customer relationships. Ethical training specific to the ethical issues of the selling context that promotes nurturing customer relationships can reduce salespeople's unethical behavior.

SALESPEOPLE'S FINE LINE IN BALANCING A HYBRID MIX OF REMOTE AND ON-SITE SALES CALLS IN B2B MARKETS

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Keywords: Sales management; hybrid selling; customer-salesperson relationships

Description: Following a two-study approach, the authors investigate the effects of the salesperson's hybrid mix of remote and on-site sales calls on relationship performance and quality and show inverted U-shaped effects contingent upon product-, customer-, and salesperson-related requirements of customer-salesperson interactions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

For decades, salespeople in B2B markets have relied on on-site, face-to-face sales interactions with their B2B customers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, governmental restrictions limited salespeople in interacting with their customers personally through on-site sales calls. Salespeople have leveraged videoconferences for sales interactions with their customers. Today, many B2B selling organizations use a hybrid mix of remote and on-site sales by the same salesperson with the same customer, which we define as "hybrid selling". From a sales executive's perspective, remote sales calls enable higher customer-salesperson interaction frequency efficient customer-salesperson interactions through a decrease in travel time and -costs. From a salesperson's perspective, there are many concerns that remote calls might not work well for all types of customer-salesperson interactions and can even have adverse effects.

In this conflict between sales executive's revenue growth expectations on the one hand and potential loss of customer-salesperson relationship quality on the other, salespeople now face the challenge of balancing a hybrid mix of remote and on-site sales calls. Extant research provides only limited knowledge to these issues.

Method and Data

Following a two-study approach, we investigate the contingent nature of the effects of the salesperson hybrid selling mix on relationship outcomes. In study 1, we analyze the impact of the salesperson hybrid selling mix (represented by the share of remote call activity) on the relationship performance (represented by the share of wallet) using 18-months of longitudinal objective CRM records of customer-salesperson interactions from a B2B firm selling sanitary products with 3,565 existing customers. In study 2, for additional 651 customers of the same B2B firm, we match objective CRM records with a customer survey. Analyzing multisource data for the additional 651 customers, we investigate the influence of the salesperson hybrid selling mix both on relationship performance and relationship quality (represented by the customer's perceived collaboration quality) and its contingent effect upon product-, customer-, and salesperson-related requirements of the customer-salesperson interaction.

Summary of Findings

Our results show that the effects of the salesperson hybrid selling mix on both relationship performance and quality is inverted U-shaped, implying that increasing both relationship outcomes can be achieved through a mix of remote and on-site sales calls. We find that product complexity magnifies the limitations of remote calls in processing and transmitting

complexity, thereby diminishing the effect of the share of remote call activity on both relationship outcomes. Customer remote call willingness indirectly reinforces the effect of the share of remote call activity on the share of wallet by elevating collaboration quality. We further show that salespeople can mitigate loss of information caused by a high share of remote call activity by fostering customer knowledge transparency, leading to increased positive effects on the share of wallet.

Statement of Key Contribution

We contribute to research on how salespeople should use remote and on-site calls in B2B customer-salesperson relationships by providing initial empirical insights into the influence of a hybrid selling mix on relationship performance and quality. We demonstrate that product-, customer-, and salesperson-related requirements of customer-salesperson interactions significantly shape the effects of salespeople's hybrid selling mix. This study offers valuable implications for sales managers seeking to optimize their hybrid selling mix, helping salespeople to decide when to conduct either a remote or an on-site call and thus fostering successful B2B customer relationships. When formulating and guiding a strategic approach for a selling organization's hybrid selling mix, sales managers need to carefully balance the mix between the efficiency gains achieved through remote calls and the effectiveness of on-site calls. Thus, steering the hybrid mix of remote and on-site sales calls should depend on product complexity, targeting customers with high remote call willingness, and fostering transparency of customer knowledge.

SALESPERSON ORIENTATION AND SALES PERFORMANCE: THE MODERATING ROLE OF DICHOTOMOUS THINKING

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Keywords: Sales Orientation, Customer Orientation, Sales Performance, Dichotomous Thinking, Person-Environment Fit

Description: This paper explores how the alignment of a salesperson's cognitive style (e.g., dichotomous thinking) and selling orientation (e.g., sales oriented vs. customer oriented) influences sales performance.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This research explores whether the cognitive style of dichotomous thinking (e.g., thinking in black and white terms) influences a salesperson's orientation (SOCO) (e.g., customer oriented (CO) vs. sales oriented (SO)) and whether a match between dichotomous thinking and salesperson orientation influences sales performance.

Method And Data

In the present research, we use a moderated regression model to assess the following hypotheses:

H1: A sales orientation will have a negative direct effect on sales performance.

H2: A customer orientation will have a positive direct effect on sales performance.

H3: The relationship between a sales orientation and sales performance is moderated by dichotomous thinking, such that the relationship increases for those salespeople who have a sales orientation and think dichotomously.

H4: The relationship between a customer orientation and sales performance is moderated by dichotomous thinking, such that the relationship decreases for those salespeople who have a customer orientation and think dichotomously.

The study uses panel data from Cloud Research's Connect with a sample of full-time salespeople within the United States (N = 327, 174 males, 141 female, 6 non-binary, 3 trans-female, and 3 who did not prefer to say, age 18-70, M = 36.5). Participants completed established scales for dichotomous thinking (Oshio 2009), sales and customer orientation (Saxe and Weitz 1982), and performance (Behrman and Perreault 1982). We also collected information for gender (Levy and Sharma 1994), sales experience (Churchill et al. 1985; Levy and Sharma 1994), and age (Levy and Sharma 1994), as control variables.

Summary of Findings

The results indicate that a sales orientation has a non-significant relationship on sales performance (b = .042, p = .86), while a customer orientation positively influences performance (b = .482, p < .001). As the majority of literature suggests a negative relationship among SO and sales performance, we predicted that a negative relationship would occur, however our results are in line with Boles et al. (2009) who found a non-significant relationship between SO and sales performance. Our results do not support H1, but provide evidence on why moderators are needed to explain the SO, performance relationship. The results of CO on sales performance indicate a positive relationship, supporting H2.

Next, we looked at the interaction effects between a sales orientation and dichotomous thinking and the results show a positive significant interaction on sales performance (b = .053, p = .017). This indicates that dichotomous thinking moderates the relationship between a sales orientation and sales performance, such that the relationship on performance shifts from having a non-significant relationship to a positive significant relationship. The interaction between customer orientation and dichotomous thinking was not significant (b = .094, p = .072) and does not support H4.

Key Contributions

While salesperson orientation has received considerable attention, the predominant focus has been on understanding customer orientation, leaving sales orientation as an overlooked aspect of SOCO (Goad and Jaramillo 2014). The current research addresses this gap by looking at the joint effects of CO and SO on sales performance and explains when one orientation is more advantageous to the individual salesperson. Research is also limited in providing moderating effects that better explain when a specific selling orientation will create optimum performance (Franke and Park 2006).

Practically, this research offers valuable implications for sales managers in gauging potential recruits and evaluating current sales employees based on their cognitive style. Recognizing cognitive styles can streamline the resource-intensive recruiting process, helping firms identify individuals best suited for the organization's product offerings and selling environment. For employed salespeople or those considering a sales career, understanding one's cognitive style becomes crucial in aligning with job requirements. The research suggests that aligning cognitive style with the selling environment can lead to improved sales performance, offering practical guidance for both individuals and organizations in the sales domain.

SUPPORTER OR ADVERSARY? THIRD-PARTY EC EFFECTS ON PRODUCT ATTRACTIVENESS COMPARED TO MANUFACTURER-BRAND EC

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ABSTRACT

A randomized controlled trial was conducted using Apple's MacBook as the subject and using the product information pages from Amazon, a third-party EC, and Apple's brand EC. The results indicate that consumers are more likely to experience greater attractiveness when viewing information on the brand EC than the third-party EC.

INTRODUCTION

With the proliferation of the Internet and the remarkable development of information technology (IT), online purchasing has become a viable and popular option for many consumers. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdowns that ensued in many countries worldwide have made online shopping a veritable necessity, with most companies deciding to actively promote online sales. Uniqlo, for example, planned to expand online sales while simultaneously reiterating the necessity of physical stores (Dvorak, 2020). Durable and expensive consumer goods are no exception to this trend. Apple eliminated the Apple Store and converted its locations into places or zones designed for brand experiences because of customers' declining need to visit stores to make purchases. In addition to delivering product experiences, the stores emerged as locations to participate in and host community

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events that would strengthen consumer relationships and enhance long-term loyalty (Du et al., 2019). Tesla also indicated a change in strategy, wherein the number of stores would be reduced, and sales would be shifted to focus on online channels (Kolodny, 2019). In the United States, where automakers have traditionally relied on a network of third-party franchise dealers, this decision goes against longstanding auto-industry practices (Higgins & Roberts, 2019). The benefit of focusing on online channels is that the customer journey at Tesla is 5 hours faster than at traditional auto-dealers (Accenture, 2022). Many manufacturer brands that understand the benefits of online sales, such as those mentioned above, use Amazon's e-commerce platform; the platform gives them the opportunity to reach 300 million active customer accounts in over 180 countries (Amazon, 2022).

However, for manufacturer brands, the expansion of online sales entails difficult decisions about the relationships and terms to be maintained with third-party electronic commerce (EC) websites. Notwithstanding the short-term increase in sales volume achieved using these channels, it is necessary to accept the disadvantages of intense brand competition, reduced profits for manufacturer brands because of commissions, and the difficulty of acquiring customer data (Israeli et al., 2022). Furthermore, serious concerns have arisen that a low-quality brand experience (unlicensed counterfeit goods, frequent discounts, and a website design that cannot express the brand concept) will lead to a decrease in brand loyalty. Thus, Nike and LVMH have recently announced that they will withdraw from Amazon's EC platform and strengthen direct sales to consumers (Wendlandt, 2016; Zimmerman, 2020). Despite this business context, the negative effects of third-party e-commerce sales on consumer attitudes are surprisingly unsubstantiated in the literature.

To bridge this gap, this study posed the following research question for the purchase of personal computers (PCs) in Japan: Does purchasing from the brand's EC website increase loyalty compared to purchasing from a third-party EC website? A randomized controlled trial was conducted on Apple MacBooks using images from Apple's brand EC website and Amazon's third-party EC website. This study marks a novel attempt at verifying the above research question from an experimental

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perspective and contributes to the existing research by increasing knowledge about the negative aspects of third-party EC website use. The results suggest the importance of building a customer experience that consistently embodies the brand concept through a channel that can be managed by the manufacturer's brand.

Related Work and Hypothesis Development

Within the same online channel, the brand and third-party EC websites exhibit completely different characteristics. For manufacturer brands that prioritize sales volume, using a third-party EC website poses three risks that could lead to low-quality brand experiences.

First, counterfeit goods are distributed on the same website, which is beyond the manufacturer brand's control. The global trade in counterfeit goods or services, estimated at 461 billion USD, is a major factor in damaging brand reputation (Islam et al., 2021). As consumer ethics discourage people from purchasing counterfeit goods, there is a need for government campaigns to raise awareness of ethical consumption (Kasber et al., 2022); however, whether such measures are sufficiently effective is ambiguous. Hence, practitioners should make efforts to reduce consumers' desire to purchase counterfeit goods and increase their desire to purchase the original brand (Chand & Fei, 2021).

Second, as previous literature on showrooming and webrooming (Arora & Sahney, 2017) indicate, consumers first use reliable manufacturer-branded channels to collect information and ultimately purchase at the lowest price, usually from a third-party channel (Chiou et al., 2012; Flavián et al., 2020). On third-party EC websites, many products are sold at discounts and with point-collection benefits; however, these lead to a decrease in loyalty toward the manufacturer's brand (Nunes & Drèze, 2006). Therefore, the third-party environment, wherein the image of cheap sales is firmly established, is assumed to undermine existing loyalty toward the manufacturer's brand.

Third, the purchase experience occurs in an environment wherein it is difficult to conceptualize the manufacturer's brand. Consumers' brand loyalty stems from how

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well they understand, empathize with, and value the brand's concept (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Hence, the basis of brand management is to consistently embody the customer's experience based on the concept (Keller & Swaminathan, 2019; Lanseng & Olsen, 2012; Park et al., 1991). However, manufacturer brands are required to follow the design and usability of third-party EC websites, limiting their expression of their own concepts.

Based on the above context, manufacturers are moving away from third-party EC websites and strengthening their own brand EC websites. However, in academic research, few studies have compared the differential effects of brand and third-party EC websites on consumer attitudes. Among them, a verification of hotel brands by Magnini & Karande (2011) revealed that customers who made their purchases from the hotel's own website showed higher loyalty than purchasers on third-party websites. However, this study lacks relevance for three reasons. First, the findings have not been verified in the context of expensive, durable consumer goods. Second, for a fair comparison, both the manufacturer and the third party must be equally strong brands. Third, as the relationship between past purchases and loyalty was evaluated, the results merely showed the characteristics of each website's consumers. Kato's (2022) study has addressed these concerns but is based on observational data. Ideally, a randomized controlled trial should be conducted to extract the causal effects of the EC websites in question. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed to verify the causal effects of EC websites through experimental studies:

Hypothesis: Compared to the third-party EC website, the brand EC website enhances consumers' perception of product attractiveness.

Methodology

A randomized controlled trial was conducted to clarify the causal effect of different EC websites on product attractiveness. During July 9–12, 2022, an online survey was conducted. The main inclusion criterion was that the respondent owned a PC that had been purchased new. The survey work was contracted to Cross Marketing Inc., a major Japanese research company. Consumers who did not meet the conditions

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were excluded, and the survey was conducted until 200 eligible participants had been enlisted. A total of 241 individuals responded to the survey invitation.

The survey included the following six question items: (1) gender, (2) age, (3) PC ownership status, (4) form of purchased product (new/used), (5) brand owned, and (6) product attractiveness of the Apple MacBook (five-point Likert scale; 1= not attractive at all, 5= very attractive). Then, before asking about (6), as shown in Figure 1, the treatment group was presented with an image imitating Apple's brand website, and the control group was presented with an image imitating that of Amazon. Apple's MacBook was selected as the target because the frequency of appearance is relatively high, and the ratio of the third-party to brand EC websites is almost the same. Amazon was selected as the third-party EC website because companies aspire to build a brand as strong as Apple. In fact, according to Interbrand, Amazon ranks third among global brands, whereas Apple ranks first (Interbrand, 2022).

For this study, both designs/images were newly created using the rights-free image material (from Unsplash; https://unsplash.com/ja) for the following two reasons: (1) To extract the pure influence of the brand website, all information is managed in the same way for both, except for the website design (product, photo, product color, performance description, price, and delivery date); (2) consideration was given to the fact that using an existing image may generate biased respondents with prior contact experience. In Figure 1, there is one less product image from the third-party EC website because the price is listed consistently on all pages across Amazon. Although Amazon promotes purchases by granting price discounts and Amazon Points, this factor was excluded because it is an extraneous difference between the EC websites. In the verification, the chi-square test was applied to the matrix of website group × product attractiveness.

Results

As shown in Table 1, the mean value of product attractiveness for the brand and third-party EC websites are 3.270 and 2.880, respectively. Hypothesis of this study is supported, as the p-value of the chi-square test result is 0.048 at a 5%

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significance level. The Cramer's V value (small: 0.1–0.29, medium: 0.3–0.49, large: ≥0.5; Grant et al. 2012; Igarashi et al. 2021; Low and LoGiudice 2018) of 0.219 confirms a small effect size.

This result is useful because it indicates that a product's appeal can change just by changing the EC website, despite identical product information. Although the information and website design were strictly controlled on both third-party and brand EC websites, based on the brand image that has been accumulated so far, product attractiveness was adopted instead of purchase intention. Amazon's design may create the perception of counterfeit goods risk, bargain sales, and the removal of Apple's concept.

Implications

The importance of building a great brand experience has been shown to drive loyalty over time (Beig & Nika, 2019; Coelho et al., 2020; de Oliveira Santini et al., 2018; Dwivedi et al., 2018; Huaman-Ramirez & Merunka, 2019; Nayeem et al., 2019; Prentice et al., 2019; van der Westhuizen, 2018). This study focused on the adverse effects of third-party EC websites to address the lack of existing research. For manufacturers and brands, the sales benefits from third-party EC websites, represented by Amazon, are immeasurable. However, this is a double-edged sword, and relying too heavily on third-party EC websites is inadvisable (Israeli et al., 2022). Existing research has reported the following factors impairing customer experience: a mix of counterfeit goods and genuine products (Chand & Fei, 2021; Kasber et al., 2022) and the promotion of showrooming and bargain sales (Arora & Sahney, 2017; Chiou et al., 2012; Flavián et al., 2020). However, surprisingly few examples of these concerns have been scientifically substantiated. Although there are observational studies in the context of comparing third-party and brand EC websites (Kato, 2022; Magnini & Karande, 2011), this study is the first to demonstrate a more reliable RCT approach. The conclusions of the previous work and this study are consistent, and the results contribute to strengthening academic knowledge in this area.

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Site category	Purchase intention					Total	Mean	p-value	Cramer's V
	1	2	3	4	5				
Brand EC website	8	12	33	39	8	100	3.270		
Third-party EC website	12	25	33	23	7	100	2.880	0.048*	0.219

Note: *p<0.05; EC: electronic commerce.

Table 1. Results of the chi-square test.
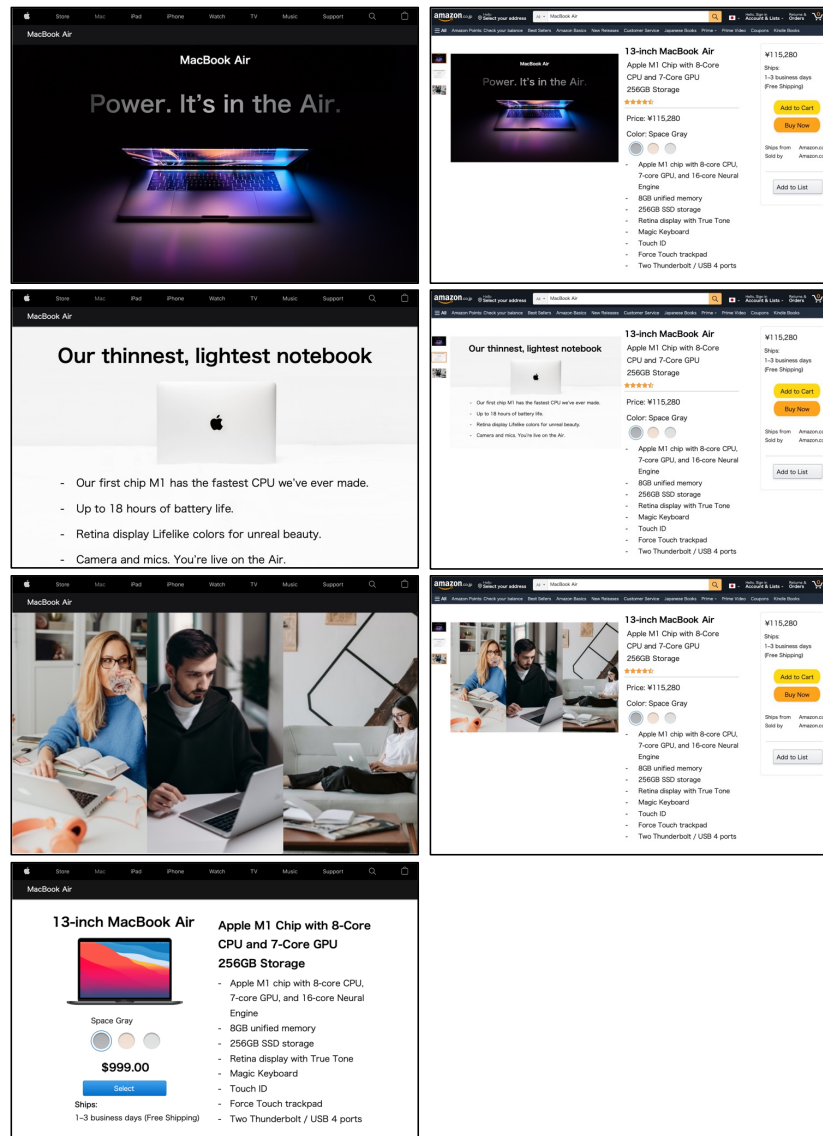
Figure 1. Images presented (left: brand electronic commerce website; right: third-party electronic commerce website).

The results indicate that consumers are more likely to experience greater product attractiveness when viewing information on the brand EC website than on the third-party EC website. In other words, the brand EC website is considered to provide a better brand experience. Therefore, reliance on third-party EC websites to enjoy short-term sales growth risks a decline in brand loyalty from a long-term perspective. One key practical implication may be that the maintenance of a strong brand requires ruthless decisions about the manufacturer's relationship with third-party EC websites, as demonstrated by IKEA, Nike, and LVMH's withdrawal from Amazon (Israeli et al., 2022; Wendlandt, 2016; Zimmerman, 2020).

Conclusion and Future Research Directions

Third-party EC websites contribute significantly to the strengthening of online sales, but depending on these websites may reduce the quality of the brand experience, which may not be desirable in the long-term. Accordingly, some brands have withdrawn from the world's largest third-party EC platform, Amazon. However, this concern is surprisingly absent from extant academic discussion. By verifying the Japanese PC market through a randomized controlled trial, this study demonstrated that purchasing from a third-party EC website negatively affects product attractiveness. Companies' focus on immediate sales expansion may jeopardize the sustainable growth of manufacturer brands. To reflect the brand in the long term, this study's evidence should be utilized while formulating online sales strategies.

This study has some limitations. First, the size of the photo of the product may create variations in its effect. For online purchases, it is well-known that the larger the size of the photo, the higher the purchase intention (Bleier et al., 2019; Park et al., 2005). However, in this study, the size of the product photos on the third-party EC website were not intentionally reduced but set according to the actual Amazon environment. Had the photo sizes been intentionally aligned, the design would have differed from the usual design on Amazon and may have produced a sense of discomfort. Hence, the priority here was to match the photo size with the actual environment. Second, because this study was limited to PCs (the Apple MacBook) in

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the Japanese market, there is a limit to the generalizability of the conclusions. Third, this study measures the attractiveness of products and cannot determine the impact on long-term brand loyalty. Accordingly, it is desirable to conduct a continuous survey of attitudes after the point of purchase or measure subsequent repurchase behavior. These can be construed as future research directions.

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12

THE DETERMINANTS OF TURNOVER INTENTION IN THE SALESFORCE: A META-ANALYSIS

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Keywords: Sales, turnover intention, meta-analysis

Description: Given the significant ramifications of salesperson turnover for organizations, this meta-analytic study quantitatively review and synthesize the existing knowledge on the antecedents of salesperson turnover intention.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Turnover has attracted considerable research attention in sales literature. When successful salespeople leave the organization, it is almost impossible to replace them without any decrease in the organization's sales performance (Babakus et al., 1996). In the marketing and management literature, a number of meta-analytical reviews have been published to summarize the current knowledge and provide a more integrative picture on employee turnover. However, to the best of the author's knowledge, no meta-analytical study on the antecedents of salesperson turnover has been conducted yet. The current study addresses this gap in the extant literature by investigating the antecedents of salesperson turnover intention. Therefore, the aim of this study is to synthesize the extant knowledge on salesperson turnover intention by conducting a meta-analysis to answer the research question: What factors contribute to salesperson turnover intention?

Method and Data

Our meta-analysis is based on empirical studies conducted on the antecedents of salesperson turnover intention. To ensure the final meta-analysis sample was comprehensive, we followed a three-stage literature search. First, we initiated the search by looking for empirical papers on various web-based databases. Second, we manually checked all issues of prominent marketing and sales journals. Third, we employed cross-referencing method. To be eligible for inclusion in this meta-analysis, studies must meet the following criteria: (1) empirically investigate any antecedent of salesperson turnover intention, (2) report a Pearson's correlation coefficient (or any other statistics that can be converted to r, such as t value) along with the corresponding sample size, and (3) explicitly measure salespeople's intention to leave the company (not their actual withdrawal behavior). Following this process, we initially yielded a pool of 79 studies that fulfilled all three inclusion criteria. Through a meticulous examination of these 79 studies, we identified a set of four antecedents: emotional exhaustion, organizational commitment, job performance, and job satisfaction. Eventually using a sample of 81 effect sizes and 15,499 salespeople from 55 studies, we conducted a meta-analysis to test the proposed model. We used Comprehensive Meta-analysis (Version 4.0) to carry out our meta-analysis.

Summary of Findings

In line with H1, results revealed that emotional exhaustion positively influenced salesperson turnover intention (r = 0.688, p < 0.05). In addition, organizational commitment was found to have a negative impact on salesperson turnover intention (r = -0.702, p < 0.05), confirming H2. Hypothesis H3, which connects job performance with salesperson turnover intention, was also confirmed (r = -0.122, p < 0.10). Finally, the findings supported H4 is accepted as a negative association was observed between job satisfaction and salesperson turnover intention (r = -0.707, p < 0.05). In terms of the effect size magnitudes, the impacts of emotional

exhaustion, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction on salesperson turnover intention were found to be strong (r ≥ .40), while the influence of job performance on salesperson turnover intention was categorized as weak according to Cohen's classification (Cohen, 1977).

Key Contributions

This meta-analytic research enriches the existing literature on salesperson turnover intention in two ways. Firstly, this is the first study to quantitatively synthesize the vast empirical research on the impact of emotional exhaustion, organizational commitment, job performance, and job satisfaction on salesperson turnover intention and provide cumulative evidence regarding the magnitude of the explanatory power of those antecedents on salesperson turnover intention. Secondly, by aggregating existing research and resolving the previous inconsistent findings, this study offers valuable implications for academicians and practitioners to understand the critical mechanism of salespeople's propensity to leave their jobs or organizations.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SALES DIGITALIZATION CAPABILITIES IN ENTREPRENEURIAL B2B SERVICE FIRMS

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Keywords: sales digitalization, dynamic capabilities, entrepreneurial orientation, B2B service companies

Description: Building on dynamic capabilities theory, this study investigates dynamic sales digitalization (SD) capabilities in the context of small- and medium-sized B2B service companies.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The growing uncertainty in business markets and the recent COVID-19 pandemic motivate firms to reinforce their capabilities to further advance the digitalization of their sales and be prepared for upcoming sales disruptions (Dugan et al. 2023; Mattila, et al., 2021). Sales digitalization (SD) is the use of technology, data, and analytics to design and support sales processes and activities (Singh et al. 2019; Zoltners et al. 2021). Although earlier research posits that firms with strong dynamic capabilities cope better with unexpected situations in the business environment (Teece, et al., 2016), there is little in-depth understanding of how firms should leverage their capabilities for SD (Badrinarayanan et al. 2022; Vial 2019). The dynamic SD capabilities can be used to sense the developing technology, advance its usage, and restructure the resources to enhance the sales efficiency and ultimately gain competitive advantage (Badrinarayanan et al. 2022). In this study, we therefore investigate the firm-level, dynamic SD capabilities that build on technology sensing, technology seizing, and transforming capabilities derived from entrepreneurial behavior (Badrinarayanan, et al., 2019; Srinivasan, et al., 2002; Teece 2007). Hence, we ask: *How does entrepreneurial orientation facilitate dynamic SD capabilities in B2B service firms?*

Method And Data

In this study, we adopted a qualitative research method, allowing flexibility and in-depth exploration for this emerging phenomenon, and aiming for the enhancement of the theory (Graebner et al., 2012; Gehman et al., 2018) in the context of B2B service firms. Small entrepreneurial firms are a relevant examination focus, as they pivot new ideas more quickly than larger firms (Dugan et al. 2023). For data collection, we applied purposeful sampling logic (Patton, 2015), and the following criteria were used to select the participating firms. The firms 1)

were SMEs (according to European Union 2003) 2) operated in the professional services industry, 3) were running, at minimum, a modern CRM system, and 4) had some experience with digital sales tools. Initially, 22 semi-structured interviews were conducted with CEOs, sales directors, and sales managers of these firms in spring 2020. Subsequently, we revisited the same firms, conducting an additional 22 semi-structured interviews in spring 2022. We focused on highly knowledgeable participants who had diverse perspectives and firsthand knowledge about the research topic, as advised by Welch and Piekkari (2017). In the data analysis, we followed the thematic analysis process suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Summary of Findings

The technology seizing capability reveals in our data as welcoming evident need for digitalization, including capabilities of exploring the sales tool alternatives, listening to users and customers, and observing own sales practices to identify areas for improvement. Such capability manifests as firms activated incorporating actions that positively welcome upcoming changes in sales practices. Technology seizing capability could be characterized as leveraging data and accumulated learning and letting go of established routines. The interviews were revealing actions that focus on higher-level adoption of SD, such as salespeople's CRM usage. Taking control as a transforming capability represents a firm's ability to lead SD and maintain a realistic take on technology's role. Sales tools are considered as means to support the main processes and technology needs to be applied and used wisely to gain value. Our findings indicate that entrepreneurial behavior, such as embracing culture of experimentation, learning and failing fast, is especially essential in the emergence stage of dynamic SD capabilities, as it encourages firms to search for alternatives with a forward-looking attitude, and gain experience quickly with agile

operations. Our findings indicate that transforming capabilities are less related to entrepreneurial behavior but instead to formal processes and decision-making practices.

Statement of Key Contributions

Based on our findings, we provide a model of entrepreneurial behavior as a driving mechanism for fostering sales firms' SD capabilities and leveraging the full potential of acquired sales technology. As such this research contributes to the ongoing discussion (e.g., Badrinarayanan, Ramachandran, and Madhavaram 2019) on dynamic sales digitalization capabilities by identifying three key dynamic SD capabilities and by pinpointing the driving forces for each dynamic SD capability. As a contribution, we answer the call for more in-depth studies of the employment of digital capabilities in the sales context (e.g. Badrinarayanan et al. 2022; Wielgos, Homburg, Kuehnl, 2021). Furthermore, the existing research argues that developing strong dynamic capabilities requires entrepreneurial management from firms (Teece 2007;2016). Therefore, we additionally contribute the existing literature (e.g. Kohtamäki et al., 2019) linking entrepreneurial orientation into sales research by suggesting that welcoming, leveraging, and taking control of digital sales technologies leans on entrepreneurial behavior and such behavior further advances stronger SD capabilities.

References are available upon request.

THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING STRUCTURES IN SALES UNITS FOR ENHANCING INNOVATION PROCESSES

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Keywords: sales teams, knowledge sharing, knowledge sharing structures, innovation processes

Description: This study examines how sales units can contribute to a firm's capacity for innovation and how market knowledge accumulated to salesforce can be shared and used to guide innovation.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

An organization's sales function is important for innovation success (Ernst et al., 2010; Kuester et al., 2017; Athaide et al., 2019) as it is in a good position to contribute to the innovation process due to its interactive relationships with customers (Homburg et al., 2009). Previous studies have largely examined the role of sales in the later stages of the innovation process by focusing on the commercialization stage (Alavi et al., 2022) and only a limited number of studies have focused on the role of sales in the earlier stages, such as knowledge gathering and idea generation stages (Woisetschläger et al., 2016; Kuester et al., 2017). Despite recognizing the significant role of sales as market researchers (Kallio & Bergenholtz, 2011) and knowledge brokers between customers and the company (van den Berg et al., 2014), there is still a paucity of research on how this

knowledge accumulated in sales units is transferred and utilized within the innovation process (Kuester et al., 2017). This study examines how market knowledge accumulated to salesforce can be shared and used to guide innovation and explores the knowledge sharing structures within sales units and how they either facilitate or impede knowledge sharing in those teams.

Research Question

By qualitatively analyzing sales managers' accounts, we address the following practical and theoretical questions to answer the research problem: 1) What kind are the opportunity structures for knowledge sharing that exist within sales teams, and how do these structures influence the sharing of knowledge both within and outside the team? 2) What are the key features of opportunity structures that facilitate or hinder knowledge sharing in sales teams? 3) What kind of opportunity structures and resources are effective in supporting the sharing of knowledge to enhance innovation processes?

Method and Data

The focus in this study is on Nordic business-to-business, knowledge-intensive, small and medium-sized companies operating in the ICT sector, where the issues of acquiring, creating, and sharing knowledge are prominently present in everyday organizational life (Tong et al., 2014). In addition, while research on knowledge sharing has focused mainly on large firms (Massaro et al. 2016), the small firms addressed in this study have their own specific challenges related to the importance of the competence of each employee, in which knowledge sharing is central. The primary empirical material for this study was collected through theme interviews with sales managers in the firms defined above. The theme interview method enables insights into the sales

managers' individual consciousness, subjectivity, and perceptions (Haytko 2004). The analysis will utilize a theory guided content analysis (Yin 2014) for theorizing across several cases and finding common thematic elements across research participants, and then for combining these with the earlier literature. To answer the research questions, Van Krogh's (2011) conceptual framework of the opportunity structures for knowledge sharing will be utilized in analyzing, conceptualizing, and comparing the research material.

Summary of Findings

The analysis of the material is currently progressing. The expected findings could increase the understanding of the influence of the opportunity structures for knowledge sharing in sales, as well as identify the hindering and promoting effects that formulate the barriers or bounds to knowledge sharing possibilities. The findings will increase the understanding of how knowledge in sales can be shared within and outside the sales unit and reveal the importance of customer-/market-related knowledge in the innovation process and provide insights into the role of sales in this process.

Key Contributions

The study contributes to the field of sales literature by augmenting the understanding of the knowledge sharing structures influencing in sales and the dissemination of the market knowledge accumulated to salesforce across the broader organizational context, in service of enhancing the innovation process. By understanding how knowledge is shared within and outside the sales unit, this study is expected to highlight the importance of customer-related knowledge in the innovation process and the crucial role of sales teams in this regard. The expected findings could increase the understanding of the influence of the opportunity structures for knowledge sharing in sales, as well

as identify the hindering and promoting effects that formulate the barriers or bounds to knowledge sharing possibilities. This research adds to the innovation literature by enhancing the understanding on the role of sales, particularly in the early stages of the innovation process. In practical terms, this study provides insights into the establishment of knowledge sharing structures that facilitate knowledge dissemination while minimizing knowledge hiding. The perspectives generated through this study can aid in the creation of more innovative and knowledge intensive sales teams and provide strategies to leverage sales-related knowledge within the firm's innovation process.

References are available upon request.

THE POWER OF FLOW STATE IN SALESPEOPLE

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Description: The current paper hypothesized and demonstrated that organizational clan control and sales skills positively contribute to enhanced flow experiences, ultimately improving sales performance.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The optimal mental state known as the flow experience, where individuals perform at their best (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Peifer and Engeser, 2021), holds potential for valuable insights into how salespeople navigate this state. This understanding could help sales managers develop strategies to support their teams in challenging sales environments. Despite the acknowledged importance of the flow experience and extensive documentation of flow theory across various fields, there is a shortage of empirical studies on this theory within sales (Kucuk, 2022). Consequently, our grasp of how salespeople experience flow remains largely unexplored. Recognizing the well-established benefits of the flow experience for productivity, decision-making, health, well-being, creativity, and performance (Dieser et al., 2015; Ilies et al., 2017; Schutte and Malouff, 2020), it is crucial to explore the relevance of flow theory in the sales context and investigate variables that may influence the theory in this domain.

Method and Data

Participants in Study 1 included individuals with sales experience recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk. The study employed a between-subjects design, focusing on high versus low sales skills and high versus low sales challenges. In the high-skill condition, participants selected their most effective sales skill, while those in the high-challenge condition described their experience facing a challenging sales opportunity. The study measured participants' flow experience using Bakker's Work-Related Flow Inventory (Bakker, 2008), comprising three components. Additionally, Study 2 involved salespeople recruited from Prolific and compensated for their participation. The study employed a series of multi-item 7-point Likert measures from

previous literature to assess various constructs, including sales skills, sales challenges, flow experience, clan control, and performance (Bakker, 2008; Kohli et al., 1998; Yang et al., 2022). Control variables, such as gender, age, sales experience, industry type, and sales anxiety, were also measured using similar Likert scales.

Summary of Findings

Study 1 examined the impact of imbalances in sales skills and challenges on salespeople's flow experience. Using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with control variables, the results indicated a significant difference in flow experience between salespeople with imbalances due to high challenges and those with a balanced skill-challenge. However, no significant difference was found when the imbalance resulted from high sales skills. Moreover, Study 2 aimed to verify flow experience in three conditions (balance, high skill, high challenge) and explored the moderating role of clan control. The one-way ANCOVA revealed a significant condition effect. Pairwise comparisons showed no significant difference in flow experience between salespeople with balanced skills and challenges and those with high challenges or high skills when working in organizations with low clan control. In organizations with high clan control, a notable distinction emerged between salespeople with balanced skills and challenges and those with high challenges. The regression analysis confirmed the positive impact of flow experience on performance.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study contributes to the existing literature by exploring the relationship between flow theory, sales performance, and organizational culture (Vieira et al., 2022; Dugan et al., 2023). Firstly, the introduction of flow theory to the sales domain sheds new light on the dynamics

influencing the success of salespeople. Through survey and experimental studies, it is revealed that sales professionals' flow experiences positively correlate with exceptional sales performance, aligning with previous studies emphasizing the impact of positive mental states on sales (Gomezel and Aleksić, 2020; Tse and Csikszentmihalyi, 2020). The study also uncovers the role of the balance between sales skills and challenges in influencing a salesperson's flow experience, highlighting situations where imbalances negatively impact performance. In addition, the research extends flow theory by deepening understanding of its antecedents and moderators (Bao and Yang, 2022; Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Hyun et al., 2022). Unlike traditional flow literature suggesting that imbalances between skills and challenges are detrimental, the study shows that in the sales context, flow experience is not negatively related to exceeded skills. Salespeople can still experience flow when their skills surpass challenges, possibly due to the fast-paced nature of the profession and the potential for increased incentives, compensation, and team performance.

References are available upon request.

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING THE LINK BETWEEN FIRM'S

STRATEGIC RISK-TAKING AND SALESPEOPLE'S DEFENSIVE BEHAVIOR IN

PRICE NEGOTIATIONS

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Keywords: Sales management; price negotiations; firm strategy; defensive negotiation

behavior

Description: This study investigates how firms' strategic risk-taking affects salespeople's

defensive behavior in price negotiations with clients, a major performance driver for firms.

January 2024

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In price negotiations with clients, defending their firm's positions and interests is critical for salespeople, particularly in the business-to-business context. Thereby, price negotiations with customers are inherently risky from a business and salesperson perspective because salespeople need to find the balance between attempting to enforce their own negotiation position and not endangering a negotiation agreement. Consequently, a firm's strategy—specifically with regard to risk—should also play a critical role in salespeople's efforts on defensive behavior. Despite the growing body of literature on the drivers of salespeople's behavior in price negotiations, the role of a firm's strategic risk-taking in price negotiations remains opaque. Thereby, existing literature focuses on individual characteristics and managerial levers as antecedents of salespeople's defensive negotiation behavior, such as leaders' behavior (Alavi et al. 2018), incentives (e.g., Joseph 2001; Weinberg 1975) or pricing authority (e.g., Homburg, Jensen, and Hahn 2012).

Against this background, this study extends existing research by examining two overarching research questions: (1) How does a firm's strategic risk-taking affect salespeople's defensive behavior during price negotiations? and (2) Which levers must sales managers handle to control this relationship to a firm's benefit?

Method and Data

We conducted a multi-method investigation comprising two scenario experiments with 155 business-to-business salespeople and an online survey with 377 business-to-business salespeople. The two scenario experiments provide initial evidence for our framework's main effects—that is, the impact of a firm's strategic risk-taking on the salesperson's defensive behavior in price negotiations through the salesperson's perceived profit orientation of the firm. We chose experimental designs to establish the main effects while avoiding common

method bias (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Specifically, Study 1a relies on a within-subject design, in which we exposed each participant to two experimental conditions. Study 1b complements the within-subject design of Study 1a with additional evidence from a scenario-based *between*-subjects design. Following this initial evidence, Study 2 is a cross-industry survey that aims to confirm our conceptual framework, including the hypothesized moderating effects. By relying on a survey, Study 2 further complements Studies 1a and 1b, as it allows us to test the generalizability of our experimental results across representative, heterogeneous samples of salespeople (MacKenzie and Podsakoff 2012). Furthermore, Study 2 increases the generalizability of our results by relying on a larger sample. To test the hypotheses, we employ a SEM and multiple regression analysis.

Summary of Findings

In three empirical studies, including one large-scale cross-industry survey, we find support for our conceptual model rooted in the MOA framework. More specifically, a firm's risk-taking strategy negatively influences salespeople's perception of the firm's profit orientation, thereby decreasing their defensive behavior in price negotiations. By that, the firm's strategic risk-taking has a significant, negative indirect effect on a salesperson's individual sales performance. Salespeople's motivation and ability to defend their position during price negotiations mitigate the negative impact of the firm's strategic risk-taking strategy on their defensive behavior. More specifically, outcome-based compensation, which constitutes a motivational aspect for salespeople's defensive behavior, mitigates the negative impact of the firm's risk-taking strategy on salespeople's defensive behavior. Furthermore, we exhibit a positive three-way interaction among the firm's risk-taking strategy, salespeople's outcome-based compensation, and salespeople's pricing authority on salespeople's defensive behavior during price negotiations. In line, we exhibit a positive three-way interaction among the firm's risk-taking strategy, salespeople's revenue- and profit-based compensation, and

salespeople's share of service sales on salespeople's defensive behavior during price negotiations.

Key Contributions

We provide two key insights for sales and marketing research. First, we shed light on the relevance of the firm's risk-taking strategy for salespeople's price negotiation behavior and outcomes. In doing so, we add important insights to an existing research void and address the call to examine how organizational aspects influence salespeople's negotiation behavior (Herbst, Voeth, and Meister 2011). We find that a firm's strategic risk-taking decreases salespeople's defensive behavior in price negotiations with clients. More specifically, when a firm engages in strategic risk-taking, salespeople perceive the firm to be less focused on stable and secure profits. In turn, salespeople invest less effort in defending their position during negotiations. The reduced defensive behavior, in turn, decreases salespeople's individual economic performance. Second, we reveal how and where sales managers can intervene to achieve the desired sales performance by identifying contingencies of the impact of the firm's strategic risk-taking on salespeople's price negotiation behavior. Specifically, sales managers may offset the negative impact of the firm's strategic risk-taking on salespeople's defensive behavior by offering outcome-based compensation. Furthermore, increasing the pricing authority of salespeople and the share of service-related sales can strengthen the moderating impact of outcome-based compensation.

References are available upon request.

UNDERSTANDING SALESFORCE TURNOVER: A PUSH-PULL-MOORING FRAMEWORK

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Keywords: Sales force, turnover, External Environment, Social Norms, Justice.

Description: Drawing on human migration theory, this paper introduces a novel framework for sales force turnover.

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a novel framework that draws on migration literature and Rational Choice Theory (RCT) to understand why salespeople leave their jobs. The study highlights the nuanced role of relational resources and social norms in turnover decisions and attractiveness of turnover destinations.

INTRODUCTION

Sales force turnover is a crucial organizational concern with repercussions of turnover not only impact the organization internally but also goes beyond the boundaries of the organization through disrupting customer relationship and negative word of mouth (Sunder et al., 2017). Researchers have been actively addressing the issue of salesforce turnover. They have primarily focused on personal and/or organizational factors, such as biographical characteristics, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, job embeddedness, role ambiguity and conflict, stress, and emotional exhaustion, to name a handful. However, there is

a lack of research on the perception of salespeople regarding the external environment and potential alternative employers (Hom et al., 2017). This issue is important because turnover is primarily a move from one job another and is often driven by individuals' perceptions of better opportunities outside their current job. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how attractiveness of external environment impact salesperson decision making.

This research provides a more comprehensive theoretical perspective for turnover by utilizing the Push-Pull-Mooring (PPM) paradigm of human migration (Moon, 1995). Employee turnover and migration share conceptual similarities since the two concepts concerns move of an individual from one administrative boundary to other (Clark, 2020). Further, the theory provides a unique explanation as it includes the role of destination qualities, not present in sales force turnover models. This study explains the framework using Rational Choice Theory (RCT) provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding the relevant push, pull and mooring forces in the turnover context. According to RCT, decisions are based on a rational analysis of the potential benefits and costs of their actions (Hechter & Kanazawa, 1997). Further, RCT recognizes the role of social capital in decision making by inclusion of social norms as a form of social capital in the rational decision-making process (Coleman, 1988). RCT posits that social norms encourage people to work together, share resources, and take collective action. These norms also provide access to opportunities and resources that may not be available otherwise. For a salesperson, these norms act as an anchor encouraging them to maintain their work relationships (Greeley, 1997).

This study contributes to sales force turnover literature in three ways. Firstly, it highlights the importance of a salesperson's perception of the external environment in their decision to leave. Understanding the impact of external environment perception is both important for theory

and practical applications as managers do not want to lose their sales talents to the competitions. Secondly, we introduce and test a new theoretical framework for turnover which draws from migration literature. This framework offers a broad understanding of turnover and can serve as a basis for explaining turnover in different contexts. Thirdly, this study explores and extends the application of RCT in the context of salesforce turnover and examines how social norms, a type of social capital within an organization, affect turnover decisions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Migration is movement of an individual from one administrative boundary to another with some permanence (Clark, 2020). The PPM framework of migration is the main paradigm in studying migration (Bansal, Taylor, & James, 2005) which examines voluntary migration without formal forces to leave the origin.

The PPM framework posits that the interplay of three forces determines migration through push, pull, and mooring factors. Based on this perspective, push element are factors in the origin that urges an individual to leave, while pull factors are qualities in the destination that attracts the person. The concept of mooring refers to "intervening factors," which might not be the primary reason but it inhibits migration. The mooring factors are defined as an opposing force that arises from social or personal factors and serves as an anchor creating stability (Moon, 1995).

Rational Choice Theory (RCT) provides a broad theory to underpin the PPM framework. RCT is a decision-making theory that has had a significant impact on various fields of study, such as sociology, political science, psychology, and marketing. In its core, the theory assumes that individuals are rational and aim to maximize their gains (Hechter & Kanazawa, 1997). Rationality means efficiency or maximizing one's gains. One of the most important

developments in RCT is the addition of social capital to the theory (Hetcher & Kanazawa, 1997)

to explain the relational aspect of the theory. Viewing individuals as self-interest maximizers in

decision making, researchers found that rationality is influenced by social factors and constraints

(Coleman, 1988). They added the concept of social capital to theory and explained that

relationships and trust can impact decision making process (Scholtz, 2015). This perspective

emphasizes the importance of social relationships and social capital and indicates that the

structure and quality of social relationships can provide individuals with valuable resources, such

as access to information, social support, and opportunities which can significantly impact the

cost and benefit analysis of an individual (Coleman, 1988). In turnover literature, the inherent

cost-benefit analysis (March and Simon, 1958) is considered an important base of decision

making which is conceptually close to the idea of utility maximization of RCT.

Figure 1: Theoretical Model
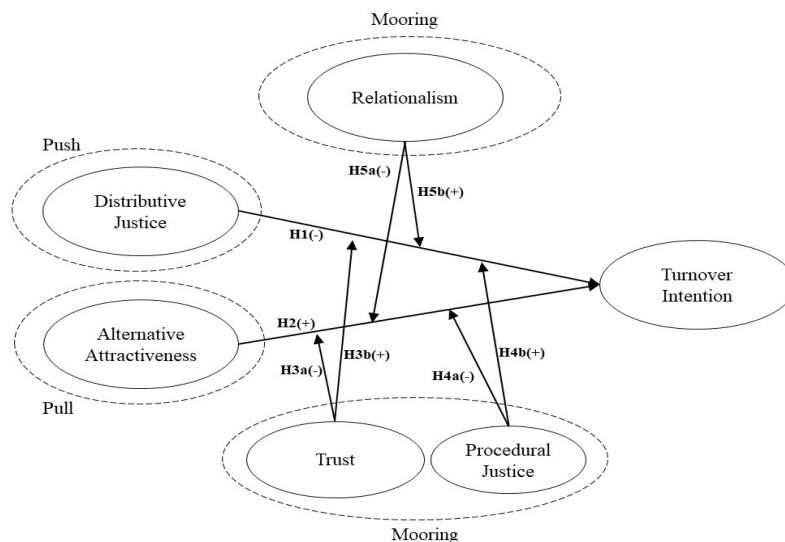
MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Push Factors

The PPM migration framework identifies push factors as elements that lower the quality of life and compel individuals to leave their origin (Moon, 1995). These undesirable factors are mostly perceptions of economic characteristics of the origin (Lewis, 2021) and correspond with distributive justice, a key predictor in the turnover literature (Rubenstein et al., 2018).

Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of outcomes or resource allocation, which reflects the extent to which a salesperson feels fairly rewarded for their efforts and contributions by the organization (Brashear, Manolis, & Brooks, 2005). An individuals' concern for distributive justice can be traced back to the roots of RCT, which assumes that individuals are driven by self-interest maximization. Individuals want to maximize their resources in a social interaction, and they believe that following the rules of distributive justice facilitates this goal (Tyler, 1994). If salespeople perceive an imbalance or inequity in their work relationship, they may experience feelings of distress or negative emotions, and show intention to leave that social interaction. Thus,

H_1: Distributive Justice is negatively related to Turnover Intention.

Pull Factors

Pull effects refer to the attractive elements that make a destination appealing to potential migrants (Moon, 1995). Alternative attractiveness is the overall assessment of the relationship fulfillment available in the best alternative relationship (Ping, 2007). In the context of turnover, a person will be dependent on a relationship as long as their expected outcomes in the current relationship exceed the best available alternative for that relationship (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

Therefore, Alternative Attractiveness is a crucial indicator of a salesperson's intention to leave or stay in their job. Thus

H$_2$: Alternative Attractiveness is positively related to Turnover Intention.

Mooring Factors

Mooring factors are the opposing force that arises from social or personal elements that serves as an anchor creating stability for the person. Social capital is a form of mooring and refers to the potential power that exists within social structures (Coleman, 1988). Researchers specifically focuses on social norms as features that facilitate access to resources. For salespeople, the key social capitals in the organization are relationalism, trust and Procedural Justice established.

Trust. Trust is a "psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another" (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395). Trust is a social capital (Coleman, 1988) and an important social norm that creates the basis for the expectation of certain behaviors from the other party in relationship (Brashear, Manolis, & Brooks, 2005). Salespeople strive to optimize their resources during their daily work interactions, and trust in their managers' decisions and actions is a valuable asset in achieving this goal. This particular type of social capital serves as a mooring factor because it boosts the expected resources from one's present employer, reinforces reliance on them, and cannot be carried over to potential alternative jobs. Thus,

H$_{3a}$. The positive relationship between Alternative Attractiveness and Turnover Intention is weaker when Trust is higher (vs. lower).

Trust can play an important role in mitigating the negative incidents in the workplace. When a salesperson assumes that distributive justice is violated, they will first try to reestablish the balance in the relationship rather than leaving the job since it is less costly (Ping, 2007).

However, their level of engagement in such behavior is proportionate to the trust that they have in their manager. Thus,

> H$_{3b}$. The negative relationship between distributive justice and Turnover Intention is weaker when Trust is higher (vs. lower).

Procedural Justice. Procedural justice refers to the fairness in processes that leads to distribution of reward and shows how actors are treated (Brashear, Manolis, & Brooks, 2005). This construct indicates that the perception of fairness in a social interaction. To ensure procedural justice is followed, it is important to include input from those affected by the procedure in the decision-making process (Leventhal et al., 1980). When salespeople feel they have a say in decisions the current employer will be more appealing and creates a sense of dependence on the employer, reducing the likelihood of turnover. Thus,

> H$_{4a}$. The positive relationship between alternative attractiveness and turnover intention is weaker when Procedural Justice is higher (vs. lower).

Distributive and procedural justice are two important aspects of organizational justice that influence employees' attitudes and behaviors within the workplace (Brashear, Manolis, & Brooks, 2005). Procedural justice acts as a moderating factor in the relationship between distributive justice and turnover intention. It enhances the perception of fairness in the decision-making processes. As a result, the decisions have more legitimacy and salespeople are more likely to accept the outcomes, even if they perceive the distribution of rewards as less fair. This reduces the negative impact of distributive justice on turnover intention. Thus,

> H$_{4b}$. The negative relationship between Distributive Justice and Turnover Intention is weaker when Procedural Justice is higher (vs. lower).

Relationalism. Relationalism involves the expectation and desire for continuous and beneficial interactions between individuals, with the understanding that the relationship is more

important than a single interaction (Brashear, Manolis, & Brooks, 2005). When the salesperson enjoys high level of relationalism with their manager, they will have a sense of belonging (Gundlach, Achrol, & Mentzer, 1995). Salespeople who feel valued and appreciated are more likely to have an attached identity to the organization, even in the face of attractive alternatives. Thus,

H4a. The positive relationship between Alternative Attractiveness and Turnover Intention is weaker when Relationship with Manager is higher (vs. lower).

Fostering relational norms between salespeople and their manager shapes solidarity, and mutual understanding (Gundlach, Achrol, & Mentzer, 1995). When employees have a strong relationship with their managers, they are more likely to perceive distributive justice positively. They believe that their managers will consider their best interest, leading to a sense of fairness in the allocation of resources (Kashyap et al., 2007). Consequently, the negative impact of distributive justice on turnover intention is weakened. Thus,

H4b. The negative relationship between Distributive Justice and Turnover Intention is weaker when Relationship with Manager is higher (vs. lower).

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection Procedure

This research focuses on full-time salespeople who work in business-to-business markets in the United States for at least 6 months to ensure they are familiar enough to the work environment. A list of salespeople was created from various industries by browsing the internet and industry directories. Surveys were sent to 621 qualified salespeople, and 359 of completed the survey within 8 weeks. A summary of the sample descriptive statistics can be provided upon request.

