Research Report

Capitalizing on brand personalities in advertising: The influence of implicit self-theories on ad appeal effectiveness

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Received 3 May 2010; received in revised form 10 May 2011; accepted 16 May 2011
Available online 12 June 2011

Abstract

How can firms use brand personalities to develop the most persuasive advertising appeals? In this article, we examine advertising appeals that capitalize on the signaling opportunities that using these brands can provide (signaling ad appeal) versus the self-improvement opportunities that using these brands can offer (self-improvement ad appeal). In two studies, we find that the effectiveness of these appeals depends on consumers’ implicit self-theories. Specifically, signaling ad appeals are more effective for consumers who believe their personal qualities are fixed and cannot be developed through their own efforts (entity theorists), whereas self-improvement ad appeals are more effective for consumers who believe their personal qualities are malleable and can be developed (incremental theorists). Implications for brand personality research and advertising are discussed.

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Keywords: Brand personality; Implicit self-theories; Advertising

Introduction

One of the most compelling aspects of many popular brands is their personality (Aaker, 1997). Brand personalities, defined as human characteristics associated with a brand, are an important element of the image for brands such as Apple (exciting), Cartier (sophisticated), and Harley-Davidson (rugged). Building brand personalities allows firms to differentiate their brands from competitors, connect with consumers on a more emotional level, and appeal to consumers who wish to express or enhance their self-image through brands (Aaker, 1996).

Once established, how can firms use brand personalities to develop the most persuasive advertising? Surprisingly, little research exists on this topic. Researchers have focused on topics such as establishing and measuring the dimensions of brand personality (Aaker, 1997; Aaker, Benet-Martinez, & Garolera, 2001) and demonstrating the ways that brand personality can be built through the use of marketing tactics, such as celebrity endorsers, metaphors in advertising, and package design (Ang & Lim, 2006; Batra & Homer, 2004; Orth & Malkewitz, 2008). Further research shows that brand personalities can influence consumer preferences. Brands with personalities appeal to consumers as a way to express aspects of their actual or ideal self, bolster self-views, and enhance their affiliation with desirable reference groups (Aaker, 1999; Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Gao, Wheeler, & Shiv, 2009; Park & John, 2010; Swaminathan, Stilley, & Ahtuuvalia, 2009). Each of these research streams is important, yet none addresses the issue of how to effectively design advertising for brands with personalities.

Quite possibly, the answer lies in understanding more about the implicit theories that consumers hold about personalities in general. In a recent paper, Yorkston, Nunes, and Matta (2010) find that consumers with different implicit theories of personality (implicit self-theories) respond differently to advertising messages for brands with personalities. Consumers generally respond best to advertising copy and visuals that are consistent with a brand’s personality. However, when advertising copy and visuals
are inconsistent with the brand's personality, consumers who believe personality traits are fixed (entity theorists) respond less favorably than do consumers who believe personality traits are more malleable (incremental theorists). In effect, consumers who believe personality traits are fixed (entity theorists) are less flexible in their thinking about brands, and are, therefore, less accepting of advertising messages that are too inconsistent with a brand's personality.

In this article, we dig deeper into the topic by examining what types of specific ad appeals are more persuasive for consumers with different implicit self-theories. Designing ads that are consistent with the brand's personality is an important general guideline, but there are many ways to structure persuasive arguments consistent with a brand's personality. For example, we examine two types of ad appeals that reflect consumers' motivation to favor brands with personalities as a way to enhance their own self-images. The first capitalizes on the signaling opportunities these brands can provide, with ad copy highlighting the use of the advertised product as a way for consumers to signal to others that they possess the trait(s) associated with the brand. The second option capitalizes on the self-improvement opportunities these brands can offer, with ad copy highlighting the use of the advertised product as a way to improve oneself to become more like the trait(s) associated with the brand. Both types of ad appeals can be implemented in a way consistent with a brand's personality, but which is more effective?

In two studies, we propose, and find, that consumers who believe their personal qualities are fixed and cannot be developed through their own efforts (entity theorists) are more responsive to an advertising message that incorporates a signaling appeal for the brand ("there's no better way to show others that you have a modern up-to-date sense of beauty"). In contrast, we find that consumers who believe that their personal qualities are malleable and can be developed if they exert effort (incremental theorists) are more responsive to an advertising message that incorporates a self-improvement appeal for the brand ("there's no better way for you to learn how to have a modern up-to-date sense of beauty").

