Film Preference: the Role of Cultural Capital and Sensation Seeking in Film Preference Type
   Joel Watson, Rockhurst University

[to cite]:

[url]:
   http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/13107/volumes/v33/NA-33

[copyright notice]:
   This work is copyrighted by The Association for Consumer Research. For permission to copy or use this work in whole or in part, please contact the Copyright Clearance Center at http://www.copyright.com/.
and Kim 1991). Extremely negative information draws more attention and a greater level of cognitive elaboration on the information, which facilitates spillover onto related brands (Petty et al. 1997). Next, consumers’ attribution of the crisis incident may also potentially influence the pattern of spillover effects. Attribution theory views people as rational information processors whose reactions are influenced by their causal inference (Folkes 1984). Previous research has shown that crises perceived to be avoidable cause more anger and stronger emotional reactions to the harmed brand than crises perceived to be unavoidable (Folkes 1984; Weiner 2000). These induced negative emotions could be generalized to related products/brands (Smith et al. 1999) and strengthen the spillover effect.

Hence, this research investigates the impact of crisis severity, consumers’ attribution of the crisis, and their interaction with the inter-brand structure on the pattern of spillover effects. We intend to set boundary conditions for the impact of negative information on brand evaluations, and therefore provide marketers with the knowledge of situations in which the negative spillover is likely to be strengthened, attenuated, or even diminished (Ahluwalia 2000). Furthermore, despite the prevalence of portfolio brands in the marketplace, little empirical research has been conducted in the brand portfolio context. In the current research, we lay the foundation for a theoretical framework of negative information spillover by focusing on the pattern of spillover in brand portfolios.

Experimental design

Three experiments provided tests of hypotheses related to spillover effects. Experiment 1 utilized a 2*2 factorial design, in which two levels of crisis severity (high/low) and strength of association between brands (strong/weak) were manipulated in one brand portfolio. Experiment 2 utilized a 2*3 factorial design, in which three levels of crisis attribution (internal controllable/internal uncontrollable/external uncontrollable) and two levels of strength of association were manipulated in a different brand portfolio. Experiment 3 utilized a 2*2*2 factorial design, in which two levels of crisis severity, attribution (internal controllable/external uncontrollable), and strength of association were manipulated to test the three-way interaction. A series of pretests were conducted to develop appropriate crisis scenarios and select suitable brand portfolios where brands are associated with each other in different levels of association strength.

Experiment 1 and 2

Experiment 1 and 2 investigate the moderating effect of crisis severity and attribution on the spillover effect respectively. We hypothesize that severe crises and crises perceived to be internal controllable can induce a higher level of cognitive activation at the origin brand (where the crisis is exposed), and therefore facilitate a stronger spillover effect conveyed via associative linkages between brands. Results of experiment 1 support our hypotheses that a severe crisis at an origin brand has a greater spillover effect on the strongly associated target brand as compared with the weakly associated target brand, whereas no such differences are found for the non-severe crisis. Results of experiment 2 support our hypotheses that both internal controllable and internal uncontrollable crises have a greater spillover effect on the strongly associated target brand as compared with the weakly associated target brand, whereas no such differences are found for the external uncontrollable crisis. These results indicate that the network structure, namely the strength of association, influences the magnitude of spillover effect only if the crisis is perceived to be severe or it is attributed as internal causes.

Experiment 3

Attribution theory suggests that the attribution process dominates consumers’ interpretation process of negative information (Folkes 1984). Therefore, we expect that when severity information and attribution information are both present, attribution information might overshadow the impact of severity on the spillover effect contingent on strength of associations. Specifically, when a crisis is due to internal and controllable causes, consumers may already have very negative attitudes towards the brand. This may create a ceiling effect so that the impact of severity on spillover will be weakened or diminished. However, when a crisis is due to external and uncontrollable causes, a severe crisis would lead to a greater spillover than a non-severe crisis. We test this three-way interaction in experiment 3. The results confirm our hypotheses, yet reveal a different pattern than in experiment 1 and 2.

The results of this study suggest that the impact of negative information on brand portfolios is not homogenous. Rather, it depends on several information characteristics, such as crisis severity and attribution. This study also shows that, when dominant crisis information such as attribution is present, the impact of other crisis information will be weakened or even diminished. Furthermore, this study corroborates previous evidence that attribution information forms the basis for the updating of central consumer judgments such as brand evaluations (Folkes 1988; Klein and Dawar 2004). From a managerial viewpoint, the results of this study help managers to predict the pattern of spillover effects in brand portfolios by looking at not only the inter-brand relationships, but also the characteristics of negative information itself.

