The Impact of Implicit Theories on Family Brand Evaluations
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This paper examines the impact of implicit theories of personality (entity vs. incremental) on the evaluations of family brands. Based on the findings of lay theories, new brand extension information is expected to be more influential or diagnostic on family brand evaluations for incremental (vs. entity) theorists; entity (vs. incremental) theorists tend to perceive the entitativity of family brands higher and form on-line (vs. memory-based) impressions of family brands; the stereotyping and attribute transference (GLAT model) within family brands are more likely to occur to entity (vs. incremental) theorists; and information about family brands are more likely to be polarized by entity (vs. incremental) theorists.

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During goal pursuit consumers differ in their confidence about reaching their hoped-for goals (e.g., exercising, dieting, savings). It is important to understand how reduced-confidence consumers can boost their perceived self-efficacy and keep trying persistently. This working paper found that priming a deliberative or an implementational mindset can make a difference in consumers’ perceived self-efficacy in a low confidence situation. Follow-up studies are needed to shed more light on our understanding of boosting self-efficacy. Possible directions include: (1) manipulating confidence in reaching a goal; (2) studying the prediction in a different context for generalizability; (3) monitoring, as a dependent measure, real behavior needed for reaching a goal; and (4) exploring additional ways to boost perceived self-efficacy (e.g., inducing a promotion or a prevention self-regulatory focus).

References

Introduction
Previous studies examining reciprocal extension effects on family brand evaluations mainly focus on the accessibility and diagnosticity of brand extension information (e.g., Ahluwalia and Gurhan-Canli 2000; Chang 2002, 2007; Chang and Lou 2006), the categorical similarity between brand extensions and their family brands (e.g., Chang 2002; Chang and Lou 2005; Loken and John 2003; Milberg and Sinn 2008; Salinas and Perez 2009), and the nature of family brands, such as varieties and perceived entitativity of family brands (e.g., Chang 2007; Chang and Lou 2005, 2006; Gurhan-Canli, 2003). In social cognition, research on lay theories (entity vs. incremental) indicate that subjects who begin social perception with different initial assumptions follow various cognitive paths and reach various social endpoints of expectations, perceptions, and inferences (Levy, Plaks, Hong, Chiu, and Dweck 2001). As with social cognition, the impact of implicit theorists may also affect reciprocal extension effects on family brand evaluations.

Conceptualization
Entity theorists believe that personal characteristics are fixed or static despite person’s efforts or motivation to change them, which means that personal characteristics are beyond personal control. They believe that “everyone is a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that” (measure statement). In contrast, incremental theorists believe that personal characteristics are dynamic or malleable and can be changed over time and with efforts. They believe that “anyone can change even their most basic qualities” (measure statement). Research results indicate that entity theorists are more likely to elicit greater stereotype endorsement, greater perceived outgroup homogeneity effects, more susceptibility to the ultimate attribution error, greater intergroup bias, and more biased behavior toward outgroup members (Levy et al. 2001).

As believing that personality is dynamic or malleable (vs. static or fixed), incremental (vs. entity) theorist are more open to, and lay more weight on, latest relevant information about brand extensions to update their impression about the family brands if they are motivated to process the information on-line. Therefore, it is hypothesized that new brand extension information is more influential or diagnostic on family brand evaluations for incremental (vs. entity) theorists (Study 1). Moreover, as believing that personality is static or fixed (vs. dynamic or malleable), entity (vs. incremental) theorists are more likely to expect the existence of underlying essences of family brands and the congruency of brand extension information. Given the congruency, the processing of integrating the extension information with the family brand is expected to be a relatively easier task for the entity theorists, who subsequently are more highly motivated to spontaneously process new relevant information about the family brands. Therefore, it is hypothesized that, as expecting the existence of underlying essences about family brands, entity theorists tend to perceive the entitativity of family brands higher (Study 2-1). Moreover, as being more highly motivated, entity theorists tend to have spontaneous on-line (vs. memory-based) extension information integration for the impression formation about family brands (Study 2-2). Based on the theory of group level trait transference (GLTT) model (Crawford, Sherman, and Hamilton 2002), the information integration for the impression formation about family brands may involve the three-stage process of attribute abstraction (or inference), stereotyping, and attribute transference. As entity (vs. incremental) theorists are more likely to have spontaneous on-line extension information integration, it is hypothesized that stereotyping and attribute transference within family brands are more likely to occur to entity (vs. incremental) theorists, where as attribute abstraction occurs to both entity and incremental theorists (Study 3-1). Moreover, the processes of stereotyping and attribute transference may amplify the magnitude of extension information and lead to more salient polarization extension effects on consequent family brand evaluations (Chang and Lou 2006; Crawford et al. 2002; Study 3-2).
Methodology

This research consists of three studies. The first study is to verify if new brand extension information is more influential or diagnostic on family brand evaluations for incremental (vs. entity) theorists. The study consists of eight experimental conditions with respondents randomly assigned to groups in a 2 (implicit theorists: static vs. incremental) x 2 (valences of extension information: positive vs. negative) x 2 (categorial similarity: similar vs. dissimilar) between-subjects factorial design; around 200 student participants are expected. The second study is to verify if entity theorists tend to perceive the entitativity of family brands higher and have spontaneous information processing to form on-line (vs. memory-based) impressions about the family brands. The study consists of eight experimental conditions with respondents randomly assigned to groups in a 2 (implicit theorists: static vs. incremental) x 4 (family brand entitativity: high similarity/high goal-derived, high similarity/low goal-derived, low similarity/high goal-derived, low similarity/low goal-derived) between-subjects factorial design; around 200 student participants are expected. The third study is to verify if the stereotyping and attribute transference within family brands, and extension polarization effects on family brand evaluations, are more salient for entity (vs. incremental) theorists. The study consists of a 2 (implicit theorists: entity vs. incremental) x 4 (family brand entitativity: high similarity/high goal-derived, high similarity/low goal-derived, low similarity/high goal-derived, low similarity/low goal-derived) x 2 (trial types: inference vs. transference) mixed-measures design with repeated measures on the fourth factor. The experimental process will follow the procedure of the paradigm of previous research by Crawford et al. (2002); around 180 student participants are anticipated.

Results

The following findings are expected. Firstly, new brand extension information is expected to be more influential or diagnostic on family brand evaluations for incremental (vs. entity) theorists. Secondly, entity (vs. incremental) theorists are expected to perceive the entitativity of family brands higher. Thirdly, entity (vs. incremental) theorists are expected to have spontaneous information processing to form on-line (vs. memory-based) impressions about the family brands. Finally, stereotyping and attribute transference within family brands, and polarization effects on family brand evaluations, are more salient for entity (vs. incremental) theorists.

References


Varieties of Family Brand Entitativity

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Introduction

Research in social cognition has recently paid a considerable amount of attentions to the influence of perceived entitativity on the impression formation of social groups. Entitativity refers to the wholeness of a group defined as the degree to which a social aggregate is perceived as “having the nature of an entity” (Campbell 1958, p. 17). The concept of perceived entitativity was also just implemented to the research domain in family brand evaluations. Previous research results indicate that high (vs. low) entitative family brands are more favourably evaluated, and perceived entitativity yields asymmetric reciprocal effects on family brand evaluations (Chang and Lou 2005, 2006), which parallel to the results of group perceptions in social cognition (Crawford, Sherman and Hamilton 2002). As categorization