Our findings provide a starting point for understanding how to use brand personalities most effectively in advertising. First, we show that brand personality is a valuable asset in advertising, but the type of appeal (signaling vs. self-improvement) used in the message can influence its persuasiveness. Second, we find that signaling appeals do not resonate with all consumers. The signaling value of brand personality has been a dominant theme of much prior research, and in our studies, we find that a signaling appeal is very effective for entity theorists, but less so for incremental theorists. Third, we show that implicit self-theories are an important moderating factor to consider when devising advertising strategies for brands with distinct personalities. Based on prior research, one might argue that as long as the ad copy and visuals are consistent with a brand's personality, there is no need to consider differences between entity and incremental theorists (since both respond well to consistent ads). However, we show that even when the ad copy is consistent with a brand's personality, implicit self-theories still influence the type of ad appeals (signaling vs. self-improvement) that should be used.

Taken together, our findings implicate the need for advertisers to think more carefully about consumer mindsets when designing messages to take advantage of a brand's unique personality.

Conceptual overview

Implicit self-theories

Individuals develop lay theories regarding the nature of the social world as a way to interpret, control, and predict their social worlds (Lickel, Hamilton, & Sherman, 2001). Implicit self-theories are lay beliefs about the malleability of personal traits. A significant body of research points to two implicit self-theories that apply to a wide range of personality traits: incremental and entity theory. Individuals who believe in incremental theory view personal qualities as malleable and capable of being developed. These individuals agree with statements such as “Anyone can change even his/her most basic qualities” (Levy, Stroesner, & Dweck, 1998). Individuals who believe in entity theory view personal qualities as fixed and being difficult to change (Dweck, 2000; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). These individuals agree with statements such as “Everyone is a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that” (Levy et al., 1998).

These contrasting views exert a powerful influence on goals and behaviors, including the way that individuals approach self-enhancement (Dweck, 2000; Molden & Dweck, 2006). Incremental theorists seek ways to become a better person through opportunities for learning and self-development, which is consistent with their beliefs that they can improve their personal qualities through direct efforts to do so. For example, college students with incremental theory beliefs are willing to take challenging classes they believe will help them improve abilities to become more competent, even if there is a high risk of receiving a low grade (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988). In contrast, entity theorists view personal qualities as something they cannot improve by their direct efforts to learn, develop, or grow.

To enhance the self, they seek opportunities to signal their positive qualities to the self or others. College students with entity theory beliefs seek out easier classes where they are sure to receive a high grade, which signals their competence, even if these classes do not result in learning or skill acquisition (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988).

Implicit self-theories and advertising appeals

We propose that implicit self-theories affect the type of appeal that is most effective for advertising brands with personalities. As described earlier, using a brand associated with a desirable personality (e.g., sophisticated, intelligent) can be appealing because it provides a signal that the brand user possesses the same personality trait as the brand or because it offers a way for the brand user to learn how to become more like the personality associated with the brand. We predict that entity theorists will respond more favorably to brand advertising that incorporates a signaling appeal. Recall that entity theorists seek opportunities to signal their desired positive qualities as a way to self-enhance. Thus, they will respond best to advertising that uses a signaling
appeal, which emphasizes an opportunity for consumers to signal that they possess the same appealing personality traits as the brand by using the advertised product.

In contrast, we predict that incremental theorists will respond more favorably to brand advertising that incorporates a self-improvement appeal. Recall that incremental theorists seek opportunities to develop positive qualities through learning, skill acquisition, and personal growth as a way to self-enhance. Thus, they will respond best to advertising that uses a self-improvement appeal, which emphasizes an opportunity to develop the same appealing personality traits as the brand by using the advertised product.

Overview of empirical studies

We test our predictions in two studies gauging consumer response to a new product being launched by brands with distinct personalities. Victoria’s Secret (study 1) and MIT (study 2). Participants are shown an ad for the new product, which includes either a signaling appeal or a self-improvement appeal. Implicit self-theories are measured (study 1) or manipulated (study 2). As predicted, we find that ads incorporating a signaling appeal produce a more favorable response toward the advertised product for entity theorists. In contrast, ads including a self-improvement appeal produce a more favorable response toward the advertised product for incremental theorists.

