Two Defending Strategies of Threatened Brand Identity in Co-Branding: the Moderating Role of Perceived Identity Fit

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Brand identity is one of the most important drivers of a successful brand as it allows consumers to connect to a brand at deeper levels. However, little is known about whether a strong brand identity can hinder or facilitate a brand’s alliance with another brand. In this research, we investigate whether consumers with strong identification with a brand will perceive its alliance with another brand (co-branding) to be a threat to their own identity and how consumers address the threat by employing defensive strategies such as decoupling and biased assimilation.

[to cite]:

[url]:
http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/1007176/eacr/vol9/E-09

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Abstract

Brand identity is one of the most important drivers of a successful brand as it allows consumers to connect to a brand at deeper levels. However, little is known about whether a strong brand identity can hinder or facilitate a brand’s alliance with another brand. In this research, we investigate whether consumers with strong identification with a brand will perceive its alliance with another brand (co-branding) to be a threat to their own identity and how consumers address the threat by employing defensive strategies such as decoupling and biased assimilation.

Consuming Metaphors: Being a Consumer

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Extended Abstract

Consumption is a fundamental component of our society (Featherstone 1991 and Slater 1999). We find meaning in consumption, assert status through consumption (Veblen 1912), and define our relationships with consumption (Miller 1987). So common is our experience as consumers, that we use it as an analogy for understanding a wide array of other experiences (Phillips 2001).

Metaphors and analogies regarding consumption common in popular discourse include medical patients as consumers, citizens as consumers, students as consumers, and dating as consumption. Medical patients are told they are consumers and must take charge of their medical treatment, weighing choices of treatment and demanding quality service from doctors and hospitals. Citizens are marketed political ideas and they consume through voting. Schools treat students as consumers of education who pay with tuition for degrees.

But what is our experience as consumers? What does it mean to be a consumer? Consumption has been characterized by choice...