The Film Preference Scale: The Effect of Preference and Cultural Capital on Film Going Behavior

Joel C. Watson, Rockhurst University

Extended Abstract

Independent film and the independent film audience are neglected areas of research. Using the film preferences scale film audiences are split into four preference groups (independent, crossover, mainstream and no film) and these four groups are compared on a number of quantitative measures (Cultural Capital, Sensation Seeking and Communication behavior (Watson 2004). This is the first attempt to categorize film audience’s types via a scale that can be given to the general public.

The measure of cultural capital is used to elaborate on the notion that there is a class system in film that mirrors the dichotomy found in the traditional art world of high art and popular art. In the case of film, independent film functions as high art compared to mainstream films functioning as popular art. This dichotomy in film will help to explain to a certain extent the perceived inaccessibility of independent film.
Most of what we know about filmgoers falls in the category of demographic information. Little has been done to explore who these people are in a more behavioral way. There is extensive research on audiences for the traditional arts such as symphony, opera, fine arts, ballet, and theatre. Film audiences have been a neglected area of research. Research for the art film audience has received even less attention (Corbett 1999; Meers 2001). Only a small amount of literature has attempted to separate film audiences into distinct groups based on film preferences. These studies have centered on fringe audiences such as those for cult films (Austin 1981), X-rated films (Nawy 1970; Webster 1998), and drive-ins (Austin 1985). For the purposes of this paper, the art film audience is closest to the independent film audience, although it historically encompasses a slightly broader group of types of films. The definition of art films most often used in research comes from Twomey (1956, p. 240), “(art films are) films from other countries, reissues of old-time Hollywood ‘classics’, documentaries, and independently made films on off-beat themes-in short films that lie outside of the mainstream Hollywood product.” Independent films, on the other hand, do not include old-time Hollywood classics or for the most part foreign films.

Research on art film audiences has shown that they tend to have more education, are of higher socioeconomic status, are older, hold more prestigious occupations, and are heavier consumers of cultural activities (Adler 1959; National Research Center for the Arts 1975; Smythe, Lusk, and Lewis 1953).

There is an inherently social aspect to the arts in general and film in particular. Although much of the direct interaction with the art object is one on one, the interaction with others plays varying roles in the experience. The conceptual model in this paper delineates the importance of the passing of information, the socialization that occurs in the process.

Traditionally, most film has not been considered a form of high art. This label has been reserved for symphony, opera, and fine art. It is argued here that the film world operates like many of the art worlds (Becker 1982). There are certain works that are more popular and others that are more alternative. These works appeal to different audiences. The independent film world, in this case, is considered to be high art, whereas the Hollywood film world is considered popular art. This will help explain the differing level of popularity between the two types of films. Given this designation of film groups it follows that the independent film group should have higher cultural capital than either the crossover film preference group or the mainstream film preference group.

The measure of cultural capital used in this study captures the three primary sites of acculturation, which is where, according to Bourdieu, cultural capital is attained. These are: cultural upbringing, formal education and occupational culture, all three being equally weighted (Bourdieu 1984; DiMaggio 1982; Holt 1997). In other studies, measures of cultural capital have included father’s occupation and education level only (Holt 1998). They have looked at the relationship of cultural capital to the father’s education and occupation only (DiMaggio and Mohr 1985). For this study, the mother’s education and occupation is included as well, to take into account the changing influence of word-of-mouth in the workforce, mother’s influences on their children, and the cases of mothers as single heads of household.

In order to test if the film scale predicts actual filmgoing behavior, respondents were presented with two lists of films, the 30 top grossing Hollywood films of 2002 and 30 top independent films from 2000-2002.

For this study a 174-item questionnaire composed of Likert style items, categorical questions, open-ended questions, and demographic information was administered to a group of 350 students of a large northwestern U.S. University. Out of the group a total of 301 usable questionnaires were generated. The 49 unusable surveys were incomplete due to unpredictable time constraints.

The results showed that the means for number of films seen in each category (independent and Hollywood) by the independent, crossover, and mainstream film preference groups were significantly different, and the number of films from each category conformed to what was predicted. The independent group saw the most independent films followed by the crossover group and finally the mainstream group. With respect to Hollywood films, the mainstream group saw the most, followed by the crossover and independent groups respectfully.

The study showed that there was a significant correlation between Independent film preferences and both general sensation seeking and the experience seeking construct and that the level of both was significantly higher for this group.

The study showed that there was a difference between the groups with respect to their level of Cultural Capital with the independent group having higher cultural capital than each of the other groups in the study. This fact may begin to account for the differing viewing habits for the three groups when looking at the relationship of independent film to Hollywood film as that of High Art to Popular Art.

Reference List
Advances in Consumer Research (Volume 33) / 327