Study 1

Sample and procedure

Sixty-four undergraduate females participated in the study: 33 in the signaling ad appeal condition and 31 in the self-improvement ad appeal condition. They were told they would participate in two different studies to mask the relationship between the implicit self-theory measures and subsequent advertising response measures. In the first study, they were given a survey, which included the implicit self-theory measure and attitude measures for a variety of brands (including Victoria’s Secret). In the second study, they were asked to read an advertisement about a new eye shadow being introduced by Victoria’s Secret, with the ad emphasizing a signaling or self-improvement appeal. Participants evaluated the advertisement and were then debriefed and dismissed.

Brand pretest

We conducted pretests to confirm that Victoria’s Secret was associated with personality traits appealing to our target population. Using a list of 42 traits from Aaker’s (1997) brand personality scale, we asked female undergraduate students (N=41) to select five traits they strongly associated with Victoria’s Secret. Results showed three traits as being most strongly associated with this brand: glamorous (M=90.2%), feminine (M=85.4%), and good-looking (M=61.0%). We also asked them how interested they would be in an opportunity to enhance themselves on all 42 personality traits (0=not at all interested to 100=extremely interested), which revealed a high degree of interest in the traits associated with Victoria’s Secret: glamorous (M=61.95), feminine (M=62.27), and good-looking (M=67.32), mean for all traits=55.39. Further, there was no difference between entity and incremental theorists (measure described below) in their ratings of these traits (all ps>.50).

Signaling and self-improvement ad appeals

We developed two ads for a new Victoria’s Secret eye shadow, Victoria’s Secret Angels Eyes (see Appendix A). Across ads, the same copy was used to describe the basic product (“each Angels Eyes kit includes four beautiful eye shadows”) and suggested use (“frame your eyes with flattering color combinations”).

To create different versions, we constructed 8 pairs of statements. Each pair included a statement emphasizing the signaling appeal of using the branded product (e.g., “there’s no better way to show others that you have a modern up-to-date sense of beauty”) and a statement emphasizing the self-improvement appeal of using the branded product (e.g., “there’s no better way for you to learn how to have a modern up-to-date sense of beauty”). To check that statements were perceived as intended, we asked female students (N=36) to read each statement and indicate what type of person would find it most appealing on a scale from 0 (A woman who wants to use Angels Eyes to improve herself to become better looking) to 100 (A woman who wants to use Angels Eyes as a signal to everyone that she is very good looking). Comparing ratings within each pair of statements, we confirmed that the signaling statements (self-improvement statements) were more appealing to people wanting to signal (improve) their personal qualities by using the advertised product (for all paired t-tests, ps<.01; Mean of signaling items=60.57 vs. Mean of self-improvement items=21.22). Further, there was no association between the implicit self-theory held by respondents and ratings for signaling statements overall (r=-.19, p>.20) or self-improvement statements overall (r=-.21, p>.20). Given these successful checks, we added the 8 signaling statements (self-improvement statements) to the basic ad copy to produce the signaling (self-improvement) ad appeal.

Measures

Implicit self-theory

Belief in entity versus incremental theories of personality was assessed using the Implicit Persons Theory Measure (Levy et al., 1998). Participants were asked to agree or disagree (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree) with a set of eight statements representing entity theory or incremental theory (see Appendix B). Responses for all eight items were combined (α=.91), with higher scores indicating a stronger belief in incremental theory.

Attitude toward the advertised product

After reading the ad, participants rated the product on five 7-point scales, such as “appealing—unappealing,” “desirable—undesirable,” and “extremely well designed—extremely poorly designed.” These five items were averaged to form a composite product attitude score (α=.87).
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Prior attitude toward the brand

Prior to reading the ad, participants were asked to rate a number of brands, including Victoria’s Secret, on a 7-point scale (1 = do not like it at all; 7 = really like it a lot). The Victoria’s Secret measure was used as a control variable in the analysis to account for the possibility that entity and incremental theorists differ in their brand preferences, thereby influencing attitudes toward the new product.

Results

We conducted a multiple regression analysis to test our prediction that signaling (self-improvement) ad appeals are more effective for consumers who believe in entity (incremental) theory. We regressed attitude toward the advertised product onto the implicit self-theory score (continuous variable), type of ad appeal (signaling = 1; self-improvement = 0), and their interaction, with prior attitude toward the Victoria’s Secret brand as a control measure. Scores were centered on implicit self-theory prior to being entered into the analysis to reduce potential problems stemming from multicollinearity [Aiken & West, 1991].