Measures

All constructs are measured using 7-point Likert scale. Salesperson *Alternative Attractiveness* is measured with a five-item scale adapted from Anderson and Narus (1990). *Distributive Justice* is measured with 9 items borrowed from Brashear, Manolis, & Brooks, (2005). The seven-item scale developed by Gundlach, Achrol, and Mentzer (1995) is used for measuring *Relationalism*. Trust is measured with an eight-item scale from Kumar, Scheer, and Steenkamp (1995). The seven-item measure of *Procedural Justice* is adapted from the work of Brashear, Manolis, and Brooks (2005). Salesperson *Job Satisfaction* is measured with a four-item scale from Brown and Peterson (1994), and *Turnover Intention* is measured using four items from Netemeyer et al., (1997). A two-step approach is used to study hypothesized relationships. First, the measures of the study are verified using confirmatory factor analysis and, in the second stage, the hypothesized model is tested using linear regression. In this model, age, gender, tenure, education, and job satisfaction are included as control variables.

RESULTS

The results of the Confirmatory factor analysis indicate that the data fits well with the model with strong convergent and discriminant validity. Table 1 provides the results of the models tested. The findings support H_1, H_2, H_{3a}, H_{4b} and H_{5a} but not H_{3b}, H_{4a}, H_{5b}.

Table 1: Estimated Model

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Intercept	6.67***	.76	9.52***	1.93
Main Effects				
Alternative Attractiveness	.22***	.08	.59*	.38
Distributive Justice	-.22***	.07	-1.11***	.24
Relationalism	-.36***	.09	-1.04***	.23
Trust	.03	.11	.79	.37
Procedural Justice	-.09	.06	.78**	.25
Moderating Effects				
Alternative attractiveness x Relationalism			.05	.04
Alternative attractiveness x Trust			-.21***	.07
Alternative attractiveness x Procedural Justice			.11*	.04

Distributive Justice x Relationalism			.12**	.03
Distributive Justice x Trust			-.03	.05
Distributive Justice x Procedural Justice			.08*	.03
Control Variables				
Job Satisfaction	-.36***	.10	-.35***	.09
Age	.01	.01	.01	.01
Gender	.07	.16	.13	.17
Tenure	-.02	.01	-.01	.01
Marital Status	-.15	.16	-.17	.17
Education	.27**	.13	.31**	.14
Model Fits				
F-test	24.19***		15.75***	
Adjusted R^2	.42		.44	
ΔR^2			.03***	

Notes: N = 359 ; * $p < .1$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$; Standard Errors are corrected for heteroscedasticity.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research uses the Push-Pull-Moorings (PPM) framework of migration, grounded in Rational Choice Theory, to analyze the factors that influence turnover decisions. The study supports the idea Distributive Justice, is perceived to low, they are more likely to consider leaving. However, the study also found that if managers exhibit procedural justice and relationalism, they can mitigate the negative impact of Distributive Justice on turnover. This means that managers should build a positive relationship with salespeople, communicate openly and honestly, and involve them in decision-making. By doing so, salespeople will feel recognized and rewarded appropriately and will be less likely to leave the organization.

The study reveals that alternative attractiveness, which is often overlooked, plays a crucial role in an employee's decision to leave. Previous research on salesforce typically focuses on organizational factors, rather than external influences. However, this study includes the impact of external factors in its theoretical model. The study suggests that employees who trust their supervisors and their actions are less likely to perceive alternative attractiveness and become dependent on the organization, making them less likely to leave the company. The results, however, do not support the hypothesis that procedural justice and relationalism have a

moderating role in the relationship between Alternative attractiveness and Turnover Intention.

Surprisingly, the study found an enhancing moderating impact for procedural justice on the

relationship between Alternative Attractiveness and Turnover Intention, which is counterintuitive

and requires further research to understand.

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UNVEILING THE IMPACT OF PURPOSE-CONTESTS ON GEN Z'S PERCEIVED SENSE OF PURPOSE AND PERCEIVED COMPANY PURPOSE

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Keywords: Sales management, Sense of purpose, Purpose contest, Job satisfaction

Description: Drawing on a field experiment, conducted with sales trainees, this paper presents the effects of a purpose contest on sales trainees' perceived sense of purpose and company purpose.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

For Generation Z a sense of purpose is particularly important when it comes to choosing a workplace, with the concept of "purpose-driven work" playing a key role. With the "war for skilled talent" raging, it is essential for employers to address those expectations to avoid disadvantageous outcomes when competing for skilled employees. Purpose-driven work in general is the experience of working toward a meaningful goal that aligns with one's values and beliefs.

Previous research has shown that individuals who feel a strong sense of purpose in their work are more engaged, motivated, and satisfied with their work. They also tend to perform better and stay with their companies longer. While most existing research has focused on the individual factors that contribute to a perceived sense of purpose at work, there is growing recognition that purposeful and growth-oriented interventions in organizations can also play a key role in shaping this. Yet research on

how to proactively create and foster a sense of purpose among employees, especially regarding sales employees, is scarce. This study is intended to contribute to closing this research gap.

Method and Data

To test our model, we worked with a global insurance company and their 200 sales trainees in Germany. We conducted a field-experiment in which a purpose contest served as the intervention method. To measure the effect of the purpose contest, we conducted both surveys pre- and post-treatment. During the contest the trainees were provided weekly videos over four weeks in which sample customers discussed individual insurance-related problems and asked for help. They were asked to put themselves in a consulting situation with the customer and come up with solutions. Trainees had to answer three questions at a time, earning points for their answers. At the end of each week, trainees received a ranking based on the scores they achieved. 75 trainees participated in the experiment and 95 trainees participated in the post-experiment survey. Finally, we were able to include the results of 67 trainees in the analysis.

Summary of Findings

Our findings suggest that contests, when framed within the parameters of the learning theory, can effectively foster a heightened sense of purpose among employees. Organizations can leverage this insight to enhance their talent management practices. Based on difference-in-differences analysis we compare the change in perceived sense of purpose and perceived sense of organizational purpose following the purpose contest. We find no significant main effect of the purpose contest on sales trainees' perceived sense of purpose and perceived company purpose. Regarding the moderation effect of job satisfaction on the effect of the purpose contest, we find that job satisfaction positively moderates the effect of the purpose contest on the sales trainees' perceived sense of purpose and perceived company purpose.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our study contributes to marketing research on sales trainees' socialization in their sales organization. We extend the past research, which has found general drivers and outcomes of employees' sense of purpose, by focusing on purpose contests as an actionable firm measure, which sales leaders can apply to foster sales trainees' perceived sense of purpose and company purpose. We contribute to bridging this research gap by demonstrating the potential of purpose contests as a promising area for organizations to shape sales trainees' perceived sense of purpose through contests grounded in learning theory. The findings provide an initial glimpse into the strategic design of environmental stimuli, like contests, to elicit specific cognitive and behavioral reactions.

Our paper is especially relevant for sales organizations and sales leaders. With the war of talents impending, the shortage of skilled workers does not spare sales organizations. Therefore, sales managers need to devise strategies how to retain the new generation of sales trainees in the long-term. Our results imply that organization can influence their sales trainees' perceived sense of purpose and that interventions like contests, typically used to maximize sales goals, can also positively influence sales trainee perceptions when framed within the parameters of the learning theory.

Services, Retailing, and Sports

ALEXA, HOW CAN WE IMPROVE BRAND ENGAGEMENT? – INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PRESENCE ON BRAND ENGAGEMENT IN VOICE SHOPPING APPLICATIONS

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Keywords: Voice Shopping, Brand Engagement, Social Presence, Parasocial Relationship

Description: This paper explores the use of voice assistants in voice shopping, highlighting consumer discomfort with voice shopping features, lower engagement with corporate brands, and investigates the impact of social presence on consumer-brand engagement, mediated by the voice assistant's humanness and parasocial relationship, with subsequent effects on voice application usage and purchase intention, regardless of the type of product (physical vs. digital) purchased online.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This study addresses key research questions surrounding the application of social cues in voice shopping contexts, aiming to uncover the level of social cues necessary to enhance 1) consumer-brand engagement and 2) subsequent voice application usage and purchase intention. With a focus on social presence, the research investigates the impact of diverse social cues in auditory messages on users' perceptions, exploring their influence on brand engagement within voice applications. The study delves into the mediating effects between social presence and consumer-brand engagement, specifically examining the perceived humanness of the agent and the resulting parasocial relationship. Additionally, the research extends its inquiry beyond immediate engagement to explore the future intentions of voice application usage and product purchases. By examining how virtual assistants employing social cues contribute to enhanced relationships with customers, the paper aims to elucidate the factors influencing application usage intention and consumer engagement, thereby contributing valuable insights to the growing field of voice shopping.

Method and Data

The paper comprises three studies. Study 1 aims to validate McLean et al.'s (2021) findings by investigating whether social presence in a voice shopping application positively impacts consumer brand engagement. This involved analyzing responses from users who utilized a specific voice application for a minimum of one month. Study 2, employing a between-subject design, sought to manipulate the level of social presence (high vs. low) by incorporating various social cues in a

conversation about a low-price household goods shopping scenario within a voice application. Users interacted with a voice assistant during the experiment. Study 3 extended the investigation to different product types, digital vs. physical goods, anticipating an influence on the effect of social presence on consumer brand engagement due to their value and emotion ascription. Using a 2x2 between-subjects design, participants were categorized into four groups (social presence: low vs. high, product type: physical vs. digital) and engaged in a conversation with the voice assistant in a voice shopping application.

Summary of Findings

The studies reveal that a heightened level of social cues in a voice application, leading to increased social presence, positively impacts consumer-brand engagement, with a direct effect observed when examining physical and digital goods separately. In both cases, the elevated perceived humanness of the assistant initiates a parasocial relationship, fostering improved user-brand engagement. This study demonstrates that enhancing the assistant's relationship-building capability positively influences subsequent user engagement with the brand. This heightened consumer-brand engagement, in turn, correlates with increased future voice application usage intention and higher purchase intention within the voice application. The positive impact is attributed to the presumed influence of social presence on intrinsic motivation to engage with the brand, resulting in a higher perceived brand value and subsequent intentions for usage and purchase. Notably, these results hold true for both low-price goods and across different product types, confirming the positive influence of social presence on consumer-brand engagement. Additionally, the research extends prior findings by specifying design features for social cues and elucidating mediating effects. Studies 2 and 3 underscore the potential influence of consumer-

brand engagement on voice application usage intentions, further contributing to the existing literature.

Key Contributions

This paper contributes novel insights to the realm of voice shopping by exploring the impact of social presence on consumer-brand engagement, extending existing literature on human-computer interaction and social cue application in conversations. Study 1 replicates and confirms the influence of social presence on consumer-brand engagement in voice shopping applications, showcasing higher engagement when social presence is perceived. Building on this, Study 2 provides new evidence for the mediating role of perceived humanness and parasocial relationships with voice assistants, unraveling the underlying effects leading to increased consumer brand engagement and subsequent effects on purchase and usage intentions. The study also distinguishes between physical and digital products, revealing that both types benefit similarly from higher social presence in applications. Practical recommendations for designing voice applications highlight the importance of adapting design features, such as auditory cues, greetings, and delayed responses, to enhance consumer-voice assistant interaction. This high-social-presence conversation style not only differentiates companies from competitors but also boosts brand engagement, future usage, and overall brand representation in the voice shopping environment. Additionally, insights into the negligible difference in benefits between physical and digital products aid practitioners in designing voice shopping applications without the need for distinct approaches based on product type.

BEHIND CHATBOT DIALOGUES: THE POWER OF MESSAGE LENGTH

SIMILARITY AND ITS EFFECT ON ATTITUDES TOWARD CHATBOT

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Keywords: Chatbots, Communication Accommodation, Message Length, Human-chatbot Interaction

Description: This study examines how a chatbot's use of message lengths similar to those of customers influences perceptions of the chatbot's human-like and cooperative traits, leading to more positive attitudes mediated through heightened social presence, with anger moderating this effect.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Recently, conversational agents (CAs) including chatbots have gained traction due to their potential positive outcomes (Nicolescu & Tudorache, 2022). However, since users give more credit to longer responses (O'Neil et al., 2020), to be perceived as more intelligent, some of these CAs such as ChatGPT are "often excessively verbose and overuse certain phrases…" (OpenAI, 2022).

In a conversation, the alignment of messages between parties can profoundly affect the interaction dynamics. For instance, if a bot mimics a customer's conversational style, greater rapport and engagement may emerge leading to a stronger relationship (van Pinxteren et al.,

2023). As a structural dimension of a message, no study has examined length similarity effects, the gap this research attempts to fill by arguing that message length similarity is a human-like behavior that makes consumers shape more favorable attitudes toward a chatbot. Thus, the first question asks, "Would message length similarity between a chatbot and a customer affect attitudes toward the chatbot?" Additionally, since anger remains the most common emotion affecting all customer-related outcomes (Kranzbühler et al., 2020), the second question is "Is there a difference in customers' attitudes toward the chatbot when the chatbot shows message length similarity when they are angry (vs. non-angry)?"

Method and Data

To address to questions, an experimental design approach is employed. As a common approach in relevant works (Crolic et al., 2022; Li & Wang, 2023), a scenario-based experiment with a 2 (customers' message length: long vs. short) x 2 (chatbot's message length: long vs. short) between-subjects design is used. Of one hundred Americans recruited via Prolific, 83 passed attention checks and provided usable data (51% male, M=32.65, SD=7.3). All participants had previous interactions with chatbots and customer service agents. Participants were asked to imagine they had purchased a T-shirt from an online store that, when delivered, did not have the same color as shown on the website, thus the participants decided to return it and needed to get the instructions by chatting with the customer service chatbot. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of the conditions to read an excerpt of the conversation between themselves and the customer service chatbot in the form of chat screenshots. Then, participants reported their attitude toward the chatbot, social presence, anger, and other control variables using adapted measures from extant literature to suit the context of chatbots in customer services.

Summary of Findings

Results demonstrate message length similarity elicits more favorable attitudes toward the chatbot mediated by heightened social presence. Further, this effect is moderated by customers' anger such that the effect of message length similarity on attitude strengthens as customers become angrier. Manipulation checks confirm successful message length similarity conditions ($p < 0.001$). Attitudes toward the chatbot significantly differed between length similarity conditions ($M_{Similar}=6.10$, $M_{Dissimilar}=5.54$; $p < 0.05$), as did social presence ($M_{Similar}=4.54$, $M_{Dissimilar}=3.64$; $p < 0.01$). A bootstrapping mediation analysis (Hayes, 2015; PROCESS model 4) reveals social presence mediates the effect of message length similarity on attitudes ($b=0.31$, $SE=0.16$, $95\%CI=[0.06, 0.67]$). Finally, there is a marginally significant interaction effect of anger and message length similarity on attitudes ($F(1,71)=3.15$, $p = 0.08$). A spotlight analysis suggests that the interaction effect was significant in the regions where anger ($M_{Anger}=3.71$) is above 3.21 ($p < 0.05$); the change of attitude toward the chatbot between conditions becomes significant ($b=0.57$, $SE=0.23$, $p = 0.02$), and this change reaches its highest when anger is at its maximum level ($b=1.19$, $SE=0.48$, $p = 0.01$).

Key Contributions

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it adds to the theory of anthropomorphism by introducing communication accommodation expressed through similar message length as a social cue leading chatbots to be perceived as more human-like. The findings demonstrate that when chatbots make accommodations by matching customers' message length, it significantly impacts customers' attitudes, mediated through heightened feelings of social presence in the conversation.

Second, showing message length similarity as a design principle is surprisingly overlooked in the literature on service chatbots. Like many other personalized offerings and communications (Jain et al., 2018; Kumar et al., 2021; Soderlund et al., 2021), this research suggests that employing message length similarity, as a cooperative practice of communication, brings more positive attitudes toward a chatbot.

Third, this study contributes a practical method to mitigate negative chatbot interactions with angry customers. Though prior research suggests avoiding chatbots for angry customers due to possible violation of expected agency (Crolic et al, 2022), this work shows communication accommodation techniques like matching message length enable chatbots to convey agency resulting in more favorable attitudes. The straightforward message length approach represents an actionable design principle for developers to improve angry customer interactions and overall user experience.

References are available upon request.

CAN CROWDSOURCING IMPROVE PREDICTION ACCURACY IN FASHION RETAIL BUYING?

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Keywords:

Fashion buying, retail buying, crowdsourcing, empirics first, prediction accuracy

Description:

The paper empirically examines how crowdsourcing can improve prediction accuracy in fashion retail buying.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: Can a crowd of ordinary customers, _as a group_, predict future sales of fashion products more accurately than individual professional fashion buyers?

RQ2: If yes, what would be a reasonable crowd size if and when implementing crowdsourcing in fashion demand forecasting?

RQ3: How would certain characteristics of the crowd and context (composition of the crowd, size of the crowd, and product category fashionability) impact the crowd's prediction accuracy?

METHOD AND DATA

In collaboration with a fashion retailer, we conducted an online experiment, where professional fashion buyers and customers forecasted the sales of items across six fashion product categories. The retailer provided actual sales data from the most recent season. This data allowed us to compare the predictive accuracies of customers as a collective group (the crowd) with individual professional fashion buyers, addressing our initial research question. For the subsequent research questions, we developed a contingency framework and generated a new dataset by applying resampling to the original customer data obtained in our earlier study. The new dataset comprised of 2800 varied customer crowds in terms of composition and size. We used this dataset to explore how crowd composition, the size of the crowd, and the fashionability of the product category influence predictive accuracy. We conducted econometric modeling to answer our research questions.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Our research presents several key findings and vital implications for retail managers. Firstly, it demonstrates the effectiveness of crowdsourcing for forecasting future sales of fashion products in retail environments. In our examination of six fashion product categories, we observed that the collective crowd consistently outperformed individual expert fashion buyers, reducing the prediction error, as indicated by the Mean Absolute Percentage Error (MAPE), by 12 to 73 percent. Secondly, our results offer insights on the ideal makeup and scale of a crowd to effectively harness the Wisdom of the Crowd, along with the associated variables. Notably, we identified that a crowd's heterogeneity is crucial for accurate predictions. Within our empirical setting, we discovered that variation in shopping frequency and income levels among crowd members significantly enhances the precision of the crowd's forecasts. Moreover, while enlarging the crowd size initially improves prediction accuracy, there reaches a point where adding more members no longer boosts the precision of the crowd's forecasts. Finally, our analysis underscores the importance of product fashionability in constituting a crowd. For more fashionable product categories, a larger crowd is necessary to make accurate predictions compared to less fashionable ones. Additionally, income diversity within the crowd becomes particularly crucial and beneficial in more fashionable product categories.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

The outcomes of our empirical studies lead us to conclude that crowdsourced forecasting is an effective, straightforward approach for fashion retail buying, especially beneficial for high-fashionability products. Our research demonstrates that a diverse group of ordinary consumers can, collectively, accurately predict future sales of fashion products. This finding aligns with prior research suggesting crowdsourcing as a market-based learning tool. We propose that

fashion retailers can significantly benefit from integrating crowdsourcing into their salability and demand projections for products before ordering from suppliers. However, we do not recommend replacing professional fashion buyers with crowdsourced forecasting systems, as these professionals possess crucial expertise in areas like supplier negotiations and in-store merchandising. Instead, we suggest using crowdsourced forecasts as a valuable resource to inform fashion buyers' order quantity decisions. Beyond the primary conclusion that crowdsourcing can substantially reduce fashion demand prediction errors compared to professional buyers, our analysis of the contingency framework offers further insights into the optimal composition and size of a crowd for the most accurate predictions.

CO-CREATING VALUE THROUGH AUTHENTICATION; A SERVICE PERSPECTIVE ON AUTHENTICITY AND TRADITIONS

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Description: This paper explores the authentication process of a cultural organization amid digital transformation, emphasizing the negotiation mechanisms that facilitate an authentic shift and promote value co-creation within the context of digital technologies

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: How can service organizations effectively negotiate the authentication process during digital transformation to achieve a productive balance between traditional values and innovative practices?

Method and Data: Data primarily contains 26 semi-structured interviews conducted with employees at the Royal Swedish Opera (RSO), a 250-year-old organization and a forerunner in digital innovation of the cultural organization. It also includes internal organizational documents, the company website, news articles about the Royal Swedish Opera, and documents regarding the overarching transformation of cultural industries.

Summary of Findings: While digitalization has been quite pervasive within service organizations, there still exists negative nuances toward this shift. Fear of losing the traditions and authenticity embedded in their offering are some examples of challenges of digitalization.

This is specifically manifested in the cultural industry, where the authenticity of the cultural offering is viewed as a source of legitimacy in the market, and digitalization poses a risk to the underlying inherent traditions. Notably, the study underscores that technology itself is not the primary disruptor; rather, it is the insufficient comprehension of authentication processes and the requisite institutional adjustments that pose challenges to the transformation. The research suggests that the digitalization of cultural service organizations demands fundamental adaptations to authentication mechanisms governing both the creative process and the final offerings. Additionally, the study delineates the impact of digital transformation levels—core and peripheral—on authentication negotiations.

Statement of Key Contributions: In response to the growing pressure for service organizations to transition into the digital realm, this paper highlights the significant challenge of fostering innovation while preserving traditions and authenticity. Using the case of the Royal Swedish Opera, with 250 years of history, we highlight the critical role of authenticity and traditions in all service organizations that envision a transformation toward a digital landscape. The study provides insights into creating a harmonious balance between traditions and innovation by understanding the nuanced process of "authenticity negotiation". This provides a comprehensive perspective for managers and enables them to synthesize innovation and traditions. Emphasizing the authentication process as a co-creating process among diverse organizational actors, the paper asserts that technology only compromises the authenticity of traditional values when ongoing negotiations are overlooked.

COMPETENCIES OF FUTURE CAPABLE EMPLOYEES IN DIGITALIZED STATIONARY RETAIL

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Keywords: Digitalization, employee competencies, competence-based view, stationary retail

Description: This study explores the impact of digitalization on stationary retail, emphasizing the need for industry-specific adaptation of employee competences to address changes in IT, cooperation, work organization, and customer interactions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Numerous companies and industries are currently undergoing a digital transformation (Hanelt et al., 2021), changing the required competencies of employees (Aepli et al. 2017). This applies in particular to service-oriented industries such as the retail sector (Biesel, Hame 2018). Communication and purchasing processes (Wolpert, Roth 2020), interaction at the point of sale (POS) or the relationship between employees and consumers (Shankar et al. 2021) are permanently changing due to technological transformation. Previous studies have focused primarily on manufacturing industry (Carnevale, Smith 2014, Wang, Ha-Brookshire 2018; Oberländer, Beinicke, Bipp 2019), but, to the best of our knowledge, there is a lack of research in service-oriented industries such as stationary retailing. Thus, the aim of this study is to find out how digitalization is changing the requirements and competencies of employees in stationary retail settings.

Method And Data

We chose to employ a qualitative research methodology, utilizing semi-structured expert interviews as outlined by Brüsemeister (2008). Interviews were conducted with 26 experts (21 managers and 5 employees) in the fields of retail, technology and HR between June and September 2022, recorded and fully transcribed. All interviewees are active in the Western Europe region and familiar with the demands of technological change on employee skills. The examination employed qualitative content analysis following Mayring's (2022) methodology. The categorization process was deductive. Requirements were systematically classified into four categories (IT, customers, work organization, cooperation), as outlined by e.g., Steinlechner et al. (2021). Similarly, competences were categorized into professional, methodological, social, and personal categories, drawing primarily on the work of Hecklau et al. (2016). Additionally, an

inductive approach was utilized for category formation, whereby categories were derived directly from the transcriptions, following Mayring's (2022) framework.

Summary of Findings

The study on digitalization in stationary retail reveals shifts in tasks, increased complexity, and new competency requirements driven by evolving customer needs. Altered demands focus on IT, cooperation, work organization, and customer-centricity, with an emphasis on customer advice as a key differentiator from online retail. Digitalization enhances customer engagement and meets expectations for efficient processes and digital tools. Employees' roles evolve, leading to strategic, coordinating, and creative responsibilities. IT requirements stress proficient handling of digital tools, necessitating cooperation and ongoing knowledge transfer. Lifelong learning, tech affinity, and growing responsibility are essential for work organization.

The study highlights the importance of four action competences (professional skills, methodological competences, social competence and personal competences) for successful adaptation, with social competence being central. Communication skills, knowledge transfer, and adaptability are crucial amid digitalization. Recognizing digitalization's value requires embracing change, self-organization, and reflection. Methodological competences like problem-solving and digital proficiency are ongoing necessities, complemented by evolving professional competences.

Statement of Key Contributions

Digitalization and evolving customer needs in stationary retail result in task complexity, shifting work dynamics, and new skill requirements. The changed demands on employees in stationary retail concern the areas of IT, cooperation, work organization and, above all, customers. The results show a strong orientation towards customer needs and thus towards service orientation.

Service-oriented customer advice is a unique selling point of stationary retail, which must be used as an advantage over online retail.

While previous research has explored changing work requirements and competencies due to digitalization primarily in manufacturing industries, the specific context of stationary retail has been overlooked. The empirical study contributes significantly to this gap, aligning with the resource-based (Barney 1991) and competence-based views (Sanchez, Heene 1996). The results show that interpersonal skills and thus social and personal competences are becoming increasingly important in a digitalized retail world. Methodological and professional competences are rather basic requirements. The required competencies are constantly changing due to digitalization. Therefore, it is essential to continuously develop and nurture employees. The research promotes the adoption of a 'competence model' for strategic personnel selection and proactive, competence-driven personnel development among companies in the stationary retail sector.

CUSTOMER BROWSING AND PURCHASES: A NETWORK PERSPECTIVE

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consumers across the globe are increasingly relying on online browsing while making consumption decisions and to get a full picture of consumer browsing, it is important to consider network-to-purchase, a novel concept we introduce through this paper. Accordingly, this paper aims to investigate the following research questions:

RQ1: Does considering customer browsing as networks significantly explain purchase behavior?

RQ2: Which network properties significantly impact customer purchase behavior?

RQ3: Do contingencies (variety and volume of search) play to affect the relationship between network properties and customer purchase behavior?

Method and Data

This study uses clickstream data to build browsing networks and extract the network properties that resemble browsing behavior. This research uses three network properties to determine Average Basket Value (ABV). They are Total Connections (TC), Network Density (ND), and Betweenness Centralization (BC). In addition, two moderators, variety and volume of search information.

Summary of Findings

We find that an increase in TC and BC decreases the ABV, whereas an increase in ND increases the ABV. We also find that the variety of information weakens the relationship between TCs and the ABV and the relationship between BC and the ABV. The results further show that the volume of information weakens the relationship between the two independent variables, ND and BC, and the ABV We correct for endogeneity and conduct various robustness checks including addressing unobserved heterogeneity.

Key Contributions

This paper complements the stream of research on the path to purchase by introducing the concept of customer browsing as a network to understand browsing behavior. The network view offers insights into complex customer browsing and explains the average basket value. Customer behaviors such as repeated visits, comparison across sites, browsing websites in a nonlinear way, visits to unrelated websites, and visits to one prominent aggregator website are all captured through network properties and contingencies. By introducing the network perspective, this research adds to the current body of literature on the path to purchase and provides an idea to future researchers to contribute and build more robust models.

Additionally, this research adds value for managers seeking to convert customers on their websites. By building networks based on browsing, managers can predict whether customers are converted on their website. Also, insights to increase the order value are also provided. The concept that customer browsing can be a network adds value to our understanding of consumers' general behaviour and browsing behavior in particular.

References are available upon request.

CUSTOMERS AS WORKERS: THE CASE OF THE MISSING EMPLOYEES

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Description: This paper examines the impact of unmanned retail stores on customer roles and experiences, highlighting the challenges and opportunities in integrating technology with human interaction in the evolving retail landscape.

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the retail format of unmanned stores, focusing on the balance between technology and human interaction. It investigates the impact of customers serving themselves without human support. The study addresses challenges with customers as workers and suggests improving customer experience in these retail settings.

INTRODUCTION

The retail sector is currently experiencing a profound transformation driven by the rapid integration of technology (eg. SST, devices to monitor customer behavior or facilitate shopping). Amazon Go is a technology-based solution that integrates all of the mentioned technologies and highlights the emergence of unmanned stores. The whole phenomenon of technology-based shopping in a physical setting is commonly referred to as "phygital" customer experiences, bridging the physical and digital elements (Belghiti et al., 2017). In these self-service retail environments, advanced technology offers customers convenient and seamless shopping opportunities at a time and place

that fits customers. Some of the current solutions for unmanned stores can fit into a container and can for instance be placed close to any potential marketplace.

Image 1. Image of an unmanned store

Shopping in a physical store tends to be a social activity where customers want to interact with other humans and are expected to live up to social norms, which implies not displaying deviant behavior (Fombelle et al., 2020). Employees are important not only to serving customers but also to create a welcoming experience not the least by taking care of the servicescape (Bitner, 1992). This is now up to customers but are they ready for that challenge?

De Keyser et al. (2015) emphasize that even tech-savvy customers often prefer human contact for service requests and handling failures, underscoring the critical need for a balanced integration of technological efficiency ("tech") and the invaluable elements of human interaction ("touch") in every service encounter. Service providers are still expected to provide a friendly and welcoming environment that signifies good stewardship. While technology undoubtedly enhances various aspects of customer service, the distinct value of human interaction remains pivotal (Mende and Noble, 2019), especially in addressing complex or sensitive customer needs. Furthermore, service without employees presents a unique challenge as it assumes that the customer should take on the

role of an unpaid worker for a company. This is without previous screening which ensures that the "employee" has the proper knowledge to perform the act to serve themselves. The concept of "customers as workers" is rooted in the idea that customers are not just passive recipients of products and services (Picot-Coupey and Tahar, 2015), but can actively participate in their creation or improvement; in this case, they are solely responsible for their own value-creation process with the support of technology.

However, our knowledge about this behavior and its consequences is still very limited. We argue that the setting of unmanned creates a unique challenge and goes one step further and builds on that the customer acts as both a customer and an employee and the perspective becomes the customers as workers. More specifically, the aim of this paper is to understand how unmanned stores can balance the absence of employees and customers as workers.

THEORY

Expanding on Becker and Jaakkola's (2020) conceptualization of Customer Experience (CX) as spontaneous reactions to stimuli, research now focuses on how these spontaneous reactions to particular stimuli shape the process of customer journeys. This aligns with Bitner and Wang's (2014) idea of service encounters as a series of stimulus-response interactions, encompassing technology, other customers, and the environment. These touchpoints impact customer perceptions of service quality and satisfaction, influencing their relationship with the brand (De Keyser et al., 2020). However, creating customer journeys without frontline employees presents challenges, as many unexpected things can happen in these unmanned scenarios since we don't know how the customers will act. The customers are expected to create value on their own without any human assistance. A common term used here is customer co-creation, and can even be seen as customers as workers. Customer co-creation refers to the collaborative process in which businesses and their

customers work together to create value (Piller et al., 2011). Unlike traditional models where companies develop products and services independently, customer co-creation involves actively involving customers in various stages of the innovation and value creation process (Piller et al., 2011).

The concept of the customers as workers is a relatively uncharted territory in literature. This notion marks a significant departure from the historical origins of retailing. Up until 1850, the retail landscape was characterized by a different paradigm (Picot-Coupey and Tahar, 2015). You were served by frontline employees, and the counter and the merchant served as a physical divide, separating the customers from the items (Picot-Coupey and Tahar, 2015). Fast forward to the present day, and we observe a remarkable shift in the retail landscape. The advent of Self-Service Technologies (SST) has transformed the way retail operates (Shankar et al., 2020). Customers not only play the role of 'shoppers' but are also expected to navigate the complexities of automated processes, making them, in a sense, 'co-workers' with the technology. This includes tasks like self-checkout, where customers are responsible for scanning and helping themselves (Picot-Coupey and Tahar, 2015).

Furthermore, the emergence of unmanned stores takes this shift to the next level. In such environments, customers are required to be even more self-reliant (Picot-Coupey and Tahar, 2015). They must understand and interact with the technology that governs the entire shopping experience, from entry access to product selection and payment. It's a paradigm where customers have become 'active agents' in their own shopping journey, assuming responsibilities that traditionally are handled by store employees. Therefore, every component of the customer journey, especially in unmanned and technology-augmented environments, plays a vital role in determining their overall experience and relationship with the brand. Any deviation from their expectations (Swan and

Combs, 1976), in terms of for example personal touch and empathy, can lead to dissatisfaction, underscoring the importance of meticulously designing and managing these encounters.

METHOD

Context

Unmanned stores, a novel retail concept, offer a digitized, staffless shopping experience that enhances convenience, especially in high-traffic and remote areas. These stores, ranging from small units to large hypermarkets, use various technologies for transactions, appealing for their efficiency (Shopreme, 2022; Guo et al., 2020). Commonly found in places like train stations and rural regions, they cater to basic daily needs and vary in size and format, including hybrid versions with partial staffing in Sweden. While providing shopping flexibility and personalized customer interactions, unmanned stores face challenges like vandalism and theft (Sohn, 2024), despite security measures like personalized identification. These issues sometimes lead to store closures or reduced hours, impacting their goal of constant availability.

Collection and Analysis

The research covered multiple grocery store brands, engaging with diverse brands for a comprehensive view. The qualitative methodology enabled the gathering of detailed data through semi-structured interviews with owners of nine different unmanned grocery store brands. The interviews, standardized and systematic, were audio-recorded and transcribed for in-depth analysis. The sample included owners/CEOs of unmanned stores in Sweden, with fifteen interviews conducted, each lasting about an hour.

RESULTS

Customers as Workers: The Case of the Missing Employees

The customer as worker is a relatively unexplored concept that refers to when the customer has to

do the work that an employee normally would do; with limited training and management and without getting paid for it. In the retail sector, as in many others, customers inherently contribute to the service as co-producers, participating in its production and delivery (Tat Keh and Wei Teo 2001). The benefits of co-creation in the shopping process are well-acknowledged (Manolis et al. 2001). Retailers aim to enhance their own performance (Haris et al. 2001) by integrating customer contributions, such as labor, knowledge, time, and resources, into their service creation strategies. Dujarier (2008) identifies a form of engaging customers as workers in the retail sector which is directed self-production, this involves customers carrying out operational tasks as part of their consumption process (Picot-Coupey and Tahar, 2015). Observing these forms of participation, recent trends in retail formats emphasize the increasing significance of customers as workers. This shift reflects an expectation for customers to actively contribute to the service process, particularly in routine activities like daily shopping (Barth and Anteblian 2011). The evolution of this customer participation, especially in directed self-production, is further influenced by the integration of new technologies and automated services in traditional store formats, as well as the emergence of innovative non-store formats.

"It's beneficial to have good neighbors who can alert us if the lights are out or if there's a power outage. They can also occasionally receive and help us with deliveries if we are not there."

As the interviews show, a lot of responsibility and trust is put in the customers as workers. The challenge arises when customers are either unable or unwilling to contribute to this process. The lack of communication and mismatch in responsibility that may arise in this scenario is worth noting.

Self-Service Technology and the Lack of Communication

Grönroos and Voima (2013) argue that a company's impact on customer value creation primarily

occurs through direct interactions between the company and its customers. In an unmanned store, customers are expected to take on the role of both customer and employee and service themselves. Unmanned stores might also create inconvenience, for example, if the technology fails in some way, and no in-store staff is available to provide support (Benoit et al., 2024), this has been suggested by self-service literature (e.g., Collier and Kimes 2013). Furthermore, Hsu et al. (2021) propose that a company offering SST may not directly influence a customer's knowledge of using the technology but can shape customer behavior by presenting a straightforward system with clear and easily understandable instructions. The effectiveness of SST is closely tied to how customers perceive its complexity. If customers find the system too intricate or challenging to use, they may feel frustrated and confused. This negative experience can lead to a diminished perception of the service's value. Especially when there is no employee around to explain which leads to this lack of communication. The challenge is to ensure that while technology-driven service encounters are efficient and seamless, they do not compromise on personalization, empathy, and the human touch that the frontline employee can bring to the experience (Mende and Noble, 2019).

"How do we primarily make it easy for customers in an unmanned store? The challenge with instructions, how do we do that in a simple way? We are not communicators. Should there be technical support? A lot of technology? A voice saying welcome? Scent? Music?'

"The challenge with unmanned stores is making them user-friendly, especially for customers who are not tech-savvy. Considerations include how to provide instructions, the role of technology support, and the use of welcoming elements like voices, scents, or music."

As highlighted in the interviews, unmanned stores face challenges with direct customer feedback and a lack of communication. The positive response to technology adoption, despite initial hesitations, needs to be balanced with effective communication strategies. This aligns with Grönroos and Voima's (2013) perspective on the importance of direct interactions in value creation.

The absence of staff exacerbates communication issues, leading to potential customer frustration and confusion, especially when technological failures occur (Benoit et al., 2024; Collier and Kimes 2013). The absence of frontline employees in unmanned stores presents significant challenges in user-friendliness, particularly for non-tech-savvy customers. This resonates with Mende and Noble's (2019) emphasis on the crucial role of staff in customer satisfaction. The responsibility for problem-solving and maintaining the store environment falls ambiguously on customers, often leading to negative experiences due to their uncertainty in handling these issues.

Frontline Employees in Unmanned Stores: The Missing Employees

In traditional retail, frontline staff are key to customer satisfaction by assisting and handling inquiries (Mende and Noble, 2019). This contrasts with unmanned stores, where the lack of staff leads to concerns about handling service failures. Brick-and-mortar stores have systems for problem-solving with direct human intervention. In unmanned stores, customers become workers who self-service and tackle issues alone, which can create uncertainty about responsibility. This shift demands customers to be more proactive in solving problems, effectively incorporating them into the workforce. Additionally, it requires developing new, intuitive, and efficient technologies and systems to support customers in the absence of staff, ensuring they can manage issues without feeling overwhelmed without the frontline employee present.

"When we are there tinkering, then people come in, etc. When we are there, sales are higher. How do you replicate that in an unmanned setting? How do you boost sales in an unmanned store? There's such a big difference when we are there and when we are not.'"

The observation that sales are higher when owners or employees are present as opposed to an unmanned setting speaks volumes about the value of human interaction in business. Customers often prefer and respond positively to the personal touch, which includes everything from active

selling and personalized service to the sense of trust and security that comes with human presence. The challenge, however, lies in replicating these benefits in unmanned stores. As the retail industry increasingly explores automation, the question arises: how can one maintain or even boost customer engagement and sales without the personal interactions that traditionally drive these metrics?

Tragedy of Commons: The Mismatch in Responsibility

The concept of shifting roles in unmanned stores, where customers are expected to take on the role of a worker and assume responsibility, resonates deeply with the idea encapsulated by the saying, "Everybody's property is nobody's property" (Scott 1955). This aligns with the economic principle known as the "tragedy of the commons" (Ostrum 1990), which posits that shared resources often suffer neglect compared to individually owned ones. The tragedy of the commons reveals a critical aspect of human behavior: communal ownership tends to dilute individual responsibility. As Peck et al. (2020) explain, when responsibility is distributed among many, it often leads to a lack of proactive oversight and care for the shared resource. The most radical solution to this problem, as suggested historically, is the conversion of common property into private property, thereby placing the responsibility for maintenance on a single owner. In contrast, traditional store employees are typically tasked with specific duties such as restocking shelves, ensuring cleanliness, managing checkout processes, and providing customer service, all aimed at maintaining an efficient and welcoming shopping environment. In the case of customers as workers, the roles of the employees have shifted, and how will that turn out?

"I go there a couple of times a week to clean and restock, but otherwise I won't see the condition of the store, if not a customer calls me."

"If something happens we can't do that much, we have a phone number and a broom for them to clean up, but we also have our other daily jobs."

"Societal adaptation to a fully unmanned model is questioned, especially considering the requirements for customers to use specific apps and technologies, which may not be accessible or familiar to all, such as older generations or people from different backgrounds."

The interviews reflect a "Tragedy of Commons" scenario, where shared responsibility leads to neglect and lack of proactive care (Scott 1955; Hardin 1968; Ostrum 1990; Peck et al., 2020). The unmanned model's dependence on specific apps and technologies raises concerns about accessibility and familiarity for diverse customer segments, such as older generations or people from different backgrounds. This situation underscores the need for flexible approaches to customer engagement and participation in store maintenance tasks.

Customer Deviant Behavior

The saying "the customer is always right" implies that customers usually contribute positively to businesses. Yet, recent trends indicate an increase in customer misbehavior, referred to as customer deviance (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2018). Customer deviance encompasses any customer actions, whether online or in-person, that adversely affect a company, its staff, or other customers in terms of resource depletion, safety, reputation, or overall experience quality (Fombelle et al., 2020). In the context of unmanned stores, where customers are expected to perform tasks typically done by employees, this presents unique challenges. With no designated staff, customers collectively bear the responsibility for certain tasks. The tragedy of the commons theory suggests that in the absence of clear individual ownership or accountability, these tasks might be overlooked. This scenario raises concerns about how to motivate customers to responsibly maintain these environments. The uncertainty of customer behavior exacerbates the issue, as some customers' actions, like misplacing products, littering, or vandalism, can negatively impact the shopping experience for others.

"We have been forced to close the store at 9 pm because of youngsters that vandalize, make a lot of noise in the community, and steal energy drinks."

"Very appreciated, but in the last six months, there have been issues with thefts. It's important to carefully consider the areas in which to open."

The interviews indicate concerns about theft and vandalism in unmanned stores, reflecting the broader issue of customer deviance (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2018; Fombelle et al., 2020). This behavior challenges the concept of customers as co-creators and responsible participants in the retail process. It highlights the need for strategies to encourage responsible behavior and maintain a constructive environment. Moreover, dealing with customers who misbehave or disrupt the co-creation process requires a delicate approach. Businesses must establish clear guidelines and boundaries for co-creation, ensuring that the environment remains constructive and respectful. In cases of serious misconduct, it may be necessary to limit or terminate the customer's involvement in the co-creation process, while still maintaining a focus on overall customer satisfaction and experience.

To summarize, the customer's role in the retail landscape is evolving. As customers transition from mere consumers to active participants in the retail process, they take on tasks traditionally handled by employees, becoming customers as workers or co-creators of their shopping experience. This shift, while offering benefits like enhanced engagement and operational efficiency, also brings forth several challenges. The use of self-service technologies, while innovative, can lead to customer frustration due to complexities or malfunctions, particularly in the absence of staff assistance. Additionally, the unmanned store model presents a scenario akin to the "tragedy of the commons," where the shared responsibility for the store's maintenance can lead to its neglect. Compounding these issues is the rise in customer deviance, including theft and vandalism, which

poses a significant challenge to the sustainability of this retail model. Addressing these challenges is crucial for the success of unmanned retail stores, requiring a balanced approach that integrates technological advancements with strategies to maintain the human element in customer service.

CONCLUSION

While unmanned stores leverage customers as workers for efficiency, they face the challenge of maintaining a balance between operational needs and the social, interactive elements crucial to traditional retail experiences. This balance is essential for creating a shopping environment that meets the needs and expectations of the customers, blending technological advancements with the irreplaceable value of human interaction.

To navigate this delicate balance, the introduction of a managerial presence, perhaps in the form of a robotic supervisor, could be a transformative solution. This robotic entity wouldn't just guide customers through their shopping experience but also uphold the store as a 'good workplace'. It would be responsible for maintaining the store's servicescape, ensuring that it remains welcoming, well-organized, and efficient. This includes managing inventory, ensuring cleanliness, and possibly handling minor customer service inquiries, thus bridging the gap between operational efficiency and the human touch.

Such an approach acknowledges the importance of human elements in retail, even in an unmanned setup. By integrating technology like a robotic supervisor, unmanned stores in rural areas can offer a harmonious blend of efficiency and much-needed human interaction, although in a new, technologically augmented form. This balance is not just a business necessity; it's a nod to the evolving nature of community and connectivity in the retail world.

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CUSTOMERS' POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND THEIR ADOPTION OF SELF-SERVICE TECHNOLOGIES: DO POLITICAL LEANINGS PREDICT INTENTION TO USE SSTs?

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Keywords:

Self-service technology, Political ideology, Technology adoption, Conservative, Liberal

Description:

The paper empirically examines political ideology as a novel predictor for customer adoption of Self-Service Technologies (SSTs), leveraging data that is readily available and objectively accurate.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: Is there a significant main effect of political ideology on SST adoption?

RQ2: What are the boundary conditions that impact the main effect of political ideology on SST adoption?

RQ3: What are the potential mediator(s) through which political ideology effects SST adoption?

METHOD AND DATA

We conducted three studies in diverse settings, utilizing participants from various sources, including undergraduate students, Prolific, and MTurk, to examine our hypotheses. Initially, Study 1, an experiment based on scenarios, involved undergraduate students to assess the main effect of political ideology on SST adoption. Subsequently, Study 2, also a scenario-based experiment, was carried out with participants recruited through Prolific, aiming to replicate the main effect and explore boundary conditions influencing the relationship between political ideology and SST adoption. Finally, in Study 3, another scenario-based experiment involving participants from MTurk, we replicated the hypothesized main effect in a new context, thereby enhancing our external validity. Additionally, we elucidated the underlying mechanisms through which political ideology affects SST adoption.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Our research presents several key findings and vital implications for managers. Across three studies conducted in diverse contexts, we identified a significant relationship between customers' political ideology and their intention to use Self-Service Technologies (SSTs). Specifically,

liberals, on average, exhibit a higher intention to use these technologies. Additionally, we observed that the impact of political ideology on SST usage intention is contingent on process complexity—the more complex the SST usage process is perceived to be, the more pronounced the effect of political ideology becomes on SST adoption. Lastly, we unveiled two mediating factors that explain the impact of political ideology on intention to use SSTs, customers' need for interaction and customers' perceived control.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

We make significant contributions to both literature and practice. Firstly, our studies, conducted in diverse contexts, reveal a substantial connection between political ideology and customers' intention to use Self-Service Technologies (SSTs). This discovery holds particular importance for decision-making within retailing and service organizations, advising managers to increase SST investments in regions with a predominantly blue political affiliation. Secondly, our contribution extends to political ideology literature and SST adoption research by establishing a significant main effect between political ideology and SST usage intention. Additionally, we identify a crucial boundary condition—process complexity—and uncover two mediators, namely, customer's need for interaction and perceived control. These mediating mechanisms help explain the observed effects. Lastly, our findings offer managers novel insights and practical strategies for resource allocation to SSTs. While average SST usage intention is higher among liberals, differences in SST adoption between liberals and conservatives become more pronounced in complex usage processes. Managers can tailor communication strategies based on customers' political ideology to facilitate easier SST adoption, focusing on customers' perceived control and need for interaction, as these factors mediate the impact of political ideology on SST usage intention.

DECODING SPORT CLUB IDENTIFICATION - A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS

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Key Words: Sport Marketing; Human Brand Identification, Brand Identification; Community Identification

Description: The study examines the effects of the three dimensions of sport club identification (sport club brand, fan community, human brand) on the fans' behavioral intention towards the sport club in a comprehensive model with consideration of subdimensions and mediation effects.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The acquisition of new fans and the cultivation of the loyalty among existing fans is of great importance for professional sport clubs. In previous research the construct of identification has been identified as a relevant antecedent of the behaviour of sport club fans. Identification with a professional sport club contains of three dimensions: sport club brand, fan community, and human brand. However, the existing literature only considered a maximum of two dimensions of

sport club identification. Furthermore, the interdependencies among the three dimensions of sport club identification receive limited attention in previous research. Finally, previous studies neglect to consider the sub-dimensions of the three dimensions of sport club identification, resulting in a lack of granularity and specificity. Therefore, our study addresses the following research questions: 1) Which effects have the different identification dimensions (human brand identification, brand identification; community identification) of a professional sports club on the fans' behavioral intention towards the sport club? 2) How are the relationships between the three identification dimensions (mediation effects)? 3) Which effects have the subdimensions of fan community identification (classic fans and hardcore fans) and human brand identification (wishful and similarity)?

Method and Data

The research model is validated in the context of a sport club from the German Fußball (football) Bundesliga. Sport club brand identification was measured by a brand identification scale from Lam et al. (2010). The identification with the two fan community identification subdimensions (classic and hardcore fans) was measured by a scale from Carlson et al. (2008). For assessing human brand identification, a prominent active player of the football club was chosen. The scale by Hoffner and Buchanan (2005) was adapted to measure the wishful and similarity identification of the study participants with the selected player. The dependent variable, fans' behavioral intention towards the sport club, was assessed using the scale from Bansal et al. (2004). The behavioral intention examined and measured in this study pertains to the match attendance behavior of fans (probability of attending matches at the stadium). All scales were rated by the participants on a seven-point Likert scale ("strongly agree – strongly disagree"). A

final sample of n=527 (71.7% male fans) is used for statistical analyses. For measurement model evaluation, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted. To test the hypothesized structural research model, Partial Least Square (PLS) path modeling was employed, utilizing SmartPLS 3 software.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the EFA, affirm the presence of the five factors: Sport club brand identification, fan community identification with hardcore fans and with classic fans, wishful and similarity identification with the human brand.

The results of the structural model show that sport club brand identification, identification with classic fans and identification with hardcore fans significantly positively impact fans' behavioral intention towards the sport club. No significant influence on fans' behavioral intention towards the sport club can be observed for similarity and wishful identification. Concerning the effects on sport club brand identification, it could be determined that both identification with classic and with hardcore fans have a positive effect. Further, a significant positive effect of wishful identification with a human brand on sport club brand identification is found. Similarity identification has no significant influence on club brand identification. This demonstrates a difference within the human brand identification dimension. The most prominent impact on fans' behavioral intention towards the sport club was evidenced for sport club brand identification. Consequently, from a management perspective, fostering a sense of affiliation to the club brand assumes paramount significance.

Key Contributions

The study contributes to the existing research in three ways: 1) it is the first study with a comprehensive model, encompassing all three dimensions of sport club identification (sport club brand, fan community, human brand), 2) the relationships between the three dimensions will be analyzed for the first time (mediation effects), and 3) it is the first study investigating the subdimensions of fan community and human brand identification. The distinction of fan community identification (classic fans and hardcore fans) provides a novel insight for community identification research. Drawing on the two subdimensions of human brand identification (wishful and similarity) the mixed results in previous research can now be clarified more profoundly.

With our more comprehensive model we support the robustness of the previous study results. This emphasizes the central importance of sport club brand and fan community as objects of identification for professional sport clubs. The significance of the sport club brand is further emphasized by illustrating the identification with the sport club as a mediator between the independent variables fan community identification / wishful identification with a human brand and the outcome variable fans' behavioral intention towards the sport club.

DIGITALIZATION AS A MEANS OF QUANTIFYING IN-STORE BEHAVIOR

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Description: This paper explores the implementation of digital tools, specifically an IoT system, and an infrared system, to monitor and quantify customer behavior in brick-and-mortar retail environments, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses in various contexts and shedding light on their potential to bridge the gap between online and offline retail experiences.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Presently, the majority of retail sales are firmly rooted within the brick-and-mortar (B&M) realm. This enduring reality persists despite the evident surge and ongoing expansion of e-commerce (Statista, 2021). What truly underscores this dynamic is the ongoing technological revolution within the retail sphere, a measurement that can help capture the process. Here, the central impetus is driven by the insatiable yearning of customers for an experience that is effortless, convenient, and utterly frictionless (Grewal, 2020).

The profound shift toward online shopping represents a crucial facet of this evolution, a manifestation of the smooth and seamless experiences that can often be furnished in the digital realm. To craft these unparalleled experiences, industry titans like Amazon harness vast troves of customer data to presage their needs and behavior (Linden et al., 2003). This invaluable data is meticulously gleaned through customer interactions with the web platform (West, 2019). The retailer can aggregate behavior on the collective or the individual level based on what is viewed, clicked on, and time spent in different activities. This is powerful data as it indicates customers' interest in different products and categories.

In contrast, the brick-and-mortar shopping environment witnesses customer-product interactions, yet these encounters remain unmonitored and unquantified. Nevertheless, research prophesies an imminent convergence between the online and offline realms, a transformation in which the online environment will extend its tendrils into the physical world (Petit et al., 2019), a captivating concept often referred to as "phygital". We have already witnessed the early stages of this integration, such as the transfer of online shopping lists to customers' mobile devices. The trajectory suggests a fusion of these two media types, evident in the emerging XR technologies exemplified by Google Glasses and Apple in this domain. Beyond the awe-inspiring technology, the real intrigue lies in shifting our focus toward understanding how our senses shape our decision-making processes.

The crux of monitoring e-commerce customer behavior revolves around interactions with touch and keyboard devices. These input mechanisms empower retailers to delve into both the behavioral and cognitive dimensions of the decision-making process (Incera et al., 2013). Touch devices like a mouse or touch screens unveil the paths customers tread and illuminate the products that captivate their attention. Simultaneously, keyboards provide a window into

customers' cognitive processes through search terms and the connections between sought-after products and eventual purchases. These interactions can be distilled into key metrics, notably the click-through rate and conversion rate, paramount in comprehending online performance (Linden et al., 2003).

In the brick-and-mortar arena, the uncharted territory of capturing the intricate journey leading to a sale is finally becoming navigable, courtesy of cutting-edge technology. We now can monitor individual products and entire shelves replete with multiple items. This evolution signifies the digitalization of physical spaces, wherein any surface can serve as a data collection point, transforming raw data into measures that crystallize interest and preference in real-time.

In this present abstract, we embark on a journey to test the viability of implementing digital tools in exploring customer behavior, a process measurement that traditional methods often struggle to unravel. The purpose of the tests is to explore how digital tools can be applied in different contexts and to highlight their strengths and weaknesses within these contexts. For this purpose, two different tools were developed using the Internet of Things (IoT) and Infrared technology (IR).

Research Question

How can digital tools, specifically an IoT system and an infrared system, be effectively applied to monitor and quantify customer behavior in brick-and-mortar (B&M) retail environments, and what are their respective strengths and weaknesses in different contextual settings?

Method and Data

The IoT system is developed on Texas Instruments - CC2650 that can collect data from multiple sensors through 6LowPAN, ZigBee, and IEEE 802.15.4 (Texas Instruments, N.D). The mesh

network can gather data from sensors e.g., motions, ambient light, product temperature, humidity, and sound (Texas Instruments, N.D). For this test, we applied two sensors' outputs, looking at motion and light. The motion sensor was used to detect interaction with a product while the light sensor was used to detect the number of people passing by the product. We used over one hundred sensors positioned on products within a retail store to detect interactions with the products. The sensors measured data for over three months.

