Taking Cues From Others: the Effect of Distinct Self-Views on the Persuasiveness of Extrinsic Brand Popularity Information

Yun Lee, University of Iowa, USA

This research examines how the situational accessibility of distinct self-views influences the persuasiveness of extrinsic popularity information used in advertising. Two studies provide initial support for the hypothesis that the accessibility of different types of self-views affects how people interpret extrinsic brand popularity information used in advertising. Study 1 showed that the more individuals were accessible with interdependent self-views, they were more likely to favorably evaluate a brand presented with extrinsic popularity information in advertising. Study 2 showed that individuals with interdependent self-views were more likely to favorably evaluate a brand presented with extrinsic popularity information than individuals with independent self-views.

[to cite]:


[url]:

http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/14620/volumes/v36/NA-36

[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/.
to generate traits in their actual and ideal selves, whereas study 3 asked participants to generate traits in their enhanced and ideal selves. Both studies then prompted participants to think about and list a product for each of the two traits that would seem to show the participant as a person possessing each respective trait. Finally, after coming up with a product for each trait, participants were asked to rate their agreement on a series of Likert-type scales measuring the hedonic and utilitarian value of each respective product and the extent to which they would feel confident, lovable, attractive, excited, anxious, relaxed, disappointed, happy, and annoyed as a result of owning/using the product. Participants were also asked to rate their agreement on Likert-type scales measuring the extent that they liked each product associated with its respective trait.

Analyses employing mixed analysis of covariates (ANCOVA) designs (with product affirmation as the between-subjects factor and product verification (study 2)/product enhancement (study 3) as the within-subjects factors and using the product’s hedonic and utilitarian scores as covariates) yielded strong and consistent support for product affirmation effects on a consumer’s emotions, personality, and product evaluations and decidedly weaker and inconsistent product verification and product enhancement effects. That is, products aligned with the consumer’s ideal self were evaluated more favorably and brought about more positive changes in the consumer’s emotions and personality compared to products aligned with the consumer’s non-ideal self. Alternatively, analyses did not exhibit parallel support for products aligned with the consumer’s actual self (product verification) or products aligned with the consumer’s enhanced self (product enhancement). Finally, these product affirmation effects operated above and beyond the product’s hedonic or utilitarian value to the consumer. Such results seem to have profound implications for the revision of self-image congruence models in accounting for the apparently superior effect of product affirmation.

References

Taking Cues from Others: The Effect of Distinct Self-Views on the Persuasiveness of Extrinsic Brand Popularity Information
Yun Lee, University of Iowa, USA

Abstract
This research examines how the situational accessibility of distinct self-views influences the persuasiveness of extrinsic popularity information used in advertising. Two studies provide initial support for the hypothesis that the accessibility of different types of self-views affects how people interpret extrinsic brand popularity information used in advertising. Study 1 showed that the more individuals were accessible with interdependent self-views, they were more likely to favorably evaluate a brand presented with extrinsic popularity information in advertising. Study 2 showed that individuals with interdependent self-views were more likely to favorably evaluate a brand presented with extrinsic popularity information than individuals with independent self-views.

Conceptual Framework
Prior work has suggested that consumers use the relative brand popularity as a positive indicator of the brand’s quality (Dean 1999; Huang and Chen 2006; Szymanski, Bharadwaj, and Varadarajan 1993). However, while brand popularity information has been frequently incorporated into advertising as a common practice for companies (Dean 1999), the effect of distinct self-views on the persuasiveness of extrinsic brand popularity information is yet to be clearly understood. Therefore, this research examines how the situational accessibility of distinct self-views influences the persuasiveness of extrinsic popularity information used in advertising. In this research, I propose that, due to different types of goals associated with distinct self-views, consumers with interdependent self-views are more likely to favorably evaluate a brand presented with extrinsic popularity information than consumers with independent self-views.
The distinction between the interdependent and independent self-views has been made through the different types of conflicted structure of goals (Singelis 1994; Triandis 1989). Individuals with interdependent self-views tend to be more sensitive to situations and social contexts and contingent upon the feelings, thoughts, and behavior of others (Kanagawa, Cross, and Markus 2001). The goals of individuals with dominant interdependent self-views are flexibility and variability to be connected with and belonged to others. Thus, those with interdependent self-views show greater relationship-relevant self-view tendencies enacting appropriate behaviors based on others’ views, fostering harmony and fitting in with others. Since interconnectedness with and belongingness to others are the central focus of individuals with interdependent self-views (Kitayama et al. 1997), these individuals are more likely to hold a flexible and variant self-view to conform to situational and contextual norms (Kim and Markus 1999) and act in accordance with behaviors and decisions of others over their internal, personal attributes or characteristics (Markus and Kitayama 1991; Singelis 1994; Stapel and Koomen 2001).