As predicted, the interaction between implicit self-theory and type of ad appeal was significant, $\beta = -.92$, $t(59) = 2.98$, $p < .01$, as shown in Fig. 1. To explore this interaction in more detail, we tested the simple slopes within each ad condition [West, Aiken, & Krull, 1996]. Simple slope tests revealed that, for the signaling ad appeal, there was a significant negative relationship between implicit self-theory and product attitude, $\beta = -.44$, $t(59) = 2.07$, $p < .05$, indicating that entity theorists expressed more favorable attitudes toward the advertised product than did incremental theorists. In contrast, for the self-improvement ad appeal, there was a significant positive relationship between implicit self-theory and product attitude, $\beta = .45$, $t(59) = 2.48$, $p < .05$, indicating that incremental theorists showed more favorable attitudes toward the advertised product than did entity theorists.

Discussion

Our findings show that entity theorists were more responsive to a signaling ad appeal, whereas incremental theorists were more responsive to a self-improvement ad appeal. Both types of appeals are appropriate choices for capitalizing on brand personality in advertisements, yet they differ in their persuasiveness for consumers with different implicit self-theories.

In the next study, we replicated our findings with a different brand (MIT) associated with a different type of brand personality (intelligent, leader, hardworking). Replication is important in branding research to allow one to generalize beyond a single brand, brand personality, and brand message. In addition, we provide further evidence for the role that implicit self-theories play in consumer response to ad appeals. In study 1, we measured beliefs in entity versus incremental theory as an individual difference variable, consistent with implicit self-theory research. In the next study, we directly manipulate beliefs in entity versus incremental theory to rule out the possibility that our prior findings were due to other factors correlated with measured levels of entity versus incremental beliefs.

Study 2

Sample and procedure

Eighty-three undergraduate students participated in the study: 40 in the signaling ad appeal and 43 in the self-improvement ad appeal condition. Participants were told that they were going to participate in two different studies. In the first study, belief in entity versus incremental theory was manipulated. In the second study, participants read an advertisement about a new add-on application for the Excel software program being introduced by MIT, with the ad emphasizing a signaling or self-improvement appeal. After reading the ad, participants evaluated the advertised product and were debriefed and dismissed.

Brand pretest

Pretests with undergraduate students ($N = 44$) from a Midwestern university confirmed that the MIT brand is associated with personality traits appealing to our target population. Using the pretest measures described in study 1, our results indicated that three personality traits were strongly associated with MIT (intelligent: 75%; leader: 63.6%; hardworking: 63.6%) as well as being highly rated as traits students were interested in enhancing (intelligent: $M = 81.45$; leader: $M = 74.64$; and hardworking: $M = 77.02$; mean for all 42 traits = 54.90). There was no difference between entity and incremental theorists on the ratings of these traits ($p > .20$).

Implicit self-theory manipulation

We manipulated implicit self-theories by having participants read an article presenting views consistent with entity or incremental theory [Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1997]. Although individuals are predisposed to one of these theories, they can be persuaded to adopt a particular mindset by communicating relevant information. To introduce the article, participants were told we were interested in their opinions about the articles. In
addition, we asked participants to write a short essay supporting the author’s viewpoint. Below is a sample from each article:

In his talk at the American Psychological Association’s annual convention held at Washington D.C. in August, Dr. George Medin argued that “in most of us, by the age of ten, our character has set like plaster and will never soften again.” He reported numerous large longitudinal studies showing that people “age and develop, but they do so on the foundation of enduring dispositions.” (Entity Theory)

In his talk at the American Psychological Association’s annual convention held at Washington D.C. in August, Dr. George Medin argued that “no one’s character is as ‘hard as a rock’ so that it cannot be changed. Only for some, greater effort and determination are needed to effect changes.” He reported numerous large longitudinal studies showing that people can mature and change their character. He also reported research findings showing that people's personality characteristics can change, even in their late sixties. (Incremental Theory)

To test this manipulation, we asked undergraduate students to read the entity theory article (N=62) or the incremental theory article (N=57). They were first asked for their impressions of the articles on 7-point scales to ensure that they were equally credible, persuasive, useful, clear, and easy to understand. Responses to these items were averaged (α = .74), and as expected, this measure did not differ by condition, Mentity = 5.08 vs. Mincremental = 5.40, t(117) < 1, NS. Second, to determine if the articles induced the appropriate mindset, participants were asked to make several predictions about a person’s behavior in a particular situation. They were given a probability scale (0.00–1.00) to register their predictions for several questions such as, “Sandra is more helpful than Molly on average. What do you suppose is the probability that Sandra would act more helpfully than Molly in a particular situation?” Responses to five questions similar to this one were combined (α = .77). Chiu et al. (1997) found that relative to incremental theorists, entity theorists tend to make stronger behavioral predictions, which was confirmed in our data, Mentity = 80 vs. Mincremental = 74, t(117) = 2.14, p < .05. This result indicates the manipulation of implicit self-theory was successful in creating the intended mindset.