The infrared system is developed with light sensors that together create a grid with X-Y coordinates. When the customer breaks the IR beam, by stretching their hand to fetch a product, the system generates an exact X-Y coordinate for the product at that specific location. Hence, the system aggregates the frequency of touch and time spent touching a product in the product shelf. The infrared system was positioned in front of a shelf and collected data over several weeks.

Summary of Findings

The results of the in-store tests using both tools show strengths and weaknesses depending on the contextual setting. In a fast-moving consumer goods setting (FMCG), we can see that the IoT system is fitted for counting pass-through but is less efficient for measuring product interaction. This is mostly because the vibrations of product interaction with FMCG products are less notable compared to electronic goods such as vacuum cleaners or laptops. The IR system on the other hand is better fitted for a FMCG setting as it can measure up to 50 simultaneous interactions with a product shelf. However, in an electronic store, the IoT system can both gather product interaction and pass through, which together can create a measure similar to conversion rate. This is a great strength as researchers can manipulate the environment and measure the effect of product interaction independent of the number of people passing by. A strength of both systems is that they can be installed within a store and collect data over a long period of time without

minor maintenance. Furthermore, both systems produce real-time data showing the researchers and store managers how different changes to the store influence customer behavior instantly and over time.

Key Contributions

This research addresses a gap in understanding and quantifying in-store customer behavior in the evolving retail landscape, which has been largely overlooked due to the focus on online shopping and customer data. By introducing and testing two digital tools, this study explores innovative ways to capture and analyze in-store customer behavior, expanding our knowledge of applying digital tools in brick-and-mortar (B&M) stores.

Furthermore, the research highlights the potential of sensor technology and digitalizing physical environments to gather valuable data on customer interests and preferences. This empowers researchers and store managers to make data-driven decisions, optimize store layouts, and improve the overall customer experience, bridging the gap between online and offline retail environments.

Beyond academia, this paper delivers value to various stakeholders, including for-profit retail firms, non-profit organizations focused on consumer behavior, and governmental agencies and policymakers. Retailers can benefit from insights on quantifying in-store customer behavior using digital tools. Non-profits can apply these insights to understand consumer preferences, while government entities can use the research findings to inform policies related to data privacy, consumer protection, and technology integration in physical retail spaces. Overall, this research offers new methods and tools for quantifying and analyzing in-store customer behavior, enabling stakeholders to enhance their operations in the retail industry through data-driven decisions.

Does Clustering Improve Store Performance? A Study of Multi-brand Franchising

Abstract

Clustering—a decision on geographical concentration of stores—has become more important yet trickier as franchise owners operate multiple brands. We examine how and when clustering improves store performance under the multi-brand franchising context in three steps. First, we deconstruct clustering into two facets: single-brand clustering, where a store is clustered with the same-brand stores of an owner, and multi-brand clustering, where a store is clustered with different-brand stores of an owner. Second, addressing the question of *how*, we propose customer satisfaction as an intervening mechanism that connects clustering with store performance. Third, addressing the question of *when*, we theorize that the performance effects of clustering are contingent on an owner's brand operating experience: local experience or distant experience. We test our predictions using data on 5953 Pizza Hut stores run by 170 franchise owners. Our results show that single-brand clustering improves, whereas multi-brand clustering impairs, store performance. Depending on its type, an owner's operating experience amplifies or diminishes the effect of clustering on customer satisfaction.

Contributions to Academe and Practitioners

1. Contributions to Research

Our study extends the past literature on clustering in two ways. First, we respond to Butt *et al.* (2018)'s call for a nuanced consideration of clustering's impact by examining not only the proximity with other stores (*how far*) but also the issue of proximity *with whom*. This is important progress because research on clustering in franchising has been primarily at the single brand level, although clustering under a multi-brand franchising arrangement can also be done with other brands. We showed positive as well as negative effects of clustering on store performance depending on the type of clustering. Second, our study establishes an explanatory mechanism for the performance effects of clustering by highlighting the effects of clustering on customer satisfaction. Although previous studies legitimized the conceptual link between clustering and customer-centric outcomes such as customer satisfaction, they have not empirically established any such outcome. Our study offers the first empirical evidence on this link.

2. Contribution to Practitioners

First, our results show franchisees benefit from clustering through the positive effect of clustering a store with the sister stores carrying the same brand (i.e., single-brand clustering) on store performance. In contrast, we found that clustering a store with sister stores carrying other brands (i.e., multi-brand clustering) hurts customer satisfaction with the focal store. Second, our results show the multifaceted, moderating influence of the owner's brand operating experience depending on the types of operating experience: local experience, intensity of distant experience, and heterogeneity of distant experience.

INTRODUCTION

The multi-unit franchise, where a franchisee owner operates multiple stores, is rapidly supplanting the single-unit franchise (Johnson 2019). A franchisee owner ("owner" hereafter) operating multiple stores must decide whether to concentrate or disperse stores across markets. This decision on *clustering*, the extent to which stores are located in a geographically proximate area (Butt, Antia, Murtha, and Kashyap 2018), is becoming trickier as owners now need to decide not only on clustering of stores but also on clustering of brands, which has yet to be examined.

Scholars in economics (Kline and Moretti 2014), economic geography (Bond-smith and McCann 2020), management (Porter 2000), and marketing (Butt *et al.* 2018) have recognized the importance of clustering. Past studies show that clustered stores may enjoy more knowledge sharing (Kalnins and Mayer 2004), but may also suffer cannibalization (Pancras, Sriram, and Kumar 2012). Clustering has also been shown to improve cost efficiency (Perryman and Combs 2012) and service quality (Lu and Wedig 2013). Despite an enhanced understanding of clustering thanks to these studies, clustering in franchising remains an enigma in two ways.

First, prior studies are ambivalent about the performance effect of clustering, with conflicting evidences of positive (Kalnins and Mayer 2004), negative (Pancras *et al.* 2012), or no effects (Ganesan, Malter, and Rindfleisch 2005) on store performance. Clustering was seen to improve store performance thanks to greater knowledge sharing between stores when it was examined through organizational learning theory (Kalnins and Mayer 2004). But it was seen to hamper store performance because of greater competition between stores when clustering was examined through a theory of competition (Pancras *et al.* 2012). These conflicting findings leave the performance effect of clustering ambiguous, highlighting the urgent need to reconcile the

inconsistent findings by uncovering *when* clustering improves store performance. Otherwise, conflicting explanations on the performance effect of clustering will continue, and owners will remain in the dark about when clustering works for them.

Second, past clustering literature focused on ultimate performance outcomes such as store sales (Butt *et al.* 2018) and store survival (Ingram and Baum 1997a). Although these economic and ecological outcomes are important, they lie at the far end of the causal chain of clustering's influence on store performance, leaving the question of intervening mechanisms (the *how*) of clustering unknown. In particular, though the past literature suggests that clustering influences customer experiences (Ganesan *et al.* 2005; Butt *et al.* 2018), it has not yet empirically established such outcomes. Establishing the influence of clustering on customers—the most important stakeholders in franchising—is an important contribution of marketing scholarship to clustering research.

We raise the following research question to address these shortcomings: ***How and when does clustering improve store performance?*** We answer this question in three steps. First, departing from the monolithic view of clustering, we posit that clustering in multi-brand franchising has two facets: single-brand clustering and multi-brand clustering. *Single-brand clustering* refers to the extent to which a focal brand store (i.e., a Pizza Hut store) is clustered with sister stores of the focal brand (i.e., other Pizza Hut stores). In contrast, *multi-brand clustering* refers to the extent to which a focal brand store (i.e., a Pizza Hut store) is clustered with sister stores of nonfocal brands (e.g., Del Taco stores).[1] Second, we examine the performance effects of clustering on customer satisfaction with the store, which is a key customer-centric outcome (Rego, Morgan, and Fornell 2013) that has been neglected in

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[1] We label those stores belong to the same owner as *sister stores* regardless of brands hereafter.

franchising research. *Customer satisfaction* refers to the degree to which a store meets the expectations of its customers (Oliver, Rust, and Varki 1997). Examining customer satisfaction helps us explain how different types of clustering lead to a store's sales performance through customer experiences (Lemon and Verhoef 2016).

Third, to reconcile the conflicting findings on the performance effect of clustering, we take an organizational learning perspective (Argote, Lee, and Park 2021) and propose that the knowledge-sharing effect from clustering varies depending on another source of an owner's learning: the owner's brand operating experience (Ingram and Baum 1997b). An owner's *brand operating experience* ("operating experience" hereafter) refers to the owner's accumulated experience of operating the stores of the focal brand at the local market (i.e., local experience) or at distant markets (i.e., distant experience) (Kalnins and Mayer 2004). Considering the moderating effects of an owner's operating experience is important because different owners may have accumulated different knowledge from their operating experiences, thereby influencing the extent to which the store may benefit or suffer from the knowledge shared through clustering.

We tested our predictions with a unique dataset of 5,953 Pizza Hut stores assembled from multiple sources including franchise disclosure documents, Google reviews, Chain Store Guide, and zip code patterns data. Our results show that single-brand clustering improves, whereas multi-brand clustering impairs, customer satisfaction with the focal store, which in turn increases store sales growth and survival. In turn, an owner's knowledge from operating experience has an amplifying or diminishing effect on clustering's performance effect depending on its type.

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

The Study Context: Multi-unit, Multi-brand Franchising

The franchising industry evolved along two dimensions of franchise ownership: the number of

units (single versus multiple) and the number of brands (single versus multiple) operated by an owner. While a single-unit franchise (SUF) has the rights to operate a single store (Bradach 1998), a multi-unit franchise (MUF) has the rights to operate multiple stores of a single brand (Dant *et al.* 2013). A new franchise format is emerging as franchisors allow owners to operate multiple brands, which we call multi-brand franchise (MBF). Those multiple brands may belong to a single franchisor or multiple franchisors. We delimit our study to the multi-unit arrangements (i.e., MUFs and MBFs) since clustering, by definition, means an owner operates multiple stores of single or multiple brands.

The Conceptual Framework

Our conceptual framework is depicted in Figure 1. We draw on the organizational learning theory (Argote *et al.* 2021) as a theoretical foundation and build upon related research on clustering (Butt *et al.* 2018; Zheng, Ji, and Su 2020). We conceptualize the performance effect of an owner's clustering decisions through customer satisfaction that influences the store's sales growth and survival. Past research has also shown that the ability of the focal store to transform the shared knowledge into useful learning outcomes depends on the owner's existing knowledge base, which is accessible through the owner's operating experience (Argote *et al.* 2021). Therefore, we examine the moderating effect of the owner's operating experience on the relationship between clustering and customer satisfaction (Kalnins and Mayer 2004).

<< Insert Figure 1 Here>>

The effect of single-brand clustering on customer satisfaction.

We posit that the higher a store's single-brand clustering, the higher the customer satisfaction for the following reasons.

High motivation for learning. Stores under single-brand clustering are likely to enjoy

high social proximity due to common ownership and high geographical proximity of being in the same local market with one another. Therefore, they are strongly motivated to share knowledge with one another (Perryman and Combs 2012). As a result of the strong *motivation* to share knowledge, there is greater transparency in knowledge sharing among clustered same-brand stores.

Greater ability for learning. Highly focused clustering allows the store to attain knowledge accumulated through similar experiences as sister stores are likely to face similar challenges from the same local market (Darr and Kurtzberg 2000). The similarity of knowledge increases the focal store's absorptive capacity for the sister stores' knowledge, effectively providing a superior customer experience through an improved understanding of customer expectations (Huber 1991). Therefore, we predict that

H_1: The higher the single-brand clustering, the higher the customer satisfaction with the store.

The effect of multi-brand clustering on customer satisfaction.

We posit that the more a store belongs to multi-brand clustering, the lower its customer satisfaction for the following reasons.

Lower motivation for learning. Multi-brand clustering means a store is grouped with the sister stores of different brands. The knowledge repositories of different-brand stores are likely to differ from those of the focal store (Keller 2003), which makes the knowledge transfer process cumbersome (Lichtenthaler and Lichtenthaler 2010). Consequently, under multi-brand clustering, the dissimilarities in knowledge repositories are likely to hinder knowledge transfer from sister stores to the focal store by dampening the *motivation* of the sister stores to share knowledge with the focal store (Szulanski 1996).

Lower ability for learning. The differences between the focal store's knowledge structure

and that of sister stores are likely to weaken the focal store's capacity to absorb knowledge from sister stores, thereby hindering the focal store's learning about customers (Cassiman *et al.* 2005). For instance, it may be difficult for the focal store to comprehend the context in which the knowledge from the sister stores was accumulated. The unrelated knowledge may also conflict with the focal store's existing knowledge base, confusing local customer expectations (Makri, Hitt, and Lane 2010). Therefore, we predict

H_2: The higher the multi-brand clustering, the lower the customer satisfaction with the store.

The Moderating Effect of the Owner's Operating Experience

Past research has also shown that the ability of the focal store to transform the shared knowledge into useful learning outcomes depends on the owner's existing knowledge base, which is accessible through the owner's operating experience (Argote *et al.* 2021). Operating experience has been shown to influence a store's capacity to value, assimilate, and apply knowledge, which influences store performance (Cohen and Levinthal 1990).

We posit that the effects of two facets of clustering on customer satisfaction vary depending on the owner's two types of experience from a market: local experience and distant experience (Ingram and Baum 1997b). *Local experience* refers to the experience accumulated by operating focal brand stores in a local market, whereas *distant experience* refers to the experience accumulated by operating focal brand stores in multiple, nonlocal markets (i.e., distant markets). An owner's distant experience has two subfacets: intensity and heterogeneity (Gill and Kim 2021). Whereas the *intensity of distant experience* refers to the magnitude of experience accumulated from operating in distant markets, *heterogeneity of distant experience* is the extent to which the distant experience is accumulated from operating in diverse distant markets. These three facets of the owner's experience constitute the owner's knowledge base

from operating its stores.

The moderating effect of an owner's local experience

On the single-brand clustering and customer satisfaction link. An owner's greater operating experience in the local market is likely to provide the owner with greater local market knowledge on customer expectations for the focal brand (Wong 2004). Greater local experience equips the focal store with a thorough understanding of local market knowledge and establishes processes for accumulating knowledge from proximate sister stores (Zahra and George 2002). Therefore, greater local experience is likely to improve the absorptive capacity of the owner to make sense of the knowledge transferred by sister stores operating the same brand (Cohen and Levinthal 1990). In addition, greater local experience helps the store apply the accumulated knowledge to enhance its customer learning, thereby amplifying the positive effect of single-brand clustering on customer satisfaction. Therefore, we predict that

H₃: Greater local experience amplifies the positive effect of single-brand clustering on customer satisfaction.

On the multi-brand clustering and customer satisfaction link. We posit that an owner's greater local experience amplifies the negative effect of multi-brand clustering on customer satisfaction by further weakening the focal store's *ability* to make sense of knowledge from sister stores with different brands. As an owner accumulates extensive local experience, she is likely to become confident in the way the focal brand stores in the local market operate while losing her ability to adapt to new and potentially conflicting information from sister stores of different brands. This self-reinforcing bias—a strict reliance on the existing knowledge base from local market experience—is likely to become more prominent under multi-brand clustering where the focal store faces dissimilar knowledge from sister stores, thereby amplifying the negative effect of multi-brand clustering on customer satisfaction. In contrast, an owner with low levels of local

experience of the focal brand is likely to be open to assimilating the incoming knowledge from different-brand, sister stores. Such motivation to understand knowledge from multi-brand clustering does not amplify the negative effect of multi-brand clustering on customer satisfaction. Therefore, we predict that

H_4: *Greater local experience amplifies the negative effect of multi-brand clustering on customer satisfaction.*

The moderating effect of intensity of distant experience

On the single-brand clustering and customer satisfaction link. An owner's greater distant experience provides the owner with knowledge of market conditions and customer preferences of distant markets. However, distant experience is not relevant to the operation of the focal store's local market (Maskell and Malmberg 2007). Therefore, we posit that an owner's greater distant experience hampers the focal store's *ability* to benefit from shared knowledge through single-brand clustering, diminishing the positive effect of single-brand clustering on customer satisfaction. On the other hand, little distant experience allows the focal store to use local knowledge to make decisions, which does not diminish the positive effects of single-brand clustering on customer satisfaction. Therefore, we predict that

H_5: *High intensity of distant experience diminishes the positive effect of single-brand clustering on customer satisfaction.*

On the multi-brand clustering and customer satisfaction link. An owner's greater distant experience amplifies the negative effect of multi-brand clustering on customer satisfaction by further impairing the focal store's *ability* to learn from the knowledge shared through multi-brand clustering. The focal store's increasing reliance on distant knowledge under multi-brand clustering means the store relies on disparate pieces of knowledge from two different sources. Note that there is little overlap in knowledge structures between the focal store's knowledge

from operating in distant markets (i.e., distant experience) and sister stores' knowledge from operating different brands in the local market (i.e., multi-brand clustering). This discrepancy between the two knowledge structures is likely to create confusion about customer preferences and may ruin the customer experience. Therefore, high intensity of distant experience is likely to exacerbate the negative effect of multi-brand clustering on customer satisfaction. On the other hand, the focal store with little distant experience is unlikely to rely on distant knowledge, thereby not exacerbating the negative effect of multi-brand clustering on customer satisfaction. Therefore, we predict that

H6: High intensity of distant experience amplifies the negative effect of multi-brand clustering on customer satisfaction.

The moderating effect of heterogeneity of distant experience

On the single-brand clustering and customer satisfaction link. High heterogeneity of distant experience equips the owner with diverse distant market knowledge on customer expectations. High heterogeneity of distant experiences increases the owner's absorptive capacity to learn new knowledge from dissimilar settings (Gill and Kim 2021). As an owner accumulates knowledge from a diverse set of distant markets, the owner is likely to gain greater ability to explore new knowledge on improving customer experience (Hoeffler, Ariely, West, and Duclos 2013). Specifically, an owner's heterogenous distant experiences increase the absorptive capacity of the focal store to analyze incoming information from sister stores because the owner has an enhanced understanding of different customer preferences through heterogenous knowledge accumulated from distant markets (Beckman and Haunschild 2002). An increase in the absorptive capacity thus amplifies the positive impact of single-brand clustering on customer satisfaction. Conversely, an owner's homogeneous, distant experiences are unlikely to increase the absorptive capacity of the focal store, which is unlikely to change the positive effect of

single-brand clustering on customer satisfaction. Therefore, we predict that

H7: Greater heterogeneity of distant experience amplifies the positive effect of single-brand clustering on customer satisfaction.

On the multi-brand clustering and customer satisfaction link. Greater heterogeneity in distant experiences is likely to improve the focal store's *ability* to benefit from the knowledge shared by different-brand stores, thereby lessening the negative effect of multi-brand clustering on customer satisfaction. Gaining heterogeneous knowledge from distant markets enhances the ability of the focal store to understand the knowledge from different-brand stores that is dissimilar to its knowledge base. Therefore, the focal store with greater heterogeneity of distant experience is likely to have a higher ability to absorb and utilize the dissimilar knowledge accumulated from sister stores of different brands than a store with low heterogeneity of distant experience. On the other hand, little heterogeneity of distant experience does not improve the focal store's ability to absorb knowledge from sister stores of different brands, thereby being unable to ameliorate the negative effect of multi-brand clustering on customer satisfaction. Therefore, we predict that

H8: High heterogeneity of distant experience ameliorates the negative effect of single-brand clustering on customer satisfaction.

The effect of customer satisfaction on store performance. We posit that high customer satisfaction with a store improves store performance because achieving higher customer satisfaction is associated with higher customer loyalty and repurchase behavior (Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann 1994). Higher customer satisfaction is known to attract potential customers to the store, create barriers to new business entry, and lead to increased market share and additional scale effects (Rego, Morgan, and Fornell 2013). This, in turn, should improve such store financial performance as store sales grow and increases the chance of store survival.

Therefore, we predict that

> *H9: The higher the customer satisfaction, the higher (a) store sales growth and (b) store survival.*

METHOD AND RESULTS

Study context. We selected Pizza Hut as the focal brand and its franchising system as our empirical test context. Pizza Hut is one of the largest Pizza franchising systems in the United States, with more than $5 billion in sales revenue (Technomic 2021). As of 2019, Pizza Hut operated 5953 franchised stores and 23 corporate-owned stores. At a store level, 4 SUF owners were operating four stores, 127 MUF owners were operating 2652 stores, and 39 MBF owners were operating 3297 stores (MB50 rankings 2020). In addition to Pizza Hut stores, those MBF owners operated 3381 other-brand stores (mean and SD of other brands = four and eight, respectively). This composition of the franchising arrangement makes Pizza Hut a rare candidate for examining MBF as well as MUF and the effects of single-brand clustering and multi-brand clustering on store performance.

   Data collection. We assembled a novel dataset from four independent sources. First, we collected information on the locations of Pizza Hut franchise stores from the franchise disclosure documents. Second, we acquired information about other-brand stores operated by Pizza Hut MBF owners from Chain Store Guide. We also acquired the sales information of Pizza Hut stores from Chain Store Guide. Third, we collected market-level information, such as population and income per household, from the zip code patterns data. Lastly, we collected 814,565 customer reviews of the Pizza Hut stores from Google reviews to measure customer satisfaction for the years 2017 to 2019.

Model and estimation

Model development. To test our hypotheses, we estimated three equations with customer

satisfaction, sales growth, and store failure as an outcome variable respectively. We consider time lags between our independent variables to control for any possible reverse causality.

$CS_{it} = \alpha_1 FC_{it} + \alpha_2 DC_{it} + \alpha_3 \text{Local Experience}_{it} + \alpha_4 \text{Intensity of Distant Experience}_{it} + \alpha_5 \text{Heterogeneity of Distant Experience}_{it} + \alpha_6 \text{Store Experience}_{it} + \alpha_7 \text{Intra-brand Competition}_{it} + \alpha_8 \text{Inter-brand Competition}_{it} + \alpha_9 \text{Distance}_{it} + \alpha_{10} \text{Customer Income}_{it} + \alpha_{11} \text{Customer Demand}_{it} + \alpha_{12} \text{Customer Diversity}_{it} + \alpha_{13} \text{Regional Heterogeneity}_{it} + \alpha_{14} \text{Year}_t$
$\ldots (1.1)$
$+ \alpha_{15} FC_{it} \times \text{Local Experience}_{it} + \alpha_{16} DC_{it} \times \text{Local Experience}_{it} + \alpha_{17} FC_{it} \times \text{Intensity of Distant Experience}_{it} + \alpha_{18} DC_{it} \times \text{Intensity of Distant Experience}_{it} + \alpha_{19} FC_{it} \times \text{Heterogeneity of Distant Experience}_{it} + \alpha_{20} DC_{it} \times \text{Heterogeneity of Distant Experience}_{it} + \rho_i + \varepsilon_{it} \ldots (1.2)$

$SG_{i(t+1)} = \psi_1 CS_{it} + \psi_2 FC_{it} + \psi_3 DC_{it} + \psi_4 \text{Local Experience}_{it} + \psi_5 \text{Intensity of Distant Experience}_{it} + \psi_6 \text{Heterogeneity of Distant Experience}_{it} + \psi_7 \text{Store Experience}_{it} + \psi_8 \text{Intra-brand Competition}_{it} + \psi_9 \text{Inter-brand Competition}_{it} + \psi_{10} \text{Distance}_{it} + \psi_{11} \text{Customer Income}_{it} + \psi_{12} \text{Customer Demand}_{it} + \psi_{13} \text{Customer Diversity}_{it} + \psi_{14} \text{Regional Heterogeneity}_{it} + \psi_{15} \text{Year}_t + \psi_{16} SG_t + \rho_i + \varepsilon_{it} \ldots (2)$

$\text{Failure}_{i(t+1)} = \delta_1 CS_{it} + \delta_2 FC_{it} + \delta_3 DC_{it} + \delta_4 \text{Local Experience}_{it} + \delta_5 \text{Intensity of Distant Experience}_{it} + \delta_6 \text{Heterogeneity of Distant Experience}_{it} + \delta_7 \text{Store Experience}_{it} + \delta_8 \text{Intra-brand Competition}_{it} + \delta_9 \text{Inter-brand Competition}_{it} + \delta_{10} \text{Distance}_{it} + \delta_{11} \text{Customer Income}_{it} + \delta_{12} \text{Customer Demand}_{it} + \delta_{13} \text{Customer Diversity}_{it} + \delta_{14} \text{Regional Heterogeneity}_{it} + \delta_{15} \text{Year}_t + \rho_i + \varepsilon_{it} \ldots (3)$

Analysis results

Results for customer satisfaction. The results in Table 1.1 (column I) show that whereas higher levels of single-brand clustering increase (b = 4.10, $p < .01$), higher levels of multi-brand clustering decrease (b = -2.83, $p < .01$), customer satisfaction, thereby supporting H$_1$ and H$_2$ respectively. Table 1.1 (column II) show the moderating effects of the operating experience. Whereas local experience amplifies the positive relationship between single-brand clustering and customer satisfaction (b = 8.93, $p < .001$), it amplifies the negative relationship between multi-brand clustering and customer satisfaction (b = -2.94, $p < .05$), thereby supporting H$_3$ and H$_4$, respectively. The intensity of distant experience diminishes the positive relationship between single-brand clustering and customer satisfaction (b = -1.37, $p < .05$), whereas it amplifies the negative relationship between multi-brand clustering and customer satisfaction (b = -1.39, $p < .001$), thereby supporting H$_5$ and H$_6$. We found the heterogeneity of distant experience diminishes the positive relationship between single-brand clustering and customer satisfaction (b = -11.22, $p < .001$), which does not support H$_7$. Lastly, heterogeneity of distant experience

ameliorated the negative relationship between multi-brand clustering and customer satisfaction (b = 4.69, p < .001), which supports H8.

Results for sales growth and store failure. The results in Table 1.2 show that higher customer satisfaction increases sales growth (b = .02, p < .001) and lowers store failure (b = -.01, p < .05), thereby supporting H9a and H9b that higher customer satisfaction increases store sales and the chance of survival.
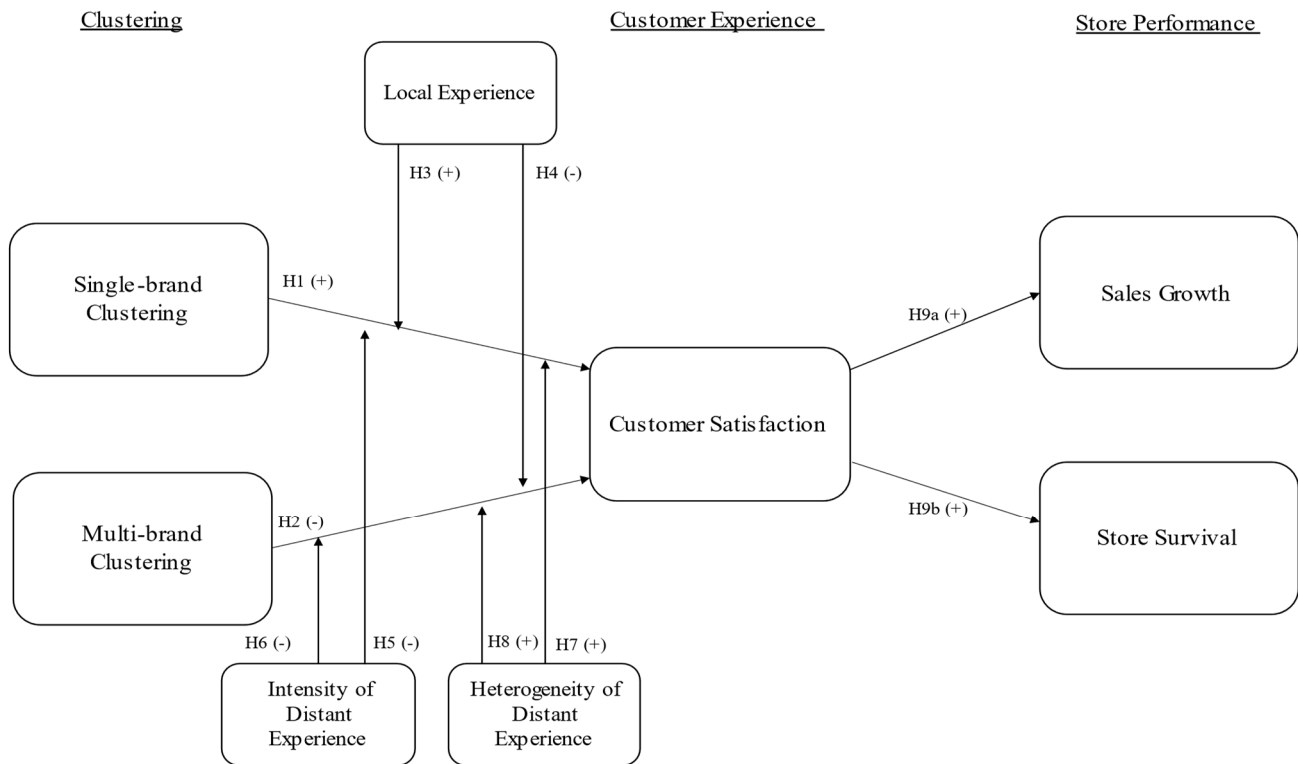
Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework

Table 1: Estimation Results

Table 1.1: Estimation Results on Customer Satisfaction

	Hypothesis	Main Effects (Column II)	Interaction Effects (Column III)
Dependent variable		Customer Satisfaction	Customer Satisfaction
Control variables			
Store experience		.08*** (0.03)	0.07* (0.03)
Intra-brand competition		1.4 (1.35)	1.59 (1.5)
Inter-brand competition		-.03 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.04)
Distance from headquarters		.67*** (0.12)	0.68*** (0.13)
Customer income		-19.02*** (1.53)	-18.21*** (1.62)
Customer demand		-1.94*** (0.23)	-1.9*** (0.24)
Customer diversity		-34.04*** (2.39)	-33.32*** (2.47)
Independent variables			
Single-brand clustering (SC)	H_1: (+)	4.1** (1.65)	7.78* (3.58)
Multi-brand clustering (MC)	H_2: (−)	-2.83** (1.19)	-4.33* (1.88)
Local experience		.63 (2.17)	-26.99* (12.28)
Intensity of distant experience		-3.01*** (0.54)	2.04 (2.59)
Heterogeneity of distant experience		-.54 (1.08)	61.82* (28.78)
Interactions			
SC x Local experience	H_3: (+)		8.93*** (2.69)
MC x Local experience	H_4: (−)		-2.94* (1.32)
SC x Intensity of distant experience	H_5: (−)		-1.37* (0.72)
MC x Intensity of distant experience	H_6: (−)		-1.39*** (0.51)
SC x Heterogeneity of distant experience	H_7: (+)		-11.22*** (3.74)
MC x Heterogeneity of distant experience	H_8: (+)		4.69*** (1.55)
Number of observations		16,053	16,053
Number of groups		5,599	5,599
F/Wald χ^2		2053.56***	2087.76***
Cragg Donald F Statistic		138.353	11.649
Stock and Yogo 5 % Maximal IV Size		13.43	11.52
Hansen J test of overidentifying restrictions		.10	.19

*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, *** $p <.001$ (all one-sided); Region dummies and year dummies are estimated but excluded in the table;
Numbers in parentheses are standard errors; The shaded cells highlight hypothesis test results; The dependent variable is scaled by 20 to represent percentage points.

Table 1.2: Estimation on Sales Growth and Store Failure

Dependent variable	Sales Growth (Column 1)	Store Failure (Column II)
Estimation type	OLS	Poisson regression
Control variables		
Store experience	-.25*** (.01)	-.06*** (.01)
Intra-brand competition	-.97* (.51)	-.09 (.31)
Inter-brand competition	.07*** (.00)	-.00 (.01)
Distance from headquarters	1.36*** (.06)	-.15* (.07)
Customer income	-11.65*** (.74)	-1.67 (1.05)
Customer demand	-2.50*** (.13)	-.03 (.14)
Customer diversity	-13.37*** (1.23)	-.04 (1.96)
Sales growth (lagged)	-42.48*** (2.43)	
Independent variables		
Single-brand clustering	-.35*** (.12)	.84*** (.17)
Multi-brand clustering	.07 (.28)	.99*** (.20)
Local experience	-.10 (.34)	-7.57*** (1.17)
Intensity of distant experience	.01 (.13)	.92* (.40)
Heterogeneity of distant experience	-4.31*** (.55)	-7.15*** (.66)
Predictor variable Hypothesis		
Customer satisfaction H_{9a}: (+) and H_{9b}: (-)	.02*** (.00)	-.01* (.00)

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END-CONSUMER OR BUSINESS PARTNER - WHO AM I? NEW PROSUMER ROLES IN EMERGING SERVICE BUSINESS MODELS

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Keywords: prosumer, prosumer roles, role acceptance, emerging services

Description: This interview study examines how consumers perceive their increasingly active role in emerging service systems as prosumers and its development over time as well as the consequences these perceptions entail.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Today's service customers take an active role in value creation exemplified in the energy market through bidirectionally chargeable electric vehicles. Customers blend consumer and producer roles by storing, selling, or consuming energy, turning into prosumers. Prior research on prosumer roles explores consumers experiencing multiple roles and acting in roles beyond that of customers. However, literature on prosumer roles and role acceptance is scarce. The sharing literature has explored motives for role switching and becoming a provider (Ertz et al. 2022) and investigated why users act as providers and customers (Chandler and Chen 2015). Yet

research on prosumers' perception of their own roles and their perception of this change is missing. This gap in research presents novel questions for academics and managers. If prosumers do or do not accept their roles, what behaviors stem from that and what expectations do they harbor toward firms? Consequently, how should firms respond?

Addressing these questions, this study outlines three research goals. Firstly, we seek to describe how prosumers perceive their role(s). Secondly, we aim to analyze how these perceptions evolve over time. Thirdly, we strive to identify potential challenges arising from prosumer role perceptions and provide managers with guidance on how to navigate these.

Method and Data

We conducted an explorative qualitative study aiming to gain an understanding of prosumers through in-depth interviews. Data was gathered among pilot customers of the field trial study "Bidirektionales Lademanagement – BDL" that tested the concept of bidirectional charging in Germany. This study employs a longitudinal design with two interview sets nine to ten months apart. We conducted 44 interviews with 22 participants (20 male, 2 female), averaging 47 years old at the time of the first set ($SD = 11.15$, min_{age} 31 years, max_{age} 75 years). 77.3% of interviewees hold a university degree, 22.7% have vocational training with a high school diploma. They all volunteered and self-selected to be part of the field trial and, with the exception of four, already owned at least one photovoltaic system in their households before the field trial and consequently had prior experience in energy production.

Our analysis used inductive reasoning to develop an understanding of the topic, utilizing thematic analysis for its flexibility, sample size, data collection methods and to capture the underlying or explicit meanings. We identified relevant content to the research question, coded

the data and extracted common themes to offer a higher-level interpretation reflecting the underlying characteristics of the observed behaviors.

Summary of Findings

In our analysis we have found three distinct groups of prosumers: *role-accepting* prosumers who embrace their new role, yet the majority remains in the mindset of a customer, therefore *role-neglecting*, while a few show characteristics from both sides, therefore *partially role-accepting, in-between* the other two. These groups are persistent over time, only a few *role-neglectors* or *role-acceptors* converge towards *in-between* after gaining experiences, yet none towards the *role-acceptors*. This suggests that a prosumer is not a role to be learned automatically but that consumers bring a certain set of characteristics that fosters the acceptance of the prosumer role and that the involved companies need to offer opportunities and conditions to support this role's acceptance. Overall, we found that the prosumers do not change their mindset in terms of accepting or neglecting their prosumer role towards different firms within the service system. Once they accept or neglect the prosumer role, they behave the same way towards all firms within the service system.

Statement of Key Contributions

First, we contribute to literature on prosumers and prosumer roles. While previous research has shown that different external conditions determine prosumer roles (Chatterjee, Mariani and Wamba 2023; Lang et al. 2021), our research extends this by showing that this may not extend to the prosumers' understanding of their roles. Additionally, we contribute to research on role switching, as prior research has shown that prosumers actively switch their roles from

provider to user or from producer to consumer in a short time frame (Ertz et. al. 2022). We extend this knowledge by showing that some contexts exist, where prosumers act as producers and consumers simultaneously, and they do not change flexibly but remain within one role, even over time. Moreover, our research is poised to assist firms navigating the landscape of highly heterogeneous consumers. It will create awareness for the diverse prosumer roles and foster an understanding of the roles the prosumers accept or reject. Managers can enhance their capability to tailor their communication strategies effectively and mitigate conflicts in messaging. Firms may need to adjust their service designs to meet the needs of these heterogeneous prosumers, and our study stands to provide valuable insights to support decision-making in this regard.

References are available upon request.

HABITS AS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD IN FREEMIUM MODELS – THEIR INFLUENCE ON SUBSCRIPTION INTENTION.

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Keywords: habits, subscription business, inertia, freemium, news media industry

Description: This paper discusses the two-sided role of consumers' habit strength towards the free version in a freemium business model.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Subscription businesses commonly apply a freemium pricing strategy, whereby users can freely access their services under restricted conditions. In the same vein, news media businesses apply this strategy to introduce users to their content. However, monetizing this strategy by converting free users into paying premium subscribers remains a key challenge in this industry and for subscription businesses in general. While existing research has frequently studied intentional behavior, theoretical and empirical evidence regarding automated behavior is scarce. In this research, we focus on habits and build on the value-based adoption model to shed light on users' decisions to convert from free to fee. To the best of our knowledge, the current research is the first to study how

habits shape consumers' behavior in the subscription economy and what positive, as well as negative effects they may have on the conversion to a paid subscription. Therefore, our research question is if and how habits influence conversions from "free to fee".

Method and Data

Based on extant literature we developed a structured survey covering all relevant constructs, control variables, and demographics. We collaborated with a national newspaper in a European country and conducted a study to address the research question and subsequently tested our hypothesis by applying structural equation modeling. The large national newspaper, with which we collaborated for this research, follows a freemium approach (i.e., a paywall), where certain content can only be viewed if users have a paid subscription. We installed a pop-up on the website to distribute the survey to actual website visitors and only addressed users without a current digital subscription to participate. The survey pop-up was displayed over a period of seven days to cover different user types and was shown one time a day and at most six times in succession if the user did not participate. The survey resulted in a total of 692 completed questionnaires, of which we were able to use 591 for our analysis after accounting for incomplete answers.

Summary of Findings

Building on the literature on habits, inertia, and the status quo bias theory as theoretical lenses, we adapted the value-based adoption model to explain how habituation in the free context influences the willingness to convert into a paid subscription in the 'freemium' context. In this field study with real users of a national news media business, we identify habits as a main driver of users' valuation of subscription offers. A provocative finding of the study is that habits gained in the free version also diminish subscription intention through inertia. We find that habituation towards the free version increases both, the expected benefits of the premium version and inertia towards the free version, namely the preference for the status quo.

Statement of Key Contributions

The current findings encourage practitioners to reinforce the perception of premium benefits to surpass the allurement of free and hold critical implications for theory and marketing managers. From an academic/research perspective, the current study examines the construct of habit as a driver of repeat behavior, its development, and its benefits in the context of marketing. We model habits as a critical construct in the context of 'freemium' business models, in which a premium (paid) subscription exists alongside a free version. Managerially, our findings implicate that while the valuation of the expected benefits is limited because premium content can only be anticipated but not experienced as long as users are in the free version, increasing inertia will diminish the probability of conversion. The way out might be to avoid/limit habituation in the free context (by reducing free content), however, that will reduce the inventory for advertisers and therefore is not

a reasonable option for management. Another option is to focus on – as we call it – beneficial habituation, which means reinforcing the perception of/experiences with premium benefits by appropriate measures to outperform inertial effects toward free.

References are available upon request.

HOW FRANCHISING BUSINESS MAINTAIN OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY UNDER COVID-19: A BOOTSTRAP DEA STUDY

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Keywords: bootstrap data envelopment data analysis (DEA); franchising business; covid-19

Description: This research article utilizes a bootstrap DEA approach for assessing the operational efficiency of 16 chain restaurants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

How to utilize a bootstrap DEA approach to improve the operational efficiency of 16 chain restaurants during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Method and Data

The restaurant's performance is benchmarked throughout a 6-month period, which includes a two-month shutdown period due to COVID-19. The bias-corrected technical and scale efficiencies before and after the pandemic shutdown are estimated. The undesirable effect of the COVID-19 pandemic is significantly unquestionable. Based on a set of inputs (weekly average of workers per store, cost of goods sold, extra hours per store, and amount of discounts offered per store) and outputs (revenue and units sold), this paper has identified room of improvement for every single store. Managerial recommendations are discussed as well.

Summary of Findings

Our case of DEA is unique because there are not many papers analyzing the relationship between discounts, extra hours, and number of employees with a specific item sold. Our study identifies which stores are the best option for reducing the number of extra hours, because after 9 hours per week, the cost of extra hours is triple the salary per hour. Furthermore, we investigate which stores sell more combos according to the number of discounts applied.

Key Contributions

Our study contributes to agency theory in franchising literature. Past studies expected that franchising stores perform similarly when they have standardized operating characteristics in terms of product design, operation management, brand name, and quality requirement, but our study shows that stores are 44% different for managerial reasons. In our 16 stores, total discounts and overtime (hours) are the managerial decisions made by stores. According to agency theory, managers of individual franchisees often do not own the full costs/benefits of the operations, they usually have incentives to behave toward their own interests. Usually, franchisee will craft their own promotional plans (Dickey and Ives, 2000) and their own schedule about how many working hours each employee will have, the good portion of full-time and part-time employees, and potential overtime (Zolfagharian and Naderi (2020). Our study confirms these differences and enlightens managers of franchised stores to adopt more customized discounts and extra-working hours to improve store's operational efficiency.

IMPACT OF PRODUCT SELECTION ON SALES IN LIVE-STREAMING SELLING

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Keyword: live-streaming selling effectiveness, product selection, popular products combination, products collection

Description: In this research, we show that influencers' *strategic use of popular products combinations* (i.e., influencers jointly promoting products from multiple categories in the same live-streaming session) has an inverted-U shaped impact on a focal product's sales performance in the context of e-commerce live-streaming selling.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

E-commerce live-streaming selling has emerged as a thriving new marketing channel, which makes significant contributions to GDP and employment in some emerging economies in Asia. Despite its exponential growth, strategies that improve the effectiveness of live-streaming selling remain understudied. Our research fills this void. In a typical e-commerce live-streaming selling session, an influencer jointly promotes a collection of products from multiple categories with the discretion to select products into the collection. Motivated to sell a product (hereafter *a focal product*), which categories of products should an influencer select into the collection of a session? Should the influencer select products that have been frequently promoted jointly with the focal product in previous live-streaming sessions on the platform? If so, to what extent? These questions motivate us to study the effect of product selection on sales. In particular, we examine how influencers' *strategic use of popular products combinations* (i.e., influencers jointly promoting products from multiple categories in the same live-streaming session) (hereafter *SUPPC*) impacts the focal product's sales performance. We theorize that this relationship has an inverted-U shape because of the interplay of two mechanisms: perceived credibility of the influencer and perceived availability of alternative sessions.

Method and Data

Our data were provided by an Asia-based leading e-commerce platform in the local B2C market. Our data include all the live sessions streamed on the platform from Jan to June 2020. In total, our data covers 150,344 sessions hosted by 5,006 influencers. In each session, we observe the hosting influencer's ID, starting and ending hours and dates, the total number of viewers in the session, the viewers' engagement metrics (i.e., number of likes, shares, comments, and new followers), the

session title, and the list of products streamed in a session. For each product, we observe the retail price, the product category (e.g., facial care, PC peripheral) and unit sales in the live and corresponding replayed session. Across these live-streaming sessions in our data, we observe 134,435 unique products, and 262 unique product categories. The key outcome of interest in our study is the sales of a focal product so we reorganize the raw data to obtain a unit of analysis at the level of influencer-product-session. Our final sample contains 1,222,766 observations. We employ a zero-inflated Poisson model for estimation and rely on instrument variables as our identification strategy.

Summary of Findings

We find that *SUPPC* initially has a positive impact on the unit sales of a focal product but after a certain threshold, the impact becomes negative. Furthermore, a plot of marginal effects between *SUPPC* and unit sales confirms that the proposed inverted-U shape relationship between *SUPPC* and the sales of a focal product.

In our conceptualization, we propose that *SUPPC* drives sales of a focal product through the interplay between viewers' perceived credibility of the influencer's recommendation and their perceived availability of alternative live-streaming sessions. We provide empirical evidence of these mechanisms by looking for scenarios in which we can subsequently turn off each of the two mechanisms. We find that the effect of *SUPPC* on unit sales becomes linear and negative in the subsample of influencer with low perceived credibility in which all the influencers' perceived credibility consistently remains low over time. We also show that *SUPPC* no longer has any impact on unit sales in a sub-subsample of influencers with low perceived credibility and late-night hours in which the sessions promote substantially differentiated product categories, which may lead viewers to perceive that there are limited alternative sessions available.

Key Contributions

The proposed research contributes to the marketing literature on live-streaming and retail multi-category product assortment. First, the nascent live-streaming literature did not study how product selection strategies affect the product-level sales performance in a session. Our research adds to this stream of literature by exploiting variations at the session and product levels and studying the relationship between influencers' strategic use of popular products combinations and the product-level sales effectiveness in the live-streaming selling context. By empirically demonstrating an inverted U-shaped relationship between the degree of strategic use of popular products combinations and the sales of the focal product as well as the underlying mechanisms, we enrich the theoretical understanding of effective marketing strategies in this emerging marketing channel. Second, the scant literature on multi-category product assortment documents the important effects of aisle, display placements, and product variety in the traditional retail context. This research adds to this stream of literature by bringing a novel perspective that considers the interplay between the signaling effect and the differentiation effects of cross-category product selection in the unique retail context of e-commerce live-streaming selling.

IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOR: AN INTEGRATED REVIEW AND RESEARCH AGENDA

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Keywords: Impulse buying, Conceptualization, Hybrid review

Description: Systematic Literature review on Impulse Buying Behavior

ABSTRACT

Impulse Buying (IB) has been an interesting topic among academicians and practitioners for the last seven decades. This paper presents the systematic literature review of IB studies published in the last seventy years. The analysis of empirical and conceptual studies reveals: (1) evolution of IB research in the last seventy years along with the spread of geography, channel, and purchase stage; (2) synthesis of the underpinning theories used (3) methodological approaches employed; (4) and the chronological trend appeared in the IB research. This paper proposes a conceptual framework based on the literate analysis comprising antecedents, mediating mechanisms, and possible mediating variables. Finally, the paper concludes with managerial implications and reporting avenues for future research.

Keywords: Impulse buying, Systematic literature review, Hybrid review

1. INTRODUCTION

Impulse behaviors were first recognized by sociology researchers in the early 1920s, gaining more structured attention with the emergence of consumer behavior studies in the 1950s. Notably, Clover (1950) identified impulse buying, making it an enduring and captivating subject for both academics and practitioners. Recent statistics, like CNBC's report indicating over 60% of e-commerce and 58% of offline retail sales being attributed to impulse buying, underscore its pervasive influence, particularly significant, exceeding 90%, in the fast-moving consumer goods sector (CNBC FA Playbook, 2020; Neomarketing, 2020). From everyday consumables to luxury items, impulse buying continues to shape consumer behavior, as indicated by the Slickdeals Survey (2021).

The persistent complexity of the impulse buying process, often deviating from rational decision-making, remains a focal point for consumer researchers and marketers. Modern advancements, such as

same-day delivery, exchange offers, and accessible credit facilities in electronic, social, and mobile commerce platforms, have further facilitated impulse buying. However, economists caution that this behavior contributes to excessive spending, potentially leading individuals into debt traps (Sarah O'Brien, 2021).

This comprehensive review not only contributes to theoretical understanding but also holds practical implications. Firstly, it maps the trajectory of impulse buying literature over seven decades, offering insights into publication trends, geographical influences, purchase stages, and distribution channels. The underlying themes are distilled into four distinct phases. Secondly, the review traces the evolution of impulse buying research, detailing theoretical and methodological advancements. Thirdly, a conceptual framework is proposed, integrating six key antecedent factors and introducing a mediating mechanism anchored in self-regulation and emotional states. Additionally, anticipated mediation variables are incorporated into the framework. Finally, the review outlines future research directions for impulse buying, providing a holistic contribution to academic and practical realms.

2. THE METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED IN THIS REVIEW

Systematic literature reviews (SLR) are gaining popularity among researchers because of the exponential growth of literature across domains since the millennium. Many articles are available to guide the researchers in conducting SLRs (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009; Paul & Criado, 2020). There are multiple ways to conduct an SLR, but it is commonly classified into four different types. It can be either Domain-based, Theory-based, Method based or Meta-analysis review (Paul & Criado, 2020). In a theory-based review, researchers investigate the literature based on a specific theory; as a result, researchers modify or develop a new theory (Babić Rosario et al., 2019; Sample et al., 2020). In a method-based review, researchers focus on a particular methodology used in the literature(Schmidt & Bijmolt, 2020). At the same time, meta-analysis is a deep dig into the quantitative connections between literature and finding the relationship between them (Hulland & Houston, 2020). On the other hand, domain-based reviews are most common in SLRs. It carried out the entire domain of the literature by focusing on widely used methodologies, theories, and constructs (Iyer et al., 2020; Khamitov et al., 2019). Domain-based SLRs are further classified into structured, framework-based, bibliometric, and hybrid reviews (Paul et al., 2021).

In this review, we are exploring IB research in the last seventy years. We have decided to conduct a domain-based hybrid type review that can accommodate the past trends, current status, identified gaps, theoretical overview and future research directions without any bracket conditions.

2.1 Search Strategy

In this review, we have used 15-step literature shortlisting criteria developed by Pickering and Byrne (2014). It is shown in the figure 1.

In Steps 1-4, the research topic of Impulse Buying was established, focusing on consumer aspects. The exploration of available studies in Step 2 prioritized understanding characteristics and theories. Step 3 involved selecting articles using keywords "impulse buying" and "impulse purchase" from reputable journals based on CABS AJG, ABDC, A*, and SJR rankings. The search, conducted in databases like EBSCO, SCOPUS, and JSTOR, resulted in 249 articles within the sampling frame. Step 5 refined the list to 97 articles by excluding studies not specifically focused on impulse buying.

Steps 6-9 utilized an MS Excel spreadsheet for data extraction, analysis, and coding. After excluding 18 studies in Step 8 due to scope misalignment, the remaining 79 articles were thoroughly analyzed in Step 9, documenting constructs, theories, and methodologies.

Steps 10-15 aimed to integrate higher-quality literature for a comprehensive review. The final list of 79 articles, deemed suitable for consolidating research, was analyzed for key results, shortcomings, gaps, and future research directions. A bibliography is available upon request, marking the completion of a rigorous process to contribute substantiated insights to the field of impulse buying research.
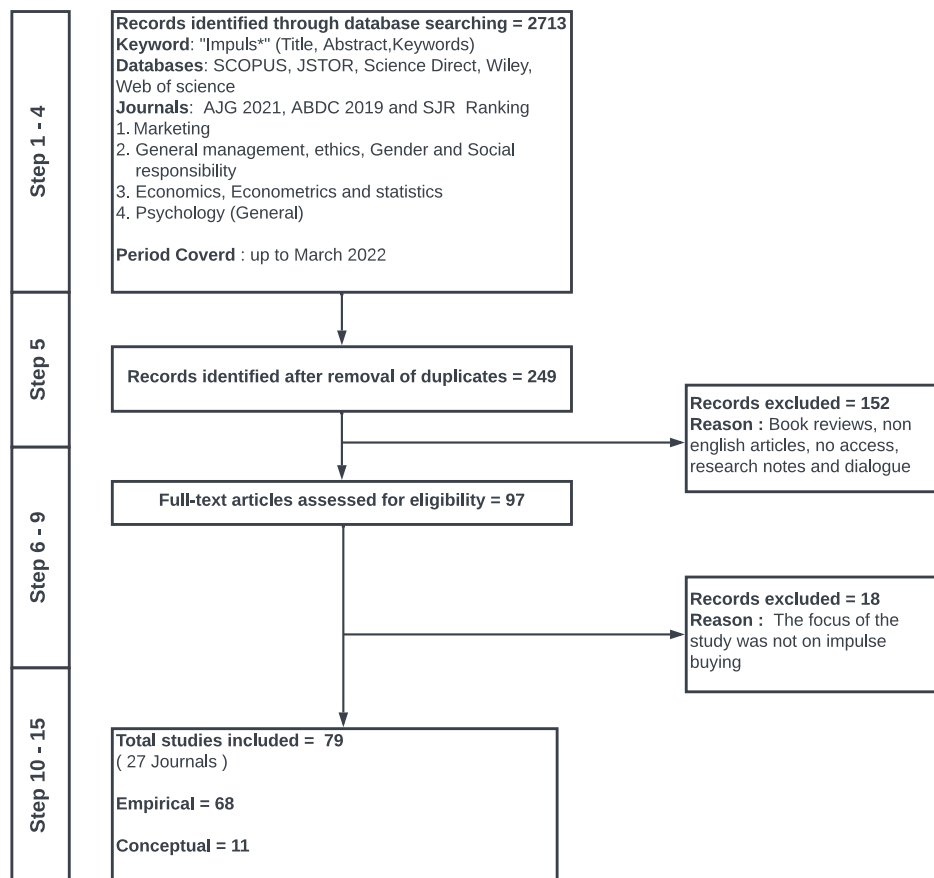
Figure 1: Shortlisting process employed in this review. *Source*: Adopted from (Bolt et al., 2022)

2.2 Findings

This overview synthesizes findings from seventy-nine studies across 27 journals spanning 1950 to 2021, comprising 68 empirical and 11 conceptual papers. The trajectory of IB research, depicted in Figure 3, highlights its maturity, with a significant surge post-millennium. Early studies observed impulsive buying behavior in retail stores, followed by a phase of conceptualization in the late 1980s. Methodological formulations and scale development characterized subsequent research, addressing factors, antecedents, and causes of IB. The quality analysis reveals over 85% in the first quartile, 96% in CABS AJG ranking 2021, and 96% in ABDC ranking 2019.