In contrast, the goals of individuals with dominant independent self-views are uniqueness, individuality, autonomy, assertiveness, and independence distinct separate from others (Aaker and Lee 2001). Thus, individuals with independent self-views tend to be more autonomous and invariant across situations and social contexts, and more focus on their own feelings and thoughts. Therefore, those with independent self-views show greater relationship-irrelevant self-view tendencies to accentuate self-related features and minimize the influence of others, resulting in emphasizing uniqueness, separateness, and distinctness of individuals (Baaren et al. 2003). Since expressions of one’s unique, personal attributes are the main focus of individuals with independent self-views, these individuals are more likely to hold a bounded, stable and invariant self-view to pursue individualized internal characteristics and attributes that are clearly distinguished from others.

The preceding discussions suggest that the impact of extrinsic brand popularity information should vary based on relative accessibility of interdependent versus independent self-views, due to goal (in)compatibility between different types of self-views and extrinsic brand popularity information. Specifically, I predict that consumers with interdependent self-views should interpret extrinsic brand popularity information as values by which they can harmoniously fit in with others and maintain interconnections with and belongingness to others (Aaker and Lee 2001). In contrast, consumers with independent self-views should interpret a brand with extrinsic popularity information less favorably than consumers with interdependent self-views, because their goals characterized with being unique, distinct, separate, and different from others (Aaker and Lee 2001; Singelis 1994; Triandis 1989) are not compatible with values extrinsic brand popularity information represent. Therefore, I hypothesize that the more consumers are accessible with interdependent self-views, the more they will favorably evaluate a brand presented with extrinsic brand popularity information (study 1). I also hypothesize that individuals with interdependent self-views will be more likely to favorably evaluate a brand presented with extrinsic brand popularity information in advertising than individuals with independent self-views (study 2).

Study 1
To test H1, the extent of interdependent self-views was measured by instructing participants to write down short stories about similarities they have with family members or friends (Trafimow, Triandis, and Goto 1991). Then they were asked to indicate the degree to which they focused on others than selves (Lee, Aaker, and Gardner 2000) on a seven-point scale (1=not at all, 7=very much). Participants, were then asked to review the 2008 Tiburon GS print ad presented with extrinsic popularity information (i.e., the bestselling car! 89% of consumers who reviewed 2008 Tiburon GS selected this car) and indicate their favorability toward the brand on a seven-point scale (1=very unfavorable, 7=very favorable). As predicted, the results showed that the more participants were assessable with interdependent self-views, they were more likely to favorably evaluate a brand presented with extrinsic brand popularity information in advertising ($F(1, 96)=6.618$, $p=.012$).

Study 2
In study 2, interdependent versus independent self-views were manipulated. Participants were asked to think about how they are similar to (interdependent) or different from (independent) family members or friends and write down short stories about their thoughts (Trafimow, Triandis, and Goto 1991). The procedure to measure brand favorability was similar to study 1. The results showed marginally significant effect of different types of self-views on the persuasiveness of extrinsic brand popularity information. Participants with interdependent self-views were more likely to favorably evaluate a brand presented with extrinsic popularity information than participants with independent self-views ($M_{inter}=5.12$ vs. $M_{indep}=4.75$, $n=98, t=1.804$, $p=.074$).

Results and Discussion
These results are consistent with the previous findings showing that people tend to more focus on features, benefits, and values which are compatible with their goals of self-views (Aaker and Lee 2001; Gardner, Picket, and Brewer 2000). Two studies reported here provide initial evidence that different types of self-views affect how consumers interpret extrinsic popularity information used in advertising. Distinct self-views encourage consumers to have different perspectives on goal pursuit (Aaker and Lee 2001; Lee, Aaker, and Gardner 2000) and then seek values and benefits which is consistent with their goals of self-views, which in turn affects their attitudes toward the brands shown in advertising.

References