Signaling and self-improvement ad appeals

We developed two ads for a new MIT software app, MIT Analyst (see Appendix C). Across ads, the same copy was used to describe the basic product (“versatile enough to take on 20 common business analysis tasks”), suggested use (“complicated analyses required for business classes, such as finance, marketing, research, and accounting”), and purchase information (“a low price of $35”). Before adding copy for the signaling and self-improvement appeals, we asked students (N=42) to read the basic ad copy and evaluate the advertised product to ensure the basic product description was equally appealing to entity and incremental theorists. As in the main experiment, students received the entity or incremental theory manipulation prior to reading the basic ad copy. Comparing participants’ responses across these conditions, we found similar attitudes toward the advertised product, as expected, Mentity = 4.66 vs. Mincremental = 4.93; t(1,40) < 1, NS.

To create different versions, we developed 10 pairs of statements. Each pair included a statement emphasizing the signaling appeal of using the branded product (e.g., “Show off your analysis skills using this amazing app!”) and a similar statement emphasizing the self-improvement appeal of using the branded product (e.g., “Your efforts will be rewarded with better analysis skills using this amazing app!”). To check that the statements were perceived as intended, we asked students (N=44) to read the basic ad copy. They were then told that we wanted to add some new copy to the ad to appeal to different types of consumers, and were asked to read each statement and indicate what type of person would find it most appealing on a scale from 0 (A person who wants to use the MIT Analyst to improve the self to be more intelligent like MIT students) to 100 (A person who wants to use the MIT Analyst to signal that he/she is very intelligent like MIT students). Comparing ratings within each pair of statements, we confirmed that the signaling statements (self-improvement statements) were more appealing to people wanting to signal (improve) their personal qualities by using the advertised product (for all paired t-tests, p < .01; Mean of signaling items = 65.0 vs. Mean of self-improvement items = 34.91). Additionally, there was no association between the implicit self-theory held by respondents and ratings for signaling statements overall (r = .04, p > .75) or self-improvement statements overall (r = -.01, p > .90). Given these successful checks, we added the 10 signaling (self-improvement) statements to the basic ad copy to produce the signaling (self-improvement) ad appeal.

Measures

Attitude toward the advertised product

Participants rated the product on five 7-point scales, identical to those described in study 1. These five items were averaged to form a composite product attitude score (α = .86).

Prior attitude toward the brand

Prior to reading the ad, participants indicated their attitudes toward various universities (including MIT) on a 7-point scale (1 = “not at all favorable,” 7 = “extremely favorable”). The MIT brand attitude measure was used as a covariate in the analysis.

Results

We performed a 2 (Implicit Self-Theory Manipulation: Entity, Incremental) × 2 (Type of Ad Appeal: Signaling, Self-Improvement) ANCOVA on attitude toward the advertised product, with prior attitude toward MIT brand as a covariate. The results revealed a significant interaction between implicit self-theory and ad appeal, F(1, 78) = 12.42, p < .01, as illustrated in Fig. 2. Planned comparisons revealed that for the signaling ad appeal, participants in the entity theory condition had more
favorable attitudes toward the advertised product than did those in the incremental theory condition, $F(1, 78)=5.24, p<.05$; for the self-improvement ad appeal, participants in the incremental theory condition showed more favorable attitudes toward the advertised product than did those in the entity theory condition, $F(1, 78)=4.37, p<.05$. Thus, these results obtained using a manipulation of implicit self-theory replicate findings from the first study that measured implicit self-theory as an individual difference variable.

**General discussion**

How can firms use brand personalities to develop the most persuasive advertising appeals? Our results show that consumers’ implicit theories of personality influence which type of ad appeal is more effective. Consumers who view personal qualities as fixed (entity theorists) are more responsive to ad appeals that promote the signaling opportunities offered by using these brands, whereas consumers who view personal qualities as malleable (incremental theorists) are more responsive to ad appeals that promote the opportunities for self-improvement that can be realized by using these brands.