Leading journals include the Journal of Consumer Research, The Journal of Marketing Research, and European Journal of Marketing. Geographically, 63% of studies emanate from the USA, followed by China (7%), Taiwan (6%), Germany (2%), and South Korea (2%). Empirical studies dominate in the American continent (66%). The research spans purchase stages (pre-purchase 12%, purchase 66%, post-purchase 4%) and channels (online 15%, offline 57%, multichannel 6%). Independent variables in empirical studies encompass Impulse Buying Tendency, Money available, Time available, External cues, Ethnicity, Product characteristics, Mood, Social norms, Gender, Age, Income, Marital status, and Psychographic variables (n=68). The thematic progression and geographical distribution offer a nuanced understanding of IB dynamics.
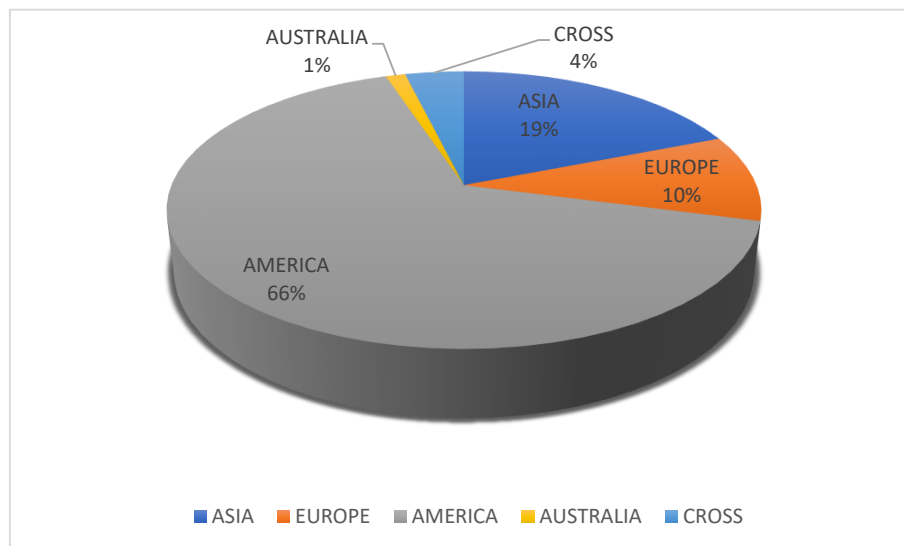
Figure 2: Geographical spread of studies

Figure 3: The evolution of Impulse Buying research.
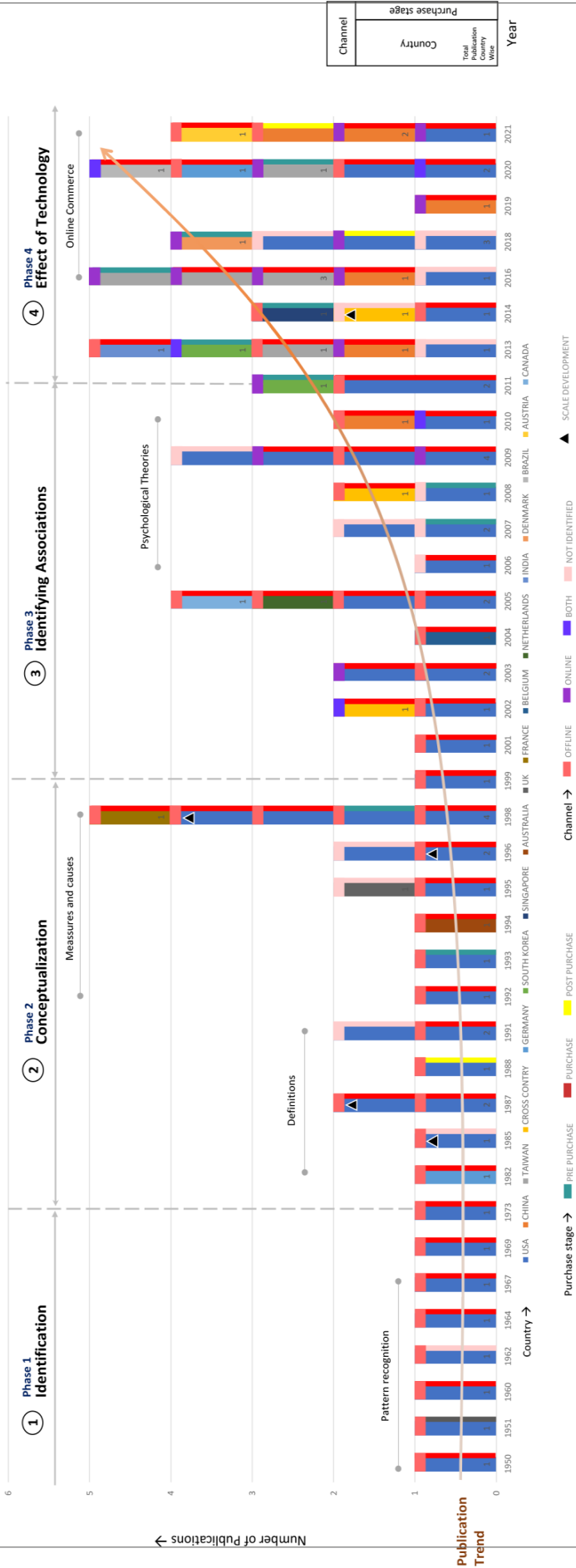
3. THE EVOLUTION OF IMPULSE BUYING RESEARCH

Over seven decades of Impulse Buying (IB) research can be delineated into four distinct phases.

3.1 Phase 1 (1950–1975) witnessed post-World War II innovation and the advent of IB in DuPont surveys. The first IB publication by Clover (1950) marked this period, emphasizing stimuli exposure and consumer traits.

3.2 Phase 2 (1976–2000) delved into advanced tools, differentiating IB from unplanned buying. Rook's seminal work defined IB as a sudden, powerful urge, exploring its emotional complexity and moods' influence. Various scales, including the Consumer Impulsiveness Scale (CIS), emerged to measure trait impulsivity.

3.3 Phase 3 (2001–2011) focused on psychological aspects, studying emotions, culture, and product characteristics. The impact of music, scent, and atmospherics on IB was explored. Culture, self-control, and co-shopping influence gained attention. Research also investigated emotions as mediators and the role of time in IB.

3.4 Phase 4 (2012–2022) witnessed a surge in online IB studies. Integrating marketing and information systems theories, researchers explored determinants of online IB, trust, and perceived risk. Online store design, navigation, and gamification techniques were found to enhance IB. Social commerce platforms, especially social media, played a pivotal role in influencing IB through parasocial interaction and perceived usefulness.

Noteworthy findings include the negative correlation between customer trust and perceived risk in online IB. Hedonic browsing positively affected online IB, while utilitarian browsing showed a negative relationship. The flow of experience acted as a mediator in online IB. Gamification techniques and social commerce platforms significantly impacted online IB, with visual appeal, portability, and handheld scanners affecting utilitarian and hedonic browsing.

Trait impulsivity remained a focal point, affecting internal motivation for IB. Essential relationship deficits increased IB likelihood. Payment methods, particularly credit cards, positively impacted IB, with credit limit misconceptions and anxiety influencing IB positively. Tourists with less experience showed negative effects of time scarcity on IB.

In conclusion, the evolving landscape of IB research has transitioned through distinct phases, reflecting changing consumer behaviors, technological advancements, and the emergence of online commerce. Each phase contributed unique insights, expanding the understanding of IB's multifaceted nature, from stimuli exposure and consumer traits to the intricate interplay of emotions, culture, and technology.

Table 1 : Summary of the four chronological phases in IB research.

Phase	1950-1975	1976-2000	2001-2011	2012-2022
Key papers	Stern (1962)	Piron (1991) Rook (1987) Rook & Hoch (1985)	Kacen & Lee, (2002) Luo (2005) Parboteeah et al., (2009) Vohs & Faber (2007)	Park et al., (2012)_; I.-L. Wu et al., (2016, 2020); Zheng et al., (2019)
Key antecedents	Marketing Mix Factors	Customer related Factors	Sociodemographic Factors	Platform Related factors
Key construct	Product Stimuli	Customer Stimuli	Ethnicity	Visual appeal, Ease of Use
Key continent	North America	North America	North America	Asia
Key Sector	Retail	Retail	Retail	Retail
Key Focus	Traditional Retail	Traditional Retail	Traditional Retail	Online retail
Key Theory	-	PAD emotional state model	Cultural dimensions theory	Stimulus organism response (SOR) model
Key Journal Category	Journal of Marketing	Journal of Consumer research	Journal of consumer psychology	• European Journal of Marketing • International Journal of Information Management
Key Method	Quantitative	Qualitative	Quantitative	Quantitative
Key data collection tool	Sales data (Secondary)	Observation/ Interview	Survey	Survey
Key timeframe	Within a year	Within a year	Within a year	Within a year
Key channel	offline	offline	offline	online
Key purchase stage	Purchase	Purchase	Purchase	Purchase
Key Scale	-	Rook & Hoch Scale (1985)	CIS (Puri,1996)	Impulse Buying Tendency (IBT) Scale
Key country	USA	USA	USA	China, Taiwan

4. THE REVIEW OF METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

We have analyzed the articles (n=79) based on: the methodology employed, the tools and techniques used to collect the data, analysis type, sample type, sample size, and the scales used in the studies.

Studies can be categorized into three types based on the methodologies applied: quantitative, 72% (n=57), qualitative, 6% (n=5) and mixed methodology, 14% (n=11). Quantitative methods are employed in most number of studies across all phases: Phase one, 57 % (n=4) ; Phase two, 52% (n=11); Phase three, 86% (n=18); Phase four, 80% (n=24). The survey method was the most used (46%) data collection technique in the literature, followed by the interview (8%), secondary databases (6%) and observation techniques (1%). However, researchers have developed robust experimental techniques

(20%) to reduce the survey method bias by mixing the data collection techniques. On the other hand, qualitative studies have been conducted in phase two (14%) and phase four (7%). Face to face Interview technique has emerged as the most employed methodology in qualitative studies.

For detailed information regarding the scales used in IB research, please refer to Table 2.

Table 2 : Scales used to measure IB metrics.

IB Metric	Name of the measurement mechanism	Description	Type	Introduced	Reference study
Psychology scale - Impulsivity	Matching Familiar Figures Test (MFFT)	Measuring trait Impulsivity	Self-report	Kagan's (1966)	(Balabanis & Craven, 1997; Gerbing et al., 1987)
	omnibus personality inventories: the 16 Personality Factors Questionnaire (16PF) Impulsivity (surgency) scale	Measuring trait Impulsivity	Self-report	(Cattell, Eber, & Tatsuoka, 1970)	(Gerbing et al., 1987)
	Personality Research Form (PRF) Impulsivity scale	Measuring trait Impulsivity	Self-report	(Jackson, 1974)	(Gerbing et al., 1987)
	impulsivity scale from the EASIIII Temperament Survey, Version III	Measuring trait Impulsivity	Self-report	(Buss & Plomin, 1975).	(Gerbing et al., 1987)
	Specialized impulsivity scales 1-5	Measuring trait Impulsivity	Self-report	(S.B.G. D. W Eysenck & H. J. Eysenck,1977)	(Gerbing et al., 1987)
	Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey (GZTS) Restraint (rhathymia) scale	Measuring trait Impulsivity	Self-report	(Guilford, Guilford,& Zimmerman, 1978)	(Gerbing et al., 1987)
	Barratt Impulsivity Scale, Version 8 (BIS-8)	Measuring trait Impulsivity	Self-report	(Barratt, 1984).	(Gerbing et al., 1987)
	Barratt Impulsivity Scale, Version 10 (BIS-10)	Measuring trait Impulsivity	Self-report	(Barratt, 1985a)	(Gerbing et al., 1987)

	Specialized impulsivity scales 1-7	Measuring trait Impulsivity	Self-report	(S. B. G. Eysenck, Pearson, Easting, & Allsopp, 1985)	(Gerbing et al., 1987)
IB-related Personality Trait	Consumer Impulsivity Scale	A person's temperament to buy impulsively	Self-Report	(Rook & Hoch, 1985)	(Jones et al., 2003; Kacen & Lee, 2002; Parboteeah et al., 2009; Vohs & Faber, 2007)
	General Impulsivity Scale	Consumer impulsiveness trait measure	Self-Report	(Gerbing et al., 1987)	(Weun et al., 1998)
	Consumer Impulsiveness scale (CIS)	Individual nature to act on urges with the evaluation of its consequences	Self-Report	(Puri, 1996)	(Sharma et al., 2014b)
	Consumer Impulsiveness scale for cross-cultural study	Consumers nature to buy impulsively in cross-cultural settings	Self-Report	(Sharma et al., 2014b)	(Sharma et al., 2014a)
	Impulse Buying Tendency (IBT) Scale	Measuring the individual IBT trait in consumers.	Self-Report	(Weun et al., 1998)	(Adelaar et al., 2003; Beatty & Elizabeth Ferrell, 1998; Kacen & Lee, 2002; Mohan et al., 2013)
Buying Behavior	Impulse Buying Behavior	Expressing IB Behavior on the time of purchase	Self-Report	(Kacen & Lee, 2002)	(Kacen & Lee, 2002; Lee & Kacen, 2008)
			Self-Report	(Yoon, 2013)	(Yoon, 2013)
			Lab Study	(Vohs & Faber, 2007)	(Vohs & Faber, 2007)
		Individual Impulsive purchase decision making	Self-report	(Rook & Fisher, 1995)	(Parboteeah et al., 2009)
		Individual state of desire	Self-report	(Luo, 2005)	(Luo, 2005)

Urge to Buy impulsively (UBI)	to purchase an object after having an encounter with that.	Self-report	(Adelaar et al., 2003)	(Adelaar et al., 2003)
Real Impulse Buying Data	Neural cortical activation using fMRI Data	Lab Study	(Hubert et al., 2018)	(Hubert et al., 2018)
	Facial Expression	Lab Study	(Weinberg & Gottwald, 1982)	(Weinberg & Gottwald, 1982)
IB measurement on shopping mall Setting	Items bought on impulse	Field Observation	(Mohan et al., 2013)	(Mohan et al., 2013)
Categorical scale (1-3) 3 is impulse buying	Categorical Variables	Field Observation	(Beatty & Elizabeth Ferrell, 1998)	(Beatty & Elizabeth Ferrell, 1998)
Impulse Buying on a stipulated time frame	Impulse purchase on a given time	Field Observation	(Jones et al., 2003)	(Jones et al., 2003)

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVANCING THE THEORY

The objective of any framework is to explain the phenomena by finding and establishing the correlation and causality among constructs. A framework usually establishes the connections among the constructs using the existing theories that may further lead to the development of new theories. The past researchers made several approaches to integrate approaches of the IB to give a unified theoretical orientation(Iyer et al., 2020; Xiao & Nicholson, 2013). However, those attempts were limited in their scope because of considering the few antecedents and moderating factors followed by a loosely grounded mediating mechanism. Furthermore, the shifts in consumer purchase behaviour due to the socio-economic conditions (Eg: Covid 19, War Conditions) and the change in the technological landscape also need to be integrated into a new IB framework for a grounded theory building.

After synthesizing the past literature, we have identified the variables related to the IB. Further, we grouped it into six different categories: customer-related factors, platform-related factors, channel-related factors, marketing mix factors, sociodemographic factors and situational factors. The independent antecedent variables are better predictors of IB and influence IB via a mediating mechanism created by the self-regulatory mechanism controlled by emotions and the pre-purchase state Urge to buy impulsively (UBI).

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS

This review has identified and classified the antecedents of IB by examining past studies. We have differentiated thirty-six independent variables into six different antecedent groups. Since IB accounts for more than sixty-two per cent offline and fifty-eight per cent online sales volume, every marketer should understand the antecedent factors of IB. These factors can be a change maker in terms of formulating marketing strategies. It is summarised in **Table 4.**

Table 3: Summary of managerial implication

Item	Implications
Customer related factors	• It is better to focus on psychographic variables rather than focusing on demographic age and gender for customer grouping because psychographic variables affect IB more than demographic variables.
Platform and Channel related factors	• Identifying and grouping impulsive-prone customers using consumer behavioural patterns in electronic, social and mobile commerce platforms will help the managers to ensure more sales via specialized campaigns. • Increase the number of channels of distribution • Improve the ease of use by using the traditional navigation process • Invest in security mechanisms to build trust in customers • Ensure the availability of credit payment mechanisms such as Buy Now Pay Later.
Marketing Stimuli	• Both online and offline retailers investigate the new marketing stimuli that emerged in digital eco systems. • Mangers should plan and invest in price stimuli rater than increasing the investment in atmospherics stimuli • Develop more hedonic level attributes in products/services to increase IB • Reduce the information overload in product descriptions
Mediating mechanism	• Managers should ensure that the campaigns are capable enough to evoke the customer's mood state. Positive moods enhance the IB. • Customers are using IB to change their negative mood to positive mood, which shows that every shop should ease up the buying process to enhance this activity for more IB sales.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

IB research has a history of more than seventy years. As we plotted the literature into multiple themes, we can see that IB research has evolved over time. During every phase, studies have been conducted to identify the new relationship between antecedent factors and the IB. However, studies are still required to formulate the ideal relationship between the antecedents and IB. Especially the marketing, platforms and channel-related factors. The role of the affective state has been tested multiple times(Adelaar et al., 2003; Donovan et al., 1994; May & Irmak, 2018; Mukhopadhyay & Johar, 2009; Rook & Gardner, 1993), but in the context of omnichannel retailing needs to be studied in future studies. In addition, rather than just investigating the effect of culture in terms of ethnicity, future studies should investigate the role of social norms, government policies, accessibility, and customer-related factors in IB. Detailed future research orientations are given in **Table 5**.

Table 4: Impulse buying future research agenda

Item	Future research directions
Customer related factors	• More studies are required to identify new customer traits that act as internal stimuli. • The post-purchase actions of impulsive people need to be studied.
Platform and Channel related factors	• Digital ecosystems-related stimuli must be identified and classified to advance the framework's scope. • The role of multichannel and omnichannel retailing in IB needs to be investigated. • The IB related to the AR/VR and metaverse store need to be studied. • Research is required to check the role of co-shopper, peer influence or the presence of family on IB in the context of online shopping.
Marketing Stimuli	• The role of reviews, experience, WoM and EWoM must be studied in IB. • The connection between influencer marketing and how it affects IB has to be studied. • Sustainable marketing practices and their influence on IB need to be studied.
Methodology	• The majority of the studies use survey methods to collect the data. Since the antecedent factors are dynamic, it is necessary to develop experimental designs to collect more realistic data. • Advanced Sensory mechanisms (fMRI, eye tracking, heat map) must be used in data collection. • More longitudinal studies are required to measure antecedent factors' effects over time.

	• More qualitative studies are required to ground the theoretical contributions • Digital commerce platforms must be analysed to understand consumer actions and journey maps. It can further help to plot the "Impulsive Customer Journey".

8. CONCLUSION

This literature review pioneers a comprehensive examination of Impulse Buying (IB) studies spanning seven decades, uniquely categorizing them into four distinct phases. The analysis underscores the lack of a well-grounded foundation in IB research, resulting in varied definitions. Addressing this gap, the study proposes an integrated IB model. Antecedents encompass customer, platform, channel, sociodemographic, and situational factors, with self-regulation mediating the impact of affective states on decision-making. The model introduces moderating factors—advertising intensity, price levels, product placement, and information processing. This unified framework provides a robust foundation for future IB research, offering a nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in contemporary contexts.

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IN A RUSH TO BUY? HOW PERCEIVED URGENCY AFFECTS CONSUMERS' LIVE-COMMERCE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Statement of Key Contributions

Live-commerce services are interactive shopping platforms that sell products through online live video shows. Customers can browse and buy products during live shows and interact with show hosts and other customers while shopping. Our study is among the first to explore the impact of live-commerce platforms on purchase intentions in the contexts of engagement and a sense of urgency. The findings of our experimental study provide U.S. researchers and marketers with valuable insights into the potential roles of live-commerce platforms that are already massively popular in East Asian countries such as South Korea and China. The study will also add to the academic marketing research on online consumer behavior and e-commerce buying processes in general and will be a useful foundation for both researchers and marketers to initiate research and business directions that involve live-commerce.

Extended Abstract

Background

Live-commerce emerges as a new subset of e-commerce that allows salespersons to interact with consumers via screen-mediated presentations (Bharadwaj et al. 2022; Cai, and Wohn 2019; Hamilton, Garrenston, and Kerne 2014). Although this type of retail shares similarities with home shopping TV programs in the 1980s (Cortese and Rubin 2010), live-commerce elevates the customer shopping experience through interactive communications and streamlined product fulfillment services. To harness the full potential of live-commerce, all major social media and traditional e-commerce platforms scrambled to launch live-commerce services including Instagram live, Facebook Live, and Amazon Live. Walmart partnered with Tiktok to host livestream shopping events for beauty products during the holiday seasons (Bursztynsky 2020). Other major retailers such as Nordstrom, Petco and IKEA are also embracing this new format of retailing. According to Statista (2022), live-commerce sales in the U.S will reach 55 billion dollars in 2026, representing a 70% annual growth rate from 2022.

Research Motivations

Compared with traditional e-commerce, live-commerce differs in two major ways: a high level of customer engagement and a limited time duration for product presentation and purchase. In a live-commerce shopping show, customers can interact with the show host and other customers by posting questions or leaving comments through live chat. This high level of interactivity differentiates live-commerce from traditional e-commerce platforms such as Amazon. Moreover, live-commerce sessions usually feature time-limited promotions as an incentive to boost sales during a short period of time. These promotion tools may work well in the short term by creating a sense of urgency, but they may also result in negative experiences including customers' remorse during the post-purchase stage of the consumer journey.

The objective of our study is to examine consumers' behavior in live-commerce. In particular, we would like to examine how the sense of urgency and engagement may affect live-commerce customers' shopping experience.

Literature Review

Live-commerce, as an emerging subset of e-commerce, has captured researchers' attention in recent years. From sellers' perspectives, studies explore selling strategies including sales approaches during live-commerce sessions (Wongkitrungrueng, Dehouche, and Assarut 2020), salesperson's facial expressions (Bharadwaj et al 2022), and the influence of product design strategy on sellers' adoption of live-commerce (Jiang et al. 2022). From customers' perspectives, research focuses on how customers respond to this new type of retailing format. Since interactivity is a unique feature of live-commerce, studies assess interactivity in different ways. According to Wongkitrungrueng et al. (2020), live-commerce shopping created symbolic value through social interaction between customers and salespeople and information sharing among customers. Also, the symbolic value improves customers' level of engagement during the shopping journey. Moreover, Kang et al. (2021) note a curvilinear relationship between the level of interactivity and customer engagement. As the interactivity exceeds an optimal level, customers become less engaged or even avoid social interaction during live-commerce shopping. Generally speaking, studies agree on the high level of consumer engagement in live-commerce shopping but remains unclear on how the increased engagement level may further change influence consumers' buying decisions. As a step further, our study proposes the following mechanism through which engagement and a sense of urgency will affect customers' shopping experience in a live-commerce environment:

H1 (serial mediation): Customers who shop on a live-commerce platform (vs. an e-commerce website) are more engaged with their shopping, resulting in more positive product evaluations, which leads to stronger purchase intentions.

H1a (moderated-serial mediation): The serial-mediation effect described in H1 is negatively moderated by customers' sense of urgency.

Method and Results

A total of 168 individuals participated in an in-person experiment session, and we analyzed responses from 150 of those who completed the session. About 93% of them (n=150) were between 18 and 25 years old, and about 45% of them were women (male=54.67%; female=44.67%; non-binary/3rd gender=.7%). The session consisted of a one-way between-subjects design; all participants were randomly assigned to either a live-commerce condition or a web-based e-commerce condition. In a live-commerce (or a web-based e-commerce) condition, participants were asked to browse product options on a Tupperware live-commerce streaming show (or browse the same products on a Tupperware e-commerce website). After reviewing the products, on 7-point scales, they reported shopping engagement levels (O'Brien 2010; α=.90), product evaluations (Kirmani, Sood, and Bridges 1999; α=.83), purchase intentions (Burcu, Ünal, and Aysel 2013; α=.82) based on the shopping task and reported their general tendency for urgent urge (α=.83; "Urgency" questions; Cyders et al. 2014).

We analyzed the data using a moderated mediation model 91 (50,000 bootstrap samples) from PROCESS macros (Hayes, 2018). The results support H1, explaining the downstream consequences of livestream services and urgent urges. The results show that shopping on a live commerce platform (X), compared to an e-commerce site, had a more positive indirect effect on shoppers' purchase intentions through their heightened online shopping engagement (M1) and more positive product evaluations (M2). This positive serial-mediation effect was significant only with low (95%CI[.003,.16]) and moderate (95%CI[.006,.12]) tendency for urgent urge, suggesting a moderated mediation effect of the tendency for urgent urge (Index=-.02,SE=.02,95%CI[=-.06,-.0007]). Both the reverse serial mediation and reverse serial moderated mediation, in which the order of the mediators was swapped, were not significant, supporting H1a.

Discussion and Contributions

Online shopping channels and customers' shopping patterns have dramatically evolved with the development of new technologies and device options. Although additional studies are necessary, our first study shows strong downstream consequences of live stream services on engagement, product evaluations, and purchase intentions. Live-commerce platforms are one of the newly developing online shopping channels in the U.S., and it is critical for marketing researchers and marketers to understand how these new platforms will be received in the U.S. market, which is different from other markets, as briefly introduced earlier.

The findings of the study add to the existing marketing literature on online consumer behavior and offer both researchers and practitioners early insights into what the role of live-commerce might be like in the U.S. retail market. More importantly, the study provides various reference points that researchers and practitioners can utilize to develop their initial research and business directions.

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Figure 1

Tendency for urgent urge (W)			
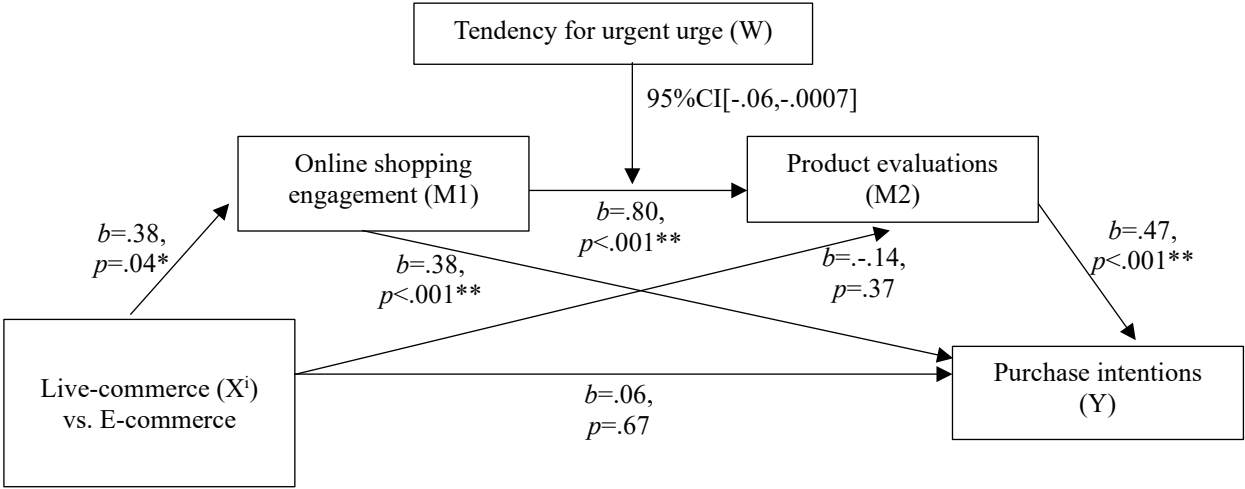
Indirect effect of live-commerce on purchase intentions

Tendency for urgent urge (W)	b	SE	95% CI
3.00	.07	.04	.003, .16
4.00	.04	.03	.001, .12
5.00	.02	.02	-.01, .08

i. The live-commerce condition was coded as 1, and the web-based e-commerce condition was coded as 0.
*Statistically significant at $p<.05$
**Statistically significant at $p<.001$

MARKETING INSTRUMENTS AND OMNICHANNEL ONLINE AND OFFLINE RETAIL BRAND EQUITY

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We analyze the role of traditional, online-specific, and cross-channel marketing instruments (MIs) on consumer behavior through online and offline retail brand equity (RBE) in omnichannel retailing and give additional insights into the reciprocal relationships between offline and online RBE.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Omnichannel firms offering a seamless experience use various MIs to increase their brand positioning (Wichmann et al. 2022). However, RBE differs offline and online due to differences in competition or consumer associations (Swaminathan et al. 2020).

Extend research has mostly analyzed traditional or online-specific MIs as driving RBE. Studies, such as those on cross-channel MIs (e.g., Frasquet and Miquel 2017; Gao and Huang 2021), do not address omnichannel firms. Only Ray et al. (2021) or White et al. (2013) study effects of traditional and online-specific MIs on RBE but show contradictory effect strengths. Fewer studies simultaneously analyze both brands (e.g., Allaway et al. 2011; Khan and Rahman 2016). Only Kwon and Lennon (2009) examine the effects of traditional and online MIs on purchase intention through offline and online brand attitudes. The important roles of cross-channel MIs about both RBEs and their reciprocal effects have not yet been studied.

Based on categorization theory, we aim to address calls and gaps: Do traditional, online-specific, and cross-channel MIs influence offline and online RBE, and what does their path to consumer

loyalty look like? Are there reciprocal relationships between offline and online RBE and, if so, how do they affect the MIs pathways?

Method and Data

We focused on fashion retailing because this sector represents one of the largest in many countries and accounts for 23.6%, the highest amount of online sales in Germany (Planet Retail 2023), and leading firms use numerous MIs. We chose four of the 15 top-selling fashion omnichannel retailers based on specific criteria (Planet Retail 2023). Three surveys were carried out in four-month intervals. Respondents must have shopped online and offline from the selected retailer before each wave. After eliminating outliers, 379 respondents remained.

We used Likert-type scales and referred to established scales. MIs were measured at time-point t_1, on a second-order basis using factor analysis. Traditional MIs were assortment, price, layout, and communication (three items each, Swoboda et al. 2016). Online-specific MIs include website aesthetics, navigation, service, security/privacy (three items each, Kwon and Lennon 2009). Cross-channel MIs were channel integration, consistency (three items each, Oh et al. 2012). Four items were used for offline and online RBE at t_2 (Keller 2010), three items for loyalty at t_3 (Oliver 1999). Covariates were measured at t_0: age, gender, internet expertise. Reliability, validity, discriminant, CMV validity were satisfactory; hypotheses were tested using sequential mediation structural equation modeling with cross-lagged interaction effects in Mplus 8.8.

Summary of Findings

Regarding our first research question, the results show traditional MIs affect consumer loyalty via both RBEs (stronger effect through offline (vs. online) RBE). Traditional MIs show stronger effects through both RBEs than the other MIs. Online-specific MIs exhibit only an online path to loyalty. This is barely visible if offline and online RBE are not distinguished. Cross-channel MIs affect both RBEs but paths to loyalty, however, have by tendency a stronger impact on offline RBE and respective path.

Regarding our second research question, online and offline RBE reciprocally affect loyalty (offline RBE more strongly). The reciprocal findings provide insights into the effect path of the MIs on loyalty through RBEs, which we cannot simultaneously test in study 1. A tendentially stronger effect of online on offline RBE than vice versa emerges. This does not change the dominant role of traditional MIs, but their path through online (vs. offline) RBE gains importance, as it is the strongest path through online RBE of all MIs. Like cross-channel MIs, the path through online RBE is reinforced. The greatest implications are for online-specific MIs. Their only significant path through online RBE is amplified by respective activation in consumer memory.

Key Contributions

Study 1 contributes to knowledge by analyzing the paths of traditional, online-specific, and cross-channel MIs on consumer loyalty through offline and online RBE. We utilize MIs because: they are independently perceived by consumers, important for engaging omnichannel shoppers, and strengthen RBE. Scholars question the role of traditional MIs in modern retailing, while others call for their examination (Blut et al. 2018; Wichmann et al. 2022). We argue knowing the roles of the MIs in offline and online RBE is essential, as firm environments, competition, and shopper associations differ (e.g., Swaminathan et al. 2020). We extend the application of categorization theory. Shoppers simplify information processing due to much available salient information, match it to subcategory knowledge (RBE), and draw inferences for loyalty decisions.

Study 2 contributes to knowledge by analyzing the reciprocal effects of online and offline RBE on consumer loyalty, thus feedback relations, as one association likely affects the other, and vice versa. Our study of both RBEs extends insights into MIs paths. Scholars call for respective studies to reveal all relationships for omnichannel firms (e.g., White et al. 2013). Consumers reciprocally transfer knowledge and draw inferences between the subcategories in both directions but to different degrees.

References are available upon request.

MORE OR LESS? HOW GLOBAL-LOCAL IDENTITIES INFLUENCE ASSORTMENT SIZE PREFERENCES

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Keywords: *Global-Local Identities, Assortment Size, Uniqueness, Global vs. Local Brands*

Description: How Global-Local identities influence assortment size preferences.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

With the advent of globalization, many companies have developed a global footprint and operate in different geographies of the world. Concomitantly, many local companies were forced out of business as they were unable to compete with global companies due to cost pressures. One of the largest contributors to the cost structure of a retailer is the assortment of products they are required to store. Understanding the correct assortment size a retailer should keep can make or break their profit structure (FMI 1993 from Sethuraman et al. 2022). For consumers, it is one of the most important criteria for shopping (Briesch et al. 2009). So, this raises an important managerial question - how to set assortment strategies given the continuous market trend toward globalization. What makes this question more relevant is that globalization beyond its effect on international trade also influences the evolution of social identities such that people developed a more global identity with interest in global cultures alongside their existing local identities focusing on local traditions (Arnett 2002). Despite research into factors influencing assortment preference, for example purchase type, resources spent, and time of consumption (e.g., Whitley et al., 2018), we still know very less about the impact of stable social-identity-related factors. As such, we investigate how people's global vs. local identities influence their assortment size preferences. We predict that global (vs. locals) would prefer larger (smaller) assortment sizes. This is due to the global (locals) higher (lower) need for uniqueness, which we believe stems from the larger size of the global in-group, resulting in a stronger sense of individuality despite feeling interconnected.

Method and Data

In order to test this hypothesis, we ran four studies.

Study 1 (N=212, undergraduate students) tests the hypothesized relationship between global identity and assortment size preference using an established measure of global-local identity from Tu et al. (2009). Assortment size preference was operationalized using the method set forth by Whitley et al. (2018). Specifically, participants indicated how many different pairs of shoes they would examine before making a final purchase decision. Thereafter, participants completed the eight-item global-local identity scale. Following Ng et al. 2021, we subtracted the means of the 4-item local item measure from the 4-item global identity measure to create the relative measure of salient global identity (M_{global} - M_{local}), with a higher value indicating stronger global identity. A regression analysis with the salient global identity as the predictor variable and the assortment size as the dependent variable revealed a significant positive relationship between global identity and preference for a larger assortment size (b = .41, SE = .20, p = .03).

Study 2a (N=303, Mturk workers) and Study 2b (N = 226, undergraduate students) were designed to provide further evidence for the hypothesized effect by manipulating global-local identity and using two different products. Both studies followed identical designs. Participants first completed the global-local identity manipulation task adopted from Ng et al. 2021. After that similar to study 1, participants indicated their assortment preference in a given product category: fictional novels in study 2a, and candies in study 2b.

Result Study 2a: A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of global-local manipulation on assortment size preference ($F (1, 301) = 4.50$, p = .03). Specifically, participants in the global condition exhibited a preference for greater assortment (M= 11.98, SD= 10.16), compared to those in the local condition (M =9.92, SD= 8.13).

Result Study 2b: A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of global-local manipulation on assortment size preference (F (1, 224) = 7.51, p <.01). Specifically, participants in the global condition exhibited a preference for greater assortment (M= 8.41, SD= 4.47), compared to those in the local condition (M =6.93, SD= 3.58).

Study 3 (N=335, Mturk workers) tests the mediating role of the need for uniqueness. Procedurally similar to study 1, participants' assortment size choice was measured using a new product category: paint for living room. Thereafter participants completed the four-item need for uniqueness measure (e.g. "while deciding on how many options to examine, I focused on making a unique choice", α=.87). Thereafter, participants completed the measure for global-local identity. A regression analysis revealed a significant effect of salient global identity on assortment size preference (b= .81, SE=.37, p=.02). Mediation analysis using PROCESS Model 4, with salient global identity as the predictor variable, need for uniqueness as the mediator, and assortment size as the dependent variable revealed a significant indirect effect (b = .18, SE = .10, 95% CI [.0174, .4318]). Additionally, the direct effect became non-significant (b= .63, p = .09).

Summary of Findings

Across four studies using different product categories and both measured and manipulated global-local identity, we find converging evidence in support of our primary hypothesis. The findings add to our knowledge of how social-identity related factors influence assortment size preference. Managerially, this means that small retailers who serve customers with predominantly local identities can decrease the size of their assortment without backlash from local consumers and thus improve their profitability, while businesses serving customers with more global identities need to increase the size of their assortments so that global can find more unique products.

Key Contributions

Globalization poses challenges for retailers, both global and local brands, in balancing assortment size for customer satisfaction without compromising profitability. Small local retailers, facing heightened competition, struggle with the financial implications of maintaining extensive assortments. This study addresses how retailers can manage assortment sizes by examining consumer preferences in the context of emerging global vs. local social identities.

The research reveals a pattern: individuals with predominantly global identities prefer larger assortments, while those with local identities favor smaller assortments due to a greater need for uniqueness. Through experiments measuring or manipulating global/local identities across diverse product categories, evidence supports the correlation between consumers' local (global) identities and their inclination toward smaller (larger) assortments.

This has implications for theory and practice. Activating local identities can enhance the profitability of small retailers with a focus on smaller assortments. Conversely, global brands may benefit from maintaining larger assortments, aligning with the preferences of individuals with predominantly global identities. This research enriches our understanding of the interplay between global identities, the desire for uniqueness, and its impact on assortment size preferences in a globalized environment.

References available upon request.

MYSTERY AS A LUXURY SERVICE BRAND SIGNAL

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Keywords: luxury services, social media marketing, mystery appeals, signalling theory.

Description: This study investigates, using the lens of signalling theory, how the element of mystery surrounding a luxury service experience can be signalled through social media via a total of 29 interviews with Michelin star restaurants in Ireland and the UK.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

One of the challenges for luxury service marketers remains balancing the pervasiveness of social media platforms with a desire to preserve a sense of mystery to provoke curiosity on the part of prospective visitors. Social media platforms continue to occupy a prominent position within luxury service brands' (LSBs) marketing strategies and an emergent literature stream explores implications for both theory and practice. The democratisation that social media brings seems diametrically opposed to the core pillars of LSBs, such as mystery and exclusivity, thus potentially limiting our understanding of these platforms for luxury marketing. Consumers rely on online media to inform themselves about prospective purchases, particularly high-involvement purchases such as luxury services. Therefore, the question for LSBs is not 'if', but 'how', social media can be effectively integrated into marketing strategies, and how it can be signalled. This study investigates LSBs' social media marketing (SMM) strategies from the brand perspective; specifically, how can a sense of mystery surrounding the nature of the luxury service experience be signalled while engaging in social media?

Method and Data

A qualitative approach was utilised in exploring the approaches of LSBs in embedding mystery appeals in their SMM strategies using a signalling theory lens. The sample in this study includes restaurants which held at least one Michelin star. Being a world-renowned standard in recognition of fine dining establishments, inclusion based on Michelin star status avoids any potential discrimination in participants' selection. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 29 Michelin star restaurants in Ireland and the UK with individuals responsible for management of their restaurants' SMM. Prior to the interview, the existing

SMM collateral was consulted, and initial notes were taken for further discussion enabling a more succinct inquiry regarding their SMM strategies and the modality and role of mystery appeals therein. Interview transcriptions were analysed using a thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke 2006, 2020). In the code generation stage, responses were analysed and various concepts and features regarding the use of mystery appeals in SMM strategies were identified. To ensure validity and reliability, two experienced marketing scholars independently coded a sample of eight interview transcripts which were then compared for inter-coder reliability (Bazi, Filieri, and Gorton 2020).

Summary of Findings

LSBs continuously face the challenge of employing democratised social media platforms for marketing purposes while seeking to preserve traditional luxury characteristics such as exclusivity. Our findings indicate that Michelin star restaurants purposefully withhold certain elements of the luxury service experience in their SMM strategies to maximise the perception of originality during the service encounter, while ensuring those elements which are portrayed online further signal their Michelin star status and quality. Signals serving to communicate the luxury status of the brand can be embedded within social media content in either a conspicuous or inconspicuous fashion. Conspicuous signals aim to communicate the luxury elements of the service more explicitly, thus lowering information asymmetry at the cost of preserving an element of mystery regarding its service experience. Conversely, brands may engage in more inconspicuous signalling which maintains high levels of information asymmetry and, thus, preserve an element of mystery and exclusivity surrounding the nature of its luxury service experience. Thus, embedding mystery appeals in SMM content can potentially be counter-intuitive for brands wishing to preserve mystery surrounding the

service experience by creating a reliance on review platforms which may not cultivate a reliable or desirable representation of the experience.

Key Contributions

This study contributes to the fledgling literature on luxury services (i.e., Wirtz, Holmqvist, and Fritze 2020) as well as the more maturing confluence of social media marketing and luxury branding streams (Creevey, Coughlan, and O'Connor 2022). This paper builds on signalling theory in proposing a theoretical framework depicting mystery appeals within LSBs' SMM as existing on a continuum ranging from inconspicuous to conspicuously signalled. Conspicuous signals reduce information asymmetry within the market by disclosing aspects of the luxury service experience in a bid to inform potential consumers and, ultimately, influence purchase behaviour. Inconspicuous appeals preserve a sense of mystery yet results in the prolongation of information asymmetry in the market which may result in prospective customers turning to third party sources, outside the LSB's control. The findings offer practical implications for luxury marketers seeking to embed mystery appeals in their SMM strategies to either maintain or reduce information asymmetry. We suggest LSBs strike a balance between preserving information asymmetry through embedding inconspicuous mystery appeals in SMM to enhance exclusivity perceptions with the converse approach of divulging certain aspects of the experience as a further demonstration of the luxury quality of the service experience to enhance desirability.

References are available upon request.

New Frontiers in Purchase Behavior:

The Appeal of Digital and Non-Monetary Payment Methods

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Keywords: digital payment, non-monetary, purchase behavior, consumer behavior, retail

Description: This study examined the preferred payment methods of consumers with

consideration of traditional payment (e.g., cash, credit card), new and emerging digital payment

(e.g., mobile wallet, cryptocurrency), and non-monetary payment (e.g., trade, voucher).

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Through centuries of commerce, methods used to exchange goods for payment have varied drastically, including bartering, the exchange of goods, and monetary purchasing using cash, credit cards, mobile payments, and other methods (De Luna et al., 2019; Vondolia & Navrud, 2019). In the 21st century, retailing has progressed significantly, in addition to the aforementioned payment methods, digital payment methods have risen in popularity (Cochrane, 2023; Wertz, 2022). Research has shown that consumers have become less reliant on cash in purchasing goods, opting for credit and digital payment options (Cubides, O'Brien, 2021). However, consumer payment preferences across traditional, non-monetary, and emerging payment options have been minimally explored. Building on early retail activities and consumer demand, this study sought to explore the preferred methods of payment. A broad range of payment types were considered including traditional payment (cash or card), new payment (digital, cryptocurrency), and non-monetary payment (trade, voucher). The following research questions were addressed:

RQ1: What is the preferred payment method for purchases?

RQ2: How does the shopping environment affect the consumer's preferred payment method for purchases?

RQ3: How do non-monetary payment methods impact purchasing behavior?

Method and Data

We sought to explore the preferred methods of payment by shoppers for fashion, lifestyle, and home purchases. We began our research with a pilot study to establish a baseline understanding of consumer demand relating to non-monetary purchases, the payment method

with limited previous data and insights. In the pilot study, an experiment was conducted in which consumers were able to shop in a pop-up store using non-monetary purchasing options including exchange and non-monetary currency. Longitudinal, secondary data was collected from a pop-up store that operated on a university campus.

The pop-up store was open to the public for two-weeks in March 2022 and March 2023. The retail store operated on a non-monetary currency, using a voucher system. Guests who visited the shop donated apparel, accessories, lifestyle, and home goods in exchange for value-based vouchers. The quantity of the vouchers an individual received was based on a Merchandiser's assessment of the value of their donated goods. Through the store's register system, the total donations, marketing activities, purchases, and individual shopper transaction history was recorded. Deidentified register data was utilized to establish baseline understanding of non-monetary purchase behavior. The final dataset included transaction insights for 421-purchased items and 113 transactions.

Summary of Findings

Results from the pilot study indicated a growing interest in non-monetary purchasing. The pop-up store followed the same merchandising and marketing strategies in 2022 and 2023 demonstrating a year-over-year (YoY) build in visits, transactions, and sales. The store had a 2% increase in visitors with 69 unique guests in 2023. In 2023, the store had a 64% conversion rate, or 44 purchasers. Transactions increased 22% YoY with a total of 62 transactions in 2023. Guests purchase behavior further demonstrated interest in non-monetary purchasing with an average of 3.6 units per transaction (UPT), higher than the 2.75 average for the fashion and lifestyle retail sectors (Dynamic Yield, 2023). When equated from points to USD using a one-to-one ratio, the average transaction value (ATV) was approximately $30 with an $8.00 average unit retail

(AUR). Shoppers further demonstrated strong repatronage behavior with an average of 1.5 transactions per purchasing guest.

Key Contributions

This study makes new and novel contributions to retailing research by exploring the experiences and behaviors surrounding evolving payment methods, specifically, digital and non-monetary payments. This research is the first to explore consumers evolving interest across traditional, new, and non-monetary payment methods. Results of the pilot study highlighted longitudinal growth in non-monetary purchases and consumers tendency towards repatronage, an early indicator of brand loyalty. Thus, results indicate interest in non-traditional payment methods, a potential transformation in the retail industry. These findings justify further exploration into payment preferences and brand experience. Subsequently, a conceptual framework relating to variables of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE; Keller, 1993) has been proposed and will be tested in future study phases.

Industry practitioners may utilize the results of this research to add value to the brand experience through payment method while simultaneously maximizing conversion (i.e., purchase behavior). As the retail environment evolves, understanding the importance of payment options to consumers will enable businesses to establish a competitive advantage while evolving to contemporary consumer demands. Results provide initial insights into consumer desires for advancing payment methods to align with their lifestyles, including digital and sustainable approaches to spending. Future research will quantitatively explore preferences across traditional, new, and non-monetary payment methods.

References are available upon request.

ONLY SEEMINGLY UNSUCCESSFUL: EMOTIONAL REACTIONS TO UNSUCCESSFUL CUSTOMER FOREWARNING AND THEIR IMPACT ON REVENGEFUL NEGATIVE WORD-OF-MOUTH

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Keywords: Proactive service recovery; customer forewarning; negative word-of-mouth; guilt; anger

Description: This paper examines how companies' unsuccessful attempts to prevent group service failures by forewarning customers before service delivery impact their emotional reactions and negative word-of-mouth.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – Companies can economically benefit from preventing service failures (e.g., Shin et al., 2017). A simple approach to achieve this is to apply customer forewarning (i.e., to initiate contact with customers before service provision to inform them that there is a reasonable chance that a problem might happen). Basically, forewarning can be 'successful' – when the pre-information prevents the service failure or 'unsuccessful', which means that a failure still occurs (i.e., expectations remain unmet). This research investigates under which circumstances unsuccessful forewarning triggers positive reactions by the involved

consumers. Specifically, we investigate group service failures (GSF; i.e., problems involving multiple consumers at the same time). GSF in which customer forewarning is neglected can be classified into (i) ego-caused GSF (one group member insists on his/her original choice) and (ii) collectively caused GSF (the group insists on its original choice). This research aims to predict the focal consumers' intention to voice revengeful negative word-of-mouth (NWOM) online following different GSF types. Our research model accounts for the possibility that NWOM is regularly affectively driven and is determined by different forms of discrete emotions depending on the failure situation (e.g., Haj-Salem et al., 2014).

Method And Data – Data for the main study were collected by means of an online survey for which 245 consumers were selected based on the convenience sample principle (64.1% female; Mage = 26.2, SDage = 6.0). 82.9% had not voiced a negative comment about a company via social media in the last year, which approximated the typical frequency. We used a single-factor, scenario-based between-subjects experimental design in which the type of the GSF was manipulated to establish three conditions: (1) ego-caused GSF, (2) collectively caused GSF, and (3) regular GSF (i.e., no forewarning prior to the service failure). In all conditions, participants had to read the baseline scenario in which they were asked to imagine a situation in which they met a longtime former colleague in a recently opened restaurant for dinner before going to a concert of their favorite band together.

To cross-validate our findings, a second, scenario-based online experiment was conducted. Here, data from 555 participants (58.6% female; Mage = 31.1, SDage = 10.9) were collected from adult consumers by using the same sampling technique, experimental design, and measures as in the main study. 83.8% had not published a negative social media post about a company in the last year.

Summary of Findings – Revengeful NWOM intentions were significantly higher in the regular GSF condition as compared to ego-caused GSF and to collectively caused GSF. These findings supported H1a and H1b. Results provided support for H2a as guilt was significantly higher in the ego-caused GSF than in the regular GSF. However, the guilt level was similarly low in the regular GSF and the collectively caused GSF condition. Hence, H2b was not supported. Anger was higher in the regular GSF condition than in the ego-caused GSF group and the collectively caused GSF group. This supported both H3a and H3b.

As H4 predicts, in the ego-caused GSF, the revengeful NWOM intention was negatively affected by guilt, which supported H4a. Anger had a positive impact on revengeful NWOM intention, which supported H4b. Concerning the situation of collectively caused GSF, results demonstrated that under this condition, NWOM is only affected by guilt. Specifically, we identified a significant positive effect of guilt on NWOM. This supported H5a and H5b. Finally, concerning the regular GSF condition – in line with H6 – the results provided evidence for a positive impact of anger on revengeful NWOM, while guilt had no effect.

Statement of Key Contributions – First, this research adds to the literature on group service failures (GSF) as nowadays, little is known about GSF's impact on consumers and the effectiveness of company's proactive recovery efforts. In literature, it remained unclear how consumers react to 'unsuccessful' forewarning (i.e., the honest pre-information aimed at reducing customer expectations is ignored by consumers which leads to a failure affecting multiple consumers). Earlier research shows that when lowering service expectations, higher customer satisfaction can arise (e.g., Diel & Poynor, 2010). However, this does not always seem to be the case as lower satisfaction levels can also result (Boulding et al., 1999). The present research shows that even when forewarning was unsuccessful in preventing the problem, it was successful in eliciting positive consumer reactions in terms of lower NWOM

(vs. regular GSF) by the focal customer. Second, this research contributes to the revenge literature, by demonstrating that attribution-based guilt can lead to either a decrease or an increase of NWOM depending on the problem situation (ego-caused GSF vs. collectively caused GSF). This work adds to the ongoing discussion on the role of guilt and how this emotion is shared with others offline or online (e.g., Zhang et al., 2023).

References are available upon request.

PRICE DYNAMICS IN THE WAKE OF STORE EXITS: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF MARKET IMPACT

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Keywords: retail exit, price, synthetic difference-in-differences

Description: Our study examinates the impact of brick-and-mortar store closures on retail prices.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: Retailers are grappling with an unprecedented surge in the closure of brick-and-mortar stores, exemplified by over 2800 store closures in the United States in 2023. This study aims to explore the repercussions of these closures on retail prices. Does the departure of these physical stores exert upward pressure on prices, potentially imposing higher costs on consumers?

Method and Data: Through an examination of store closures within a major retail chain, we utilized Kantar consumer panel data and employed a synthetic difference-in-differences estimator to evaluate the impact of store closure on retail prices.

Summary of Findings: Our findings reveal that, on average, consumers experience elevated prices for both national-brand (NB) and private-label (PL) products post store closures although considerable heterogeneity can be observed across markets. Further analysis indicates that the price increase for NB products is primarily driven by store closures in low-income communities, while prices for NB products decrease in middle-class and upper-class communities. As for PL products, the price surge is observed in both low-income and middle-class communities, with no discernible impact on upper-class communities.

Key Contributions: Our study contribute to the retail exit literature by underscoring the significance of considering socio-economic factors when evaluating the consumer implications of retail store closures. The price dynamics following retail store closures are more nuanced than extant literature generally posit. Specifically, our study reveals that low-income communities are disproportionately affected by the price surge after store closures, while store closures have no discernible effect on upper-class communities.

SEARCHING FOR THE "SECOND BUSINESS MODEL": DEVELOPMENT OF A CONSUMER FOCUSED ESG SCALE

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Keywords:
ESG, scale development, consumer behavior, sport marketing

Description:
The following research sought to develop a consumer focused ESG scale in the context of sport and lifestyle apparel companies. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, an 11-item unidimensional ESG scale that is both reliable and valid was developed.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Environmental, social and governance, also known as ESG, is a practice that relies on integrating specific ESG tactics into investment analysis and organizational strategy. Over the last two decades, the importance brands have placed on ESG has increased tremendously. However, few instruments that emphasize consumer perceptions are available to analyze organizational ESG performance. Given ESG's growth and the changing consumer, it is paramount to begin understanding of ESG from the consumer's vantage point.

To achieve this end, Churchill's (1979) model of scale development was utilized. Following his seven-step process, an 11-item unidimensional scale for the sport and lifestyle brand Nike was developed, this measure was found to be both reliable and valid. Because Nike is a popular and well-known brand worldwide, it is believed that this scale can utilized for other brands, however additional research is needed to confirm this notion.

