The Effect of Perceived Brand Name–Logo Coherence on Brand Attitudes
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Short Abstract
This research investigates how the perceived coherence between brand name and logo affects brand attitudes and how this relationship is influenced by consumer-level and marketer-controlled variables. The constructs whose relationships are investigated in a first study are perceptions of coherent brand logo actions, self-brand connections and preference for consistency. Several experiments are projected to study the effect of additional moderators on the main relationships, including brand ownership, initial congruence between brand and logo, logo stability and social visibility of the brand.

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The respondent was told that each source recommends a different camera so they will have to make a decision based solely on the sources since they must buy the gift immediately.

Each source was then rated on their expertise, believability, trustworthiness and interest in helping them make the best choice on a nine-point scale. They were then asked which recommendation they would be most likely and least likely to take. For the latter, they were asked why they would be least likely to follow this recommendation.

**Results**

Respondents were 140 undergraduate students. The sample was 54.1% female and 90.1% spent four or more hours per week on the internet.

In terms of interest in helping the customer to make the best decision, the chatroom advisor was rated statistically significantly lower (mean=5.09) than all three other sources (Customer=6.63, Web Guide=6.01, Salesperson=6.04), confirming expectations that suspicion led to lower ratings than those with admitted self-interest. While the salesperson and chatroom advisor were described as having equivalent expertise experience, the chatroom advisor was rated statistically lower (mean=5.48) on expertise than the salesperson (mean=6.81), and was even statistically lower than the store customer (mean=5.90) or the Buying Guide (mean=6.47).

When asked whose recommendation they would most likely take, 31.4% said the website buying guide and 30.0% said the customer, while 25.7% said the electronics’ salesperson. In terms of the recommendation they would be least likely to take, 51.4% said the chatroom advisor. The verbatim for those respondents showed that 68% of the responses doubted the chatroom advisor’s credibility, some expressing the need to see advisors face-to-face to be able to judge their credibility. Another 11% suggested that the person probably worked for the manufacturer. Interestingly 12% saw the recommendation as part of a possible joke, prank or fraud.

This provides some limited support to Fein’s arguments about the effects of suspicion. Consumers seem to be suspicious of sources who may be concealing their true identity and therefore their self-interest, rating them lower than self-interested sources.

This study suggests that marketers should proceed with caution in using online forums. Consumers are becoming more sophisticated in these forums where identity is less verifiable, leading to suspicion. The very “hint” of deceit may be sufficient to elicit significant consumer backlash. The heyday of marketers being able to “masquerade” as consumers to gain greater influence and avoid coping strategies may be past. The suspicion in this study seemed to be limited to the online forums.

**References**


**Product Placement: Developing Concepts, Constructs and Measures**

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Product placement practice has grown in scope and volume, and expenditure now exceeds one billion dollars per annum. Publicity and public concern is also increasing. Placement research however has not kept place with these trends. Effects-based research is minimal and findings across studies diverge. Most researchers have adopted traditional advertising effect measures, however placement is qualitatively different to interruptive advertising. Whilst theoretical discussion is ensuing, it remains minimal. Before viable research can emerge, sound concepts and constructs must be developed. This paper presents a discussion and resolution of conceptual issues.

**The Effect of Perceived Brand Name–Logo Coherence on Brand Attitudes**

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**Extended Abstract**

This research investigates how the perceived coherence between brand name and logo affects brand attitudes and how this relationship is influenced by consumer-level and marketer-controlled variables (Keller, 1993, 1998). The topic is an important one since brand names and logos are common means to communicate brand identity to consumers (Aaker 1996; Henderson and Cote 1998). However, if these brand elements are incoherent, incongruity may occur at the brand association level (Keller 1993). Therefore, the coherence between brand name and logo is crucial to the development of a strong brand identity. Even though the coherence between brand names and their logos has been recognized as an important research topic, little systematic research has investigated it yet (Henderson and Cote 1998; Henderson, Giese, and Cote 2003; Klink 2003).