Our findings underscore the importance of implicit self-theories in understanding consumer response to brand personalities. Recently, Yorkston et al. (2010) have shown that consumers who hold entity theories of personality are less flexible in their thinking about brands, and as a result, they favor advertising copy and visuals that are highly consistent with a brand’s personality. We add to this line of inquiry by showing that entity and incremental theorists respond better to different types of ad appeals, which we attribute to the different self-enhancement approaches favored by entity vs. incremental theorists. Taken together, these studies suggest that brand personalities can be a valuable asset in advertising, but that there are important nuances in the way advertising elements (copy, visuals, persuasive appeals) are incorporated that dictate the effectiveness of the advertising for different consumer segments.

How might advertisers take these nuances into account? One option would be to include a measure of implicit self-theories, such as the one included in study 1, in the customer database or online customer profile. Ad appeals could be tailored for entity versus incremental theorists and delivered through email or website links. A second option would be to use sponsored links for search keywords relevant to entity theorists (e.g., impress, show) versus incremental theorists (improve, learn). A third option would be to manipulate implicit self-theories through ad copy including statements like those used in study 2, including the type of ad appeal most effective for consumers primed with entity or incremental beliefs.

In fact, looking at these options, it is possible that they could be employed in situations other than advertising for brands with personalities. Even functional brands, which consumers associate with functional attributes and benefits rather than personalities, could utilize different ad appeals for entity versus incremental theorists. Although functional brands might be a better fit for self-improvement appeals favored by incremental theorists (e.g., “Use Marie’s Light Vinaigrette to cut calories and lose weight”), it may be possible to appeal to entity theorists by promoting the brand as a signal of desirable personality traits (e.g., “Use Marie’s Light Vinaigrette to show that you know how to eat right”). These dual ad appeals might also be appropriate for non-profit organizations and social marketing contexts. For example, appeals for immunizing children might use a signaling appeal for entity theorists: “Show you are a Mom who knows what’s best for your child by immunizing your son or daughter against common childhood diseases.” And, for incremental theorists, a self-improvement appeal could be most effective: “Learn how to be a better Mom who knows what’s best for your child by asking your doctor how to immunize your son or daughter against common childhood diseases.”

Examining these possibilities would be a useful direction for future research on the role of implicit self-theories in advertising. Also on the agenda for future research should be additional types of advertising appeals beyond those examined here. We focused on signaling and self-improvement ad appeals as they seemed especially well-suited to entity and incremental theorists, respectively. However, it is possible that other types of ad appeals exist that would resonate with either entity or incremental theorists. In addition, one might test ad appeals with less extensive copy than the ones we included in this study. We designed ads to ensure that the signaling and self-improvement appeals would be clear to consumers, but tests with less copy and additional advertising elements (such as pictures) would be helpful in establishing the robustness of effects. Finally, it would be interesting to explore whether there are demographic or psychological variables that correlate with implicit self-theories to enrich our understanding of why implicit self-theories are consequential in consumer response to branding appeals.

Brand personality is an important aspect of the consumer marketplace, and future research aimed at understanding exactly how this element of a brand’s image impacts consumers is warranted. Traditionally, researchers have focused on the self-expressive and signaling function of brand personalities, showing that consumers are attracted to brands with appealing personalities as a way to signal who they are or want to be. Recent work shows this signaling motivation to be most apparent for entity theorists, who perceive themselves in a more
Capitalizing on brand personalities in advertising: The influence of... (Park & John, 2010). We add to this research by showing that brand personalities can also be appealing as an instrument for self-improvement, and that this aspect appeals to a different consumer segment (incremental theorists) than the one attracted by the signaling aspect of brands (entity theorists). Brands can resonate with consumers on so many levels, and there is no question that brand personality is not only a ubiquitous but also an important aspect of why brands are so important in the lives of consumers.

Appendix A. Advertising copy for study 1

Signaling ad appeal

Introducing Victoria's Secret Angels Eyes

Welcome to the world of Victoria's Secret, the favorite brand of women around the world who want to show the world their best.