Research Question

The purpose of this study was to develop a valid and reliable consumer based ESG instrument. While consumer-based measurement models have been developed, there has been little to no work developing a consumer-based ESG instrument. Therefore, the primary research question that this study seeks to answer was: "How can organizational ESG be measured from the consumer's perspective?"

Method and Data

A mixed methods approach was used to achieve the purpose of developing a valid and reliable ESG scale. The scale development process outlined by Churchill (1979) was employed for the purpose of this research, This process was appropriate to employ as this project involved operationalizing a new construct: a consumer focused ESG scale.

- *Step One: Specify the Construct Domain:* Literature Review

- *Step Two: Generation of Sample Items:* Literature Review, Screening Survey, Focus Groups and Expert Review

- *Step Three: Pilot Data Collection:* Pilot Survey via Amazon MTurk

- *Step Four: Measure Purification:* Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

- *Step Five: Second Data Collection*: Primary Survey via Amazon MTurk, Tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis

- *Step Six: Reliability Assessment*: Cronbach's Alpha

- *Step Seven: Validity Assessment*: Construct (Convergent and Discriminant) and Criterion (Concurrent and Predictive) Validity Tests

Summary and Findings

- *Step Two Results:* Per the screening survey, 63 individuals were deemed eligible to participate in focus groups. Two focus groups of six individuals were conducted that generated 49 sample items. Thirty-nine pages of focus group data were transcribed. Items from other scales were added, giving the pilot instrument 62 items. Expert review narrowed the pilot instrument to 55 items.

- *Steps Three and Four Results:* Participants were recruited via Amazon MTurk ($N = 200$) with exploratory factor analysis not producing statistically sound factor loadings. Additional participants were recruited, narrowing the focus of the study to only one brand: Nike. Four additional EFAs were conducted, indicating a unidimensional ESG factor structure for an 11-item ESG scale. A CFA was conducted on the pilot sample, showing good model fit.

- *Step Five Results: Second Data Collection*: A new sample ($N = 150$) was collected via Amazon MTurk and tested using CFA, showing good model fit.

- *Steps Six-Seven Results: Reliability Assessment*: The eleven-item scale was found to be both valid and reliable.

Key Contributions

Simply put, it is believed that this research represents a first attempt at developing a consumer based ESG scale. Furthermore, if ESG can now be assessed from the consumer's perspective, the role of ESG on many consumer-based outcomes can also be measured (e.g., purchase intention, willingness to pay a price premium, etc.). Similar work has been done in the related area of CSR, but this study is among the first to extend consumer outcome work from

CSR to ESG. This study provides support that ESG perceptions are positively correlated with positive brand outcomes including willingness to invest, brand image and brand trust.

Since its introduction in 2004, ESG has been conceptualized as a three-dimensional construct with the environmental domain distinct from the social and governance domains and vice versa. Furthermore, ESG rating agencies clearly distinguish between environmental, social and governance concepts. To the researchers' best knowledge, the dimensionality of ESG has not been empirically tested until this research. The findings provide initial insight that the concept may be more intricate than three clear domains, at least in the eyes of the consumer. While the definitions of environmental, social and governance may appear to be distinct at first glance, these concepts may need further refinement.

References Available Upon Request

SERVICE FAILURE & RECOVERY: A REVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH TRENDS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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Key words: service failure, service recovery, literature review, customer-firm conflicts

Description: The rapidly evolving nature of conflicts and frictions between customers and firms require a broadened perspective of service failure and recovery.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Dividing the service failure and recovery (SFR) literature (1991-2023) into five-year periods shows a decline in the average growth of publications and citations. Nevertheless, we believe that SFR research will remain relevant and has the potential for a renewed phase of growth rather than a slow decline. Our belief is based on two main reasons. First, we believe that conflict and friction between customers and firms will continue to exist. In the post-pandemic world, service failures and customer dissatisfaction with recovery initiatives are on the rise (CCMC

2023). The nature of the service failure and the organization's recovery efforts will continue to play a critical role in the customer's overall evaluations and continuity with the firm (Kunz and Hogreve 2011). Second, socioeconomic trends and digital transformation are giving rise to newer contexts, conflict types, and firm responses that require increased scholarly attention (Ostrom et al. 2021). Furthermore, by incorporating new theoretical frameworks, novel data types, advanced methods, and more expansive research designs, scholars can continue contributing to the SFR literature's development.

Method and Data

Our suggestions are informed by a systematic review of 130 articles published in eight elite marketing journals and four leading service journals between 2018-2022. In addition to SFR, our review also covers other negative events in marketing (e.g., brand transgression, moral transgression, product harm, etc.). Not being circumscribed to only the SFR domain allows us to provide a holistic view of conflicts and friction between customers, organizations, and other stakeholders. We adopted established procedures utilized in other systematic literature reviews to select articles and perform content analysis (e.g., De Keyser et al.2020; Morgan et al. 2018).

We classified our shortlisted papers along two dimensions: research type (i.e., behavioral or quantitative) and managerial relevance (i.e., conceptual or substantive contribution) (Houston 2016; Jaworski 2011). These dimensions allow us to categorize the articles and propose a typology that encompasses four broad subdomains: (1) fundamental-behavioral, (2) managerial-behavioral, (3) managerial-quantitative, and (4) fundamental-quantitative. We then conducted a descriptive analysis of articles in each category, focusing on their conceptual development,

context, methodology, and other characteristics.

Summary of Findings

The articles in our review predominantly focus on limited contexts, restrict themselves to the traditional unit of analysis (i.e., customer), transgressor (i.e., firm), and stage in the customer journey (i.e., recovery). From a methodological perspective, we notice a strong reliance on scenario-based studies.

Based on the gaps identified, we offer some context and methodology-related recommendations. In terms of context, we suggest research addressing pressing challenges faced by managers and customers in the increasingly digitalized and post-pandemic world (e.g., healthcare, public services, artificial intelligence) (Hoffman et al. 2022). We also provide a range of methodological advice, such as combining different methods and employing dyadic or triadic designs (e.g., customer, frontline employee, firm). Further, we advocate the increased use of secondary data to capture real customer behavior and firm performance. Additionally, we encourage using longitudinal designs to examine the customer's experience and evolving relationship evaluations along the recovery journey (i.e., from pre-failure to post-recovery). Finally, our review urges SFR researchers to transcend the field's traditional theoretical boundaries to investigate newer conflicts emerging in the marketplace. We recommend research exploring large-scale service crises, moral transgressions, events where the failure is not attributable to the firm, and circumstances where no recovery is available.

Statement of Intended Contribution

This research contributes to academic literature in three main ways. First, by developing a typology and reviewing recent research trends, this study assesses the state of the service failure and recovery (SFR) field. By doing so, the paper updates perspectives from other recent SFR literature reviews (e.g., Khamitov, Gregoire and Sury 2019). Second, by incorporating other negative marketing events in the study (e.g., brand transgression) and drawing attention to contemporary issues in the marketplace (e.g., moral outrage, incivility), the paper advocates for a broadened perspective of SFR to stimulate further work. We contend that being circumscribed within the traditional theoretical boundaries of the field limits the possibilities of addressing emerging conflict types and results inincremental contributions. Third, we formulate specific recommendations for SFR researchers by emphasizing recent sources of conflicts and friction between customers and firms, underexplored contexts, and new methodological considerations. Our research also has important implications for practitioners. Industry evidence points to increasing friction between organizations and their customers (CCMC 2023). Further, due to technological developments, these conflicts become instantaneously visible to many passive observers worldwide. Our research encourages managers to build awareness of these newer negative events and reinvent themselves to facilitate effective service recovery.

SHARING HEALTHCARE ASSETS: EVIDENCE OF UNWANTED CUSTOMER CONSEQUENCES

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Keywords: Sharing economy, Healthcare, Facility sharing, Perceived contamination, Perceived service quality

Description: Two scenario-based studies show that asset sharing in healthcare may prompt dark-side outcomes.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In research focused on unintended effects of shared assets, most studies feature conventional triadic relationships and assume end-users have complete decision power. This, however, is not always the case. The healthcare sector is a case in point; some asset sharing-related decisions are heteronomous (i.e., provider-driven), so patients, as end-users, have no decision-making power in the sharing processes (i.e., as to whether assets such as medical equipment, medical staff, or facilities should be shared). Although in some service contexts the decision about the shared assets is made by the service provider, there is a paucity of research into patient-related service outcomes of provider-driven sharing, especially in relation to the healthcare services. Given that the success of healthcare sharing approaches is contingent upon the consideration of patient needs and concerns, this research is concerned with patients' responses and assessments when

they have no part in the decision to use the shared assets as part of the service provision.

Drawing on reactance theory and contagion theory, this research aims to understand the mechanisms that lead to unintended service outcomes.

Method and Data

To provide insights into the unintended effects of sharing healthcare assets when the sharing decision is made by the healthcare service provider, not the end-user (i.e., patient), we conducted two scenario-based studies (n = 398; n = 261). The data were collected by means of online questionnaires. In Study 1, we investigate the effect of sharing a healthcare asset (shared vs. not shared operating room; shared with five vs. ten other practices) on intentions to obtain services from the provider (i.e., physician), while also noting the potential influence of perceived service quality. In Study 2, we test an extended model of patient responses to shared asset use, in which we consider the mediating role of perceived contamination and additional outcomes.

Summary of Findings

The first study (n = 398) shows that when moving from not sharing to sharing the operating room (combined group of five or ten practices conditions) leads to a negative association with patients' service quality perceptions (b = -.54, p = .000). Furthermore, we identify a direct effect of perceived service quality on intentions to use the service again (b = .91, p < .001).

A second experiment (n = 261) details how perceived contamination mediates the negative effects of healthcare asset sharing on key patient outcomes—satisfaction with the physician and the treatment decision, intention to use the service again, and word of mouth. Relative to not sharing the operating room, the combined sharing condition (five or ten medical practices) is more positively associated with patients' perceived contamination (b = .40, p = .011). We also find that sharing with ten, rather than five, medical practices increases contamination perceptions

(b = .42, p = .021). In turn, perceived contamination is negatively associated with all four outcomes.

Key Contributions

Asset sharing is gaining relevance in many sectors and countries, though its applications to the healthcare sector, as well as its potential unintended effects, remain underresearched. With this study, we seek to provide deeper insights into the negative effects of sharing healthcare assets by addressing the specific but common scenario in which the sharing decision is made by the service provider, not the end-user (i.e., patient). With insights from theory, we establish that sharing a healthcare asset, such as an operating room, affects patient outcomes through service quality and contamination perceptions. The healthcare sector is likely to be an important part of the sharing economy in the future. Our research shows that sharing a healthcare asset negatively affects patient outcomes, through patients' service quality perceptions and contamination concerns. Thus, healthcare managers, clinicians, and patients are likely to face difficulties and challenges, along with enjoying the benefits of asset sharing. Healthcare providers need to balance these costs and benefits by acknowledging unintended effects, especially in the form of diminished customer outcomes.

THE APPLICATION OF THE SERVICE QUALITY ASSESSMENT SCALE (SQAS) IN EVALUATING SERVICE QUALITY OF YMCA FITNESS FACILITIES IN HONG KONG

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Keywords: Service Quality, Health-fitness clubs, Factor analysis, Scale validation

Description: The Service Quality Assessment Scale-Chinese (SQAS-C) has sound psychometric properties and is a reliable measuring instrument that can accurately assess the service quality of Chinese health fitness facilities.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Since Parasuraman et al. (1985) proposed the conceptual service quality model, service quality has become a popular topic in marketing research. For example, Parasuraman et al. (1988) developed the SERVQUAL to measure consumer perceptions of service quality. Service quality has long been recognized as the major element affecting member retention and an organization's long-term profitability (McDonald & Howland, 2005; Zeithaml et al., 1996). Sun and Pan (2023) identified a significant positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, while Mehmood and Shafiq (2015) found that service quality is a significant predictor of

purchase intention. In the health fitness industry, customer retention is a crucial factor for the survival of fitness clubs (Lam et al., 2005), and service quality continues to impact member retention substantially (Xu et al., 2021). Based on the service quality model, the main purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between customer satisfaction and membership renewal as well as their recommendation of the facility to others. The other purpose of the study was to apply the widely used Service Quality Assessment Scale (SQAS) to create a valid scale to measure service quality in China's rapidly growing health and fitness club industry.

Method and Data

Based on the SQAS (Lam et al., 2005), a modified and translated version of the Service Quality Assessment Scale-Chinese (SQAS-C) was created according to the setting of the Hong Kong Chinese YMCA health-fitness facilities. The SQAS-C (with six dimensions and 37 items) was used to measure the perception of the service quality of the YMCA. The response format was a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "1" to "7" (e.g., "1" = Poor, and "7" = Excellent). This study used a convenient sampling method. Six hundred questionnaires were distributed, and 453 valid and usable questionnaires were returned (75.5% response rate). The Dimension Reduction (Factor) and Scale (Reliability Analysis) procedures from the IBM SPSS Statistics 29 (SPSS, 2022) were used to tabulate the results. Using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), several factors were identified by maximum likelihood (ML) extraction and varimax rotation. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to confirm the factor structure of the six-factor SQAS-C scale. Multiple regression with enter method would be used to examine the relationship between the six factors of the SQAS-C and members' recommendation as well as their renewal of membership.

Summary of Findings

Results of the EFA supported the factor structure of the 6-factor SQAS-C model with a total variance of 75.54%. The alpha reliability coefficients (Cronbach, 1951) for Staff, Program, Locker Room, Fitness Facility, Swimming Facility, and Physical Facility range from .90 to .96, suggesting that all items were reliable in estimating their respective construct. Results of the CFA indicated that the data fit the model well (e.g., RMSEA = .076, χ^2/df ratio = 2.31; CFI = .901; SRMR = .045). The composite reliability and the variance extracted from each dimension of the SQAS-C were above the .70 and .50 standards, respectively (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Two multiple regressions were conducted. The first model was significant (F[6,446] = 23.747, $p <$ .001; R^2 = .242). Factors such as Fitness (t = -2.365, p = .018), Swimming (t = 3.091, p = .002), and Facility (t = 4849, $p <$ .001) significantly predicted members' recommendation of the YMCA to others. The second model was also significant (F[6,446] = 10.775, $p <$ .001; R^2 = .127). Swimming (t = 2.084, p = .038) and Facility factors (t = 4.372, $p <$ .001) significantly predicted members' intention to renew their membership.

Key Contributions

Service quality has long been recognized as a major element affecting member retention and an organization's long-term profitability. In the health fitness industry, customer retention is a critical factor for the survival or success of fitness clubs (Lam et al., 2005), and service quality continues to impact member retention substantially (Xu et al., 2021). The Service Quality Assessment Scale (SQAS) is a widely used scale for assessing the service quality of health fitness clubs (Lam et al., 2005). Meanwhile, the fitness center business in China is multiplying. This study adapted the SQAS and used its modified version, the Service Quality Assessment Scale-Chinese (SQAS-C), to assess the service quality of health-fitness facilities in a Chinese setting. These results indicated that the SQAS-C has sound psychometric properties and is a

reliable measuring instrument that can accurately assess the service quality of Chinese health-fitness facilities. This study provides an excellent example of adopting, revising, and validating a measuring instrument for evaluating and marketing facilities based on the scale development and validation model (Lam et al., 2005).

References are available upon request.

THE BIGGER THE BETTER: AN INVESTIGATION OF CONSUMER RESPONSES TO CLOTHING RETAILERS' EXTENDED-SIZE PRODUCT LINES

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Description: In this research, we investigate how consumers respond to clothing retailers' extended-size (versus straight-size) product offerings.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In recent years, several clothing retailers, such as Abercrombie and Fitch and Old Navy, have extended the sizes of the clothing they sell to cater to both the plus- and extended-size markets; however, the marketing implications of his change in retail strategy has not been studied. The current research seeks to fill this gap. Building on the stigmatization, corporate social responsibility, and trust literatures, we study how consumers respond to retailers' extended-size offerings. Specifically, we investigate how offering extended-size (versus straight-size) clothing influences consumers' perceptions of how inclusive and trustworthy the retailer is as well as consumers' willingness to pay for clothing products sold by the retailer.

Method and Data

Study 1 utilized a secondary dataset to investigate the marketplace relationship between the largest size available and price. Studies 2, 3, and 4 were experimental studies conducted on

Prolific Academic. In all three experimental studies, participants evaluated either a straight-size or extended-size retailer. In study 2, participants were shown a target item sold by the retailer but between the two conditions, the sizes offered were either straight-sizes (XS – L) or extended-sizes (XS – 4XL). After viewing the stimuli, participants completed measures of perceived inclusivity of the retailer, trust in the retailer, and willingness to pay. Study 3 was identical to study 2 but instead of viewing a target item, participants viewed an advertisement for a clothing subscription service that did not show any clothing. Participants in the straight-size condition were told that the clothing subscription service was available in sizes 00-16 while participants in the extended-size condition were told that the clothing subscription service was available in sizes 00-32. In study 4, participants viewed the same stimuli from study 3 and completed the same measures from previous studies; however, in study 4 we recruited both straight-size and plus-size consumers to investigate how consumers' size influences our results.

Summary of Findings

The results of study 1 suggest that as the largest waist size (in inches) of pants currently available in the marketplace increases, the price of a pair of pants decreases, suggesting that plus-size consumers have fewer high-priced options in the marketplace. In study 2, we find that extended-size (versus straight-size) retailers are perceived to be more inclusive and trustworthy. Furthermore, we find that contrary to the findings of study 1, women consumers are willing to pay more for an article of clothing from an extended-size (versus straight-size) retailer. Study 3 replicates the findings of study 2 in a clothing subscription service context. Lastly, study 4 finds that all consumers – regardless of their size – perceive an extended-size retailer to be more inclusive than a straight-size only retailer. Furthermore, straight-size consumers' willingness to

pay does not significantly differ between a straight-sized or extended-size retailer; however, plus-size consumers are willing to pay significantly more to shop at an extended-size retailer.

Statement of Key Contributions

To our knowledge, our research is the first to explore how consumers respond to clothing retailers' extended-size offerings. In doing so, we contribute to the retailing, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and stigmatization literatures. We find that extended-sizing (versus straight-sizing) serves as a stigmatized-identity safety cue to consumers. Specifically, consumers perceive extended-size retailers to be more inclusive and trustworthy. Importantly, while straight-size consumers' willingness to pay for products sold by either extended- or straight-size retailers does not significantly differ, plus-size consumers are willing to pay significantly more to shop at an extended-size (versus straight-size) retailer. Our research investigates how supporting body type diversity efforts via a retailers' product offerings influences consumer perceptions and brand outcomes and find that, contrary to popular belief, offering extended-size options does not dilute the brand. While offering a wide range of sizes can be costly to implement and may create logistical complications, this research suggests that these investments may be worth it, given retailers' potential to financially benefit offering extended sizes.

THE LUXURY TO COMPLAIN: PERCEPTIONS OF SENIOR DINERS OF LUXURY FINE DINING

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Keywords: Seniors, Elderly, Complaint Behavior, Luxury Services, Restaurants

Description: This research examined American senior consumers' perceptions and expectations of luxury fine dining, how it differs from quality casual dining, and what causes them to complain in this setting.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Given the importance of seniors as a market segment, services are a prime area for marketers to understand in the context of marketing to seniors, especially in terms of complaint behaviors (Grougiou & Pettigrew, 2009; Meiners et al., 2021). Luxury services are an important area for study given the dearth of research in this area (Wirtz et al., 2020). As seniors like to eat out (Hu et al., 2008), research is needed to examine their needs in the restaurant domain (Bowden, 2009; Lee et al., 2012). Considering their financial power (Knutson et al., 2006; Grougiou & Pettigrew, 2009), a better understanding of seniors' expectations and complaint behaviors with luxury fine dining, contributes to the luxury services literature. This research also contributes to practice as competitive advantages can be gained through understanding senior consumers. We examine

how seniors' expectations and complaint behaviors differ between luxury fine dining and quality casual dining. We address two broad questions: (1) What are senior consumers looking for in luxury fine dining and does it differ from quality casual dining; and (2) What would cause seniors to complain in a luxury fine dining setting and does it differ compared to a quality casual dining setting?

Method and Data

A Qualtrics panel of 55 American senior consumers (defined as those over 50 years old) with an annual household income of $100,000 or more (to ensure they could afford fine dining) were the participants in this study. There is support in the literature for defining seniors as those 50 years old or older (Pettigrew et al., 2004; Riley et al., 2012). They were asked a series of open-ended and several close-ended items about their luxury dining perceptions in an online qualitative instrument. The use of both qualitative and quantitative measures to study seniors has support in the literature (Lee et al., 2012). The use of an online survey was reasonable as Faverio (2022) illustrates that most adults between 50 and 64 years old and a large portion of those over 65 years old own a smartphone (83%; 61%) and use social media (73%; 45%). To ensure quality responses, an attention check item was and those who selected the wrong answer were dropped from the study. Additionally, Qualtrics utilized a speed check, determining the average time to complete the qualitative study was 756.5 seconds; those respondents answering the questions in less than 379 seconds were automatically not included.

Summary of Findings

What seniors are looking for in luxury fine dining relates to functional luxury values in terms of the high quality of the food and service as well as unique elements in the atmosphere of the restaurants. Luxury fine dining differs from quality casual dining in terms of functional value,

featuring higher-quality food, better service, and special ambience with tablecloths, cloth napkins, and presentation of dishes served. Seniors are looking for the highest-quality food, professional service, and a comfortable, quieter atmosphere. Our participants reported that a combination of issues would give rise to complaint behaviors, including service, food, and to a lesser extent ambience and other patrons. These issues were noted in view of seniors' expectations based on luxury fine dining, though a number of respondents stated that the same expectations apply to casual dining contexts. Two reported differences between expectations for luxury versus casual dining include the need to be treated as a special individual and to uphold perceived perfection in both food and service. Fine dining restaurant marketers should note that it is not one issue that will impact seniors' luxury fine dining experiences, but rather the totality of the experience.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study contributes by focusing on an important market segment not examined in the luxury domain, seniors. Our findings support Wirtz et al.'s (2020) idea of luxury services being extraordinary hedonic experiences that address both objective features of luxury fine dining as well as subjective perceptions. This can be seen in how often our respondents connected both the food and the waitstaff in their descriptions of their expectations as well as what would cause them to complain. Our respondents did not expect a large quantity of food with luxury fine dining as no one discussed luxury fine dining in terms of being a good value, but they did expect to be pampered by the servers. This suggests that what senior consumers are looking for with their dining are not benefits that can be measured monetarily, but social experiences. An interesting dimension is that the social aspect was not discussed in terms of impressing others or going out to dinner with friends, but rather in how the wait staff made them feel. This finding

highlights the need for luxury restaurants to develop comprehensive training programs to ensure

that the wait staff is prepared to serve customers according to their high expectations

References are available upon request.

THE MODERATING ROLE OF PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE AND CONTROL WHEN DESIGNING MYSTERY PROMOTIONS

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Description: This research examines how the design elements of transparency and control impact consumers' behavior when purchasing a mystery promotion and shows that their effectiveness depends strongly on consumers' product knowledge.

Research Question

Selling mystery promotions, where firms consciously conceal information about the promoted product until after consumers purchase the offer (Fay 2008; Kovacheva and Nikolova 2023), is a common phenomenon in today's marketing activities (Hill, Fombelle, and Sirianni 2016; Huang and Yu 2014). Interestingly, firms vary significantly in the way they design their mystery promotions. In particular, they make use of two design elements: transparency and control. Regarding Loewenstein's (1994) information gap theory and its implications in terms of the size of information gaps, consequently, several relevant questions arise: Which design choice from a firm's perspective is more effective in attracting consumers? Is there a universally optimal design choice of such mystery promotions, or does their effectiveness vary across different customer segments? How do mystery promotions have to be marketed to attract a greater range of heterogeneous customers?

Method and Data

Our study employed a 2 (transparency level: high, low) x 2 (control level: high, low) x measured (product knowledge) between-subjects design circumstanced in a pre-purchase fashion retail context. We recruited 298 participants from a professional online panel. We asked participants to imagine that they encounter an ad for a mystery promotion while browsing the Internet. The mystery promotion featured a surprise shirt, of which the particular attributes and details (i.e., color and pattern) were unknown to participants. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four mystery promotion ads: (1) *transparency high/control high* (2) *transparency high/control low* (3) *transparency low/control high* (4) *transparency low/control low.* After viewing the mystery promotion ad, participants firstly indicated their level of ad exploration behavior regarding the shown mystery promotion. Subsequently, they rated their level of product knowledge.

For our analyses we employed a stepwise approach to disentangle the effects and make them more accessible.

Summary of Findings

The goal of step 1 was to test whether consumers' prior product knowledge influences the effect of transparency on ad exploration behavior in a situation with low control, which is the most prevalent case in industry practice. To test the proposed moderation effect, we split the data set and only incorporated the two low control conditions to analyze the interaction between transparency, product knowledge, and ad exploration behavior. The final data set of step 1 comprised 159 participants. An ANCOVA (controlling for gender, age, prior mystery promotion participation, and risk aversion) on ad exploration behavior revealed a significant two-way interaction. The analysis showed that there was a marginally significant positive effect of product knowledge on ad exploration behavior for a product knowledge level lower than 1.6 and a significant negative effect of product knowledge on consumers' ad exploration behavior for a product knowledge level higher than 6.56.

To test whether the observed respective influence of prior product knowledge on the relation between transparency and exploration behavior inverts when introducing the possibility to control the transparently designed mystery promotion, step 2 included all four conditions and all 298 participants from the professional online panel. This time we analyzed consumers' ad exploration behavior regarding such mystery promotions as a function of transparency, control, product knowledge, and their interaction, controlling for gender, age, prior mystery promotion participation, and risk aversion. The regression analysis showed the predicted

three-way interaction as well as inversion and revealed that there was a significant negative effect of product knowledge on consumers' ad exploration behavior for a product knowledge level lower than 3.63 and a significant positive effect of product knowledge on consumers' ad exploration behavior for a product knowledge level higher than 5.88.

Statement of Key Contributions

With this article, we first extend research on mystery promotions by highlighting the importance of design choices in general and advancing extant research (Fay, Xie, and Feng 2015; Hill, Fombelle, and Sirianni 2016; Kovacheva and Nikolova 2023). Notably, our study goes beyond previous work by examining consumers reactions to differently designed mystery promotions. Our results uncover substantial effects that vary depending on the specific design choices made by retailers. Second, we show that prior product knowledge is a relevant component, which is in line with Loewenstein's (1994) information gap theory. While prior mystery promotion research has primarily looked at the mystery promotion itself as a source of the information gap, we extend this perspective by demonstrating how consumers' product knowledge is part of the information gap as well. Third, we provide insights into different design alternatives of mystery promotions applicable by firms. Our results suggest that transparency has a notable impact on consumers' ad exploration behavior when moderated by product knowledge. Depending on the level of product knowledge, consumers react conversely to such promotions and demonstrate distinct variation in their ad exploration behavior.

Our research also provides important managerial implications. Our findings suggest that firms should consider consumers' prior product knowledge when offering mystery promotions to customers. Retailers could either target a specific consumer segment and design their mystery promotion accordingly. Or based on data, identify different segments, and develop and simultaneously design different mystery promotions that are suitable for each consumer segment.

USING A SERVICE ECOSYSTEMS LENS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND FIRM LEVEL COLLABORATION

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Through a detailed analysis of the feedback shared, collaborative value as determined by non-academic beneficiaries is discussed and a reporting framework capable of capturing agility, collaboration and a multilevel understanding of value co-creation in service ecosystems provided.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Through a service ecosystems lens, emerging from S-D Logic, we provide a multi-layered examination of the self-reported value collaborators (beneficiaries) derive from working with the academic community. Collaboration is a popular activity for the academic community with examples of public-private and not-for profit relationships regularly reviewed (Quelin et al., 2017), interestingly though, often from a dyadic perspective (Weber et al., 2017). In this paper we extend this perspective by adopting a service ecosystems lens, a "relatively self-contained, self-adjusting system of resource-integrating actors connected by shared institutional arrangements and mutual value creation through service exchange" (Vargo and Lusch, 2016, p. 161) capable of providing a more nuanced analysis of collaborative activity. We utilize one collaborative case, six years in the making, involving 300+ collaborators, to critically examine the extent to which a service ecosystems lens is capable of disentangling knowledge associated with multiple beneficiaries in a meaningful and potentially impactful way (Vargo and Lusch, 2011; O'Leary and Boland, 2020). The findings are of relevance to multiple stakeholder across both for-profit and non-profit organizations.

Method and Data

The service ecosystem under scrutiny here is the palliative and end-of-life care community. Data collection began in 2015 when one collaborating hospice organization, Red Hospice, approached the researchers keen to undertake a 'deep dive' into the service experiences of their patients and their families. The Trajectory Touchpoint Technique, a visual story-telling technique capturing pathographies, stories of illness (Hunsaker Hawkins, 1999), was co-created between both partners. The work grew from here. At a micro level (people), two distinct

groups of beneficiaries contributed to the case: service users (n=257) and service providers (n=62). Service users included patients (n=88), carers (n=82), and the bereaved (87). Service providers, representing the meso level, included 11 collaborations across a complex healthcare economy web of hospices (not-for-profit) (n=6) and hospitals (public and for-profit) (n=3). In two cases, the collaboration included different service providers within one unit. Data generated was manually, thematically analysed (Braun and Clarke, 2006), independently, by the three core researchers adopting the seven-stage approach suggested by Spiggle (1994)

Summary of Findings

In all but one collaboration, this exception, a chain hospice unable to effect strategic thinking at a unit level, each individual organization shared similar strategic intentions in embarking upon a collaboration with us as an academic partner. The collaborations yielded three different types of financial contributions. First, they provided a route map to which parts of the service offering were effective, suggesting money well invested, and, conversely, they identified those in need of a refresh. Second, they identified service gaps, providing also the necessary evidence base to justify the need for further investment. Third, they helped tweak existing service delivery to ensure providers were fully communicating what the offering was. This did not involve the need for extensive fundraising activities as needed to launch new services, but rather a re-allocation of funds to capitalise upon what was already available. Impact contributions touched the lives of both service users, including patients and their families, alongside staff, both paid and volunteers. Additions and updates to staff training was a common area of benefit arising from the work. The importance of positioning palliative and end-of-life care work within the community, as a community support, was a common theme across different collaborations.

Key Contributions

This paper offers three contributions to theory and practice. First, we add to the service ecosystems literature providing a fuller appreciation of the different actors co-creating impact value and the role and contribution each makes. Second, we extend theoretical understanding of the value of a service ecosystem lens when applied to a detailed analysis of meso, organizational level activity, an area frequently overlooked in extant ecosystem research (Audretsch et al., 2019). Third, we expose the complexity of auditing academic contributions and argue the need to adopt ecosystem level processes if a truer appreciation of academic impact is to be realized. In so doing, we seek to encourage marketing and organization scholars to not only 'think more broadly about the opportunities for making an impact with their research and to begin doing so more often' (Wickert et al., 2021).

References are available upon request

WHEN ROBOTS DEAL WITH CUSTOMERS IN CRISIS: THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP VULNERABILITY IN SERVICE ROBOT RECOVERY

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Keywords: service failure recovery, customer relationship vulnerability, service robot, recovery satisfaction

Description: Our research offers a novel perspective on smart service failure and recovery and suggests that with vulnerable customers service firms are ill-advised to copy recovery strategies that are effective with human assistants with service robots.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

A growing number of service firms have recently been incorporating smart services such as service robots to interact with customers. As these smart service assistants are becoming prevalent, they have been involved in service failures and recovery—leaving customers disgruntled and unsatisfied (Gale & Mochiquki 2019) and service providers in need to better

understand the effectiveness of service robots in service recovery. Prior research has explained customer responses to service robot recovery by emphasizing the characteristics of the service robots (e.g., Choi et al. 2021), the type of recovery strategies (e.g., Xing et al. 2022), and the service context (e.g., Ho et al. 2020). While this research has contributed much to our understanding of customer reactions to service failure and recovery involving service robots, this research is based on the implicit assumption that customers desire beneficial relationships—an assumption that has long since been questioned (e.g., Bendapudi & Berry 1997). The current study draws on the concept of customer relationship vulnerability (CRV)—a customer predisposition to psychological harm in relationships with service firms (Cenophat et al. 2023)—to address this research gap and provide a richer understanding of the effectiveness of robot-led recovery initiatives. We connect key assumptions of crisis theory with the warmth-competence model of social perception to posit that service robots may be ineffective at recovering service failures when customers are vulnerable.

Method and Data

In line with previous research on service failure and recovery efforts (e.g., Roggeveen et al. 2012), we used a survey-based experimental approach. In our design, participants read about a service failure and the response to the failure of a service assistant. For our empirical approach, we used the procedure of Cenophat et al. (2023), including their scenario and service assistant responses.

Our experiment was a 2 (service assistant type: human vs. service robot) by 2 (customer participation: no vs. yes) between subjects design, with CRV as an additional measured moderator. After reading the scenarios respondents answered two comprehension check questions in order to ensure they have read the scenario. Then, respondents answered measures

of the dependent variable, the mediators and the manipulation checks. We also included two attention check questions. We recruited 644 consumers from the United States via Prolific (average age: 40 years; 49.5% women). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the conditions.

Summary of Findings

Our findings show that service robots (vs human) assistants decrease perceptions of warmth, which leads to lower recovery satisfaction. However, we unexpectedly found a negative impact of service robots on competence, resulting in a decrease in recovery satisfaction. Further, drawing on crisis theory, we show that when the service recovery involves service robot assistants (compared to human assistants) and customer participation, the perceptions of warmth and competence decrease with increasing CRV—leading to lower recovery satisfaction. However, such perceptions increase with increasing CRV—resulting in higher recovery satisfaction—when the service recovery involves human assistants and customer participation. Overall, our findings show that crisis theory complements established frameworks of service failure-recovery research and, with the novel concept of CRV, helps better understand service (robot) assistants in service recovery.

Key Contributions

This research contributes to service theory and practice in two ways. First, the current research lays the foundation for a new approach to understanding the effectiveness of service robots during service recovery. Prior research argues that warmth (i.e., the social object's perceived intentions that includes trustworthiness, sincerity, and friendliness; Gelbrich et al. 2021) serves as a mechanism through which service robots lead to satisfaction. We extend this research by

arguing that service failures and recovery are crisis that vulnerable customers must overcome, and that a vulnerability-based approach is necessary to provide a larger picture of customer response to smart service recovery. Second, we demonstrate that customer participation is not effective when service firms use service robots in the recovery process. Cenophat et al. (2023) have found that customer participation plays an important role in service recovery that involves highly vulnerable customers. The current research shows that such effectiveness differs from smart service vs (human) assistants.

References are available upon request.

Sustainability, Social Responsibility, and Social Justice

ARE WE MORE WILLING TO FORGIVE AN UNDERDOG? AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF SECOND-HAND PRODUCT FAILURES

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Keywords: Sustainable Consumption, Second-Hand Consumption, Consumer Brand Forgiveness, Consumer Behavior, Product Failures

Description: Consumers are more willing to forgive the failure of a second-hand product (compared to a new one), not because of its external disadvantage, but because of the passion and determination associated with it (underdog image).

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

An increasing number of brands are entering the re-commerce business. However, selling products second-hand can be risky for firms because, given their pre-used nature, consumers are more likely to make negative product experiences. Such failures can potentially harm the consumer-brand relationship, lowering consumers' purchase intentions of further new products, damaging the firm's brand image, and hampering consumers' word-of-mouth (WOM).

In this study, we ask whether consumers respond differently to a second-hand product failure, as compared to a new product failure. Forgiveness plays a substantial role in brand relationships and is a key predictor for consumers' behavioral responses to product failures. Specifically, we propose that consumers are more forgiving after a second-hand (versus new) product failure because they are more likely to perceive a second-hand product as an underdog (in terms of passion and determination attributed to them). This underdog effect refers to consumers exhibiting positive attitudes toward a weaker entity, despite certain disadvantages. When consumers perceive a product as an underdog, such as a second-hand product, a product failure should have a less detrimental impact on their attitude and behavioral intentions (i.e., less intention for negative WOM, higher purchase intention).

Method and Data

To test our assumptions, we designed a 2×2 between-subject online-scenario experiment, in which we manipulated the product type (new versus second-hand) and type of experience (negative versus same condition). We therefore recruited 187 participants from a German university.

In the scenarios, we introduced participants to *wearIMM*, a fictional clothing company. Participants were told that they bought a new (versus second-hand) jacket. Further, they were told to be invited to the movies. When taking the jacket out of the cabinet, the product was in the same good condition (versus much worse condition in the failure scenario) as it was a couple of weeks ago, and the subject felt comfortable (versus uncomfortable in the failure scenario) wearing it. Scenarios were pretested and manipulations worked as intended.

As dependent variables, we measured consumer brand forgiveness, consumers' negative WOM intention, purchase intention toward new products of the brand, and brand attitude. As mediators, we queried the two key dimensions of consumers' underdog perceptions: its attributed external disadvantage, as well as passion and determination. Finally, we controlled for consumers' experience with and preference for second-hand clothing, as well as product involvement. To test our hypotheses, we then employed an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

Summary of Findings

First, we find that consumers are comparatively more likely to forgive a failure of a second-hand versus a new product. Second, consumers encountered with a second-hand (as compared to a new) product scenario state higher perceptions of the underdog dimension *external disadvantage*, as well as of the underdog dimension *passion and determination*. However, while *passion and determination* lead to higher consumer brand forgiveness, perceived *external disadvantage* even decreases consumer brand forgiveness. Significant indirect effects of second-hand product failure on consumer forgiveness via both underdog dimensions support these findings. Finally, we find evidence that brand forgiveness decreases consumers' intention for *negative WOM,* increases their *intention to purchase a new product*, and increases their *brand attitude.* Again, significant indirect effects from second-hand (versus new) product failure on these brand relationship outcomes underline our assumptions. In essence, the underdog effect related to second-hand products explains why consumers are more willing to forgive second-hand product failures and show less severe behavioral intentions in response. Importantly, however, consumers do not forgive product failures because of second-hand products' external disadvantage, but because of the passion and determination associated with them.

Key Contributions

Our study contributes to consumer behavior and sustainable consumption research. First, while the influence of brand forgiveness for second-hand products is relatively unexplored in the consumer behavior literature, we show evidence that consumers are more willing to forgive a second-hand (versus new) product failure. Adding to sustainable consumption research, we further show that consumers perceive second-hand products as an underdog (as compared to new products), even when it is sold by the original brand. However, this underdog perception has ambivalent effects on consumers' forgiveness intention: The determination attributed to an underdog increases consumers' forgiveness intention, which translates into lower negative WOM intentions, higher intention to purchase a new product, and a higher brand attitude. In contrast, however, the external disadvantage attributed to an underdog decreases consumers' willingness to forgive a product failure and translates into more negative brand relationship outcomes.

Lastly, our study informs managers that the underdog image associated with second-hand products buffers against the negative consequences of product failures. Seeing that consumers' perception of an external disadvantage of second-hand products counterintuitively reduces (instead of increases) forgiveness intentions, we suggest marketers of original brands to focus communication efforts on promoting the passion and determination associated with second-hand offerings.

References are available upon request.

Carbon Footprint Tracking Apps. Does Feedback Help Reduce Carbon Emissions?

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Keywords:

Description:

As the effectiveness of Carbon Footprint Tracking Apps (CFTA) has not yet been investigated at all, the authors developed a CFTA to explore whether and how such applications help shape sustainable consumption behavior.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In this study, we aim to explore the main research question: How does individual carbon emission feedback, provided by carbon footprint tracking apps, encourage consumers to reflect on and subsequently modify their habits to reduce their emissions? Additionally, we will investigate how various moderating variables enhance the prediction of planned changes in carbon footprints. These variables include beliefs in technology as a solution, green self-efficacy, green self-identity, and both positive and negative emotions. Furthermore, we intend to analyze whether the impact of these moderators varies across different consumption domains.

Method and Data

We developed a carbon footprint tracking app (CFTA) that was created primarily for research purposes and was validated in numerous pretests. The application allows users to calculate the carbon footprint of their consumption as well as the effects of consumption changes on the individual carbon footprint. The carbon footprint expresses the amount of carbon dioxide emissions that are caused by consumption. The study (n = 216 participants) consisted of several steps. First, participants installed the carbon footprint tracking app and entered socio-demographic details and responses to scales (moderating variables) like green self-identity, emotion, etc. They logged their past consumption in the app across four domains (mobility, food, heating, household activities) and received feedback on their carbon emissions. Afterwards, they indicated their planned future consumption changes in the app, documented these changes, and received updated feedback on their carbon emissions. Finally, participants received an incentive for their participation.

Summary of Findings

We demonstrate that a CFTA actually motivate consumers to make plans to change their consumption habits in order to reduce emissions. Notably, the higher the feedback in a specific consumption domain is, the more consumers intended to alter their consumption in this domain. By decomposing total consumption into four main consumption domains, we show that these intentions to change consumption vary significantly across different domains, ranging from a 12% reduction in mobility to a 35% reduction in household activities. Including different moderator variables, such as the technology-as-solution belief, green self-efficacy, green self-identity, as well as positive and negative emotions, improves the prediction of planned carbon footprint changes. The moderators' impacts vary across the consumption domains. Green self-efficacy is the most relevant moderator, which has a reinforcing effect in each domain. Finally, our findings suggest that consumers find it difficult to estimate their carbon emissions. We add to this notion by demonstrating that the validity of consumer estimations tends to be good for the overall estimation, but the self-estimation and the actual feedback within a particular domain are not correlated.

Key Contributions

Whereas earlier studies primarily utilized carbon footprint calculators (CFCs) to quantify consumers' carbon footprints at a singular point, our approach adopts a more holistic view. Not only do we measure these footprints, but we also actively engage consumers, urging them to introspect, reflect upon, and, where necessary, modify their habits to achieve reduced emissions. W provide a comprehensive analysis of consumer responses to CFTA feedback across pivotal domains. A distinctive feature of our study is the exploration of various moderators. Understanding these variables is crucial as they potentially dictate the degree to which CFTA feedback can inspire and motivate consumers to adapt their habits and subsequently lower carbon emissions. The implications of our findings span across multiple stakeholders: from policymakers and governmental bodies to application designers,

marketers, and everyday consumers who are committed to a sustainable future. Those in policy-making roles can leverage these insights to champion sustainable consumption patterns, providing citizens with tools akin to CFTA. Our research pinpoints areas where the potential for carbon emission reduction is more pronounced, and others where the scope might be limited. This nuanced understanding can enable policymakers to craft tailored strategies - fostering behavioral change in more receptive domains and considering alternate strategies.

CONSUMER REACTIONS TO ENVIRONMENTAL BRAND TRANSGRESSIONS: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF BRAND GLOBALNESS VS. LOCALNESS

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Keywords: environmental brand transgressions, brand globalness, brand localness, consumers' condemning emotions.

Description: this paper empirically examines consumers reactions to environmental brand transgressions based on the brand's globalness vs. localness.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Today's marketplace is rife with corporate moral transgressions (broadly defined as the breach of social and moral norms [Xu et al., 2021]), such as BP's oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and Volkswagen's emissions scandal. Due to the speed of modern communications, transgressions quickly become public news and are swiftly criticized (Stabler and Fisher 2020). However, not all companies receive the same public reaction. Crisis type, company's country of origin, past corporate social responsibility campaigns, and the way a company responds to the allegations are a few factors that influence how the public reacts to brand transgressions (Dutta and Pullig 2011). However, the role of a brand's globalness has received limited attention in this context.

With this background in mind, this study investigates the effect of the globalness of the transgressing firm on consumers punitive responses to an ethical breach. We focus on non-offering related environmental transgressions and investigate whether there are more condemning emotions (i.e., contempt, anger, disgust [CAD]) toward global vs. local brands. We also investigate how condemning emotions mediate the relationship between brand globalness and consumers' retaliatory intentions (i.e., negative word-of-mouth [NWOM] and boycotting intentions [BI]), and whether these mediated relationships are moderated by consumers' moral identity (MI).

Method and Data

We employed a single factor (brand globalness: global vs. local) between-subjects online experimental design to test whether 1) MI moderates the effects of brand globalness on NWOM and BI, and 2) CAD emotions mediate the relationship between brand globalness and NWOM and BI. We recruited 375 participants through Prolific. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions where they read a social media news script where a global (vs. local) brand was

reported to have engaged in environmentally harmful practices. Participants were then asked to respond to items measuring: 1) CAD emotions, 2) NWOM, 3) BI, 4) MI, and 5) environmentalism. All items were either adopted or adapted from previously established scales in the literature and were presented as 7-point Likert scales except for moral identity items (presented as 5-point Likert scale). Twenty responses were removed from further analyses due to being incomplete or failing attention checks. The remaining 355 respondents were on average 33 years old; 47.9 % identified as women, 49.9% as men, and 1.7% as third gender; 62.5% identified as white; and 38.3% indicated having an undergraduate degree. We used Hayes PROCESS Models 1 and 8 to test the first and second hypotheses respectively.

Summary of Findings

Results show that MI moderates the effects of brand globalness on NWOM and BI, such that at low levels of MI, NWOM and BI are stronger for global brands. The coefficients for brand globalness indicate that NWOM (β=0.19) and BI (β=0.14) are higher for the global brand when mean-centered MI equals zero. Moreover, the negative and significant interaction term for NWOM (β=-0.49, t=-2.90, p<0.01) and BI (β=-0.53, t=-2.94, p<0.01) indicate that the effect of brand globalness on these outcomes weakens with increasing MI. Thus, supporting our first hypothesis.

Moreover, results show partial moderated mediation, where CAD emotions patially mediate the effects of brand globalness on NWOM and BI subject to MI. Moderated mediation results suggest that mediation effects by CAD weaken with increasing levels of MI (LowMI$_{NWOM}$: β=0.17, LCI=0.04, UCI=0.30; MeanCenteredMI$_{NWOM}$: β=0.10, LCI=0.02, UCI=0.18; LowMI$_{BI}$: β=0.20, LCI=0.07, UCI=0.32; MeanCenteredMI$_{BI}$: β=0.11, LCI=0.03, UCI=0.19), and these effects become non-significant at high levels of MI (HighMI$_{NWOM}$: β=0.02,

LCI=-0.07, UCI=0.12; HighMI$_{BI}$: β=0.03, LCI=-0.06, UCI=0.12). Moreover, results show that the interactions between brand globalness and MI with respect to NWOM (β=-0.37, LCI=-0.63, UCI=-0.11) and BI (β=-0.40, LCI=-0.68, UCI=-0.12) are significant, indicating the possibility of a conditional residual (direct) effect. Thus, partially supporting our second hypothesis.

Key Contributions

The findings of this study indicate that the effects of brand globalness/localness on consumer reactions to environmental transgressions depend on consumers' levels of moral identity. When an environmental transgression occurs, consumers with a stronger moral identity punish global and local brands equally; on the other hand, consumers with a weaker moral identity are more likely to express stronger condemning emotions and subsequent retaliatory intentions towards global brands compared to local brands.

Our research has implications for international and local policymakers. International regulatory organizations can benefit from our findings and tailor their goals to enhance consumer moral identity worldwide. Policymakers can better understand the role of morality in consumer behavior, particularly in their punitive reactions when environmental transgressions occur. Improvements in board members' moral identities tend to result in more environmentally conscious decisions, while improvements in consumers' moral identities tend to increase punitive reactions against any unsustainable and unethical businesses. Furthermore, industry professionals can benefit from our findings by understanding consumers' expected reactions to their brand in the event of unintentional environmental transgressions and implementing better corrective actions during crisis management.

References are available upon request.

CONSUMER SKEPTICISM TOWARD COMPANIES' SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENT AND COMMUNICATION

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Keywords: consumer skepticism; CSR communication; greenwashing; sustainability

Description: This study identifies new factors that contribute to encouraging or mitigating consumer skepticism toward companies' sustainability commitment and communication.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – Sustainable companies aim to maintain their competitive advantage by integrating social and environmental demands into their strategies, practices, and processes. Unfortunately, companies do not always truly or efficiently communicate their commitment to sustainability. Misguided communication strategies can significantly impact consumers' perceptions of whether a company is genuinely committed to sustainability values. It is common for consumers to question the authenticity of companies' sustainability initiatives and communication. Consumer skepticism is a defense mechanism against misleading and deceptive marketing practices that can negatively influence purchase intentions, attitudes, and the

effectiveness of ads. This article examines why consumers might be skeptical about a company's sustainability commitment and communications.

Method and Data – The study applies a qualitative approach to identify factors that contribute to (or reduce) skepticism and make consumers less (or more) likely to perceive a company as genuinely committed to sustainability. The method involves a series of in-depth consumer interviews based on a semi-structured interview protocol. Between January and February 2023, 16 Brazilian participants were recruited via social networks, while the interviews were conducted online through the Microsoft® Teams platform. Qualitative data were analyzed using a two-step analysis: the first cycle, which entails the initial coding of the data, and the second cycle, which consists of identifying patterns and meaningful explanations beyond the initial codes. The data analysis was performed using MAXQDA, which is a well-known software used for qualitative data analysis.

Summary of Findings – Our findings indicate that consumers are more likely to believe in a company's sustainability efforts if they are transparent, consistent, and coherent. The results further suggest that consumers want to see consistency in the company's history and the reasons that led it to support a particular sustainability cause or change. Consumers understand that companies primarily focus on profit, so purported motivations that overly emphasize external issues can make consumers doubt the company's real intentions.

The present study identified three new elements that can reduce consumer skepticism regarding a company's sustainability commitment. The findings provide evidence supporting all three of these assertions: 1) Consumers are more likely to believe in a company's commitment when they

see the company developing initiatives that impact the environment and society; 2) Companies that pursue initiatives of which profit is not the primary objective also gain credibility; 3) Consumers recognize that companies are made up of people with sustainable attitudes and intentions; thus, engagement from leaders and managers increases consumer perceptions of companies' commitment.

Statement of Key Contributions – This research contributes significantly to the field in several ways. First, it provides an overview of the factors that encourage and mitigate consumer skepticism toward sustainability. While previous studies have examined some causes independently, this research presents a comprehensive list of potential influences on sustainability-related skepticism. Additionally, this study identifies new antecedents of consumer skepticism not previously identified in the literature. Second, this research investigates the reasons behind consumer doubt regarding companies' commitment to sustainability and the communication strategies they promote. This study challenges the distinction between a company's sustainability commitment and the communications it disseminates, as the two are interconnected. This has become especially crucial since the rise of "greenwashing." This study also offers insights into how to decrease skepticism regarding communications about sustainability. In this regard, companies would do well to better communicate their commitment to sustainability and increase the level of consumers' perceptions of it. Companies and managers can use this insight to present and support new sustainability initiatives and—by promoting their sustainability practices coherently and effectively—persuade consumers to follow sustainability principles, thereby encouraging conscious consumption and pro-sustainability behaviors. To

conclude, this research highlights the importance of responsible production and consumption for achieving sustainable outcomes.

CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD SOCIAL INNOVATIONS: CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT

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Keywords: attitude, scale development, social innovation, consumer research

Description: This research introduces and validates a three-dimensional scale to measure consumers' attitudes toward social innovations (CASI).

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Despite the fact that social innovations are brought to market and have attracted significant attention among marketing practitioners and scholars, no measures exist to adequately capture consumers' attitudes toward social innovations (CASI). Without a valid and reliable measure, it is not possible to establish the relationships between CASI, its antecedents and customer-level consequences, such as the acceptance of social innovations. Drawing on tripartite attitude theory, this research proposes a tripartite conceptualization of CASI and aims to develop and comprehensively validate a psychometric scale to measure CASI.

Method and Data

In developing the CASI scale, we employ both qualitative and quantitative methods. Initially, we use interviews and quantitative procedures to assess content validity, judgmental validity, and

face validity of the scale. Subsequently, we conduct three quantitative studies (n = 311; n = 252; n = 450) to test scale reliability and validity. The data were collected by means of online questionnaires.

Summary of Findings

Based on comprehensive validation procedures, support is found for a three-dimensional scale with the following dimensions in Study 1 (n = 311): Cognitive, affective and conative (i.e., behavioral) attitude toward social innovations. We assess the CASI scale's factorial, discriminant, convergent and nomological validity in Study 2 (n = 252). In Study 3 (n = 450), the scale's known-group and predictive validity are established. As part of the validation process, we embed the CASI scale in a net of expected antecedents and consequences, showing that perceived usefulness of social innovations has a positive effect on the three CASI dimensions and that cognitive and conative CASI positively affect behavioral intention. We further demonstrate that high- (vs. low-) innovativeness consumers score higher on the CASI scale and that CASI predicts consumer-based reputation of a firm. We thus provide compelling evidence for the CASI scale's sound psychometric properties and for its usefulness to the study of social innovations.

Key Contributions

Considering the importance of social innovations and the role of consumers in addressing societal issues, the contribution of our study to the literature is twofold. First, we find support for a reliable and valid tripartite scale to measure consumers' attitude toward social innovations, short CASI, considering both the social and innovation-related aspects of the concept. Second, we embed the CASI scale in a net of expected antecedents and consequences, showing that the scale can be employed for the purpose of making predictions in both consumer-oriented and

corporate-related outcomes. Accordingly, this research gives innovation scholars and

practitioners a measurement tool to start empirically studying correlates of CASI and to assess

the success likelihood of social innovations.

CUSTOMERS DEVALUATION IN HOSPITALITY ORGANIZATIONS: A SOCIAL LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

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Keywords: Top-down knowledge hiding; devaluation of customers; leader-member exchange; moral identity; social learning theory.

Description: A social learning perspective of customers' devaluations in hospitality organizations.

Extended Abstract

Purpose or research questions: We attempt to extend the research on "top-down knowledge hiding" in the hospitality organizations to investigate whether, how, and when the direct report as an observer of leader's knowledge hiding behavior towards customers (LKH-C) trickles down to employees' knowledge hiding behavior towards customers (EKH-C). We introduce employees' devaluation of customers (EDC) as an indicator of the social learning process of LKH-C. In addition, we introduce LMX that can intensify the influence of negative role modeling, and moral identity that can "break the cycle" of top-down knowledge hiding.

