Carrying the Torch: Determinants of Intergeneration Influences As Sources of Brand Loyalty

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Since Moore, Wilkie, and Lutz’s (2002) exploration, little research has been conducted to provide answers to which specific family factors contribute to the phenomenon of intergenerational influences. This paper seeks to fill that gap by researching the effects of mother involvement, sibling influence, and family structure as IG influences on both intentional and perceptual brand loyalty. Using dyadic analysis, early results indicate that intergenerational influences increase ten percent across all product categories and brands when both intentional and perceived brand matches are analyzed. Additionally, regression analysis is used to identify significant predictor variables in estimating mother-daughter brand matches.

[to cite]:

[url]:
http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/15276/volumes/v37/NA-37

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subjects responded to an open-ended inquiry about their reasons for making their choice. Response times for the discrete choice and strength-of-preference tasks were recorded. Lastly, subjects responded to the Maximizing-Satisficing scale.

Results

Analysis revealed that we were able to replicate the medium maximization effect in the conditions most similar to Hsee et al.’s Study 1. Forty-two percent of subjects selected the more effortful Task 2 (7 minutes to receive the 2nd flavor) over task 1 (6 minutes to receive the 1st flavor) when points (100 versus 60 points) were involved while only 11% did so when no points were involved. Counter to expectations, the medium maximization effect slightly increased with greater effort time, despite equal ratios, when the flavor choices remained between 1st and 2nd. Forty-six percent of subjects selected Task 2 with points versus only 5% with no points. Although greater outcome disparity did not eliminate the Medium Maximization effect, the effect decreased with more effort despite equal ratios, as predicted. When the effort ratio was 6:7 minutes and the choice was between 1st and 5th most preferred flavors, 35% selected Task 2 with points while no one did so without points. However, when Task 1 was 30 minutes to receive the 1st preferred flavor and Task 2 was 35 minutes to receive the 5th most preferred flavor, no one selected Task 2 when no points were involved and only 22% did so when points were involved.

A logistic regression revealed a significantly positive main effect of including a medium (p<0.05) and a significant effect of outcome equivalence (p<0.05). The main effect of effort level and all the interactions were not significant. ANOVA analysis using slider preference yielded the same pattern of significance.

Analysis using Maximizing-Satisficing scores found little support for it as a moderator. Further, other analyses (e.g., response time and reasons for choosing Task 2) were not consistent with the notion that Maximizers exert extra effort to optimize their choices. Other researchers (e.g., Diab et al. 2008; Nenkov et al. 2008) have recently questioned the original Maximizing-Satisficing scale’s validity while acknowledging the concept’s usefulness.

Discussion

This research supports the notion that medium maximization may undermine consumer’s ability to select the best alternative in terms of effort and outcome ratios. However, it also demonstrates that medium maximization is less of an issue when outcomes are more easily compared and effort levels differ more at an absolute level. Individual differences in susceptibility to medium maximization could not be clearly predicted from scores on the original Maximizing-Satisficing scale. In order to handle the issues with Schwartz et al.’s scale, a follow-up study was conducted using revised Maximizing-Satisficing scales (e.g., Diab et al. 2008) as well as need for cognition and involvement measures. The results demonstrate that Maximizing-Satisficing is a distinct concept worthy of future research in a consumer context.

References


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Much of consumer behavior becomes engrained at a very young age. From the time we are born, we consume; and as this process is replicated, we begin to develop preferences for certain products and brands of products. One key relationship that is instrumental in the forming of these preferences is the relationship that a child develops with his or her parents. As a family grows and develops, the purchasing decisions that reflect a family’s lifestyle become internalized allowing children to learn to accept them as the norm (Sears 1983). Hence, this socialization process has become an area of particular interest for consumer researchers studying the effect of intergenerational (IG) influences on brand loyalty.

Moore, Wilkie, and Lutz (2002) performed one of the most methodologically challenging studies demonstrating the effects of intergenerational influences on brand equity. They concluded that “intergenerational influences are a real marketplace phenomenon and a factor that merits much closer attention.” Even so, little research has since been conducted to provide answers to which specific family factors contribute to this phenomenon. Therefore, this paper seeks to fill that gap by researching the effects of several predictor variables including mother involvement, sibling influence, and family structure on IG influences.