This fall, Victoria's Secret is introducing a limited edition of stunning eye shadows worn by the famous models called Angels Eyes. Developed by Victoria's Secret lead makeup artist, Linda Hay, each Angels Eyes kit includes four beautiful eye shadows artfully arranged in a demure black acrylic case accented with beautiful swirls of the four colors that help women learn how to put the colors together. Just imagine carrying this gorgeous case in your purse or backpack there is no better way for you to learn how to have a modern up-to-date sense of beauty.

Plus, you will receive a booklet with pictures of different women wearing the stunning eye shadows included in the kit. You can see the eye shadow colors in the kit to create the looks shown in these pictures. Also included are special eye shadow brushes with soft bristles and a black handle, with Victoria's Secret engraved on each one. You'll be pleased to see how easy they are to use. Just wait until you show your friends how you learned to create a great eye shadow look!

The show-stopping shades in Victoria's Secret Angels Eyes have the perfect combination of saturated color and versatile tones. You can frame your eyes with the flattering color combinations that work well for all women. Using Angels Eyes, you can create a number of different eye shadow looks that will show your fashion sense. No matter where you go, work, school, or out on the town, you'll be glad you learned how to have the right make-up look thanks to Angels Eyes!

Try Angels Eyes and, learn how to look your best!

Appendix B. Items for implicit persons theory measure

- Everyone is a certain kind of person, and there is not much that they can do to really change that. (Entity Theorist)
- The kind of person someone is, is something basic about them, and it can't be changed very much. (Entity Theorist)
- People can do things differently, but the important parts of who they are can't really be changed. (Entity Theorist)
- As much as I hate to admit it, you can't teach an old dog new tricks. People can't really change their deepest attributes. (Entity Theorist)
- People can change even their most basic qualities. (Incremental Theorist)
- Everyone, no matter who they are, can significantly change their basic characteristics. (Incremental Theorist)
- People can substantially change the kind of person who they are. (Incremental Theorist)
- No matter what kind of person someone is, they can always change very much. (Incremental Theorist)

Appendix C. Advertising copy for study 2

Signaling ad appeal

Introducing MIT Analyst

Do you dread the thought of spending hours and hours on complicated analyses required for business classes, such as finance, marketing research, and accounting?

Now, there's MIT Analyst, a new add-on application for Excel. Developed at the Sloan School of Management at MIT, the MIT Analyst is easy to use yet versatile enough to take on 20 common business analysis tasks including cash flow analysis, balance sheet analysis, pricing and break-even analysis, and more. Show off your analysis skills using this amazing App!

Don't waste your time figuring out how to use Excel for common types of business analysis. A unique visual interface will let you do the analysis in a very short time. With MIT Analyst, you'll be able to produce analyses that will be the envy of your classmates. No wonder MIT Analyst has received rave reviews from students at top business schools who have had the opportunity to use it!

Now, the MIT Analyst is being offered to students at top U.S. business schools for a low price of $35. It's easy to load onto your laptop. Plus, wait till you see the amazing icon on your screen MIT in large red letters superimposed over a picture of the MIT Dome, a recognizable symbol of intellectual excellence in the world.

Get your own copy of MIT Analyst by visiting www.mit.edu/bookstore/sloan. Use the password: elite022. Join the ranks of top business students who know the power of MIT Analyst and the difference it can make in your case analyses, internships, and projects.

Show everyone that you're an MIT Whiz!

Self-improvement ad appeal

Introducing MIT Analyst

Are you interested in learning the best way to perform the complicated analyses required for business classes, such as finance, marketing research, and accounting?

Now, there's MIT Analyst, a new add-on application for Excel. Developed at the Sloan School of Management at MIT, the MIT Analyst is easy to use yet versatile enough to take on 20 common business analysis tasks including cash flow analysis, balance sheet analysis, pricing and break-even analysis, and more. Your efforts will be rewarded with better analysis skills using this amazing App!

Learn how you can use Excel more effectively for common types of business analysis. A unique visual interface will let you do the analysis in a very short time. With MIT Analyst, you'll learn how to produce analyses that will take less time than you would ever imagine. No wonder MIT Analyst has received rave reviews from students at business schools who have had the opportunity to improve their abilities by using it!

Now, the MIT Analyst is being offered to students at business schools across the U.S. for a low price of $35. It's easy to load onto your laptop. Plus, wait till you see the discrete icon on your screen MIT in small black letters superimposed over a picture of an Excel spreadsheet, small enough not to clutter up your laptop screen.

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