Method: We collected a time-lagged data from three to five star ranked hotels located in Saudi Arabia (*N* = 379). We offer a few insightful implications for managers, practitioners, and organizations on how to "break the cycle" of knowledge hiding in the hospitality industry and maximize the overall customer experience. Hospitality organizations, such as hotels, would be able to identify and address potential issues related to knowledge sharing and transparency within the organization, leading to improved customer service and overall customer experience. Governmental agencies responsible for regulating and supporting the hospitality industry may find value in the implications of the research. The findings could inform policy decisions aimed at fostering a knowledge-sharing culture within hospitality organizations, potentially leading to better service quality and customer satisfaction.

Results: We found that LKH-C instigates EKH-C through EDC. As predicated, we found that the indirect effect could be intensified at high-LMX, and employee with high moral identity could break the cycle of top-down knowledge hiding behavior. We offer a few insightful implications for managers, practitioners, and organizations on how to "break the cycle" of knowledge hiding in the hospitality industry and maximize the overall customer experience.

Statement of Key Contributions: Our study expends the understanding of trickle-down effect of knowledge hiding towards customers in the hospitality work settings by providing a comprehensive picture of the social learning process, its outcomes, and how/when this could be intensified and mitigated. To provide the comprehensive understanding of the trickle-down effects of LKH-C on EKH-C through EDC, we introduce LMX (as a first-stage moderator) that can intensify the influence of negative role modeling. By doing so, we argue that the direct reports with high-LMX are more likely to observe and learn their supervisors'

behaviors and model them too (i.e., knowledge hiding towards customers). Finally, our study

also focuses on the observer's personal-level factor that can lessen the trickle-down effects of

LKH-C on EKH-C through EDC. By doing so, we introduce MI (as a second-stage

moderator) can "break the cycle" because devaluation of customers observed and learned

through LKH-C are inconsistent with the direct report's moral traits.

DECODING DON-JJUL: UNDERSTANDING DON-JJUL AS PRO-CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR THROUGH TOPIC MODELING, SENTIMENT ANALYSIS, AND IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

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Keywords: Pro-consumption, Don-jjul, User-generated Content, Text Mining, In-depth Interview

Description: This study utilizes a text-mining approach and in-depth interviews to investigate a new pro-consumption behavior known as Don-jjul, which emerged in South Korea during the COVID-19 pandemic, and suggests that understanding Don-jjul helps to identify opportunities for the proliferation of prosocial businesses.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Unlike anti-consumers, pro-consumers undertake a higher number of purchases to enact societal changes for all (Muncy & Iyer, 2020; Sen & Block, 2009). Although consumers are increasingly choosing pro-consumption, little is known about why and how consumers engage in these behaviors. Recent research has recognized a growing interest among consumers in making purchases based on their values (Adıgüzel, & Donato, 2021; Calderon-Monge et al., 2020; Kaur

& Luchs, 2022) with the emergence of a new behavior of responsible hedonic consumption among Generation-Z consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic (Amatulli, Peluso, Sestino, Guido, & Belk, 2023). In South Korea, during the pandemic, consumers exhibited a new pro-consumption behavior known as "Don-jjul," which refers to compensating businesses that have engaged in altruistic actions by boosting their sales. Don-jjul consumers typically utilize online platforms to encourage other consumers to support these businesses by replying to comments, sharing their feelings, experiences and knowledge. Thus, analyzing user-generated contents (UGC) can help understand the outcomes of consumer attitudes and behaviors (Diwanji & Cortese, 2020). To this end, this study examines perceptions, motivations, and emotions regarding Don-jjul pro-consumption behaviors by utilizing latent dirichlet allocation (LDA), sentiment analysis, and in-depth interviews.

Method and Data

For our analysis, we collected 51,032 user comments on 15 videos regarding Don-jjul cases and recruited 34 consumers who disclosed their Don-jjul experiences on social media, internet forums, blogs, and social networks. We commenced our data analysis by parsing each comment into individual words and conducting part-of-speech (POS) tagging. In alignment with our research goal to explore the motives and emotions associated with Don-jjul, we extracted words corresponding to "noun," "verb," and "adjective" (Kim, Hwang, & Kim, 2022). Subsequently, we excluded any irrelevant or difficult-to-interpret words (e.g., I, that, thing) from our analysis (Sağkaya Güngör & Ozansoy Çadırcı, 2022). Next, we adopted two unsupervised text-mining techniques, namely LDA analysis and lexicon-based sentiment analysis, determining the optimal number of topics as five. We suggested interpretations including keywords and calculated the

overall sentiment scores and positive/negative sentiment intensity for each topic. Additionally, to validate and supplement our text-mining results, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 34 Don-jjul consumers from February 2022 to February 2023. We utilized follow-up questions to enhance the specificity and accuracy of our interpretations, avoiding any potential ambiguity in the topics derived from the LDA analysis (Fernando & Aw, 2023).

Summary of Findings

The five topics identified from the LDA analysis included recognizing the multitude of good citizens (topic 1), wishing good owners great success in business (topic 2), feeling empathy for people experiencing financial difficulties (topic 3), feeling touched but suspicious about Don-jjul stories (topic 4), and patronizing stores to support Don-jjul (topic 5). Among the five topics, topic 2 exemplified the most positive sentiment toward Don-jjul, while topic 3 represented the most negative sentiment. By conducting in-depth interviews, we aimed to corroborate whether the identified topics aligned with the experiences of the 34 Don-jjul participants. This validation process highlighted three findings regarding Don-jjul: (1) it contributes to making a better society through consumption (perception), (2) it involves supporting underdogs or compensating good businesses economically (motivation), and (3) it leads to respect for good business owners or concerns regarding the misuse of Don-jjul (emotion).

Statement of Key Contributions

This study contributes to the understanding of pro-consumption behavior by investigating consumers' perceptions, motivations, and emotions toward Don-jjul during the COVID-19 pandemic. By reinforcing consumption, consumers can ensure fairness in the marketplace

(McGinnis & Gentry, 2009) or compensate businesses for their responsible deeds (Hoffmann, Balderjahn, Seegebarth, Mai, & Peyer, 2018; Kim & Kinoshita, 2023). However, research on behaviors that promote consumption for the purpose of changing society is still in its infancy (Özer, Özer, & Koçak, 2022). Utilizing text-mining approaches and in-depth interviews, this study identifies the ambivalent emotions and diverse motivations of pro-consumers from an insider's perspective. These findings address the gap identified by a previous study that suggested combining qualitative methods in UGC analysis (Diwanji & Cortese, 2020). This study's findings also provide a foundation for understanding values-based consumption, which requires marketers to scrutinize consumer needs. Furthermore, our analysis can help corportate social responsibility (CSR) managers to simultaneously monitor the concerns of pro-consumers and play a role in building authentic business-to-consumer (B2C) relationships.

INCLUSIVE DESIGN AND BRAND ALLYSHIP FOR STIGMATIZED CONSUMERS

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Keywords: stigmatized identity, inclusive design, brand allyship, LGBTQIA+ consumers

Description: This research explores attitudes of stigmatized consumers to inclusive design and brand allyship in marketing campaigns.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The ongoing debate between market stakeholders is unraveling around the question: should brands be woke and support stigmatized consumers? The opinions on this subject are strongly divided: while some individuals view it as a positive thing that encourages change and inclusion, others (especially consumers from marginalized groups) see it as woke washing.

Marketing research has recently started engaging in topics of brand activism and brand allyship. Mere supportive posts for stigmatized groups on social media (performative allyship) aren't effective. In contrast, true allyship — like supportive social media posts combined with having a diverse board of directors — enhances consumers' connection with the brand and their purchase intent (Spielmann, Dobscha, and Shrum 2023).

Another avenue for supporting underrepresented groups lies in inclusive design. Patrick and Hollenbeck (2021) define it as a perceived fit between the consumer and the design object. They argue that companies can employ inclusive design at various levels: from specifically catering to underrepresented groups to developing a design ethos that serves both the majority and the stigmatized.

This study aims to decipher how brand allyship — portrayed through donations to non-profits — and inclusive product design impact the responses of stigmatized consumers to a promotional campaign, the product, and the brand.

Method and Data

The study has a 2 (brand allyship: present vs. absent) x 2 (inclusive design: present vs. absent) between-subjects experimental design. 187 participants were hired on Prolific to participate in the study (55% female, 21% trans or non-binary, M_{age} = 31.3), who self-identify as members of the LGBTQIA+ community (a stigmatized group of consumers). The respondents were asked to imagine that they received a promotional email from their bank, which advertises the new credit card design in support of LGBTQIA+ clients. In the brand allyship condition, the bank continues its annual donation initiative to LGBTQIA+ non-profits and this year donates $5 million. In the inclusive design scenario, an inclusive feature allows clients to use their preferred first name on the card, supporting trans and non-binary clients in particular, who may have not officially changed their name in the documents yet. The participants then evaluated their attitude towards the promotional email, the product (Dimofte, Goodstein, and Brumbaugh 2015), and the brand, as well as rated perceived brand sincerity (Yoon, Gürhan-Canli, and Schwarz 2006) and brand-self connection (Park et al. 2010).

Summary of Findings

Results indicate no interaction between brand allyship and inclusive design. However, inclusive design contributes to more positive promotion attitudes (M_{incl} = 5.46, M_{noincl} = 4.97, p = .015) and product attitudes (M_{incl} = 5.36, M_{noincl} = 4.74, p = .001) in presence of inclusive design (vs. absence). Mediation analysis further discloses that self-brand connection mediates the relationship between inclusive design presence (vs. absence) and product and evaluations.

Exploratory analysis reveals an interaction effect between inclusive design and trans identity on consumer attitudes. Only those respondents who identify as trans or non-binary have more favorable attitudes towards the promotion (M_{incl} = 6.08, M_{noincl} = 4.61, p < .001), the product (M_{incl} = 5.93, M_{noincl} = 4.22, p < .001), and the brand (M_{incl} = 5.91, M_{noincl} = 4.71, p = .003) in presence of inclusive design (vs. absence). In contrast, attitudes of cis LGBTQIA+ respondents remained consistent across conditions.

The main effect of inclusive design is thus driven by a small sub-sample of trans and non-binary respondents. Further moderated mediation analysis reveals an indirect effect of the inclusive design (vs. absence of it) on product, brand, and promotion evaluations through perceived brand sincerity, but only among trans respondents, not cis.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research adds to the marketing literature on inclusive design and brand allyship. This is one of the first studies to focus on how members of the stigmatized group perceive marketing aimed at them, discerning which aspects they deem most vital in brands' support. Findings illustrate that the use of inclusive design increases consumers' brand-self connection, which bolsters their attitudes towards the product and the brand. I further add to the literature by looking deeper into

the differences in attitudes of trans and cis LGBTQIA+ consumers. As research on trans consumers is rather scarce, understanding their discernment between genuine marketing and woke washing is essential. Perceived brand sincerity operates as a mediator between the use of inclusive design and consumer attitudes, but this mediation effect is only salient for trans and non-binary respondents, not cis. This suggests that trans consumers may value communication sincerity more than feeling brand-self connection, which improves their brand and product attitudes.

Marketers can use this study to adapt their marketing strategy to stigmatized consumers, particularly LGBTQIA+ individuals. As results underscore the efficacy of highlighting inclusive design over brand allyship narratives (history of donations), such insights should guide the design of marketing campaigns for underrepresented consumers.

References are available upon request.

IS THE CLEANSER REALLY 'CLEAN'? INTRODUCING AND ASSESSING A FRONT-OF-PACKAGE LABELING FRAMEWORK ON EFFECTIVENESS- AND INGREDIENT CLAIMS

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Keywords: front-of-package labeling, claims, FMCG, packaging, green claims directive

Description: The paper develops and validates a holistic front-of-package labeling framework for non-food consumer goods based on a dataset of 2666 personal care products.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Existing research has shown how distinct forms of FOP labeling influence consumer's product attribute inferences (André et al. 2019; Rybak et al. 2021), product demand (Kim et al. 2022), willingness to pay (WTP) (Hartmann et al. 2018; Liaukonyte et al. 2013) and product evaluations (Parker et al. 2021), differently.

While various classifications for FOP labeling exist and the framework by André et al. (2019) is one of the most established ones, it remains unclear whether existing approaches are fully applicable or exhaustive for non-food FMCG like cosmetics and personal care products, thus creating a gap in the literature and hindering research examining the effects of FOP labeling of non-food products on consumer behavior. We, therefore, fill this gap by developing a holistic framework of FOP-labeling of non-food FMCG through qualitative and quantitative analyses of 2666 product packages.

Method and Data

Study 1 analyzed personal care products available in the market for their FOP labeling to develop a unique and extensive dataset and a holistic framework. We obtained pictures and product data of 2666 products that were examined for their FOP labeling through open, axial, and selective coding to develop the framework through grounded theory.

Study 2 was to confirm the conceptual framework through consumers' perceptions while focusing on ingredient claims and effectiveness claims. We recruited 1100 participants who were asked to evaluate four randomly assigned ingredient claims and four randomly assigned effectiveness claims and utilized several clustering techniques.

Study 3 examined the association between ingredient claims and the safety of product ingredients. Data was the ingredient claims found in Study 1, ingredient lists for each product, and the EU Cosmetics Regulation. We conducted a regression with the number of restricted ingredients as the dependent variable and its nature index, presence index, and their interaction as independent variables.

Study 4 explored consumer responses to different claim types. We asked 1254 participants to evaluate personal care products bearing claims and performed various regressions to examine the effects of different claim types on consumer responses.

Summary of Findings

We developed a holistic framework for FOP Labeling of cosmetics and personal care products through the qualitative analysis of 2666 drugstore products. By creating a unique and extensive dataset on 2666 FMCG products, their FOP claims, and ingredients, we constituted a substantial base for the consecutive studies, providing crucial insights for consumer responses

and informed decision-making. We identified 32,000 different claims instances and found effectiveness, ingredient, packaging claims, and the source of the claim to be relevant classifications. Cluster analyses showed that the two proposed frameworks developed in Study 1 appropriately classify the 80 most frequent FOP claims for personal care products.

Study 3 showed that neither ingredient claims by marketers nor third-party labels are reliable indicators for consumers to infer the presence or absence of restricted ingredients in the product. Through multiple linear regression, we found that no ingredient claims and only four of the 22 examined third-party labels were significantly associated with the number of restricted ingredients found in the product, with two even being positively correlated.

Contrasting consumer responses regarding beliefs, attitudes, and intent toward products carrying different claim types in Study 4 further confirmed our framework and provided valuable insights for marketers and policymakers.

Statement of Key Contribution

We developed a holistic framework of FOP labeling of cosmetics and personal care products by analyzing 2666 drugstore products, identifying 32000 claims instances, and assessing their informative value based on ingredient data, EU regulation, and consumer ratings.

We contribute to marketing research by examining packaging design and its prevalent factors. We extend the knowledge of what consumers perceive as natural (Rozin 2005). Even for processed products like cosmetics, marketers can effectively transfer an image of naturalness through ingredient claims on the presence of naturally-sounding ingredients. We also find that framing effects, i.e., prospect theory (Tversky and Kahneman 1989), are prevalent in FOP claims as a dominant factor in consumers' perception of ingredient- and effectiveness claims.

Industry stakeholders can benefit from our findings on consumer perception based on FOP claims to communicate their product's properties effectively. Manufacturers should adopt informative third-party accredited labels to signal to consumers the absence of restricted ingredients. Consumer advocacy groups should create indicators to help consumers make informed.

We find that neither ingredient claims provided by the manufacturer nor third-party labels are reliable indicators for restricted product ingredients. Policymakers should thus continue their efforts on claim regulation, as already being improved for green claims.

References are available upon request.

LET ME THINK ABOUT THAT: SUSTAINABLE ADVERTISEMENT PERCEPTIONS AND COGNITIVE ELABORATION

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Description: This research explores how altering sustainable advertisement messages to be more distant or proximal impacts consumer purchase intentions of sustainable products, investigating the role of cognitive elaboration as a mediator and testing the impact of other individual level factors including processing fluency and self-efficacy.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Despite arguments that consumer intentions do not lead to sustainable purchase behavior, consumers are shopping more sustainably (Whelan and Kronthol-Sacco 2019). Even in the presence of a pandemic, sustainability-marketed products grew more than twice as fast as conventionally marketed products from 2015 to 2021 (Whelan and Kronthol-Sacco 2022). The consistent increase in interest and actual purchase of sustainable products is evident, marking important opportunities for businesses and researchers.

There is a diversion in the literature regarding the effectiveness of proximizing climate change impacts through construal level framing. While some research finds that reducing

psychological distance of climate change can increase climate change mitigation actions (Chu and Yang 2018; Jones, Donald, and Marks 2017; Pahl and Bauer 2011), others find the implications are not so straight forward (Brügger, Morton, and Dessai 2016; Chu and Yang 2020; Spence and Pidgeon 2010; Spence, Poortinga, and Pidgeon 2012). Taking a CLT lens, we explore if bringing the advertising message of a sustainable product "nearer" can increase purchase intentions. The purpose of this research is to find the most effective way to encourage sustainable consumption. We do so by understanding how cognitive processing is affected by internal factors.

Method and Data

Participants were 206 adults recruited through Prolific (49.8% male; M_{age} = 36.50; 72.7% White). Construal was manipulated through benefits for the future versus today. Elaboration type was measured using a thought listing task wherein qualitative data is coded into relational or item-specific categories, then computed into an index (Lee and Lee 2011; Malaviya, Kisielius, and Sternthal 1996; Meyers-Levy and Maheswaran 2004).

There is a significant negative direct effect of construal on the elaboration index (b = -.354, p = .01). There was a significant direct effect of fluency on attitudes toward the ad (b = .366, p = .000) and brand (b = .295, p = .001). Brand attitudes had a significant positive effect on purchase likelihood (b = .457, p = .000). There was a significant direct effect of self-efficacy on attitude toward the ad (b = .227, p = .000) and brand (b = .235, p = .000).

Linear regression tested if elaboration significantly predicted fluency. When using elaboration scale operationalization, the regression was statistically significant (R^2 = .048, F(1, 203) = 10.17, p = .002). Results of the Pearson correlation indicated there was a significant positive association between elaboration and fluency (r(205) = .218, p = .002).

Summary of Findings

The research seeks to understand the effect of elaboration on consumer purchase intentions. Construal has a negative direct effect on the elaboration index. As the index increases, thoughts become more item-specific and less relational. The negative coefficient indicates that for those in the low construal group (low = 0, high = 1), thoughts are more item-specific, as predicted. When fluency is relatively high, consumer attitudes toward both the ad and brand also relatively high. Additionally, when attitudes toward the brand are relatively high, purchase likelihood is also relatively high.

With a lack of support for construal level's effect on elaboration amount, future research may want to explore other construal level dimensions and manipulations. For example, abstract versus concrete messaging using a sentence or paragraph format to manipulate construal level (in comparison to the single word manipulation of today versus future for temporal construal in the current research) may result in elaboration levels that offer a wider range of results on a 7-point scale.

Key Contributions

Our theoretical contributions add to the divided literature of proximizing climate change. By studying construal level in sustainable advertisements using a cognitive elaboration-processing fluency-self-efficacy pathway, we develop a thorough understanding of how construal level messaging impacts consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. We do so through furthering our understanding of the impact of cognitive elaboration, its relationship with construal level, and its impact on purchase intentions. We address the need identified by Newman et al. (2012) to examine individual difference variables.

With the increasing popularity of greenwashing and a lack of established and commonly accepted meaning behind sustainability-related phrases (e.g., eco-friendly, recycled, compostable), brands and policy makers should consider labeling practices to be most reflective of the truest sustainable aspects in addition to most comprehensible by consumers (Ellen 1994; Mayer, Scammon, and Zick 1992; Olney and Bryce 1991). This research addresses a UN Sustainable Development Goal: Responsible Consumption and Production. Our findings contribute to bettering society overall through promotion of sustainable consumption.

References are available upon request.

NAVIGATING THE FRONTIERS OF INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS: TENSIONS AND PRACTICES AT THE INTERSECTION OF COMMERCE AND CARE

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Keywords: Institutional logics, tensions, commerce, care, hybrid organizations.

Description: This research investigates how managers of social supermarkets (SSMs), organizations in the grocery sector that are positioned at the intersection of institutional logics of commerce and care, navigate tensions related to assortment composition, customer profiles, employee idiosyncrasies, and stakeholder engagement.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Companies operate within institutional logics, which are socially constructed patterns of beliefs, values, and practices in their respective fields (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). Social supermarkets (SSMs) represent an innovative retail format that bridges the logics of commerce and care which

are prevalent in the food distribution sector. SSMs provide affordable food to at-risk-of-poverty consumers by selling surplus and near-expiration products, often provided by manufacturers or traditional supermarkets (Gruber, Holweg, & Teller, 2016; Holweg & Lienbacher, 2011). While existing studies highlight the blending of institutional logics in organizations (Ertimur and Coskuner-Balli, 2015), limited attention has been given to the experiences of managers as they navigate these logics (e.g., Welté, Cayla, and Fischer 2022).

In this project, we focus on the experiences of SSM managers who juggle demands of two competing institutional logics on a daily basis. We are guided by the following research question: What are the tensions that SSM managers experience and the strategies they employ as they balance market efficiency with the pursuit of humanitarian and environmental objectives?

Method And Data

Drawing on comparative case analysis, we focus on two Vienna-based social supermarkets (SSMs) to exploring variations in their formal structures, institutional contexts, and internal regulations (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009). Recognizing the importance of prolonged engagement in understanding managerial experiences (Hill & Stamey, 1990), we immersed ourselves as observers and volunteers in the SSMs. Spending nearly four weeks actively participating in various roles, from back-office support to frontline tasks, we gained firsthand insights into the challenges faced by store managers.

Additionally, we conducted in-depth interviews with four senior store managers, each with an average of six years of experience. The interviews, lasting approximately an hour, were audio-recorded, transcribed, and complemented by observational rounds. Our analytical approach involved reading and contextualizing transcripts, field notes, and additional materials. Grounded and theoretically informed coding revealed both commonalities and disparities in the experienced

tensions and coping strategies, providing a comprehensive understanding of the retailscapes managed by these individuals.

Summary of Findings

Our study delves into the challenges faced by social supermarket (SSM) managers who juggle two disparate institutional logics. These challenges extend beyond conventional organizational complexities and also encompass emotional labor experienced by managers. Apparently straightforward decisions, like determining whether to discard a carton of tomatoes, pose unexpected complexities for them. Balancing the desire to empower customers by offering produce at nominal prices for autonomy, while supporting long-term unemployed as staff and ensuring the social supermarket's financial stability gives rise to unique challenges.

Our research identifies four sources of tensions that arise due to SSMs' unique position at the interface two institutional logics: product assortment composition, distinct customer profiles, employee idiosyncrasies, and interactions with various stakeholders. These tensions highlight the intricate challenges faced by social organizations like SSMs striving to fulfill their missions within a neoliberal framework that prioritizes competitiveness over collective service (D'Enbeau & Buzzanell, 2011). The managers in our case study employ different strategies to navigate these tensions such as proactive communication with customers, employees, and partner organizations; regular debrief sessions, or the strategic use of store infrastructure.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our research is the first to explore in detail the case of a retailscape in the food distribution sector that is positioned at the intersection of two institutional logics. Social supermarkets proved a rich context to study tensions between logics of commerce and care. The in-depth involvement with

SSM managers, and the analysis of their experience and strategies, allows us to contribute to existing knowledge on managing competing institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). In addition, describing their efforts to stay economically viable, to minimize food waste, and to uphold humanity while assuring food security, the accounts of the managers we followed tell a new story about sustainability in the food sector.

We posit that achieving sustainability in the realm of food retail extends beyond mere optimization of supply chains to mitigate food waste or the incorporation of produce donations as part of a company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Instead, organizations must embrace the principles and recommendations of a logic of care, urging managers to cultivate empathy, occasionally deviate from conventional norms (such as when SSM managers opt not to report theft to the police), and boldly adopt practices that may appear counterintuitive to efficiency and optimization.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE SOLUTIONS

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Keywords: political ideology, climate change, carbon emission mitigation solutions, fit effects

Description: This research finds that conservatives (vs. liberals) prefer external carbon emission mitigation solutions (offsetting emissions) over internal solutions (cutting emissions) due to their environment-related (vs. human-related) attribution of climate change.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Conservatives are less supportive of activities aimed at combating climate change than liberals (Bayes and Druckman 2021; Leiserowitz 2006). But is there any way to increase conservatives' support for climate change mitigation strategies? We examine two different types of carbon emission mitigation solutions and test whether each might garner more or less support from consumers with different political orientations. Specifically, we classify carbon emission mitigation solutions as either *internal*, defined as solutions that *reduce* environmental harms by making internal changes in how the organization operates and uses resources (e.g., replace equipment powered by traditional non-renewable energy with equipment powered by clean renewable energy, reduce carbon emissions from transportation), or *external,* defined as solutions that *offset* environmental harms by changing the external environment without modifying the organizations' operations (e.g., planting trees, buying carbon offset credits). Research shows that conservatives tend to make external attributions for climate change by attributing it more to natural causes and liberals tend to make internal attributions by attributing it more to human activities (Malka et al. 2009). We predict that conservatives (liberals) will be more likely to support external (internal) carbon emission solutions due to the fit between their climate change attributions and a solution's characteristics.

Method And Data

Six studies supported our prediction. We first provide support for our predictions in four online experiments using both between- and within-subjects design (Study 1A – S3). Next we provide real world evidence via two correlational studies using secondary datasets: In Study 4A, we use data from a large-scale survey (N = 20,488; Eurobarometer 2017) to show that right-wing political affiliation is negatively associated with the frequency of engaging in activities that fit our definition of internal carbon mitigation solutions (e.g., 1= "You have bought a new car and its low fuel consumption was an important factor in your choice"). In Study 4B, the annual

amount of carbon credits purchased by companies (CEPP 2021) is used as a proxy of companies' implementation of external carbon emission solutions to show that, on average, companies located in liberal counties have a lower number of registered carbon credits than those located in conservative counties.

Summary of Findings

In Study 1A, participants ($N_{Prolific} = 292$) reported their political ideology (1 = liberal, 0 = conservative) and then indicated their choice between two grocery delivery companies that mitigate environmental harm with either an internal ("Store A uses clean renewable energy in its operations and delivery to reduce its carbon emissions") or external carbon emission solution ("Store B, which pays carbon credits for third parties to plant trees to offset its carbon emissions from operations and delivery"). More participants chose Store A (67%) than B (33%), suggesting that overall the internal solution was more preferred. However, more liberals (62%) than conservatives (38%) chose A, whereas more conservatives (76%) than liberals (24%) chose B. Overall, liberals (conservatives) were less (more) likely to choose Store B (external) versus A (internal; B = -1.66, *Wald χ^2* = 34.72, *p* < .001). Study 1B replicated these findings using a between-subjects design. Study 2 ($N_{Undergrad} = 280$) showed our proposed effect was serially mediated by climate change attribution and the perceived fit between individual environmental beliefs and solution type. Study 3 ($N_{Prolific} = 468$) showed providing higher economic value (i.e., lower price) mitigated the influence of political orientation on carbon emission solution preferences.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our findings suggest that conservatives (liberals), who tend to make external (internal) attributions for climate change are more likely to support companies' external (internal) carbon emission mitigation solutions due to the fit between their climate change attributions and the characteristics of the solution. Companies targeting conservative (liberal) consumers or operating in more conservative (liberal) geographic areas would be better off implementing external (internal) carbon emission mitigation strategies in their operations and promotions. Lastly, providing superior economic value can be utilized to dynamically nudge liberals to prefer external solution and conservatives to prefer internal solution.

References are available upon request.

PREVALENCE OF DIGITAL INACCESSIBILITY OF RETAIL JOB POSTS FOR DISABLED USERS

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Keywords: Accessibility, Retail Marketing, Users, Posts, Disability, Employment

Description: The paper discusses the prevalence of inaccessibility and lack of adherence to American Disability Association guidelines among the largest retail companies in the United States, and how certain public policies have both exacerbated this issue, and also may hold the promise of a solution.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Job posts and applications are increasingly found online, rather than in print. When they are digitally inaccessible, roughly 30 million Americans, who rely on assistive devices like screen readers cannot find, read, or digitally apply for available positions. Visually impaired participants may resent businesses that fail to make websites accessible, leading to feelings of discrimination. Empirically, this study assessed the digital accessibility of job posts for the top 100 retailers in America, an industry that in 2023 employs over 21 million workers. Top brands in the National Retail Federation list such as Walmart, Target, CVS Health, Macy's, and Apple Stores, show serious design flaws in their career sites. Such digital inaccessibility thus made

navigation difficult or impossible for visually impaired users to read or complete job applications within the studied years of 2015 through 2021. This paper suggests that employers who proactively address digital inaccessibility issues on job posts are uncommon, and this issue might severely impact public perception of companies, their website users, and society in general.

Research Question

The study researches the need for companies to adopt digitally accessible career website protocols through (1) emphasizing the negative effects on both companies and visually impaired website users resulting from digitally inaccessible career websites; (2) showing the level to which digital job post inaccessibility pervades the online job marketplace, through an evaluation of digital job post accessibility; and (3) explaining how companies may attain competitive advantage by correcting this.

The empirical study then evaluates the top one hundred retail companies' digital inaccessibility, focusing on the question of whether their job posts are following ADA guidelines to ensure accessibility for individuals with visual impairments. The study utilizes commercially available evaluation tools in the methodology, such that these tools can be used by employers when addressing their own digital inaccessibility.

Methods and Data

This study assessed career-related website digital accessibility by testing the topmost 100 United States retailers based on the National Retail Federation ranking, which includes brands such as Walmart, Target, CVS Health, Macy's, and Apple Stores. According to IBIS World, the retail sector currently employs 21,268,688 workers in the United States alone, and has been increasing

its workforce at a rate of 3.6% annually. Using *Sort Site Rating* software, an accessibility

assessment was performed from 2015 to 2021, with each company evaluated using the globally

recognized World Wide Web Consortia Guidelines (W3CG), and were repeated annually. The

number of complaints filed increased from 2015 to 2021 significantly.

The *Sort Site Rating* tool was selected since it computed and classified accessibility errors

into A, AA, and AAA priority groups. At the time this data collection began, no other tool

provided this functionality. Website assessment takes between 15 minutes to over 24 hours,

depending on website size, and the quantity of errors and pages needed to catalog. Sort-Site

software lists only 22,500 pages per scan. If the error quantity is too high or discrepancies

occurred during the study, the assessment was redone to ensure that no errors existed in the final

analysis.

Summary of Findings

Results suggested an astounding number of digital accessibility issues, including high priority

issues (i.e. A errors) that would immediately and completely stop a visually impaired website

user from submitting a job application. Second, an equally high number of moderate priority

issues (i.e. AA and AAA type errors), that while not necessarily stopping the completion of a job

application online, could severely impede or hinder the completion of an application by a

visually impaired website user. Both of these can be considered discriminatory, either outright

preventing or making it needlessly difficult to submit a job application for a specific and

protected group of disabled website users.

The data showed a substantial drop in errors occurred across all of the study's visuals in

2020, as opposed to every other year. Between 2106 and 2019, and again in 2021, a substantial

increase in digital accessibility errors is found, representing a continual increase in the online impediments to job seeking for the disabled. The drop in errors in 2020 may reflect a drop in job listings available online due to fewer jobs being available at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Contributions

This study suggests how major retailers that currently account for 21 million jobs in the United States may, through digital inaccessibility of their job posts, be discriminating against visually impaired users. The study accomplishes this by identifying accessibility errors and unclear labeling of website features, which make it difficult for website users with disabilities to navigate. This method also presents an avenue for these retailers to implement the standard layout of website digital accessibility.

This paper also identifies that inconsistent government guidelines in marketing ethics around digital inaccessibility for the visually impaired have created frustration, legal liability, and negative public perception of companies that do not have clearly defined mandates from the law for how to address accessibility online. The paper suggests that a path forward is needed for these ADA policies to be clarified and made completely legally binding. Until that point comes, it is in businesses' interest to be proactive in addressing their digital accessibility issues using the software tools and design recommendations suggested. The paper provides a way for businesses to self-monitor and correct issues of digital inaccessibility as they arise, through an explanation of software resources.

References are available upon request.

TITLE: Racial Diversity Representation Improves Preference For Stigmatized Products

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Keywords: stereotype content model, women business owners, stereotyping, gender bias

Description: This study demonstrates that increasing the number of racial groups represented in marketing appeals for a stigmatized product (e.g., STD treatment) improves consumer attitude toward the ad and enhances perceived firm quality.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question:
Evidence for consumer preference toward diverse racial representation, such as mixed-race groups or interracial couples, in marketing appeals is inconclusive. Past work has found that increasing the number of racial groups presented in advertisements can improve firm outcomes while other research finds that consumers do not always favor diverse representation. One under-researched theme in this domain is how consumers respond to diverse racial representation in advertisements for stigmatized products (e.g., STD treatment). As promotions for stigmatized products may activate stigma associations, we propose that racial diversity may counter this by signaling inclusion, which may lead to more favorable product evaluations.

Method and Data:
We tested our reasoning across five experiments (four preregistered). Study 1 first examined how mixed-race versus monoracial dyads of White and Black individuals displayed in marketing promotions for a stigmatized product influence ad evaluation, using a 2x2 ANOVA between-subjects experimental design. Study 2 provided a key test of our theorizing that consumers favor mixed-race (vs. monoracial) groups represented in marketing promotions for stigmatized products by testing a stigmatized versus non-stigmatized advertisement, in a 2x3 ANOVA between-subjects design. We replicate our central effects and test our proposed mechanism in study 3, as well as generalize gender by using female models and a female-oriented stigmatized product using a three-condition between-subjects design. Study 4a and study 4b replicated our main effects and offered a test of the two signals driving the effect: inclusion and brand expertise. Empirical evidence supports the proposed theory that inclusion and brand expertise serially mediate the positive influence of racial diversity on consumer response toward stigmatized products and expand into a new stigmatized product category (4b).

Summary of Findings:
Empirical evidence indicates that, unlike past findings, the representation of mixed-race groups (versus monoracial majority or minority groups) delivers the best ad outcomes for stigmatized (vs. non-stigmatized) promotions. Interestingly, the pattern of results found relating to romantic couples and different racial compositions in recent work (Davis, Smith, and Sevilla 2023) is

replicated for non-stigmatized advertisements. Drawing from social identity theory, we find that the increased preference for the mixed-race group is driven by diverse representation which signals inclusion and brand expertise, leading to better outcomes such as higher ad evaluations and expected quality.

Key Contributions:

The findings in this study have substantive implications for broadening our understanding of how consumers perceive and respond to racial diversity in marketing appeals. First, we answer the call to extend marketing research that offers insight into consumer response to and reception of marketing diversity practices (Arsel, Crockett and Scott 2021; Lamberton 2019). Second, we divert from the conventional perspective that racial diversity is always favored (Chandy et al. 2021; Flowers et al. 2020; Madadi et al. 2021) and show that the effectiveness of marketing racial diversity is influenced by the context or product category in which it is presented. Third, we build on past findings (Berger et al. 2007) by uncovering a new way in which perceptions of expertise may be influenced, that is, by portraying a wider product audience rather than a wider product selection. Our work also holds managerial relevance. The current study provides important strategic guidelines for marketers to counter the potential negative consequences of brand stigmatization and support the challenge of developing effective diversity initiatives.

SHALLOW BUT WIDE, OR DEEP BUT NARROW: DOES THE TYPE OF DONATION CAUSES IMPACT DONATION ALLOCATION STRATEGY?

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Description: This research examines how consumers allocate donation amounts based on whether a donation cause is related to urgent or non-urgent cause.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

Consumers must decide how to allocate their donations among various causes when considering a charitable act. There are two strategies for people to allocate donations. First,

consumers can choose a donation strategy in which the donation amount is fully used for a single beneficiary (depth strategy). Conversely, consumers can choose a donation strategy that serves more beneficiaries, even if a smaller amount is allocated per beneficiary (breadth strategy). Farmar et al (2021) found that there is a preferred method between depth and breadth depending on political beliefs. Specifically, conservatives who value social order prefer depth, while progressives who value social justice prefer breadth. Although a study has found that individual difference factors such as political beliefs can affect consumers' donation decisions (depth vs. breadth), as far as we know, no studies related to the characteristics of donation campaigns have been investigated. Therefore, to narrow this research gap, this study examines how consumers allocate donations based on whether the cause is urgent or non-urgent. We predict consumers will prefer the breadth strategy when donating to urgent causes. However, consumers' preference for the depth strategy will increase when donating to non-urgent causes (vs. urgent cause).

METHOD AND DATA

Study 1: The experimental design was a 2 (cause type: urgent vs. non-urgent) between-participants design (N=401). Participants in the urgent condition were manipulated into donating to a food supporting for impoverished children, while those in the non-urgent condition were manipulated into donating a sports education supporting campaign for

impoverished children. Participants then chose to support either one child with $100 or five children with $20 each. In the urgent condition, 88.6% opted for the broader support strategy, compared to 77% in the non-urgent condition ($\chi2 = 9.40$, p = .002).

Study 2: Using the same experimental design as Study 1 with 247 participants, those in the urgent condition read about donating for food, while the non-urgent condition involved cultural and art education support. All participants answered whether they preferred their donations to be used for one person or to support as many people as possible. Finally, they reported feasibility' importance of beneficiary outcome when making their prior decision. Results showed that the impact of donation cause type on decision-making was mediated by the perceived importance of feasibility ($\beta = .0840$, SE = .04; 95% CI = [.02, .17]).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Despite growing interest in sustainability and the need for donations, there is a lack of research on how consumers decide how many beneficiaries to help when considering giving and how much to give per beneficiary. Some studies found differences in deciding whether to help many people shallowly or deeply to help a single person depending on political beliefs and differences in deciding whether to donate more to urgent (vs. non-urgent) cause depending on

social class. However, these studies have all focused on individual factors. In contrast to previous studies, this research focuses on the characteristics of donation campaigns, examining more generalizable situations. when donating to a cause that supports an urgent issue, participants preferred to help more beneficiaries even if the amount allocated per capita was smaller (breadth) rather than allocating donations to one beneficiary (depth). However, when donating to causes that support non-urgent issue (vs. urgent cause), the preference for the depth strategy increased. The mechanism is that feasibility is critical since urgent cause are relatively survival and immediate; in contrast, desirability increases in importance in the case of non-urgent cause related to personal development and long-term. These results have not previously been reported elsewhere.

STATEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

The present research offers new insights into consumers' judgment of donation allocation strategy. In contrast to previous donation literature investigating individual factors influencing donation allocation strategy, we focus more on the characteristics of donation campaign types, examining factors with higher generalizability that may influence donation allocation decisions. Our results provide important practical implications. For example, in a donation campaign related to an urgent cause, they can emphasize how many lives can be saved with donations. In a donation campaign related to a non-urgent cause, they can emphasize how well each

beneficiary can receive a good education, learn, and grow. Also, advertising campaigns that support urgent cause can be more effective when using frames related to feasibility (concrete, how, immediately); conversely, when advertising campaigns that support non-urgent cause, frames related to desirability (abstract, why, long-term) can be more effective when using. Furthermore, when the perception of urgency and the importance of feasibility (or desirability) of the cause is manipulated, the allocation decision difference depending on the cause type can be moderated in that case.

References are available upon request.

STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING OF FACTORS INFLUENCING INTENTION TO SUBSTITUTE PLANT-BASED PROTEIN FOR MEAT IN DIFFERENT NATIONAL MARKETS: IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE MARKETING STRATEGY

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Keywords: Plant-Based Meat Alternatives, Value-Based Motivations, Multi-Country Analysis, International Sustainable Marketing Strategy, Standardization/Adaptation

Description: This study undertakes a multi-country analysis to identify and model predictors of intention to substitute plant-based protein for meat in four major national markets that are similar (e.g., large economies with sizable middle classes) yet culturally distinct: United States, United Kingdom, China, and Japan.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consumers can make meaningful contributions to the battle against global warming by reducing their meat consumption. Plant-based meat alternatives (PBMAs) are viewed as one viable way to facilitate this behavioral shift. Increasing adoption on a global scale, however, requires a better understanding of the factors that influence consumer intention to try these more sustainable alternatives. Unfortunately, international marketing research addressing this topic is scarce. As a result, multinational corporations have little information to guide their standardization/adaptation strategies in different national markets. Determining the right

positioning strategy has important implications for the development of marketing communications designed to encourage dietary changes and increase consumer demand for meat alternatives. For some consumers, the decision to switch to PBMAs may reflect moral and ethical concerns, whereas others may be more motivated by egoistic considerations. Of the value-based motivations driving the shift toward plant-based diets globally, future orientation, green attitude, and health consciousness appear to be especially relevant. Yet, how these motivations affect intention to substitute in different national markets remains unclear. The role of confidence in ability to prepare meals with PBMAs has also been overlooked in prior cross-national research. This study seeks to elucidate the relationships between these factors.

Method and Data

Quota samples drawn from adult panels in the United States (n = 403), United Kingdom (n = 418), China (n = 404), and Japan (n = 418) completed a cross-sectional, language-appropriate online survey. The Chinese and Japanese versions were double-back translated from English. The questionnaire included measures associated with adoption of plant-based diets: *future orientation* (e.g., "I think about what the future has in store"), *green attitude* (e.g., "It is important to me that the products I use do not harm the environment"), *health consciousness* (e.g., "I reflect about my health a lot"), *confidence in ability* (e.g., "How confident are you that you have the knowledge required to make a satisfying meal with plant-based protein instead of meat protein?"), and *intention to substitute plant-based protein for meat* (e.g., "Over the next six months, I intend to substitute plant-based protein for meat for one or more of the main meals that I eat"). For each country, all Cronbach's alphas exceeded .70, with most greater than .90. To test the study's hypothesized model, the two-step approach to structural equation modeling was

undertaken (i.e., development of a measurement model and specification of relations between latent constructs in a structural model).

Summary of Findings

Quota screens produced equivalent proportions across gender and 10-year age cohorts in each country (50% female / 50% male; 25-65 years old). A majority of participants in the United States (56.4%), United Kingdom (62%), and Japan (81.4%) reported rarely or never eating PBMAs. However, in China, 36.1% reported eating PBMAs one to three times per week, whereas only 14.6% rarely/never did so. The structural models for all four countries exhibited acceptable goodness-of-fit indices (CMIN / DF < 3; CFI > .95; TLI > .95; RMSEA < .06; SRMR < .08). The relatively large R-squared values for each country ($R^2 \geq .51$) also indicated that the models explained sufficient variance in the dependent variable. In all four countries, green attitude was positively related to intention to substitute ($p < .01$). Health consciousness was positively related to intention only in the United States ($p = .003$), whereas future orientation predicted intention only in Japan ($p < .001$). Confidence in ability mediated the relationship between green attitude and intention in each country ($p < .001$). Finally, the effect of health consciousness on intention to substitute was also mediated by confidence in each country ($p < .05$), except the United Kingdom ($p = .238$).

Key Contributions

Nowhere is the issue of standardization/adaptation more pressing than in the global food product market. Not only is this market extremely large and competitive, it is also one in which consumers' values play an important role in determining product attribute preferences. Given the

negative environmental impact of meat production and consumption, identifying value-congruent ways to promote sustainable food choices is a critical step in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and addressing the climate crisis. Consistent with the recent call for "better marketing for a better world," marketers and policymakers can encourage consumers in multiple national markets to consider choosing PBMAs for one or more regular meals a week. Drawing on the motivation, opportunity, and ability framework, this study offers deeper insight into predictors of intention to substitute plant-based alternatives for meat in western and nonwestern markets. Specifically, the study identifies antecedents that are likely to be "etic" and, therefore, more conducive to global standardization or "emic" and, thus, in need of local adaptation. To increase adoption of low-GHG plant-based alternatives, practitioners can use the study's findings to develop marketing interventions that motivate consumers to consider the personal, societal, and environmental consequences of their food choices and consumption habits.

*References are available upon request.

TITLE: THE CASE FOR PRODUCT REPAIR: HOW TO OFFER IT AND WHAT TO EXPECT FROM CONSUMERS

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Keywords: product repair; sustainability; purchasing process; product lifetime;

Description: The study aims to enhance understanding of the role repair services play in attracting consumer interest and shaping overall brand evaluations

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Transitioning towards a more sustainable product offering requires a substantial effort from organizations. Organizations are not widely adopting repair solutions, and the literature has not proposed validated paths to move toward product repair, a gap that needs to be closed to make CE circular. This work proposes a framework to offer product repair, starting from the companies' key activities. The work explores how those manufacturers that are facilitating repair, referred to as "*repair pioneers*", are implementing a repair strategy, providing support to organizations that are considering following. Indeed, while the literature suggests various ways to shape a firm's activities to facilitate repair, it lacks the perspective of how to put this

internal effort into a commercially viable offer. The proposed framework is then tested with consumers, to provide an understanding of the potential effect of repair on the purchasing process and brand image. A second contribution of the work is thus advancing the understanding of how repair may increase consumer interest in the firm offering and shape brand evaluations.

Method And Data

Two studies are conducted. The first study wants to examine how organizations are understanding and implementing repair. A case study method is adopted, where interacting with *repair pioneers* serves to develop a taxonomy of ways to offer repair. By examining the repair activities offered, through the company's website, reports and external resources, a set of 32 companies is selected. The companies operate in the B2C market and pertain to different industries, from fashion to outdoor equipment. The analysis of the 32 companies is used to identify the main sub-activities that are adopted to enable repair. Then, managers from 6 of these companies are interviewed adopting a semi-structured approach. An interview guide with open-ended questions is designed to understand how and why they are trying to enable product repair. In study 2, a scenario-based experiment is used to test the effect of the different repair offers on consumers. Four cases are drafted with the goal of isolating the impact of repair, offsetting other evaluations such as product aesthetics, price, store, experience and the social influence on buying a product. The sample is composed of European consumers and a total of 352 responses are gathered for analysis.

Summary of Findings

Through the analysis of the 32 repair pioneers and the interviews conducted in Study 1, a taxonomy of different types of repair offers is developed. The types of offers are defined adopting the methodology of Ertz et al. (2019b), where the difference lies in the activities performed by the manufacturer, which change based on the stakeholder that performs the repair of the product. Manufacturers face three possible strategies: selling spare parts and providing tools and guidance to their customers (Type A), offering free or low-cost repair services (Type B), or incentivizing do-it-yourself repairs while still offering the option of sending the product to the company for repair (Type C). For study 2, data collected through the survey study has been analyzed through PLS-SEM. We provide evidence that repair increases consumers' intentions, independent of how the repair is offered. This finding suggests that consumers do not discern between facilitated DIY repair and repair services. The favourable effect on consumer intention is mostly due to a higher perceived value for money rather than green brand equity, suggesting that consumers regard more repair practices as something that will raise the value of the purchase, rather than highlight the company's environmental commitment.

Statement of Key Contributions

The study investigates the sub-activities that organizations can implement to extend the lifetime of products through repair. The proposed framework can serve as a taxonomy of the repair activities companies may offer to the market, disentangling this practice. Such activities have been further tested on consumers, to assess their perceptions, looking at how manufacturers should orchestrate them. Grounding on this, we propose a novel conceptual model to evaluate consumers' intentions toward repair offerings, that connects both the perspective of green marketing with the one of branding. Starting from the research of Ng et al. (2014), we expand the model to investigate a pre-purchase situation, when consumers first approach a product offering. Thus, we contribute to research by providing a model exploring consumers' intentions

in the first touchpoint with the company, offering directions on the elements inducing individuals to purchase a more sustainable product. Moreover, we enrich the model with further constructs, thus providing a deeper understanding of how consumers form intentions toward repair offerings. This research provides a tool for managers and marketers that are interested in offering product repair, by showing how to develop a repair offer, starting from its core activities.

THE DUAL IMPACT OF BRAND ACTIVISM ON BRAND CHOICE AND PUBLIC INTEREST IN SOCIOPOLITICAL ISSUES

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Keywords: Brand activism, brand choice, societal issues, brand credibility

Description: The current paper investigates the dual impact of brand activism on both public interest in the addressed issues and on brand awareness, purchase intention, and choice.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Many leading global brands are adopting inclusive activist stances to bridge the societal disparities on issues such as LGBT rights and immigration. These brands claim to engage in activism to draw public attention to contemporary societal problems, exerting significant pressure on policymakers and other corporations (Sarkar & Kotler, 2021). However, existing research lacks empirical evidence to substantiate this claim. Instead, it has focused on whether brand activism is good for the brand, with mixed results.

Given the divisive nature of activism, we build on negative publicity research and argue for an increased information search following activist stances. Consequently, our first research question is: Does brand activism amplify public interest in the sociopolitical issues it addresses?

Nevertheless, brands must be accountable for their actions and create value for their stakeholders. While recent studies present conflicting results regarding consumers' responses to activism, we distinguish between prosocial and instrumental activist stances. This differentiation is based on stances that express goodwill, as in being primarily targeted at the customer and society at large, in contrast to instrumental. Thus, we also aim to answer the second research question: Does the consumer response to prosocial versus instrumental activist stances differ in brand awareness, purchase intention, and brand choice?

Method and Data

We investigate activism's impact on public interest in sociopolitical issues and on various brand metrics using panel regressions. Our first outcome variable consists of the weekly time series of the interest (in terms of Google searches, 0-100 score) in topics like LGBT rights, gun control, and immigration, collected from Google Trends.

Brand activism is a pulse dummy with value 1 in the week of a brand's activist stance announcement, 0 otherwise. The information about activism occurrence was collected on Factiva and Ravenpack filtering for keywords such as LGBT, immigration, etc.

The measures for the brand metrics are 0-100 scores from the YouGov BrandIndex dataset, aggregated weekly, for 30 months (July 1st, 2016 to December 31st, 2018). *Brand Awareness* corresponds to having heard anything about a brand in the previous two weeks. *Purchase Intent* is the likelihood of purchasing a brand in a given category. *Brand choice* corresponds to having recently purchased or currently owning a brand.

We differentiate activist stances into two dummies. *Instrumental activism* takes value 1 in the week of a brand's activist stance that followed a brand-related scandal, 0 otherwise. While *prosocial activism* is 1 in the week of a brand's stand unrelated to any company wrongdoing, 0 otherwise.

Summary of Findings

Our findings suggest that brand activism does not generally impact purchase intention but can either increase or decrease it under certain conditions. Consumers are more likely to purchase from brands advocating for societal good (prosocial activism), such as gun control. However, purchase intention decreases for instrumental activism. In our data, such activism could either be reactive, i.e. in response to scandals or stakeholders' pressure, or inconsistent with ongoing corporate practice (not 'walking the talk'), e.g. statements on improving user privacy or hindering the diffusion of fake news without actual follow-through.

Additionally, we find that activism's impact on brand awareness is positive, over time. We further find that reactive activist stances to corporate scandals, such as racism incidents and harassment accusations, or motivated by stakeholders' pressure, such as to protect users' privacy, bring the most attention to brands.

Finally, we find that brand activism contributes to maintaining the public interest in issues that have long been at the center of public debate, such as climate change and the refugee crisis. In turn, this heightened interest translates into an increase in brand awareness, showing that at least some of 'doing good for the world' also benefits the brand.

Key Contributions

Considering society as one of the key stakeholders of companies' activities, we contribute to the research field of activism by demonstrating the value of this corporate practice beyond consumer and firm benefits. By showing that activism contributes to raising societal

awareness of divisive issues, we present empirical support for the claim that brands become political advocates to raise public interest in wicked societal problems.

Moreover, whereas most research has taken a short-term and consumer perspective, we show that, over time, activist stances that respond to stakeholders' pressure or follow corporate scandals increase brand awareness. In turn, this heightened public awareness makes the firm's positioning on the activist issue more beneficial. We further warn executives that instrumental activist engagement is perceived as inauthentic and self-serving, leading to lower purchase intention. Only when activism concerns issues that support societal well-being, hence are other-oriented, customers appear more likely to buy these brands, seemingly rewarding them for the risk undertaken. Finally, we quantify the impact of brand activism on actual brand choice, not previously measured directly as a consequence of CSA. As such, we find that activist stances inconsistent with corporate conduct reduce brand choice, providing empirical support for authenticity's role.

THE EFFECTS OF PERCEIVED BRAND CIRCULARITY ON BRAND RELATED OUTCOMES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Keywords: Brand circularity, branding, rational brand attitudes, emotional brand attitudes

Description: The aim of this paper is to assess the effect of perceived brand circularity on rational and emotional brand attitudes and subsequent behavioral intentions toward brands by using brands from three different product categories in an empirical analysis.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Most OECD countries have agreed on stricter environmental policies over the past decade aiming to fulfill the international treaty on climate change. As a result, many nations have set up respectively stricter laws for industries and companies. To achieve these goals and to be conform with this stricter legislation, companies inevitably need to switch their business

practices from a traditional linear economy to a circular economy. In many industries, this is connected to high switching costs. The question for many managers is thereby whether such investments into circularity pay off and how consumers react to brand circularity. To answer these questions, we developed four categories of hypotheses. First, we explored the effects of perceived brand circularity on consumers' rational and emotional brand attitudes. Second, we investigated the effects of consumers' rational and emotional brand attitudes on their behavioral intentions toward brands. Third, we assessed the effects of rational and emotional brand attitudes on consumers' personal connections with brands as well as the effects on intentions toward brands. Finally, we controlled for the potential interaction effects of consumers' green attitude toward these brand related outcomes.

Method and Data

In our study, we explored whether the perceived circularity of brands has a positive impact on behavioral intentions toward brands within different product categories.

Different industries and their respective products have deviating perceptions regarding their positive and negative effects on the environment. Therefore, we chose brands from the industries of fashion, fast-moving consumer goods, and food. We therefore selected brands with a high and low level of circularity value.

We developed items to assess *perceived brand circularity* and to measure *green attitude*. Furthermore, we adopted established scales on *rational brand attitude*, *emotional brand attitude*, *personal connection to the brand*, and *behavioral intentions toward the brand* and measured them on 5-point Likert scales. We surveyed German consumers and applied structural equations modelling to assess our model.