The purpose of this research is to study a main effect (the impact of brand name-logo coherence on brand attitudes), its potential moderators and its boundary conditions. To do so, the primary theoretical frameworks we rely on are Keller’s (1993) consumer-based...
brand equity model, research on self-brand connections (Edson Escalas and Bettman 2003; Edson Escalas 2004) and preference for consistency (Cialdini, Trost, and Newsom 1995). The main rationale is that consumers will favor brand logos that are coherent with the brand’s current image and that this preference is affected by several consumer-level and marketer-controlled variables. The constructs whose relationships are investigated in a first study are perceptions of coherent brand logo actions, self-brand connections (SBC) and preference for consistency (PFC). Specifically, the following hypotheses are tested:

H1: Attitudes toward a brand action that increases coherence between brand name and logo will be more positive than attitudes toward a brand action that decreases coherence between brand name and logo.

H2: Consumers with a high PFC will have more positive attitudes toward a brand action that increases coherence between brand name and logo than consumers with a low PFC.

H3: Consumers with a strong SBC will have more positive attitudes toward a brand action that increases coherence between brand name and logo than consumers with a weak SBC.

H4: Consumers with a strong SBC and a high PFC will have more positive attitudes toward a brand action that increases coherence between brand name and logo than consumers with a strong SBC and a low PFC.

An experiment was conducted to test these initial hypotheses. A multinational cell phone brand was chosen as the stimulus brand for two reasons. First, most students know the brand and own a cell phone. Second, cell phone brands usually have a distinct positioning and the brand to be investigated possesses distinctive characteristics in terms of brand name and brand marks. Stimuli and instructions were pre-tested with 15 students. Eighty-nine undergraduate students aged between 19 and 23 participated in the main study, which comprised two separate parts presented to participants as ostensibly unrelated surveys. In the first part, personal characteristics were collected including the seven-item SBC and the 18-item PFC scales (Cialdini et al. 1995; Edson Escalas 2004). In the second part, a 2 x 2 between-participants experiment was conducted (incoherent/coherent logo with brand; weak/strong self-brand connection; low/high preference for consistency). Participants were presented the current brand logo and were asked to imagine a new logo that would be (in)coherent with the name and current positioning of the brand. After time for reflection, they were asked to write down the characteristics of such a logo and why these characteristics could improve cohesiveness with the brand compared to the current logo. Participants also had the possibility to draw a new logo if they wished to do so. Finally, they were asked to rate their attitudes toward a brand action (three items) that would actually introduce a new logo in the market based on participants’ recommendations.

A 2 X 2 X 2 ANOVA was conducted with attitude toward brand action as the dependent variable and logo coherence, SBC and PFC as between-participant factors. Low/high groups on the SBC and PFC scales were constituted using a conventional median split. The main effect of logo coherence was significant (F(1, 81)=47.78, p<.01), whereby participants rated a brand action introducing a coherent logo with the brand more favorably (M=4.67) than an incoherent logo (M=2.79). This result supports hypothesis 1 and suggest that brand name–logo coherence matters to consumers. The three-way interaction between logo coherence, SBC and PFC was also significant (F(1, 81)=4.08, p<.05). A planned contrast revealed that participants with a strong self-brand connection and a high preference for consistency had more positive attitudes toward a brand action that increased coherence between brand name and logo (M=5.04) than participants with a strong self-brand connection and a low preference for consistency (M=3.85, F(1, 81)=4.23, p<.05). These results support hypothesis 4 and suggest that the effect of the two psychological difference measures on brand attitudes is strongly intertwined.

As a next step, a series of experiments are projected aiming at testing the effect of additional moderators on the basic relationship of hypothesis 1. These include other consumer-level factors such as brand ownership and also marketer-controlled factors such as perceived initial congruence between brand and logo, stability of the logo over time and the social visibility of the brand. Specifically, we expect consumers actually owning a product of the brand to judge coherent brand logos more favorably than consumers who do not own any product from the brand. We also expect that brand name–logo congruence will be important for brands that frequently (vs. rarely) change logos over time; and for brands that are highly (vs. weakly) visible in social interactions.

In a broad perspective for future research, our conceptual framework may also extend to brand elements other that logo (slogans, sponsoring, public relations etc.) It would also be interesting to relate our framework to brand extensions research (e.g. Aaker and Keller 1990; Sanjay and Sood 2002). Whether the same factors influence the effect of other brand elements on attitudes as those hypothesized in this research is certainly an interesting question for future inquiry.

References