Consistent with Moore et al. (2002), we conducted parallel surveys of 121 mother-daughter dyads. We recruited the daughters from an introductory marketing course from a Southeastern university with the proviso that they must currently live off-campus and shop for groceries. We developed two similar questionnaires where each dyadic member was asked to indicate whether she used each of the twenty-four product categories listed. Respondents then listed their preferred brands as well as listing any additional brands that were “seriously
considered.” Then we asked participants to report independently their perceived dyadic partner’s product usage and brand preference in each category. Students completed their questionnaires first and provided their mother’s name and address for the mailing of the parallel survey and cover letter that explained the project. Both dyadic partners were alerted not to communicate about survey responses until all forms were returned.

While data collection was identical, our assessment of the scope of intergeneration influence is different than Moore et al. (2002). The aforementioned authors’ measurement of IG brand loyalty consists if, and only if, there is a direct match between the actual choice of the most preferred brand of both mother and daughter. However, exact matches do not take into account the probability of chance or bidirectionality, which the authors admit is a limitation of their research. Therefore, we chose to combine both the dyadic analysis of Moore et al. (2002) with the perceived single-member approach of their earlier predecessors (Childers and Rao 1992; Heckler, Childers, and Arunachalam 1989). Using the exact survey distributed by the Moore et al. (2002), a combination of answers allows for an alternate way to analyze intergenerational brand loyalty. Using a combination of survey items such as acknowledgement of mom’s consideration set, whether the daughter chooses from her mom’s consideration set, and actual brand preference match, we were able to conceptualize at the individual level different categorizations that account for intentional IG brand loyalty, perceived IG brand loyalty, deliberate avoidance, chance matches, and complete unfamiliarity. These new categorizations of choice data have allowed us to conceptualize IG brand loyalty as the combination of both intentional and perceived IG brand loyalty. Theoretically, we argue that even though the survey data for some mother-daughter dyads do not match in brand preference, there is still an effect of IG influence. For example, we contend that when a daughter knows her mom’s consideration set and actually chooses the brand she perceives as her mother’s preferred choice, then there is perceived brand loyalty. We contend this data should be considered in the dyadic analysis even though the dyad does not “match” in brand preference. Likewise, these new categorizations allow us to remove matches that are considered to be a product of chance and bidirectionality. We believe the removal of these chance matches along with the addition of perceived IG brand loyalty is one initial contribution to this literature stream as it adds validity to the construct.

Finally, in addition to collecting product and brand preference information, we collected information on a number of independent variables as they relate to predicting IG brand loyalty. We hypothesize that there are direct and interaction effects of the relationships between IG brand loyalty and a number of family related variables such as mother involvement, number of siblings, and household family structure (traditional vs. non-traditional). Here, mother involvement specifically measures post hoc a daughter’s perception of actual versus desired level of involvement during the daughters’ formative years. The key to this measure is not just the amount of time that daughter and mother spend together, but also the quality of time that will have a profound impact on the nature of the mother-daughter relationship and the daughter’s desire to adopt intergenerational brands. Early results indicate that intergenerational influences increase ten percent across all product categories and brands when both intentional and perceived brand matches are included in the analysis. This suggests that IG brand loyalty is even more prevalent than originally expected. Additionally, regression analysis demonstrates that predictor variables are significant and account for a reasonable amount of variance (r-squared=.169). We believe that these results are interesting and adequately respond to the call by Moore et al. (2002) for discovering predictors of intergenerational influence. This is by no means an exhaustive list of determinants, but it is an important step in the understanding of the interactions of the familial socialization process.

References

The Effects of Self-Construal and Moral Identity on Company Evaluations: The Moderating Roles of Social and Personal Relevance of Corporate Social Responsibility Activities
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In this research, we examine the effects of self-construal and moral identity on company evaluations as a function of social and personal relevance of CSR activities. In a set of two studies, we find that when self construal is independent (vs. interdependent), company evaluations do not vary as a function of social (vs. personal) relevance of the CSR activity. In contrast, when self-construal is independent (vs. interdependent), high personal (vs. social) relevance of CSR activity, leads to more favorable company evaluations. In a third study, we demonstrate that social relevance interacts with symbolization dimension of moral identity to predict company evaluations.

An important objective of corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities is to improve consumers’ evaluations of a company or its brands. Extant research examined the effects of CSR activity-company fit (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore and Hill 2006; Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Hult 2004; Simmons and Becker-Olson 2006), fit between CSR efforts and consumer characteristics (Sen and Battacharya 2001), and consumer attributions (Ellen, Webb, and Mohr 2006; Forehand and Grier 2003; Yoon, Gurhan-Canli, and Schwarz 2006) on company