Summary of Findings

The results of the empirical analysis show that *perceived brand circularity* indeed positively affects consumers' *rational* as well as *emotional brand attitudes*. The subsequent effect of rational brand attitudes on *behavioral intentions* is direct, and the effect of emotional brand attitudes is both direct as well as indirect via a *personal connection to the brand*. Finally, consumers' *green attitude* positively affects their personal connection with the brand. Altogether, the study shows that perceived brand circularity impacts brand attitudes as well as behavioral intentions toward brands and shows that switching to more sustainable business models may even improve consumer attitudes and behavior. As a first of its kind, the present study looks at *perceived brand circularity*, linking this fundamentally new construct to key brand related outcomes.

Key Contributions

This paper develops an initial understanding for the effects of perceived brand circularity on consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions toward brands and does so by applying the conceptualization of rational and emotional brand attitudes. For practitioners, the results indicate that establishing circular business models can have positive effects on brand related outcomes, thus increase market success. That proves that companies' efforts to implement such models are worth it because consumers recognize and value them. Moreover, investing more into building personal brand connections is recommendable, as this connection positively mediates the relationship between perceived brand circularity and behavioral intentions.

For academics, circularity is a fundamentally 'new' construct, so there is a lack of a measurement scale to thoroughly assess perceived brand circularity. With our study, we used initial items to assess this construct. However, further studies are required to validate our

findings and to improve the items. Also, the need to develop a common definition of the term is apparent. Furthermore, while our results show stability across three product categories, other brands and national contexts might show different effects.

References are available upon request.

THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE ADOPTION PROCESS:

HOW COMMITMENT TO ENVIRONMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

INFLUENCE PURCHASE INTENTIONS

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Keywords: Environment, Technology, Identity Signaling, Experimental, Empirical.

Description: A conceptual model of the factors affecting electric vehicle (EV) purchase likelihood -- involving mediation from ideological commitment through identity signaling in parallel environmental and technology pathways, ultimately moderated by the negative influences of the recharging inconveniences and higher up-front price associated with EV ownership -- is developed and empirically tested using data gathered from three experimental studies.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The emergence of electric vehicles (EVs) as a new car-buying choice facing consumers demands closer inspection. In addition to being a major marketing concern of interest for companies in the global automotive and energy sectors, the selection of an EV during the car-buying process is one of the most impactful choices that an individual consumer can make to reduce their carbon emissions.

Note that EVs face two notable disadvantages relative to conventional gasoline vehicles: an up-front *price premium* as well as the need to endure *greater inconveniences* associated with battery recharging (rather than refueling). Given these current disadvantages, EVs are more likely to appeal to two types of prospective buyers: those who gain extra utility knowing that their purchase will result in lower carbon emissions (i.e., environmentally-committed individuals) and/or those who value being associated with innovative and technologically-advanced products (i.e., technology-committed individuals).

Our research explores how evaluation of an EV relative to a gasoline vehicle – as a proxy for other product purchase decisions based on new technologies promising large environmental benefits – may be conducted differently by buyers that are committed to environmental protection vs. buyers that are committed to new technologies.

Method And Data

We advance and analyze a conceptual model that describes the evaluative process as a prospective customer considers an EV relative to an equivalent gasoline vehicle. The conceptual model incorporates a series of subjective environmentally-related and technologically-related

assessments, in the context of the price and inconvenience disadvantages, leading to EV purchase likelihood as the behavior of interest.

Our research involved gathering experimental survey data from online respondents and analyzing the data using structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques to assess the statistical significance of the relationships between constructs in the conceptual model. Data was gathered from three experiments conducted during 2023, using survey instruments of essentially the same structure, albeit with slight variations made to refine inquiry on certain measures.

Independent SEM analyses of the three experimental data sets yielded many similarities in findings, although notable differences as well. To develop an integrative statistical perspective across the three experiments, we employed a Bayesian consensus methodology that consolidated the statistical outputs of the three SEM analyses into one set of estimated coefficients and standard errors, which in turn produced a single assessment of statistical significance of effects.

Summary of Findings

For both the environmental and technology pathways in our conceptual model, we found strong evidence of both direct and mediated effects on EV purchase likelihood, all positive in nature. Meanwhile, the expected negative direct effects on EV purchase likelihood of higher EV price and of greater EV inconvenience were also revealed.

The hypothesized moderating effects of signaling value on the negative impacts of both higher EV price and greater EV inconvenience on EV purchase price were less obviously apparent. Price and environmental signaling value were found to interact positively, implying that the positive effect of environmental signaling on EV purchase likelihood is magnified when the price premium associated with buying an EV is higher.

Additionally, we also found evidence that ideological commitment (to environment or to technology) and knowledge about the ability of EVs to further that ideological cause negatively interact with each other towards EV purchase likelihood, suggesting that people who know more about EVs are more sanguine in their impact on their cause of concern.

Lastly, the relative magnitude of coefficient estimates indicates that, in many ways, EV purchase likelihood is more sensitive to the technology assessments than the environmental assessments made by prospective EV buyers.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research should be of considerable interest to researchers in several subdisciplines of consumer behavior. Those focusing on consumer choice processes will find the conceptual model a novel application and refinement of the Theory of Reasoned Action. Based on twin sets of mediated pathways, our conceptual model could encourage others to investigate decision-making under multiple parallel sets of influences. Researchers active in the areas of identity and signaling will find this paper extends the understanding of the motivations and perceptions of consumers with deep commitment to environmental protection or technological advancement. Consequently, this paper also augments the literatures pertaining to environmental psychology and innovative technology adoption. The work may also have notable implications for future research in branding, product development, and new category definition.

Methodologically, experimental researchers may find the survey design and construct development aspects of our work to be a good model to follow, particularly if the measures and scales we develop are useful to their area of interest. The use of Bayesian consensus methodology may also be a case study of interest to researchers seeking to consolidate and interpret empirical findings across multiple studies involving similar investigations.

References are available upon request.

THE HEDONIC NATURE OF FOOD PRODUCTS AND RECYCLED PACKAGING

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Keywords: recycled packaging, utilitarian, hedonic, food products, environmentally friendly

Description: This research examines the use of recycled packaging in food products and reveals that marketing efforts highlighting the use of recycled packaging enhance appeals for utilitarian food products but not hedonic food products.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Waste from human activities has caused significant environmental issues that impact the well-being of people worldwide. As such ecological concerns intensify, eco-friendly packaging has received increasing attention from different societal stakeholders. Many food companies, such as McDonald's, have coordinated efforts to increase recycled content in product packaging to improve product appeals. Yet, this practice seems to be driven mainly by "intuition rather than knowledge" because there is still a limited understanding of factors influencing consumer responses to eco-friendly packaging. Thus, the purpose of this research is to address this crucial theoretical gap and extend the marketing literature on eco-friendly packaging by addressing the following important research questions:

RQ1: Would marketing efforts that promote the use of recycled packaging in foods help increase product appeals? If so, what is the explanation for that effect?

RQ2: What are the boundary conditions (i.e., moderators) that regulate the effect of recycled packaging in foods on product appeals (if any)?

Method and Data

We conducted two experiments to seek insights into our research questions. Study 1 uses a randomized within-subject experimental design in which participants saw an ad about a fictitious bottled water brand (utilitarian product) and an advertisement about a fictional hamburger brand (hedonic product). Each ad either shows that the brand uses recycled packaging or highlights the product's benefits. Study 2 has a 2 (communication highlight: use of recycled packaging vs. product benefits to consumers) by 2 (product hedonic nature: low vs. high) randomized between-subject experimental design. Participants randomly saw one of the ads as in Study 1 and then indicated their purchase intentions and warm glow.

Summary of Findings

The studies in this research reveal that marketing efforts highlighting the use of recycled packaging (in comparison with the conventional approach of emphasizing product benefits) enhance appeals for utilitarian food products but not hedonic ones. The reason is that whereas the low hedonic nature of utilitarian food products allows consumers to adopt an altruistic/bio-spheric perspective toward initiatives that enhance environmental well-being (such as the use of recycled packaging), hedonic food products prompt consumers to think about their hedonic cravings and how they can satisfy such needs. Such thinking consequently drives consumers to adopt a more egoistic perspective, thus showing less support for environmentally friendly initiatives. As a result, consumers experience more warm glow toward recycled-packaging communication for utilitarian food products (but not for hedonic food products), leading to enhanced product appeals.

Key Contributions

This research makes multiple theoretical contributions. First, to the best of our knowledge, this research is the first to identify and provide empirical evidence that the hedonic nature of foods impacts the relationship between recycled packaging communication and product appeals. Second, this research contributes to the self-control literature by providing empirical evidence about how hedonism and altruism influence consumer responses to marketing stimuli. Third, this research extends our understanding of the environmental perspective theory, which is relatively new and worthy of more investigation. Fourth, this research also contributes to the warm glow literature by documenting the role of hedonism in foods as a boundary condition for the emergence of warm glow.

This research also provides important implications for practitioners. Specifically, the findings in this research suggest that food brands that use recycled packaging could increase their product appeals if their products are more utilitarian in nature or if their marketing communications emphasize the utilitarian aspects of the products.

THE IMPACT OF CSR ON FUTURE PERFORMANCE: THE ROLE OF MARKETING MECHANISMS AND CAPABILITY CONTINGENCIES

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Keywords: Social dilemmas; corporate social responsibility; brand value; costs of production; marketing capability

Description: By arguing that marketing is a missing piece of the puzzle for CSR to positively impact firm performance, this research develops a conceptual framework that includes two marketing mechanisms – brand value and costs of productions – and three moderators – marketing, R&D, and operations capabilities – to test the impact of CSR on revenue growth and profit growth of firms.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

While research has shed some light on the influence of firms' CSR practices on performance, the results are mixed (Mishra and Modi 2016; Schuler and Cording 2006). In this regard, we argue that marketing can play a significant role in explaining these equivocal results. Indeed, although a significant number of studies support the view that CSR practices allow firms to enhance their profitability and value (e.g., Flammer, Hong, and Minor 2019; Luo and Bhattacharya 2006), an extensive body of literature finds neutral or negative relationships between CSR activities and firm performance (e.g., Balabanis, Phillips, and Lyall 1998; Duanmu, Bu, and Pittman 2018). Specifically, despite the increasing attention toward CSR in marketing research, scant research

discusses CSR dynamism (short-term/long-term tradeoffs for firms and society) and marketing's role in positively showing *why* and normatively demonstrating *how* firms should accept and advance CSR practices. Accordingly, the aim of this research is to demonstrate that even though corporate pro-social and pro-environmental activities can be costly in the short-term, they can enhance corporations' brand value and reduce costs of production and, thereby, increase firm performance in the long-term. Further, this research explores the moderating impacts of marketing, R&D, and operations capabilities on mediation effects of brand value and costs of production between CSR and firm performance.

Method and Data

Data. To test the hypotheses, we utilize a large representative sampling dataset assembled by combining secondary data from multiple databases: Thomson Reuters Eikon, BrandFinance, Compustat, GlobalData.

Model Specification. We start by using a linear model specification to estimate the main relationships of interest – the effect of CSR on the firm's future growth performance– in which we treat (i) future revenue growth as a linear relationship of CSR and control variables, and (ii) future profit growth as a linear relationship of CSR and control variables. In estimating our main effects models, we follow a multiple step approach to deal with potential econometric and estimation concerns emanating from the usage of the panel data. First, we utilize a fixed-effects panel data estimation to take into account various identification challenges resulting from endogeneity concerns with respect to omitted variable biases. Second, to control for exogenous economic shocks including boom and bust business cycles that can also affect a firm's future revenue growth and future profit growth, we include year dummies (i.e., time fixed effects) in our model. Third, to control for the remaining heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation concerns,

we use White Cluster robust regression. Fourth, we incorporate a comprehensive set of covariates to account for time-varying firm and industry characteristics.

Summary of Findings

We pursue stepwise robust regressions by first incorporating covariates only, second the main effects, third the mechanisms, and finally the interactions. Therefore, by estimating our equations with the time fixed effects and White cluster-adjusted robust regression, we find that the effects of CSR on both future revenue growth and future profit growth are positive and significant. We also find strong support for hypothesized mediating effects. Specifically, our results show that CSR positively influences brand value and negatively influences costs of production. Further, while our findings indicate that both brand value and costs of production are significant predictors of firm future revenue growth, we only find brand value as a significant predictor of firm future profit growth. Additionally, in both models, the main effect of CSR is also significant, demonstrating a partial mediation model.

Next, we investigate whether the CSR–brand value and CSR–costs of production relationships are influenced by a firm's marketing, R&D, and operations capabilities. Our findings show that the positive effect of CSR on brand value is attenuated with marketing, R&D, and operations capabilities. However, while our results demonstrate that marketing and operations capabilities strengthen the negative effect of CSR on costs of production, we find no evidence supporting the moderating effects of R&D capability on the CSR–costs of production relationship.

Contributions

While the extensive body of research on CSR-firm performance relationships has produced equivocal results, research suggests that this ambiguity is due to: (i) inadequate attention paid to theoretical background; (ii) samples used, model's inadequacies and misspecification,

methodology used in measuring CSR, firm performance, and their linkage; (iii) the lack of understanding about the mechanisms through which CSR affects firm performance (e.g., Margolis, Elfenbein, and Walsh 2001; McWilliams and Siegel, 2001; Schuler and Cording 2006; Servaes and Tamayo 2013). To address these three issues and based on the premise that strategic CSR is a potential remedy for resolving the social and environmental dilemmas faced by firms and the society, the central contribution of this research is to test if marketing is the key mechanism through which CSR influences firm performance in the long-term. Specifically, this research sets out to (i) develop conceptual clarity by identifying and synthesizing various CSR theoretical backgrounds under the overarching social dilemma framework, (ii) provide comprehensive and generalizable empirical evidence, and (iii) find key marketing mechanisms that link CSR with future performance. Our findings suggest that marketing is, indeed, a missing piece of the puzzle in CSR positively impacting firm performance.

References are available upon request.

THE ROLE OF WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT IN IMPROVING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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Keywords: Individual Values; Institutional Pressures; Organizational Performance; Sustainable Procurement;

Description: This paper highlights factors that shape willingness to pay for sustainable procurement.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – Sustainable procurement is important to realize sustainable industrial development. However, most companies have not yet adopted sustainable procurement due to various reasons. Scholars argue that companies would be more enthusiastic to adopt sustainable practices if their customers would be willing to pay a premium price for sustainable products or services. A plethora of studies have examined the willingness to pay for sustainable products in the business-to-consumer (B2C) contexts, but more research is needed on this topic in business-to-business (B2B) contexts. We thus explored what individual and organizational factors shape willingness to pay and whether sustainable procurement adoption is worthwhile for companies.

Method And Data – We developed a multi-level framework to examine the willingness to pay for sustainable procurement. We tested this framework with 372 procurement managers using partial least squares structural equation modeling.

Summary of Findings – We found that the individual values of procurement managers and perceived institutional pressures shape their willingness to pay for sustainability. Furthermore, the confluence of this willingness to pay, past pay behavior, and institutional pressures lead to sustainable procurement adoption which consequently improves the operational performance of their companies.

Statement of Key Contributions – The role of procurement managers is crucial for ensuring sustainability throughout the supply chain. Whether or not they are willing to pay for sustainable products or services is an important question. We, therefore, examined the antecedents and consequences of their willingness to pay. To the best of our knowledge, this paper is the first large-scale empirical study that has examined willingness to pay for sustainable procurement in a business-to-business (B2B) context. Globally, most companies remain reluctant to invest in sustainability, but our findings specifically on the improvement of performance may motivate them to consider investing and adopting sustainable procurement.

THEORIZING BRAND ACTIVIST FUNCTION: AN EMPIRICAL EXPLORATION

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Keywords: brand activism, socio-political issues, branding, transformative consumer research

Description: This paper explores consumers' perceptions of brand activism to theorize a brand activist function, capturing the potential of brand activism to advance the status quo of socio-political issues and empower consumers to engage with these issues in the marketplace.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Early branding research identifies that consumers perceive that brands have attributes that perform several functions and fulfill a range of apolitical needs and expectations. Examples include brand utilitarian (e.g. quality), hedonic (e.g. sensory stimulation), and symbolic (e.g. social status) functions[1]. More recently, scholars have highlighted the increasing consumer

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[1] The terms "utilitarian" and "functional", "hedonic" and "experiential", "symbolic" and "self-expressive", "function" and "functionality" are used interchangeably in the literature (e.g. Homburg et al., 2015; Keller, 2012). In this paper, we consistently use "brand utilitarian/hedonic/symbolic functions" throughout.

expectations of brand activism, a brand's public demonstration (statements/actions) of support for or opposition to critical socio-political issues, such as transgender rights and racial justice (Moorman, 2020). As consumer needs and expectations have evolved to include engagement with socio-political issues, the corresponding adaptation of brand functions becomes imperative (Keller, 2021). However, since brand activism is a new direction in branding, there is a significant gap in our understanding of how consumers perceive brand activism as a function with the potential to satisfy their needs for engaging with and addressing socio-political issues they deem to be important. To address this gap, this paper pursues the following research question: "how do consumers perceive brand activism as an emerging brand function of fulfilling their needs and expectations?". We refer to this emerging yet under-explored brand function as a *Brand Activist Function*.

Method and Data

Semi-structured interviews were conducted online with consumers who were aware of brand activism in the UK. The sample was comprised of 32 participants, with a gender-balanced distribution (17 females) and a diverse range of age groups (two participants aged 18–25, nine 26–40, nineteen 41–60, two over 60), ethnoracial backgrounds (nineteen white and thirteen others), nationalities (seven countries), and occupations (seven university students and twenty-five professionals). The interviews commenced with broad questions regarding participants' backgrounds and general brand consumption, followed by specific questions about their responses to self-recalled instances of brand activism (Krauss et al., 2009). Subsequently, the photo elicitation technique aided in facilitating discussion (Heisley & Levy, 1991; McCracken, 1988), in line with prior studies (e.g. Epp & Price, 2011). The interviews varied in duration from 30 to 143 minutes (M = 60 minutes) and were transcribed verbatim, generating 800 pages of double-spaced text in size 12. Given the exploratory nature of this

study, we followed a grounded theory approach (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Gioia et al., 2013) to analyze how themes and aggregate dimensions relate to each other holistically and derive a conceptualization of brand activist function.

Summary of Findings

By holistically considering the aggregate dimensions and themes, we define brand activist function as consumers' perceptions of a brand's capacity to effectively meet consumer needs and expectations regarding critical socio-political issues. It encompasses a brand's ability to enact changes on socio-political issues and empower consumers to engage with these issues, which can be achieved through the strategic incorporation of the issues into a brand's marketing mix elements. The findings capture participants' perceptions that when activist branding aligns with consumers' stance and ideal vision, they perceive brand activism and its subsequent influence as transformative, contributing to the advancement of the status quo in their desired direction. Furthermore, the data analysis and interpretation suggest that consumers symbolize activist brands and their offerings as means through which they can voice opinions and gain a sense of participation in and control over the issues. In other words, activist brands empower consumers by providing an alternative choice to express and realize their socio-political stance and vision in the marketplace, transcending the boundaries of the traditional political domain.

Key Contributions

This paper responds to calls for research in "better marketing" (Chandy et al., 2021). In particular, our conceptualization of brand activist function offers two key theoretical contributions via: 1) advancing the theorization of brand function to include addressing consumer expectations regarding engagement with socio-political issues; and 2) empirically

evidencing brand activism as a means of empowering consumers to engage with these issues.

The third contribution lies in the practical implications of brand activist function. For brand managers, our findings highlight that brand managers should strive to propel desirable changes in socio-political landscapes in line with consumers' visions and empower consumers in their socio-political pursuits within the marketplace. Policymakers should recognize the potential of activist brands to advance socio-political progress. While activist brands are unlikely to replace the traditional role of NGOs as agents of change and empowerment, NGO managers should assess and proactively prepare for a potential loss of constituencies due to competition from activist brands, which have been perceived as relatively more competent according to prior research (Aaker et al., 2010).

References are available upon request.

TO USE OR NOT TO USE REUSABLE TABLEWARE: A THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR PERSPECTIVE

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Keywords: Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB); reusable tableware use habit; environmental awareness; conformity tendency; compliance; guilt

Description: By adopting the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), this research investigated how psychological variables, such as environmental awareness, conformity tendency, compliance, and guilt, affected consumers' habits of using reusable tableware.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Most of the research on environmental protection and/or green products is concerned with green cosmetics, green hotels, specific kinds of tableware (such as straws and cups), etc. (Chitaka, Russo, and von Blottnitz 2020; Garrido and Alvarez del Castillo 2007; Lee and Chen 2019; Lin et al. 2018; Liu and Hu 2022; Merli et al. 2019). Rarely has any study investigated the adoption and usage of reusable tableware, including chopsticks, forks, bowls, cups, etc. as a whole, in terms of the theory of planned behavior (TPB). This research is to contribute to the burgeoning literature on environmental issues by building theoretical connections between consumer usage of reusable tableware with both of their cognitive and affective states from a

planned behavior perspective. In line with the research streams in environmental protection, the research is thus double-fold: (1) to empirically explore why consumers are self-motivated to adopt and use reusable tableware; (2) to explicate and investigate the mechanism underlying the usage of reusable tableware induced by social influence processes.

Method and Data

The research used four psychological variables – environmental awareness, conformity tendency, compliance, and guilt – as focal constructs of independent variables in the questionnaire. The measure of environmental awareness was adopted from Dunlap and Van Liere's (1978); the construct of conformity tendency was adopted from both Deutsch and Gerard's (1955) and Mehrabian and Stefl's (1995); compliance was measured according to Herath and Rao (2009); guilt was adopted from Coulter and Pinto's (1995) and Cotte et al.'s (2005). All items of the measures were scored on 5-point Likert scales with a range from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Additionally, the amount of usage occasions was asked and used to measure consumers' use of reusable tableware. Due to the regularity of daily life and the restriction of Taiwanese regulators on disposable tableware, usage amounts sometimes cannot accurately represent consumers' use of reusable tableware.

Online questionnaires were used as the research method, Taiwanese reusable tableware users as the survey respondents. In total, 261 valid questionnaires were retrieved.

A Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) approach to Harman's one-factor test was adopted to assess potential common method bias (Podsakoff and Organ 1986). In addition, the Cronbach's alphas test and regression analysis were used during hypothesis testing.

Summary of Findings

The empirical results imply that consumers with environmental awareness or guilt regard the use of reusable tableware as more environmentally friendly, which motivates them to use reusable tableware voluntarily. In contrast, compliance imposes a positive effect on the amount of consumers' reusable tableware usage occasions. This means that consumers tend to passively comply with environmental protection regulations lest they will be blamed or penalized. Conformity tendency negatively affects the amount of consumers' reusable tableware usage occasions. This finding is insightful in that using disposable tableware is in line with following a mainstream trend as most Taiwanese consumers are still not accustomed to the use of reusable tableware. The findings of this research confirm that consumers' environmental protection behaviors are affected by both rational and affective determinants. It also shows that consumers' behavior is self-motivated as well as shaped by social influence.

Key Contributions

This research represents an initial effort toward linking consumers' use of reusable tableware with their antecedents, based on a TPB model featuring environmental awareness, conformity tendency, and compliance. Besides the majorly cognition-inherent TPB model, the research also incorporates an affective construct, i.e., guilt, into the model. The research findings indicate that guilt positively affect consumers' behavior of using reusable tableware, meaning that consumers' behaviors are influenced by not only cognitive determinants but affective determinants.

Guidelines are also provided for environmental protection agencies, who want to promote reusable tableware. It is found that sometimes consumers' behaviors are influenced under the pressure of others. We classify the four antecedents into active determinants (including

environmental awareness and guilt) and passive determinants (including conformity tendency and compliance). The active determinants motivate consumers voluntarily. In contrast, the passive determinants affect consumers' decisions under the influence of others. For example, compliant consumers use reusable tableware just to obey the regulations lest they will be blamed by others or penalized by laws. Conformity tendency negatively influence consumers' use of reusable tableware because most Taiwanese people are still using disposable tableware, and conforming consumers do not want to stand out. Our findings confirm that social influence indeed exists.

References are available upon request.

TO "B" OR NOT TO "B" A B-CORP: LEGITIMIZING A PURPOSEFUL CORPORTATE BRAND IDENTITY

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Keywords: Sustainability, Social Responsibility, Social Justice, Corporate Brand Identity

Description: Studying "B-Corps," we find that: 1.) for many, the certificate is a blueprint for codifying and legitimizing a purpose-driven brand identity that allows firms to signal their identity and build communities of purpose, and 2.) instead of considering profit as problematic, B-Corp-certified firms view revenue as a tool for achieving "higher" purpose.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The interaction between business and societal objectives has often resulted in tension (Smith & Pettigrew, 2017), as evident in the enduring calls for firms to organize themselves around a morally undergirded purpose. For these firms, the emphasis on promoting the well-being of the environment and society has centered on the importance of creating and delivering such value through market offerings, along with the presumed financial benefits stemming from these market offerings (Hollensbe et al., 2014; Muñoz et al., 2018). Interestingly, while the corporate branding literature has addressed other concerns related to performance by establishing the importance of aligning corporate vision, culture, and identity (Balmer & Greyser, 2006; Harris & de Chernatony, 2001; Hatch & Schultz, 2001, 2003), marketing scholars have not thoroughly explored how a purpose-driven vision translates into the organizational culture and accompanying behaviours that shape corporate brand identity, the innate character of the firm (Balmer, 1995, 1998; Schultz et al., 2005). Accordingly, this paper poses the question: how do

purpose-driven firms ensure that their vision of purpose informs corporate brand identity throughout the firm?

Method and Data

We examine small-and-medium sized firms interested in certification as a benefit corporation, commonly known as "B-Corps". The B-Corp certificate is conferred upon firms that satisfy pro-social and environmental conditions, codifying them through governance mechanisms in five areas: community, environment, governance, customers, and employees (Parker et al., 2019). We study B-Corps given that certification represents a deliberate choice to surpass voluntary CSR activities and institutionalize purpose-driven behaviours.

Forty semi-structured interviews were conducted across 25 firms in Canada. The sample comprised certified B-Corps, firms in the process of certifying by attending a series of workshops, purpose-driven firms not yet committed to the certification, and those who chose not to re-certify. Follow-up interviews were conducted with workshop firms one year after completing the workshops, providing longitudinal data from the same firms (Kelly & McGrath, 1988). The data collection phase occurred concurrently with the theoretical development phase (Arsel, 2017; Thompson & Üstüner, 2015). Relying on data from participant-observation and semi-structured interviews allowed for the extraction of general insights from unique instances (Burawoy, 1998; Gephart, 2004). Following the data analytic and thematic analysis approaches proposed by Muller (2017) and Gioia et al. (2010), the resulting data structure served as the foundational framework for the findings.

Summary of Findings

In essence, the B-Corp certificate serves to legitimize the purpose-driven identity of a firm. According to existing legitimacy theory, firms must adhere to societal norms, values and expectations to gain legitimacy (Corciolani et al., 2022; Velte, 2022; Suchman, 1995). However for-profit, purpose-driven firms often experience existential tension in balancing the sometimes-conflicting objectives of purpose and profit.

Three findings emerged: (1) for purpose-driven firms, implementing purpose through a structure such as B-Corp certification can help establishing and inscribing a purpose-driven corporate brand identity; (2) certification functions as a tool to authenticate corporate brand identity for both internal and external stakeholders; (3) tensions between purpose and profits are managed, though not completely resolved, through B-Corp certification.

We show that certifying firms undergo four stages of legitimization. First, the impetus to certify reflects a desire for confirmative legitimacy. Having decided to certify, firms discover that codifying their purpose provides pragmatic guidance that ideology alone cannot offer. Once certified, the affirmation of their values becomes an authenticating tool to construct and express their identity. Lastly, certification allows purpose-driven firms to manage some of the tension between profit and purpose by reifying and reinforcing their brand's identity.

Key Contributions

While corporate vision, culture and core values are vital elements of a corporate brand's identity (Balmer 2010; Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Urde, 2013), there is limited guidance in the corporate brand literature on how smaller organizations—particularly purpose-driven firms whose core values are centered around a "moral purpose"—can establish and align these elements. This study demonstrates that for purpose-driven firms, third-party certification can serve as a means

for enabling alignment between management's ideology and the many elements that compose corporate brand identity. Furthermore, our findings reveal how external codification and validation enable and even enhance aspects of corporate identity previously believed to be established only internally.

Moreover, this study extends our awareness of how ideologically-driven firms navigate the seemingly inevitable tension between purpose and profit, including the pressure experienced by managers attempting to balance competing imperatives. In doing so, we extend legitimacy theory by highlighting the often step-wise progression required to acquire organizational legitimation. Lastly, this study offers a methodological contribution in its provision of longitudinal qualitative data, which provides rare insight into the process of brand identity construction and change over time.

References are available on request.

Understanding Privacy Paradox In Mobile Application Users: An Experimental Approach To Study Privacy Concerns And Actual Disclosure

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Key Words: Privacy Paradox, Smartphone users, Cognitive Bias, Heuristics, Actual Disclosure

Description: In this research, we empirically verify the existence of the privacy paradox and test the reasons that explain the privacy paradox among smartphone users.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Rapid advances in information technology and its adoption have benefitted consumers by increasing interactivity, openness, and engagement with marketers and other consumers. However, it also has given rise to privacy concerns like improper use of personal information, disclosure to outside parties, or unauthorized use of the information without the individual's consent (Smith et al., 2011). Advances in mobile technology and the proliferation of smartphones have further accentuated privacy concerns as it allow marketers to collect many users' personal information without their consent. Moreover, the intentions of the organization to collect and use personal data are not always evident (Chellappa and Sin, 2005). Smartphone users are aware and anxious about the misuse of their data. They demand transparency and information control. However, the desire to own a particular app appears to offset its possible risks (Kelley et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2008). Consumers seeking

convenience and personalization disclose data, even with high privacy concerns (Acquisti, 2012). This has been documented as a privacy paradox (Barnes, 2006).

Although consumers increasingly protest against invasions of privacy, they routinely disclose more information than their disclosure intent. The rational and irrational reasons (cognitive biases and heuristics) that provide a plausible explanation for this paradox have been conjectural. Thus, in this research, we empirically verify the existence of the privacy paradox and test reasons that explain the privacy paradox in the emerging market context with Generation Z mobile users.

> **RQ1: Does the information privacy paradox exist among smartphone users in India?**

> **RQ2: Why does the privacy paradox exist among smartphone users in India?**

Method/Data

Four explanations for the privacy paradox were identified. Privacy calculus as a rational reason, information asymmetry as part of bounded rationality, bandwagon effect as a bias, and trust as a heuristic were tested by conducting separate experiments. Four quasi-experiments were designed to test these reasons. Data was collected from 594 smartphone users using a Post-test-Only Control Group Design. To capture the actual disclosure behavior, respondents were asked to disclose actual information about themselves in an experimental setup using a dummy app called 'Assist Me.' Research participants were asked to provide their personal information to subscribe to the app services. To measure privacy concerns, we used the Internet Users Information Privacy Concern (IUIPC) scale by Malhotra et al. (2004), which has three dimensions: control, awareness, and collection. Hypotheses were tested using regression and ANOVA.

Summary of findings

Results indicated that a privacy paradox exists among smartphone users. Despite the speculative existence of the privacy paradox cited in the literature, our study manifests that users express high privacy concerns yet provide personal information without hesitation. Smartphone users have reported an average concern level of 82%, while their average disclosure of personal identifying information is 86.7%, and the average disclosure of lifestyle information is 82%. The results of this study gave new insights regarding the reasons for the mismatch in individual privacy concerns and disclosure behavior in the context of mobile computing. Our experiments revealed 'information asymmetry' as one of the main reasons for the privacy paradox. Participants in the experimental group who were given the privacy policy disclosed significantly less information than the control group who were not given the privacy policy. On further investigation, we also found that several participants took the risk of disclosing demographic and personally identifying information, considering it to be peanut information despite high concern. We referred to this as the 'peanut effect.' People tend to underestimate the risk probabilities of disclosing peanut information, thinking that nothing adverse can happen due to sharing this insignificant piece of information. They miscalculate the probability of revealing their personal information and becoming victims of cybercrime or identity theft.

Key contributions

This work extends the debate on the relationship between privacy concerns and disclosure behavior. We have established that a privacy paradox exists in an emerging market like India by conducting multiple experiments that measured actual behavior, thereby being more convincing than studies that only measure intention to disclose. Further, we provide novel

explanations of information asymmetry and the peanut effect for the prevalence of the privacy paradox phenomenon.

The results of this research can aid marketers in designing interventions to guide users toward safer online practices gently. Being sensitive to privacy issues will lend a strategic opportunity for brand growth. Businesses should make an effort to inform customers about the usage of their information as well as provide control to decide how their information is being used. This will bring confidence and trust to the relationship. Also, knowing the cause of deviation between privacy concerns and disclosure behaviors would ultimately aid in designing solutions so that individuals can make better online privacy decisions that minimize loss or regret later.

Along with crafting privacy awareness support systems, warning messages should signal users that they are equally vulnerable to the adverse situation. Developing choice architectures and user-orientated solutions that empower individuals to make self-determined decisions on privacy protection can be a successful move to counter the potential business challenges of the privacy paradox.

WHEN IS IT OK FOR FIRMS TO SAY NO? CONSUMER RESPONSES TO IDEOLOGICALLY-DRIVEN CUSTOMER DENIAL

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Keywords: Customer denial, consumer perceptions, self-expressiveness, handmade, machine-made

Description: We find converging evidence that the self-expressiveness of a product or service determines the extent to which consumers perceive ideologically-driven customer denials as acceptable.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Legally, responses to ideologically-driven customer denial may fall along two axes. Some may argue that customer denial is discriminatory based on equal access under the law (Masterpiece v. Colorado 2018). However, forcing firms to serve customers with different ideologies may be viewed as a violation of freedom of speech, as it compels them to make an expressive statement (Masterpiece v. Colorado 2018). Both axes of judgment matter to consumers: discrimination is seen as unacceptable (Lippert-Rasmussen 2017), and freedom of speech is valued (Macleod 2010). But when do consumers interpret customer denial as acceptable and when do they not?

We propose that, given the natural connection between the purchase of goods and services and consumers' identities (e.g., Belk 1988; Berger and Heath 2007; Escalas and Bettman 2005), consumers may also see products and services as an extension of the self of producers and service providers (Marx 1844). To the extent that this self-expressive function is recognized, ideologically-driven customer denial will be viewed as acceptable by consumers.

Method And Data

To examine our research questions, we conducted four experimental studies. Study 1 shows that the degree of self-expressiveness of a product or service systematically influences the perceived acceptability of ideologically-driven customer denial in a correlational study. Study 2 replicates the findings in a between-subjects experiment. Study 3 provides process evidence for the effect of self-expressiveness on the normative acceptability of ideologically-driven customer denial. Finally, Study 4 probes one consequence of ideologically-driven customer denial by demonstrating that the denial of a highly self-expressive service leads to a lower degree of punishment compared to a less self-expressive service.

Summary of Findings

The research results suggest a relationship between the self-expressiveness of products and services and how acceptably lay consumers perceive ideologically-driven customer denial to be (Studies 1-2). Results of Study 3 demonstrate that differences in causal attributions underlie the effect of self-expressiveness on the normative acceptability of ideologically-driven customer denial. Lastly, Study 4 demonstrates a downstream consequence for firms that can arise from ideologically-driven customer denial: by influencing causal attributions of customer denial, the

self-expressiveness of products or services can affect consumers' willingness to punish

businesses that withhold access.

Key Contributions

Our findings empirically clarify the debate currently existing at the Supreme Court of the United

States. Furthermore, we extend previous research (Powell, Schnabel, and Apgar 2017) by

providing a conceptual framework that explains when consumers are likely to find ideologically-

driven customer denial acceptable. In particular, we demonstrate that the self-expressiveness of

products or services represents a specific characteristic that can change the perceived

acceptability of the denial of goods and services. Denying self-expressive goods and services on

the basis of ideology offers the firm an opportunity to make a stand—and to the extent that

consumers understand that the action is self-expressive for the firm, they may be less likely to

punish the firm for their denial.

WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER: THE TRIGGERING EFFECT OF PERCEIVED CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON THE DORMANT INTRAPRENEUR IN EMPLOYEES

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Keywords: CSR perceptions, internal branding, brand-enhancing behavior, innovative work behavior, pro-social rule-breaking

Description: Using survey data from 1,096 employees in Germany, we investigated how employees' perceptions of CSR affect their subsequent brand-enhancing and value-creating behavior.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

More than ever, companies must fulfill the growing demands of consumers to maintain brand value (Bar Am et al., 2020; Jones, 2021; Rafi, 2021). "*Perceived work-related problems, […] and emerging trends*" (Janssen, 2000: 288) are triggers for new ideas (Janssen, 2000) with which companies can meet increasing consumer demands. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become an essential part of internal marketing (Golob & Podnar, 2021), which increases

employee engagement with a brand (Gond et al., 2017) and raises employees' awareness of today's challenges (Heyward, 2020). Employees' positive perception of CSR boosts their creativity. Yet, the impact beyond creativity on innovative work behavior, a brand-enhancing behavior, has never been assessed (Brammer et al., 2015). CSR could guide employees in developing brand-enhancing ideas (Hernández-Perlines et al., 2022; Rafi, 2021). Moreover, existing CSR research neglects the constructive form of workplace deviance (Gond et al., 2017). However, its consideration would show whether CSR can improve consumer value (Dahling & Gutworth, 2017) and, thus, strengthen the brand.

We seek to answer two leading research questions: (1) Does employees' perceived CSR increase their innovative, brand-enhancing work behavior? (2) Does innovative work behavior mediate the relationship between perceived CSR and constructive workplace deviance, thereby improving consumer value?

Method and Data

Between June and November 2021, we collected data from employees in Germany via an online survey. Unlike previous research, we did not limit our study to one industry, company size, or functional area (John et al., 2019). To counteract common method biases early on (Podsakoff et al., 2003), we assured respondents anonymity and confidentiality. There was no correct or incorrect answer. The survey structure did not allow respondents to conclude the relationships in our subsequent analyses. 1,905 questionnaires were answered thoroughly. After cleaning the data, we obtained a sample with 1,096 observations.

We applied established constructs, which we translated from English to German according to Brislin's (1970) back-translation method. We used the construct of El Akremi et al. (2018) to

measure the independent variable "perceived CSR." We used Janssen's (2000) scale to measure the dependent variable "innovative work behavior." We used a construct by Liang et al. (2012) to measure the mediators "promotive and prohibitive voice behavior." We used Dahling et al.'s (2012) scale to measure the dependent variable "pro-social rule-breaking", a form of constructive workplace deviance. All constructs were measured using a seven-point Likert scale. Moreover, we included four individual-level controls based on established literature.

Summary of Findings

Confirmatory Factor Analysis validated our measurement model. A five-factor model was best suited for our research purpose. Testing alternative nested factor models (el Akremi et al., 2018; Wo et al., 2015) encouraged us to use the five-factor model. Model tests ruled out non-response bias, informant bias, common method bias, and multicollinearity.

We confirmed all hypotheses in a Structural Equation Model (SEM). Perceived CSR significantly and positively influences innovative work behavior (ß = 0.216; p < 0.001), confirming *Hypothesis 1*. Promotive voice behavior ($\beta_{indirect}$ = 0.096; p < 0.001) and prohibitive voice behavior ($\beta_{indirect}$ = 0.009; p = 0.045) mediate the association between perceived CSR and innovative work behavior, confirming *Hypothesis 2a* and *Hypothesis 2b*. Perceived CSR significantly and negatively affects pro-social rule-breaking (ß = -0.221; p < 0.001), confirming *Hypothesis 3*. SEM revealed a significant positive effect of perceived CSR on pro-social rule-breaking through promotive voice behavior ($\beta_{indirect}$ = 0.013; p = 0.004) and prohibitive voice behavior ($\beta_{indirect}$ = 0.001; p = 0.036) and innovative work behavior, confirming *Hypothesis 4a* and *Hypothesis 4b*. Foremost, perceived CSR reduces pro-social rule-breaking. Yet, in the context of innovative work

behavior, perceived CSR positively affects pro-social rule-breaking. Two robustness tests confirm our empirical results.

Statement of Key Contributions

We make two theoretical contributions to the emerging literature on internal branding (Barros-Arrieta & García-Cali, 2021; Piehler et al., 2018). First, we contribute to the antecedents of brand-enhancing behaviors. Employees are the face of companies. Therefore, their behavior is crucial for consumers' brand experience. Yet, external branding has attracted much greater interest in academia. We contribute to internal branding research (Barros-Arrieta & García-Cali, 2021; Piehler et al., 2016) by establishing CSR as an antecedent of brand-enhancing behavior.

Second, we contribute to empirical knowledge on how consumers can derive greater value and a better brand experience. Employees who demonstrate more innovative work behaviors based on their CSR perceptions are likelier to break pro-social rules, enabling them to deliver a better brand experience to consumers (Dahling et al., 2012). We empirically validate that brand-enhancing behaviors serve as a mechanism to transfer the positive effects of employees' CSR perceptions to consumers.

Firms invest in CSR activities for strategic reasons (John et al., 2019). Our empirical findings justify investing more (scarce) resources in CSR (Shea & Hawn, 2019). Practitioners could leverage employees' CSR perceptions when crafting an internal branding strategy to strengthen employee-employer bonds and encourage employees to engage in brand-enhancing behaviors.

<div align="center">**References are available upon request.**</div>

Special Interest Group (SIG) Submitted Sessions

META-ANALYSIS: CONSUMER ADOPTION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE INTERNET OF THINGS (AIoT)

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Description: This meta-analysis empirically synthesizes inconsistent findings on determinants impacting consumers' adoption of products powered by artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things, while also examining the boundary conditions contributing to such findings.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

The swift digital transformation, driven by extensive adoption of artificial intelligence (AI), has yielded substantial advantages for firms, encompassing task automation, cost reduction, and personalized service delivery. In this dynamic landscape, AI can harness data from interconnected devices and consumers via Internet of Things (IoT) technologies, enhancing its task automation and self-learning capabilities. This convergence of AI and IoT signifies the rise of Artificial Internet of Things (AIoT), driving increased consumer engagement and AIoT adoption. Extensive research has delved into the drivers of AIoT adoption, such as design features, usage benefits, or individual differences. However, fragmented and conflicting findings hinder a conclusive understanding of these drivers. For instance, Pillai et al. (2020) identified a positive impact of perceived ease of use on shopping intention at automated retail stores, whereas Kowalczuk (2018) found this effect insignificant for smart speakers. These inconsistencies pose theoretical challenges, underscoring the necessity for a systematic review. To address this gap, we conducted a meta-analysis to answer the following research questions: (1) What are the key determinants of AIoT adoptions explored in prior consumer research?, (2) How can we reconcile inconsistent findings on these determinants?, and (3) Which moderators might explain such discrepancies?.

Method and Data

We conducted a literature search from June to August 2022, employing seven inclusion criteria. In particular, included articles must be (1) quantitative, (2) non-meta-analytic, (3) in English, (4) available in full text, (5) report correlation coefficients from independent samples, (6) study consumers or potential customers, and (7) measure behavioral intention or actual behavior towards AI- or IoT-powered products.

Following the above criteria, we employed several keywords and keyword combinations to search across (1) the title, abstract, or keywords of articles in 10 major marketing journals; (2) the title, abstract, or keywords of articles in four databases (i.e., EBSCO, ProQuest, Social Science Research Network, and Web of Science); and (3) Google Scholar. Additionally, we conducted backward searches within references of relevant systematic reviews and conceptual articles from major marketing journals.

Initially, 7,899 articles were retrieved. After screening, we curated 254 effect sizes from 49 articles, representing 55 independent studies and 19,002 participants. Using Schmidt and Hunter's (2015) procedures, we integrated the effect sizes (i.e., correlations) and performed subgroup analyses examining the moderating effects of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, sample gender dominance, physical product embodiment, and publication type on the relationship between the behavioral outcomes and their antecedents.

Summary of Findings

We classified factors affecting consumers' behavioral responses to AIoT products into five dimensions: individual, social, functional, emotional, and constraints. In the individual dimension, attitude, habits, and personal innovativeness were strongly and positively related to behavioral responses. In the social dimension, social influence, engagement, perceived anthropomorphism, and interactivity were strongly and positively related to behavioral responses. The association of social value was positive and moderate. In the functional dimension, perceived value, perceived usefulness, compatibility, functionality, utilitarian value, and perceived ease of use were strongly and positively related to behavioral responses. The association of perceived quality was positive and moderate, whereas the association of usage

barriers was negative and moderate. Also, the association of privacy and safety risks was negative and weak. In the emotional dimension, satisfaction and hedonic value were strongly and positively related to behavioral responses. The association of trust was positive and moderate. In the constraints dimension, facilitating conditions were strongly and strongly related to behavioral responses. Moreover, our results also showed that Hofstede's six cultural dimensions (i.e., power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and indulgence), physical embodiment of the AIoT products, samples' gender dominance, and publication type significantly moderate the aforementioned antecedents-outcomes relationships regarding AIoT adoption.

Key Contributions

Our research significantly contributes to marketing and consumer research in AIoT on multiple fronts. First, we conducted a meta-analysis to consolidate inconsistent findings on AIoT adoption, offering an empirical synthesis instead of relying solely on qualitative approaches. Second, our comprehensive meta-analysis overcomes prior limitations by encompassing consumer research across all AI and IoT contexts, exploring behavioral outcomes, including unpublished studies, and examining cultural moderators. Third, our analysis sheds light on significant cultural variations, enhancing understanding on why certain factors exhibit varied effects in certain cultural settings. Our findings also offer marketers several insights. First, our findings suggest that marketers should identifying key customer segments—innovative and habitual users—as prime targets for influence. Second, leveraging social influence through partnerships with celebrities, influencers, and peer recommendations emerges as a potent strategy for AIoT acceptance. Additionally, cultural characteristics should guide marketing

strategies, emphasizing utility in individualistic cultures and user-friendliness of AIoT products in collectivist cultures. Finally, addressing experiential benefits for physically embodied AIoT products, as well as ensuring user-friendly and secure systems for non-physically embodied ones is paramount for user trust and adoption.

References are available upon request.

A REVIEW OF PARASOCIAL THEORY APPLICATION TO SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS: AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH

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Keywords: Parasocial relations, social media influencers, digital celebrity, consumer behavior

Description: The paper aims to integrate the previous literature that considers parasocial theory concerning social media influencers-consumer relationships and develop an organizing framework through an evidence-based approach.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

What is the present literature on parasocial theory concerning social media influencers-consumer relationships?

How and why does the usage of parasocial theory concerning social media influencers need updated theorization?

What are the prospects of parasocial theory concerning social media influencers?

Methodology and Data

This study aims to integrate the previous literature that considers parasocial theory concerning SMIs-consumer relationships and develop an organizing framework through an evidence-based approach. First, in study 1, we rigorously conduct a systematic review of parasocial theory concerning SMI research and describe the findings of previous studies in detail. Second, in study 2, we conducted 36 in-depth interviews with SMIs and triangulated with consumers to develop an organizing framework to explore further research on the parasocial theory application to SMIs and consumer behavior.

Summary of Findings

Study 1, a systematic literature review, found that previous literature describes parasocial theory as a one-sided relation. Study 2 utilizes qualitative inquiry to enunciate that parasocial theory needs updated theorization as the relationship between social media influencers and consumers is two-sided and intimate. We found that consumers and social media influencers develop direct and indirect personal bonds during their initial stages of interaction, leading to intimate friendships or relations. However, before their two-way close connections begin, we propose that the association is moderated by the type of intimacy, which can be social, emotional, or meaningful, leading to long-term two-sided parasocial relations. Additionally, we

found social media influencers construct their identity vis-á-vis consumers, which helps them quickly connect and build credibility. Therefore, social media influencers and consumers mutually co-construct their personas through cognitive and emotional bonding and mutually benefit each other. Finally, through our two studies, our thematic analysis also points out that with a positive association of the two-sided relationship of social media influencer-consumer, they together experience negative emotions, leading to dark consequences of two-sided parasocial relations theory.

Key Contributions

This review of parasocial theory concerning social media influencers makes several contributions. First, our study finds that the literature on social media influencers still identifies parasocial relations as one-sided relationships between consumers and celebrities. This theoretical underpinning is a presumption in the case of the social media influencer-consumer relationship. However, a two-sided relationship exists through direct and indirect communication and sharing of personal bonds. Second, our study 1 suggests that parasocial relations mediate between social media influencers and consumer relations, leading to purchase behavior. Parasocial theory, moreover, has concentrated on long-term positive one-sided relationships. Third, in study 2, we present that SMIs and consumers construct a mutual persona through intimate two-sided relations and sometimes experience negative consequences through long-term or short-term relationships. Finally, we develop an organizing framework and suggest that parasocial theory concerning social media influencers and consumers is two-sided and sometimes faces negative emotions and consequences, adding a new perspective to earlier theoretical underpinnings. Thus, we propose a future research agenda based on the organizing framework and unique themes. In sum, we contribute to parasocial theory by highlighting gaps and assumptions in the literature, enunciating a new theoretical lens for parasocial theory.

A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION IN STUDENT RECRUITMENT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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Keywords: Marketing communication, systematic literature review, Higher Education, Decision making

Description: A systematic literature review on marketing communication strategies and tools for student recruitment in the area of marketing for higher education.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

2. RESEARCH QUESTION

The research utilizes a systematic literature review as the methodology to locate pertinent studies, assess their contributions, and synthesize the knowledge acquired from them. As per LibGuides (2018), "a systematic literature review impartially, transparently, and comprehensibly presents academic research focused on a specific topic, aiming to identify research gaps and provide evidence for practical and policy-making purposes."

In alignment with the study's defined objectives, we formulated research questions to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the topic

RQ1: What is the current status of marketing communication studies from the student recruitment perspective in the area of marketing of higher education?

RQ2: How can a structured review of available literature contribute to a comprehensive understanding of this academic domain?

RQ3: Which research gaps persist and need further investigation within this area by researchers?

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The examination of marketing communication studies in higher education revealed a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of these strategies, organized under themes such as prospectus, website, e-WOM, and social media marketing. The focus on student recruitment emphasized the dynamic and iterative decision-making process influenced by diverse

sources, requiring tailored strategies due to cultural differences among student subgroups. Secondary channels like higher education websites and prospectuses were highlighted for their pivotal roles in recruitment, with the potential to positively or negatively impact brand image based on attractiveness and information quality. Primary channels, such as social media platforms, particularly Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, played a central role, in influencing user engagement and brand awareness. The strategic use of social media was deemed vital in shaping decision-making processes and building a positive institutional reputation. Additionally, e-WOM through various digital platforms significantly impacted students' decisions, emphasizing the need for managing online reputation.

The review identified a limited number of studies on advertising effectiveness and the integration of diverse marketing tools, suggesting substantial potential for research across the marketing communication mix. Comparative studies on HEIs in different countries and the examination of diverse marketing tools in recruitment activities are essential. The evolving emphasis on Internet and social media-based approaches highlights the need for a balanced integration of traditional and modern tools to ensure consistency across all communication channels. Tailored strategies for diverse target audiences are crucial for enhancing brand image and improving student recruitment in higher education marketing.

4. KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

This review holds importance in both academic and practical applications. This literature review contributes to practice by detailing the influence of diverse information sources, the role of culture, and the content strategy that influences student choices. It highlights the need for tailored

marketing communication for distinct student subgroups and underscores the significance of traditional and digital media, e-WOM, social media, and content strategy in shaping student choices. Practically, our systematic literature review offers valuable insights for higher education institutions, government officials, policymakers, and marketing communication managers who aim to use marketing communication strategies or tools to attract or increase enrollment in universities or institutes. By providing valuable insights into crucial tools, channels, and strategies for promoting HEIs. This information can assist them in effectively achieving their respective objectives.

"References are available upon request"

CONFLUENCE OF CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: A REVIEW AND RESEARCH AGENDA

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Keywords: Cause related marketing, Corporate social responsibility, Systematic literature review, SPAR-4-SLR**.**

Description: Employing the SPAR-4-SLR procedure and TCM framework, current review presents an in-depth examination of the current trends, benefits, and associations between cause-related marketing (CRM) and corporate social responsibility (CSR), offers a valuable foundation for future research and actionable insights for practitioners, all while ensuring high-quality contributions through stringent publication criteria.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The present study is poised to cater to the following research questions:

1. What are the current research trends in cause-related marketing (henceforth CRM) and corporate social responsibility (henceforth CSR) concerning theoretical approach, research method, geographical variation, and publication patterns?

2. What are the diverse benefits of CRM for companies, consumers, and the supported cause?

3. How can the nature of the association between CRM and CSR be characterized and understood?

4. What future research directions, and implications for literature, policy, and practice can be drawn regarding CRM and CSR?

Method and Data

The SPAR-4-SLR procedure, also known as the Scientific Procedures and Rationales for Systematic Literature Reviews protocol was used for this systematic review (henceforth SLR). For this SLR, researchers developed a search strategy to determine relevant literature. This search strategy employed two databases namely Web of Science and Scopus. Articles published in A* and A category journals of the "Australian Business Deans Council" (ABDC) list in all the last three consecutive lists published in 2022, 2019, and 2016 were only considered for this review.TCM (Theory, Context, Method) framework based approach is used in the SLR to map the research trend in the concerned area. VOSviewer software was applied for conducting keyword analysis and bibliographic coupling of documents.

Summary of Findings – 200 words

The finding of the study can be summarized in following three parts:

1. <u>Research Trend</u>: The study, using the TCM method, explores research trends in the field. Findings indicate the repetitive use of theories, with social responsibility, stakeholder, construal, attribution, and legitimacy theories being prominent. Among 120 studies, the USA leads with 55, followed by China (16) and the UK (10). Quantitative methods dominate with 94 articles; 71 studies employ experimental designs, 10 use a conceptual approach, and 16 employ qualitative methods, including case studies and thematic analysis.

2. <u>Benefits of CRM</u>: CRM has proven to be a mutually gratifying association, where all the parties seek benefit either directly or indirectly. The company gets a boost to their profit maximization objective through revenue generation, cause/society gets the requisite solution to their problems, and at last, consumers get utility by consuming required goods and services. Hence, CRM is considered a win-win proposition for all concerned parties.

3. <u>Association between CSR and CRM:</u> Cause related marketing is effective marketing tool in the hands of marketers which not only helps to increase financial benefits to the companies by directly contributing towards revenue generation process but also build socially responsible brand image of the company among the stakeholders. CRM is a type of corporate social initiatives that fulfils the requirement of corporate social responsibility.

Statement of Key Contributions

This SLR offers a comprehensive and high-quality analysis that guides future researchers and provides actionable insights for companies engaging in CRM campaigns. Following are the key contribution of this article:

1. This study stands out as the inaugural attempt in the literature to conduct a comprehensive review that integrates both corporate social responsibility and cause related marketing. Its pioneering endeavor provides valuable insights for future research endeavors in both domains.

2. Employing a TCM (Theory, Context, Method) framework-based approach, along with content analysis, bibliometric analysis, and mapping, this review delivers a holistic overview of CRM literature. By identifying significant studies, theories, authors, research methods, influential journals, authors, and countries, recurring keywords, and key topics, this review equips future researchers with a foundation for structuring their studies.

3. This review exclusively considers conceptual and evidence-based articles published in journals with ABDC publication rankings of "A*" and "A." This meticulous selection process ensures that only high-quality papers contribute to the review, enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings.

4. This study provides practical insights for companies, emphasizing the pivotal role of the company-cause-consumer trinity. By understanding the various benefits attached with CRM campaigns, companies can enhance their societal connections, thereby offering additional significant benefits.

References

References are available upon request.

Title of the Study:

CONSUMER ADOPTION OF AI TECHNOLOGIES: A HYBRID REVIEW AND RESEARCH AGENDA

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Keywords: Consumer adoption, technology adoption, artificial intelligence, consumer behavior, consumer acceptance

Description: The study synthesizes research on consumer adoption of AI using TCM-ADO framework and bibliometric analysis and presents a comprehensive overview of future agendas for research.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question:

Exploring consumer adoption of AI technologies prompts the development of research frameworks across disciplines. However, literature is scarce on the corresponding interdisciplinary ideas on consumer adoption research that focus on inherent consumer traits (Rahman et al., 2023), socio-cultural differences affecting consumer adoption (Sahi et al., 2021), and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) (Lim et al., 2022) in the context of AI technologies. Therefore, this hybrid review aims to integrate the existing literature on consumer adoption and suggest future areas for research.

Accordingly, the study focuses on the following research questions;

i) What is the current scope of consumer adoption literature in the context of AI technologies?

ii) What are the dominant theoretical frameworks used in consumer adoption research?

iii) What are the opportunities for researchers and practitioners working on consumer adoption of AI technologies?

Method And Data:

The study adopts a hybrid review method and employs a TCM-ADO framework (Jain et al., 2023; Paul et al., 2021) and bibliometric analysis (Donthu et al., 2021). The bibliometric analysis is divided into four steps. In the first phase, 5,565 articles were identified through Web of Science and Google Scholar. In the second phase, inclusion criteria filter articles published in English between 2003 and 2024 and is done as the term AI was popularized in 2004 in the

context of consumer behavior (Jain et al., 2023), 5433 articles are retained that are filtered again to include only journal articles. Finally, a bibliometric analysis of 4424 articles is conducted.

A descriptive analysis is conducted for the final eligible articles. It was done using R programming software, biblioshiny, and bibliometric coupling (Donthu et al., 2021) and is followed by a coding process that highlights the theories used in consumer adoption studies. We also use the TCM framework and categorize the theories, contexts, and methodological approaches.

Summary of Findings:

Selected studies are compiled, leading to the identification of the following clusters that are positioned as agendas for future research.

- *Emotions and Consumer Adoption of AI*: The cluster highlights that emotions are complex and tend to determine human behavior. Positive and negative emotions influence consumer behavior and adoption intention (Valor et al., 2022). Therefore, more studies are required to confirm emotions as significant influencers in consumer decision-making and adopting AI technologies.

- *Neuroscientific Measurement Techniques:* The cluster reaffirms that artificially intelligent tools and technologies can bring personalization and necessitate human intelligence (Bansal & Gupta, 2022). However, neural mapping of consumers' thoughts and eye-movement tracking that can significantly influence consumer behavior holds an active call for future research. These are experimental approaches that are still at a nascent stage.

- ***Consumer Adoption of AI as Decision Support Systems:*** Generative AI and other tools are being used to enhance consumer experiences, and the cluster confirms that consumers use these tools to make decisions (Dellaert et al., 2020). Therefore, the scope of further exploration using models other than behavioral reasoning and technology acceptance is highly needed.

- ***Ethical Dilemmas:*** Du and Xie (2020) discuss the persisting paradoxes in consumer markets. The cluster identifies ethical issues, AI bias, consumer privacy concerns, and inorganic AI designs as critical flaws in adopting AI technologies. There is a possibility to explore how transparency and data privacy positively influence consumer adoption of AI and other technologies.

- ***Human Intelligence vs Algorithmic Advice:*** Walter et al. (2022) attempt to explain how the underlying beliefs of consumers act as heuristic cues for decision-making. The study demonstrates that algorithmic advice can potentially outweigh human intelligence in complex, simple decisions. There is a call for experimental studies to explore how humans control advice based on the complexity of the decision and the level of trust in the advisor.

Statement of Key Contributions:

Theoretical Contribution: This hybrid review has three critical theoretical implications. First, the study gives a comprehensive overview of research on consumer adoption of AI technologies

beyond the traditional perspective. Second, the results of this study offer opportunities for future researchers to advance their understanding of consumer adoption of AI technologies with the help of the identified clusters. The clusters substantially align with seminal theories like technology acceptance theory, diffusion of innovation theory, self-service technology adoption theory, self-determination theory, uses and gratification theory, optimal distinctiveness theory, behavioral reasoning theory, and unified theory of technology acceptance. Third, integrating the research offers a nuanced perspective of possibilities in evolving areas like generative AI, which can be further examined.

Managerial Implications: The study offers four managerial implications based on the review. First, AI experts and technology innovators must understand the enablers and barriers influencing customer adoption of AI technologies. Second, the clusters can help practitioners understand the subsets of consumer adoption and incorporate the insights into their businesses. Third, ethical dilemmas can be considered while designing marketing and other business strategies for enhancing customer engagement and adoption. Finally, the study also recommends that practitioners create balanced AI-driven products and services that are socially viable and culturally accepted by consumers.

References: "References are available upon request."

CONSUMER MOBILE PHONE RECYCLING BEHAVIOR: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

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Keywords: consumer behavior, e-waste, mobile phone recycling, systematic literature review, TCCM framework

Description: Applying the theories-characteristics-contexts-methods (TCCM) framework, this study provides a systematic review of the existing consumer mobile phone recycling behavior literature and a future research agenda that outlines different research topics and questions based on identified gaps in the literature.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION: This study addresses the following questions (RQ):

RQ1: What theoretical lenses have been applied to understand consumers' mobile phone recycling behavior?

RQ2: Which countries have studied consumers' mobile phone recycling behavior?

RQ3: What methods have been used to study consumers' mobile phone recycling behavior?

RQ4: What influential factors drive or impede consumers from recycling mobile phones?

RQ5: What are potential future research avenues to advance the research field?

METHOD AND DATA: This study adopts the framework-based theories-characteristics-contexts-methods (TCCM) model (Palmatier, Houston, and Hulland 2018; Paul et al. 2021) to evaluate the theories, contexts (i.e., research contexts), characteristics (i.e., influential factors) and methods in the existing literature on consumer mobile phone recycling behavior.

This study follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flowchart process (Page et al. 2021) to extract data from the Web of Science database. Search strings using keywords (e.g., "mobile phone*", "cell phone*", "smartphone*", "recyc*", "disposal*" "recyc* behavio$r", "disposal* behavio$r", and "sustain* behavio$r") were applied, resulting 6845 articles identified.

The publication date was then restricted from 2000 due to the increasing popularity and growing prevalence of mobile phone ownership in society, and some telecommunication companies already initiated recycling programs at that time. Document type was set to "article," and

language was restricted to "English". Since this study focuses on individual behavior, several keywords (i.e., "resident*" or "household*" or "consumer*") were input in the refine box to refine results, which showed 281 articles for further assessment. Later, after carefully screening the keywords, title, abstract, and journals, 48 articles were retrieved for in-depth content analysis.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: Findings show that nine articles were published between 2009 and 2016, and 39 were published between 2017 and 2022. Notably, 75% of the papers did not explicitly employ a theoretical framework. The lack of theory application results in a less rigorous research design, leading to difficulties in interpreting and generalizing study results. China produced the highest number of publications, at 27%. Mobile phone waste in these countries is commonly handled by peddlers, retailers, special collectors, and second-hand markets (Wang et al. 2011). Compared with non-OECD countries, OECD countries received little attention, with ten articles undertaken in such contexts.

Key determinants of mobile phone recycling include internal factors (i.e., knowledge, emotions, disposal habits, personality, and trust) and external factors (i.e., economic incentives and convenience. Survey dissemination was the most popular research method, accounting for 96% of the total study set. No qualitative papers were found in the extant literature.

This study suggests that more theoretical lenses should be employed to understand the mechanisms influencing consumers' mobile phone recycling behavior. Future studies should investigate the role of social media marketing, communication strategy, and new technology

adoption in promoting such behavior. More studies using qualitative methods or mixed methods should be conducted.

STATEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTIONS: This study makes several important contributions. First, this study is the first to provide a comprehensive and recent picture of mobile phone recycling behavior research. Importantly, this study identifies and discusses the theoretical underpinnings, contexts of interest, factors affecting mobile phone recycling behavior, and methodological approaches in the extant literature. These are useful for current and prospective scholars interested in examining mobile phone recycling behavior.

Second, this study proposes a future research agenda that outlines different research topics and questions based on identified gaps in the literature. This agenda serves as a guiding compass for future studies to advance the mobile phone recycling behavior domain.

Third, this study provides valuable practical implications for policymakers, technology and telecommunication companies, marketers, and sustainability organizations. Notably, the comprehensive findings of the drivers and barriers of mobile phone recycling behavior can assist in developing policies, strategies, and interventions to promote mobile phone recycling.

References are available upon request.

Customer's eSports Satisfaction and Engagement

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Abstract

Purpose – Recently, technological advancements in gaming have transformed the video-gaming sector (Formosa et al., 2022; Lehtonen et al., 2023). Video-gaming sub-divisions varying from adventure and action, to sports, role playing, and/or arcade- games, would attain a worldwide revenue, especially in the games market of about $396.20 in 2023 (Statista, 2022). Video-games are included in the service- domain (Hollebeek et al., 2022), in which *service* represents "the application of specialized competences (i.e., skills/knowledge] through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity, or the entity itself" (Vargo et al., 2017). Thus, while playing video-games, customers (users) can benefit themselves or other gaming partners, involving role-playing (e.g., Final Fantasy), in card (e.g., Hearthstone), multiplayer-online-battle arena (e.g., League of Legends) or sports (e.g., FIFA) (Abbasi et al., 2023; Abbasi et al., 2020; Abbasi et al., 2021). In line with the significance and motivation of eSports (video-gaming) in service context, the study explores the impact of gamers (customers) eSports satisfaction on their affective, cognitive, and behavioral engagement, and its subsequent effect on their subjective wellbeing.

Design/methodology/approach – We collect the data from 290 participants (students), who had played online videogame.

Findings – PLS-PM findings revealed that customer satisfaction have a significant impact on cognitive, affective and behavioral engagement. Second, cognitive, affective and behavioral engagement positively effects subjective wellbeing.

Research limitations/implications – Considering our focus on gamers satisfaction and engagement, we contribute to extant service marketing literature that also generates abundant openings for further research. This current research provides important implications for managers and eSports gaming developers, particularly for assessing customer's engagement subjective wellbeing.

Practical implications – The current study may assist eSports gaming developers and managers to design their video-games for evaluated customer's engagement, considering its accredited imperative value and expected useful outcomes in this research.

Originality/value – However, regardless of observed substantial growth of the eSports (video-gaming) field, very little remains known about player's satisfaction, engagement, and subjective wellbeing with eSports games, revealing a significant research gap.

Keywords: Gamers satisfaction; customer engagement; subjective wellbeing; video gaming: eSports; Services.

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FROM CONTROVERSY TO CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT: A HALF-CENTURY EXPLORATION OF THE DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SEX IN ADVERTISING AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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Description: Examining the historical evolution of sex in advertising (SIA) from 1969 to 2021, this research reveals the enduring efficacy of SIA as a global advertising strategy, providing insights into its influence on contemporary consumer behaviour.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The current review systematically explores the evolution of sex in advertising (SIA) from 1969 to 2021, encompassing five distinct epochs, employing a qualitative, narrative-style systematic literature review guided by the SPAR-4-SLR protocol. The research reveals evolving dynamics between marketers and society, demonstrating that SIA is an effective

advertising strategy for global brands despite recurring social critique. This historical perspective serves as a valuable foundation for investigating SIA's contemporary manifestations and implications in our digitally connected world. In particular, it prompts further exploration of how sexual appeal may be strategically employed as a driver of customer engagement. The study enriches the literature on SIA and contributes to our understanding of evolving advertising practices influenced by emerging areas of endorsements, influencer marketing, AI influencers and metaverse marketing.

Research Question

RQ1: What do we currently know about SIA research since the 1970s?

RQ2: How has SIA research evolved, and what are the potential future directions?

Method and Data

The current research is a systematic literature review guided by the SPAR-4-SLR approach to synthesize insights and shape future research. We selected keywords based on Boddewyn's definition of sex in advertising, resulting in 13 keywords validated by advertising experts. These keywords were used in a Boolean search operator, revealing an evolving theme from sexuality-centric to consumer-centric academic conversations.

We used SCOPUS and EBSCO host databases for article selection, focusing on A* and A category journals as per ABDC JQL 2019, with B category articles included for their novel ideas. We considered only peer-reviewed English articles related to Business and Management. Initial individual article reviews were conducted with the help of industry experts. Articles unrelated to advertising and its evolution were excluded, resulting in 103 articles from 32 reputable journals for further analysis.

Summary of Findings

The research provides a systematic and geographically classified analysis of Sex in Advertising (SIA) since 1969, categorized by the location of the corresponding author. The USA emerges as the primary contributor, with a notable shift towards non-US sources in the past two decades. Research design classification reveals prevalent methods for experiments, content analysis, and surveys. Around fifty theories were identified for further investigation. The study delves into key epochs, starting with the controversial beginnings in 1969 through the 1970s, addressing the objectification of women, the inflection point in the 1980s, and the rationalization of sexuality in the 1990s.

Further exploration covers the commercialization of sexuality in the 2000s, examining consumer psychological variables, desire, and societal influences. The 2010s mark a new epoch characterized by the "sexualization of culture" and "addictification of society." The societal and cultural implications of sexual appeals, shockvertising, and strategic marketing of sexual appeals are explored. Insights into consumer personality traits, empowerment, emancipation, and the positive impact of advertising on social structures, gender equality, and societal norms are also discussed.

This synthesis contributes to understanding the multifaceted nature of SIA, its historical evolution, and its impact on societal perceptions, paving the way for future research on the intersection of advertising, culture, and human behaviour.

Key Contributions

This review offers valuable contributions to academia and practitioners. It provides a comprehensive historical perspective on the evolution of sex in advertising (SIA), revealing shifts in societal norms, ethics, and marketing strategies. It also explores the complex link between SIA and consumer behaviour, uncovering the impact of sexual appeals on advertising effectiveness, consumer attitudes, and purchase intentions, benefiting both researchers and

marketers. Additionally, the paper addresses ethical concerns related to SIA, including objectification and stereotypes, promoting responsible advertising practices and corporate social responsibility. The study emphasizes the contemporary relevance of SIA in the digital age, considering AI influencers and the metaverse, aligning with the ever-changing advertising landscape and offering avenues for further research in influencer marketing. Furthermore, it provides practical guidance for practitioners to adapt to the evolving advertising environment and strategically use sexual appeals for customer engagement.

Using a multidisciplinary approach drawing from sociology, psychology, ethics, and physiology, the paper encourages diverse exploration of SIA, enriching our understanding of this complex phenomenon. It identifies promising research directions, such as the societal impact of viral video advertising, ethical concerns regarding taboo themes, and the emotional aspects of responses to sexual stimuli in advertising. These directions pave the way for deeper insights into the interplay between sexual appeals and consumer behaviour in the digital age. The exploration of AI influencers and the metaverse and their use of sexual appeal invites further investigation into how AI and virtual spaces influence consumer engagement, aligning with today's dynamic technological advertising landscape.

References are available upon request.

GAMIFICATION AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR (2000-2023) A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW AND FUTURE RESEARCH

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Keywords- Gamification, Consumer Behavior, Systematic-literature review, Future research.

Description- Systematic literature review on gamification and consumer behavior (2000-2023).

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTIONS- RQ1: What is the intellectual understanding and structure of gamification and consumer behaviour?

RQ2: What are the theoretical constructs related to gamification and consumer behaviour?

RQ3: What are the emerging and evolving future research areas after conducting framework-based reviews on gamification and consumer behaviour.

METHOD AND DATA- Our research represents a framework based on gamification and consumer behaviour. We have incorporated the TCM-ADO framework to synthesize the previous literature and highlight possible future research references. The incorporation of the framework was rigorous and extensive. Incorporating the TCM-ADO framework allowed us to identify relevant articles, research decisions, and outcomes. Subsequently, including framework-based reviews is advisable, which eventually avoids human bias and error. Similarly, framework-based studies allowed us to understand knowledge gaps, knowledge identification, and promising research areas. The framework also identified relevant strings, research trends, and possible intellectual networks aligned in the research context.

FINDINGS- The manuscript integrates the literature on gamification and CB. It aligns the intellectual work published in various disciplines, such as marketing, branding, technology studies, psychology, and gaming studies. The descriptive analysis in the paper provides substantial data about the journals, authors, and keywords used by the scholars in this area. The framework-based review provides antecedents, core concepts, outcomes, theories, and contexts of various research undertaken by researchers in gamification and CB. Our paper offers relevant clusters significant to consumer behaviour and gamification. Meanwhile, clusters 1 and 2 address the emergence of gamification and consumer behaviour. Subsequently, clusters

3 and 4 discuss the relevance of personalization and customization-enabled gamification in consumer studies.

CONTRIBUTIONS- Our research represents interdisciplinary research, showcasing the progress of gamification and consumer behaviour research. Our research introduces a relevant framework work on gamification and consumer behaviour, synthesizing the scholarly discussions of gamification and consumer behaviour. Initiated through the antecedents, we highlighted research decisions, outcomes, mediation, and moderation of research variables through the proposed framework. Overall, this research guides a framework-based review, which extends the understanding of gamification and consumer behaviour. Second, our research capitulated the theoretical progress of gamification and consumer behaviour. Previously, scholars associated gamification and technology-based theories to highlight the importance of research contexts.

IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGY & LUXURY CONSUMERS: A HYBRID REVIEW AND RESEARCH AGENDA

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Keywords: Immersive Technology, Consumer Behavior, Luxury Consumer, Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, Artificial Intelligence, Metaverse

Description: The paper systematically reviews the literature on immersive technologies and luxury consumers using a hybrid method.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the latest immersive technologies and luxury consumer research trends?

RQ2: Who are the field's most influential authors, publications, and nations?

RQ3 Which theories are most frequently applied to studying immersive technologies in luxury consumer behavior?

RQ4 What research gaps and opportunities exist?

Method and Data

A TCM (Theories, Contexts, and Methods) - ADO (Antecedents, Decisions, and Outcomes) framework in conjunction with integrated bibliometric analysis was utilized to conduct a systematic literature review of 343 studies concerning luxury consumers and immersive technologies. The four-step PRISMA protocol involving identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion was employed. This protocol helped us identify the papers, screen them based on the eligibility criteria, and include only the relevant literature for further analysis. For identifying the relevant literature, we incorporated critical terms such as 'Metaverse,' 'Artificial Intelligence,' 'Augmented reality,' 'Virtual Reality,' and 'Innovation' for the immersive technologies dimension as these technologies have widespread recognition in academic discourse (Ford et al., 2023). Similarly, for the luxury consumer facet, we incorporated terms such as 'Luxury,' 'Consumer,' and 'Customer.'

Furthermore, to maximize the comprehensiveness of the article coverage, we used a combination of Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus databases. As a result, we accumulated 45,617 articles, books, book chapters, and conference proceedings from January 2003 to October 2023. Out of these, 343 were deemed suitable for the research. These documents were analyzed using quantitative tools such as Biblioshiny and VOS Viewer.

Summary of Findings

The study comprehensively consolidates the research articles on immersive technologies and luxury consumers. It highlights the descriptive performance, such as the number of publications, top ten contributing countries, journals, authors, most globally cited articles, and keyword analysis through quantitative examination that reveals the increasing trend and importance of immersive

technologies and luxury consumer research. The intellectual structure was analyzed through bibliographic coupling, and four thematic clusters that uncover the present research field are (1) digital transformation for interactive consumption, (2) enhancing consumer experiences, (3) sustainable innovation, and (4) immersive technology-driven customer knowledge management systems.

Thus, this review demonstrates the research perspective on immersive technologies and luxury consumers to academicians, scholars, and practitioners by uncovering the present research field and outlining future research directions to advance the literature.

Key Contributions

This systematic literature review with quantitative examination makes five theoretical contributions. First, this review focuses on immersive technologies and luxury consumer research grounded in marketing, consumer behavior, information systems, and ethics discipline. Second, we conduct the bibliometric analysis and outline the descriptive results with intellectual structure through bibliographic coupling to uncover the present themes in the literature. We identify four prominent clusters through bibliographic coupling, namely, a) digital transformation for interactive consumption, b) enhancing consumer experiences, c) sustainable innovation, and d) immersive technology-driven consumer knowledge management systems. Third, to advance the literature, we outline future research directions based on current themes and their interwoven relationship through bibliographic coupling. Fourth, this review will significantly help practitioners and emerging scholars to develop an orientation for immersive technologies and luxury consumers. Fifth, it will allow scholars to identify trends and facilitate the industry with newer findings.

LET'S CO-CREATE: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON MOTIVATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN SHARING ECONOMY

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Description: To summarize and synthesize academic literature on motivations to participate in sharing economy.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Sharing Economy (SE), born in the Internet age (Belk, 2014), has become a distinct research area, encompassing terms like collaborative consumption and access based consumption. Numerous definitions exist, creating ambiguity as some characterize SE as peer-to-peer activity, while others emphasize business-to-customer activity. Definitions also differ on the permanence of ownership transfer. To address this, we propose a comprehensive definition: "*The sharing economy is a dynamic socio-economic system facilitated through digital platforms, encompassing a wide range of activities, from sharing, renting, borrowing, leasing, buying, selling of usually underutilized tangible and intangible goods, for monetary or non-monetary compensation.*"

Motivation research on SE gained traction around 2000, with various studies exploring this domain. While numerous literature reviews exist, none specifically focus on SE motivation, despite the surge in academic literature, especially post-2016. Thus, our Systematic Literature

Review (SLR) aims to fill this gap by answering the question: what theories, theoretical constructs, methodologies, and contexts are explored in existing SE motivation research, paving the way for future research directions?

Method and Data

First, we searched for research papers using the keywords ("sharing economy" OR "collaborative consumption" OR "access based consumption" AND "motivation" OR "motivator" OR "driver" OR "adoption" OR "abandonment" OR "adopt" OR "abandon" OR "barriers" OR "inhibitors"). Keywords are identified by referring to previous studies and through brainstorming. Web of Science and Scopus databases are used to search as they transcend disciplines (Paul et al., 2021), and the coverage of both databases differs substantially (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). Initially, "1703" papers appeared, then referring to the Scientific Procedures and Rationales for Systematic Literature Reviews (SPAR) protocol (Paul et al., 2021), we sorted "313" papers. The protocol included only peer-reviewed papers published in English and in Journals that are Australian Business Deans Council Journal Quality List (ABDC JQL)- (A*, A, and B). More than two-thirds of SE motivation research has been published recently "2019-2021" (Khalek & Chakraborty, 2022). Therefore, with the increasing research interest, including research published from "2019" to "2023" is justifiable. The subject area is limited to "Business, Management & Accounting, Psychology". After removing duplicates, the abstract and full paper were read thoroughly. The papers relevant to the motivation research on SE were considered, including "149" papers, for final review.

Summary of Findings

SE research has applied more than "40" theoretical frameworks. We classified these theories into behaviour, social, individual/psychological, technological, and communication theories. The USA, UK, and Europe are the most significant contributors, and few studies have used multinational respondents. Various industries within SE, such as accommodation, transportation, and fashion & clothing, have been explored, focusing on the companies Airbnb and Uber.

The motivators and inhibitors that emerged from the literature were grouped under a single variable. Motivators such as saving money, ease of use, perceived value, and gaining authentic experience are grouped under "benefits." Similarly, inhibitors such as various risks and lack of trust are grouped under "risk and trust." A total of "6" motivators are identified after grouping: trust and benefits, social dimensions, sustainable and ethical practices, personality traits, consumption, safety and security, and "5" inhibitors, namely risk and trust, functional, personal, social, market or platforms.

The most employed research design is empirical, followed by experimental and exploratory. Most researchers have used cross-sectional data gathered through surveys, and qualitative designs rely on interviews and testimonials. Most quantitative studies have used structural equation modelling for data analysis and thematic, content, cluster, case-study, iterative, and hermeneutic for qualitative analysis.

Key Contributions

This study provides a summary of SE motivation literature and identifies future research avenues. Researchers collected data either before or during COVID-19. There was a behavioural shift as individuals demonstrated resilience, fostering a sense of community. Thus, future researchers can explore how community resilience can lead to adopting SE. The identified motivators and

inhibitors lay foundation to delve into longitudinal studies to ascertain significance over time. One promising theory to guide such research is the Socio-Ecological Model, which acknowledges the interplay of individual, interpersonal, and societal factors.

Future researchers can use neuro responses to uncover unconscious motivations which might not have been identified using traditional methods. Most of the research has explored drivers, however, it is equally important to identify inhibitors and develop strategies to overcome them.

Consumers are giving mindful consumption priority due to this market for second-hand luxury and luxury rental expanded (Gupta et al., 2022). Future researchers can explore how people participating in luxury SE perceive exclusivity and ownership. In contrast to reliance on surveys or interviews, future researchers can embrace transactional data to understand motivations. To bridge this gap, our forthcoming study endeavours to comprehensively analyze real-time data sourced from prominent SE platforms.

References are available upon request.

METAVERSE AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR:

A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH AGENDA

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Keywords: Metaverse, Consumer Behaviour, Systematic Literature Review, Virtual World, Immersive Technology

Description: This study systematically analyses all facets of consumer behaviour and the metaverse to guide organizations and provide scholars with further research avenues.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Technological advancement has profoundly altered consumer attitudes and behaviour in recent decades. In this rapidly evolving digital era, there has been a notable transformation in consumer interaction with products and services and their decision-making process. There is a growing requirement for a complete change of traditional marketing strategies to engage with customers effectively. The advent of the metaverse signifies a significant shift in conventional and digital marketing practices. The metaverse has become the focus of technology companies and academic scholars. In light of the current rate of investments and research development, there is a pressing need for a thorough review of the metaverse and consumer behaviour. The existing literature on consumer behaviour focuses on consumer perception, attitude, adoption, and decision toward the metaverse. This study analyses the current landscape and holistically presents future research avenues in the metaverse and consumer behaviour.

Research Question

The metaverse has a discernible impact on consumer identity, social influence, and ownership compared to the real world due to its ability to provide consumers access to a hyper-personalised experience. A thorough literature review was required to understand nuanced segments of the metaverse and consumer behaviour comprehensively. While looking for literature, we found a few studies conducted with a limited scope, either probing particular consumer segments or vastly covering marketing perspectives. This addresses the gap in the literature by analysing metaverse and consumer behaviour from the standpoint of theory, cross-fertilization of theories, clusters, the interwoven relationship between clusters antecedents that are technology,

consumers, and brand-related, types of research, data, sampling, and methodologies. The study immensely adds value to theory and practice by providing the gist of the current literature while guiding scholars on future research directions. The study analytically examines various aspects of consumer behaviour in the metaverse and uses the theory-context-characteristics-methods framework for reporting.

Summary of Findings

After conducting a comprehensive literature examination using Boolean keyword searches across prominent databases such as Web of Science, Science Direct, Emerald, IEEE Xplore, Sage, Jstor, Wiley Online Library, and Scopus, Ninety-two publications were selected for the review. It was found that the studies used a combination of psychological, communication, and technological theories. The context of literature focused on investigating 1) the impact of the metaverse on consumer behaviour, 2) examining the decision-making processes in the metaverse and explicitly investigating the factors that affect these decisions, 3) understanding the factors influencing consumer acceptance and adoption, and 4) emphasised the negative impacts on consumers and the more dark aspects of the metaverse. Quantitative studies are the predominant focus in this research field, following qualitative studies. There is a limited availability of conceptual, experimental and computational studies.

Further research is required to enhance understanding of consumer decision-making towards and within the metaverse. As existing studies primarily focus on intention, to comprehensively navigate the conversion funnel, studies must delve into the actual purchasing behaviour of consumers. Exploring consumer behaviour in the metaverse and comprehending

consumer decision-making and product purchases within the virtual world holds enormous possibilities for further research.

Key Contributions

The paper provides a state-of-the-art systematic literature review on metaverse and consumer behaviour. This study analyses research articles and investigates the dynamics of interactions and the convergence of the metaverse and consumer behaviour. Examining contexts and themes has identified four significant research areas in the metaverse and consumer behaviour study. The study provides an extensive analysis based on frameworks to outline the theoretical and methodological approaches used in this field. The paper also highlights significant areas for future research that have been obtained systematically via the meticulous coding process, expert suggestions, and the descriptive analysis performed in the review process. By delineating crucial research areas and offering recommendations for future research, this research guides scholars, professionals, and policymakers in staying informed about the most recent advancements, trends, and research opportunities in the metaverse and consumer behaviour.

ROLE OF EMOJIS IN MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS IN FOSTERING BRAND-CONSUMER RELATIONSHIPS: A SCOPING REVIEW

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Keywords: Emoji, Marketing Communication, Consumer-Brand Relationship, Scoping Review

Description: Emojis have become a form of language extensively used in marketing communications to build long-term relationships with consumers; this scoping review aims to identify the areas that have been studied, and that can be explored in the future.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

1. **Research Question:** Emojis are pictorial representations that convey emotional information in digital communication. Researchers suggest that the presence of emojis makes mediated communication rich because emojis amplify messages and convey non-verbal cues in digital communication. Emoji literature has focused on understanding how consumers interpret and respond to these pictorial representations of emotions. A primary

purpose of marketing communication is to build and sustain long-term relationships with consumers, which has received limited attention in emoji literature. This paper attempts to fill the above research gap by conducting a scoping review of the literature examining the effect of emojis on consumer-brand relationships. It answers the research question: *What is known from the existing literature about the role of emojis in marketing communications in fostering a consumer-brand relationship?* The broad research question comprises four avenues following the TCCM (Theory, Concepts, Contexts, and Methodology) Framework given by Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019*.

- *Theory*: What theories are used to study the role of emojis in marketing communication that fosters brand-consumer relationships?

- *Context:* What events and platforms are considered?

- *Constructs and Concepts:* What are the concepts explored? What constructs (independent, moderating, mediating, and dependent variables) are used?

- *Methodological Approaches:* What research methods and analyses are used?

2. **Method and Data:** A scoping review is conducted as either a stand-alone project or to map the significant concepts supporting a study subject, the primary sources, and the types of evidence accessible in the literature. (Arksey and O'Malley, 2007) *. It is conducted using the five-stage procedure recommended by Arksey and O'Malley (2007). PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses- Scoping Review) protocol is followed to select review articles in the scoping review. The Rayyan.ai tool is used to store references and to aid the study selection process.

A two-fold study screening is undertaken by two collaborating reviewers who screen the title and abstract at the first stage and eliminate the records unrelated to the marketing domain. The second stage of the study is to screen full-text articles. The criteria for selecting full-text studies are:

Inclusion criteria :

- Peer-reviewed journal: ABDC listed (having two exceptions)

- Intervention: Usage of emojis/emoticons/TPL

- Context: Digital brand communication

- Concept: Consumer Brand Relationship

Exclusion Criteria:

- Listed in Non-Peer Reviewed journals

- Unavailability of full-text articles

- Language restricted to English

The summary of the articles is charted based on journals, year, hypotheses, methodology, key variables, and findings. The results are represented in tabular as well as graphical form.

3. **Summary of Findings:** The results show the previous usage trends of emojis. It indicates where studies can be conducted to contribute to the emoji literature. The findings show that studies on emojis that are included in this review are spread over the last ten years and that the trend has exponential growth except for the 2020 slump. Most of the articles reviewed are published in top-tier journals. Twelve of twenty-six articles are published in "A"

category journals of the ABDC journal list. The review identifies influential articles based on the number of citations it has received in Google Scholar. It is seen that seven of twenty-six papers are cited more than fifty times. Furthermore, emoji literature has used varied theories to explain the relationship between the variables that are from three domains viz. psychology, communications, and linguistics. The individual dependent variables are brought under broad topics of customer satisfaction (6), customer response (12), and customer emotion towards the brand (1), evaluation of message(2), engagement(7), effectiveness of communication(4), social presence(1), and relationship strength(2). Of twenty-six papers, eighteen used quantitative methodology, four articles used a qualitative approach, and four used mixed methods to explain relationships between the different constructs.

4. **Key Contributions:** The following research questions can be explored further.

- ***Theoretical Foundations***

a. Can Social Presence theory (Short et al.,1976) * explain the role of emojis on consumer brand relationships in mediated communication?

b. How can relatedness with self-influence consumers' inferences (Kardes et al., 2004) * about a brand based on brand communication using emojis?

c. Under what conditions does the usage of emojis have a positive or a negative influence on consumer brand relationships?

- ***Concepts***

a. Do emojis anthropomorphize the brands to establish social connectedness with the consumers?

b. Can brand communication using emojis influence the consumer's well-being?

c. Will emojis in brand communication help promote sustainability intentions based on product type (hedonic vs. utilitarian)?

d. Does the perceived appropriateness of a brand message using emojis depend on the socio-cultural identity of a customer?

- *Contexts:*

a. Can chatbots of non-luxury brands use emojis in their communication to establish connectedness with the consumers?

b. How can brands use emojis in mobile push notifications to improve the psychological well-being of consumers? (Fitz et al., 2019) *

- *Methodological Approaches*

a. Will the current typology of textual paralanguages (emojis or emoticons) reduce the semantic ambiguity of a brand message containing emojis?

* References are available upon request.

Influence of Social Issues on Consumer Behaviour in Omni-Channel Shopping Ecosystem: A Systematic Literature Review and Future Research Agenda

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Keywords: Omni-channel, Consumer privacy, Sustainable consumption, Consumer behaviour

Description:

This systematic literature review (henceforth SLR), employs the PRISMA framework to comprehensively analyse the impact of consumer privacy and sustainable consumption on behaviour in the omni-channel shopping ecosystem, revealing that privacy significantly influences trust and channel selection, while sustainable practices shape consumer behavior, emphasizing the crucial need for robust data protection measures and strategies tailored to regional markets, thus paving the way for further exploration in this dynamic and critical field.

Research Question:

The research questions for the study on the influence of social issues on consumer behavior in the omni-channel shopping ecosystem adopt a systematic approach. The first question focuses on how consumer privacy impacts behavior in a technology-driven retail landscape, crucial for establishing and maintaining consumer trust amid increasing data security concerns. The second question explores the influence of sustainable consumption on consumer behavior, recognizing the growing importance of eco-conscious choices in purchasing decisions and the need for businesses to align with evolving consumer values. The third and fourth questions delve into theoretical frameworks and primary constructs in the literature, providing insights

into diverse approaches shaping consumer behavior across different geographical contexts. The final question assesses research methodologies, ensuring a nuanced understanding of the influence of social issues on consumer behavior in the evolving omni-channel shopping landscape and guiding future research endeavors.

Methodology:

This study employs a PRISMA-based SLR to investigate the impact of social issues on consumer behavior in the omni-channel shopping ecosystem (Moher et al., 2009). The review covers conceptual and framework-based domain reviews, focusing on the period from 2000 to 2023. The search strategy, using the keyword "omni-channel shopping" and variations, yielded 77 studies from Scopus and Web of Science. After excluding duplicates and irrelevant publications, 40 articles were selected for data extraction and analysis (Paul et al., 2021).

The review follows the Theory, Context, and Method (TCM) framework, starting with foundational theories in consumer privacy and sustainable consumption. The contextual section explores key themes and regional factors, while the methodology details the study design, data collection, and analysis methods.

Findings are presented through textual analysis with a rigorous gap analysis informing a research agenda within the TCM framework. Influential researchers, such as Kumar et al. (2023), Wang et al. (2022), and Billore & Anisimova (2021) previous works guide the development of the research agenda. The study aims to contribute to the understanding of social issues in the omni-channel shopping landscape.

Summary of findings:

The SLR employing the PRISMA framework delves into the impact of social issues on consumer behavior in the omni-channel shopping ecosystem, focusing on privacy and sustainable consumption. Notably, privacy concerns significantly shape trust and channel selection, influenced by factors such as channel integration, empowerment, and psychographic traits. Meanwhile, sustainable consumption, evident in interactive omni-channel spaces and order status visibility, plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior.

The integration of diverse theoretical frameworks, including Retail Location Theory, Behavioral Decision Theory, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), UTAUT2, and Consumer Socialization Theory, contributes to a nuanced understanding of consumer decision-making processes.

Geographically diverse studies from countries like the United States, China, France, Turkey, Malaysia, Spain, Taiwan, Germany, India, Singapore, Canada, Japan, Korea, and Thailand highlight the complex relationship between social issues and consumer behavior in omni-channel retailing.

Survey methods, statistical analysis, advanced analytical techniques like PLS-SEM, and exploratory techniques collectively enrich our comprehension of the intricate dynamics within the omni-channel shopping ecosystem (Cheah et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2021; Mahusni & Ghafar, 2020; Robichaud & Yu, 2023; Wieland, 2023; Yao et al., 2023).

Statement of Key Contributions:

This literature review significantly contributes to academia and industry by comprehensively investigating the impact of consumer privacy and sustainable consumption in the omni-channel shopping ecosystem.

The study advances theoretical understanding by integrating established frameworks, offering a robust analytical lens that identifies regional nuances. This nuanced approach provides valuable insights for businesses to tailor marketing and operational strategies to diverse geographical contexts. Recommendations for prioritizing consumer privacy and adopting sustainable practices as fundamental components of business operations underscore the importance of investments in data protection, eco-conscious product lines, and staying updated with technological advancements, particularly augmented reality, for maintaining a competitive edge.

On a broader societal scale, the research underscores the increasing significance of consumer privacy and sustainable consumption in shaping retail behavior. The study signals a shift towards more informed and conscientious consumer choices, with businesses playing a vital role in driving positive societal and environmental change. Encouraging eco-conscious behavior is highlighted as supportive of conservation efforts and contributes to a more sustainable global economy.

This review offers a comprehensive understanding of how social issues influence consumer behavior, laying the foundation for future studies to explore emerging trends and unexplored dimensions in this dynamic field.

References

References are available upon request.

THE HEART BRAIN CONNECTION: INVESTIGATING COGNITIVE, EMOTIONAL, AND BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES IN CONSUMERS

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Keywords: Neuromarketing, Consumer Neuroscience, Neuroscientific Tools, Systematic Literature Review, Methodological Structure

Description:

This present research conducts an extensive and methodical review of neuromarketing research published in 35 leading marketing journals offering a comprehensive overview of the research landscape, and outlines potential directions for future research in the field of neuromarketing.

EXTENDED ABSTARCT

Consumer neuroscience combines neuroscience, psychology, and economics to study and affect consumer behaviour. It studies the mind, brain, and behaviour to predict and influence consumer behaviour and decision-making (HBR, 2022). The term "consumer neuroscience" refers to the measurement of physiological and brain signals in order to obtain insight into the motives, preferences, and decisions of customers (Harrell, 2019). Indeed, there has been a surge in interest in consumer neuroscience among academics and practitioners globally in recent years (Karmarkar & Plassmann, 2019; Ramsøy, 2019 and Zhang et al., 2022). Consumer neuroscience literature began about 20 years ago (Smidts, 2002) and has addressed consumer decision making, preferences, and choices. Self-reports, which are conscious, have greatly influenced marketing and consumer research, whereas subconscious/unconscious processes remain undiscovered (Hsu & Cheng, 2018).

An abundance of marketing literature has focused on consumers' conscious decision-making across industries and product categories (Karmarkar & Plassmann, 2019; Ramsøy, 2019 and Zhang et al., 2022. However, a deeper understanding of subconscious/unconscious motivations may also help explain consumer decision-making and choice (Blazquez-Resino et al., 2022). In addition, a couple of prior reviews (Oliveira et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022; Levallois et al., 2021; He et al. 2021) acknowledge the field of neuromarketing in consumer behavior research. However, there is a paucity of conceptual and theoretical clarifications in the existing literature on how consumer neuroscience is structured in consumer research. This disparity has been a key driving force for the present study and progress in the subject of consumer neuroscience, particularly in relation to the stages of purchasing and post-purchase. The current review examines consumer neuroscience, marketing, and unconscious decision-making literature to integrate the neuromarketing field's diverse methods to understanding

neuromarketing. Unlike previous reviews this paper tracks the 15-year trajectory of consumer neuroscience investigations in academic marketing publications, following theory and core ideas.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How consumer neuroscience is conceptually and theoretically structured within the area of consumer research and what progress has been made in the subject particularly in relation to the stages of purchasing and post-purchase.

To fulfill this research question, the article establishes a theoretical context that elucidates the convergence of consumer neuroscience, marketing, and technology in contemporary literature. Later, we revisit and expand upon this theory. In the subsequent section titled "Review of marketing literature," we outline our review methodology, encompassing literature scoping, gathering, and analysis, inspired by a critical reflexivity perspective in the "Proposed Topology" section, we synthesize research on "Neuromarketing" and "Consumer neuroscience" in marketing. The article concludes by exploring future research areas in the "Research Avenues" section and advocating for the relevance of this research from both theoretical and practical perspectives in the "Discussion and Implications" section.

METHOD AND DATA

This paper employs a systematic literature review approach in an endeavor to unify the disparate variety of marketing literature from various fields. Following Finks' (2014) outlined steps, our approach enhances study robustness and rigor by minimizing subjectivity in data gathering and evaluation, as advocated by Cacciotti and Hayton (2015). The five phases encompass formulating review questions, defining scope and boundaries, identifying studies, screening and selecting studies, and analysis and synthesis.

Selection of Articles

To begin, we formulated a review question (Denver and Tranfield, 2009) that establishes the criteria for the inclusion and exclusion for this literature review: "How have the concept of consumer neuroscience employed within the gamut of marketing literature?". Second, we opted to utilize SCOPUS, EBSCO, and WoS for our literature searches. Thirdly, relevant papers were identified by checking article metadata fields (title, abstract, or keywords) for references to neuromarketing. Following Denyer et al.'s (2008) proposal, we defined the main conceptual parameters, resulting in 1707 potentially useful articles for the study.

Third, an article must be published in marketing and related disciplines such as applied psychology and consumer neuroscience. This criterion required first applying a discipline filter to results from the databases "WoS", "EBSCO", and "Scopus" - 'Business' or 'Management', which produced 286 articles. We looked through scholarly, peer-reviewed publications in all three databases because these publications contain validated knowledge that has shaped the industry (Podsakoff et al., 2005). The time period was kept from 2017 till 2022 for the three databases and 32 marketing journals were searched over the last 15 years. Using EndNote X9, we narrowed down the studies to 131, excluding duplicates. Following Zuschke's (2020) guidance, we prioritized studies from higher-ranked journals (CABS Grades 3, 4, or 4*, ABDC A or A*, or Q1 in Scimago). With a focus on fit-for-purpose standards, 73 articles matching our criteria were found, rendering the fifth step (scientific quality screening) unnecessary, and ultimately, 66 articles were selected for review.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is based on the five phases of consumer purchase decision-making. Given the five phases do not always follow a linear path (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016) and the attitudinal responses can span multiple phases, it is crucial to consider their occurrence,

specifying the conscious-unconscious decision-making continuum. For example, as per Dowling et al (2019) study the un-conscious behavior during the pre purchase stage, indicating the influence of behavioral biases on consumer's decision making. In addition, Zhang et al (2022) also highlights the influence of un-conscious decision making on attitudinal responses, during pre-purchase stages with regards to advertising and branding. On the other hand, Garczarek-Bąk et al. (2021) and Çakir et al. (2018) demonstrated how behavioral and attitudinal biases are shaped up unconsciously during the purchase stages. The study was carried out in predicting brand familiarity and subsequently purchase decision. Similarly, the study by Herrando et al (2022) indicated how online customer reviews activate arousal and pleasure un-consciously and result into a purchase. Furthermore, Hamelin et al (2020) and Grigaliunaite & Pileliene (2017) studied the effect of storytelling resulting in more immediate shift in decision making during post purchase stages, of a consumer life cycle. Therefore, we propose that the three attitudinal responses have different levels of importance and conscious-unconscious valence. We observe a similar pattern in measuring conscious-unconscious choices during the post-purchase phases, with an even greater relevance of the purchase phase (Garczarek-Bąk et al., 2021; Medina et al., 2021; Couwenberg et al., 2017 and Missaglia et al., 2017). The existing marketing literature largely focusses on the conscious decision making among the pre-purchase and purchase phases and related behavioral responses. Unconscious choices play an important role when consumers make predictions about their future behavior and provide post purchase feedbacks (Zhao, 2022; Hamelin et al., 2020 and Hamelin et al., 2017.)

Phases of Decision Making and Attitudinal Responses

An overview attempts to succinctly organize diverse conceptualizations of neuromarketing research across three stages of purchase decisions: (a) pre-purchase, (b) purchase, and (c) post-

purchase. The suggested paradigm is founded on two theoretically distinct dimensions anchored in existing literature: Unconscious and Conscious cognition. The conscious cognitive dimension, rooted in marketing literature, draws on theorization regarding antecedents or inhibitors to pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase behavior, revealing abundant literature on measuring conscious behavioral, cognitive, or affective responses. However, there is a notable gap in literature regarding the measurement of these responses unconsciously during purchase and post-purchase stages, indicating a need for further research. Therefore, our framework emphasizes unconscious cognition as a pivotal psychological process activating unconscious decision-making.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Insight 1: Neuromarketing 2x2 Typology

The study proposes a 2x2 typology which centers around the purchase decision stages of consumers. This typology comprises two dimensions: (1) decision-making stages (Pre-purchase, Purchase, and Post-Purchase) and (2) Cognition level (Conscious and Unconscious). Insights from relevant neuromarketing and consumer buying decision literature were incorporated into the typology, drawing from both literary canons as "method theories" (Jaakkola, 2020). These ideas offer fresh perspectives on various stages of purchase decision-making when used collectively as typology characteristics. The typology characterizes purchase decision stages (Y Axis) with cognition (X-Axis). A scheme is presented in every quadrant representing the literature coverage for specific functional domains. The thirty functional domains are mentioned, with every functional domain corresponding to a block. For example, Advertising refers to the first block, Packaging as the second block and pricing as the 30th block. Each block is represented using three shades (light grey, dark grey and black). The color of the block indicates the quantum of research, which has been done in the past. For

example, light grey corresponds to literature coverage of less than 20 research papers, dark grey indicates literature coverage of 20-100 research papers, whereas black indicates coverage of over 100 research papers.

Insight 2: Insights from Key Techniques and Tools

Our study highlights the application of various neuro-metric (fMRI, EEG, MEG, SST, TMS, fNIRS, PET) and non-neuro-metric techniques (ET, GSR, Facial Action Coding, fEMG, HR, IRT) in marketing and consumer research to understand decision-making (Boz et al., 2017; Baldo et al., 2022; Ćirović et al., 2022; Šola et al., 2022). These tools help identify cognitive, emotive, and behavioral responses, aiming to comprehend and address barriers to acceptance and behaviors associated with any issue or concern. Traditional methods answer "what" but not "why" and "how," leading to the emergence of disciplines like neurophilosophy, neuroeconomics, neurofinance, and neuromarketing. Combining neuroscience data with self-reported data has been suggested to explore decision-making processes (Clark et al., 2018). Notably, studies commonly employ mixed methodology alongside traditional research methods, as highlighted.

Insights 3: Use Cases and Future Applications

Applications for consumer neuroscience can be classified into two broad categories: fundamental and applied. Fundamental applications enhance theories and models in a controlled environment, establishing relationships between variables with potential commercial implications. In contrast, applied applications address real business problems using real-time data for managerial decision-making. Fundamental applications focus on theoretical implications, while applied applications center on business implications.

KEY CONTRIBUTION

The present review evaluates marketing literature on consumer neuroscience and neuromarketing critically and methodically. It joins similar studies (Karmarkar & Plassmann, 2019; Ramsoy, 2019; Zhang et al., 2022) that aim to create insights to support the incorporation of neuro and non-neuro-metric tools into intentional and real decision making. Four contributions to marketing scholarship are made in current review. a 2x2 typology illustrates how neuromarketing techniques analyze both conscious and unconscious decision-making. The evaluation also reveals a lack of consistency in the use of neuromarketing words and ranges, which invites theoretical uncertainty and unneeded complexity for researchers working in the reviewed field. Second, it is interesting to note that, to the best of the authors' knowledge, this review is the only one that not only discusses different tools and techniques but also links them to various theoretical frameworks in order to measure important classification variables and then have a significant impact on applications. Additionally, the tools and approaches used in our study have been mapped with applications, giving future researchers a sense of the depth and breadth of the tools used across many domains and thereby revealing a gap that can be filled in future studies. This criticism is complemented by recommendations for further research on how to make it more transparent. Third, this evaluation identifies several areas that require additional study. Finally, the review presents a fresh methodological strategy for researchers who want to write critically reflective reviews that challenge a body of literature's presumptions. Thus, this study hopes that academics and practitioners will be able to use the constructive tensions brought up by consumer neuroscience as both useful heuristics and lenses for critical reflexivity. Researchers and marketers can use these conflicts to develop a larger range of ideas and practical approaches that enable the meaningful integration of technologies into the lives of older consumers.

TITLE: UNMASKING DECEPTION: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON DEBUNKING MISINFORMATION

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Keywords: Misinformation, Debunking Misinformation, Fake news, Deep Fakes, Artificial Intelligence

Description: The paper extensively reviews corrective strategies to combat misinformation (often known as debunking) and explores the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) in facilitating the debunking process.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Prior systematic reviews on misinformation focused on specific contexts, be it the topic or the types of misinformation. None of the prior reviews looked into the corrective strategies, debunking misinformation, and the impact of artificial intelligence facilitating the debunking process. The following research questions are addressed by assessing the existing literature on misinformation and setting the scope, questions, and inclusion/exclusion criteria.

RQ1: What are the theoretical perspectives on debunking misinformation?

RQ2: How can consumers combat the impact of misinformation?

RQ3: What is the impact of artificial intelligence on debunking misinformation?

Method and Data

To address the research questions mentioned above, SPAR4-SLR guidelines were followed, and databases such as Web of Science, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and Emerald Insights were selected. Studies from diverse disciplines such as psychology, marketing, computer science, business, education, journalism, public policy, and sociology were considered. The keywords used to search were "debunking misinformation," "misinformation AND consumer response," "misinformation, AI AND consumers," "debunking fake news," and "misinformation and deepfakes." Thus, any articles having these keywords in their title, abstract, or keyword list were considered for review and subjected to the inclusion or exclusion criteria. Following the criteria consistent with the existing literature, those articles were selected for the final selection to review, which a) were written in English, b) were scholarly works, c) were published in a peer-reviewed journal and d) were focused on misinformation-related research questions discussed before. This search also included the articles presented in conference proceedings to account for the impact of artificial intelligence in influencing corrective strategies. After filtering the initial data of 554 articles utilizing the inclusion and exclusion criterion, the final dataset incorporated 129 research articles published till September 2023.

Summary of Findings

The corpus of existing literature concerning the debunking of misinformation is characterized by a central focus on fact-checking, with a particular emphasis on influencing consumer behavior. This body of research also explores preventive mechanisms to correct misinformation and assesses their effectiveness. The Inoculation Theory, originating in the 1960s, stands out as a prominent theoretical framework for debunking misinformation. It advocates for the preemptive immunization of consumers, equipping them with the ability to discern and counter false information. Given the dire consequences of misinformation, past research has focused on finding the optimal corrective techniques and correction formats. One recurring theme in

examining AI's role in debunking misinformation is its function as an enabler for developing methodologies to debunk or categorize misinformation effectively. Smart AI-powered algorithms such as BERT have been harnessed across diverse platforms for classifying and detecting misinformation. In recent years, researchers have increasingly turned to deep-learning neural network methods to enhance the detection of misinformation.

Key Contributions

This research article offers a comprehensive review of the corrective strategies to address misinformation and the pivotal role of artificial intelligence in this endeavor. Previous systematic literature reviews have predominantly centered on methodological aspects, antecedents, and consequences of misinformation or have sought to define concepts like misinformation and fake news specifically. This systematic review extends the frontiers of existing knowledge by delving into an expansive array of corrective actions grounded in behavioral theories and algorithmic approaches, with a focus on their practical application for the benefit of consumers. It underscores the paramount significance of debunking misinformation not only within the academic sphere but also across domains encompassing marketing, media, journalism, and other pertinent areas of the business world. As a result, it beckons forth an array of promising research avenues dedicated to the creation of behavioral corrective mechanisms, a prospect of keen interest to marketing practitioners and policymakers alike.

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