Price

strategies

&

the role of

congruence





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Abstract

In the present study we examine price reductions of 10% and 30% and the role of congruence between the consumer and brand personality on pleasure and the perception of product quality.

In our first hypothesis we state that the greater the congruence between the consumer personality and the brand personality in their trait excitement/ extraversion, the greater will be the pleasure response of consumers. The second hypothesis proposes that the greater the congruence of the trait extraversion/ excitement between consumer and brand the better will be the evaluation of the product quality. The last hypothesis consists of two parts. The first part of the last hypothesis stated that the effect of price strategy on pleasure is more evident under conditions of incongruence than under conditions of congruence. The second part is the hypothesis that the effect of price strategy on the perceived product quality is more evident under conditions of incongruence than under conditions of congruence.

The study used a 2x3 design. We found via linear regression support for the first hypothesis. Thus, there was a significant effect of the strength of congruence on pleasure. There was also significant support for a main effect of price reduction on the perceived product quality.

Dutch Abstract

In dit experiment wil men prijsstrategieën van 10 % en 30 % en de rol van congruentie tussen de consument en merk persoonlijkheden op vreugde en de evaluatie van product kwaliteit onderzoeken. Verwacht werd dat hoe beter de congruentie tussen de consument en merk persoonlijkheden hoe groter de vreugde van de consument. Verder wordt verondersteld dat hoe beter de congruentie tussen de consument en merk persoonlijkheden hoe beter de evaluatie van product kwaliteit. De laatste veronderstelling bestaat uit twee deelhypothesen. Een deel van de derde hypothese onderzocht of het effect van prijsstrategieën op de vreugde groter is onder de conditie van incongruentie tussen de consument en merk persoonlijkheden dan onder congruentie. De laatste deelhypothese geeft inzicht of het effect van prijsstrategieën op de evaluatie van het product kwaliteit groter is onder de conditie van incongruentie tussen de conditie van prijsstrategieën op de evaluatie van het product kwaliteit groter is onder de conditie van incongruentie.

De onderzoeksopzet was een 2x3 design. De resultaten van lineaire regressie ondersteunen de eerste verwachting. Dus was er een significant effect van de sterkte van congruentie tussen mens en merk persoonlijkheden op de vreugde. Verder wezen de resultaten uit dat er een significant effect van prijsstrategieën op de evaluatie van het product kwaliteit is.

Introduction



The present study investigates the effect of price strategies on consumer reactions in relation to congruence between human personality and brand personality.

Following Mowen (1993) consumer behaviour can be defined as the study of the consumers and their transaction processes for obtaining goods and services. Every day the consumer is confronted with a lot of different sale advertisements. Sales promotions can be directed at the customer, sales staff, or distribution channel members (such as retailers). These

promotions are one of the important aspects of the promotional mix. Media and non-media marketing communication are employed for a pre-determined, limited time to increase consumer demand, stimulate market demand or improve product availability (Diller & Hermann, 2003). Thus price discounts are commonly used to attract sales. Often these discounts are periodic rather than continuous in nature. Sometimes the major reason for using discounts is to move seasonal stock, or maybe the promotion is merely used as a device to liven up flagging sales (Diller & Hermann, 2003).

The problem faced by retailers is how to attract the consumer better than the competitors in the mass of sales advertisements. With the availability of scanner panel data, the large increase in promotional spending (Chandon, 1995), studies of anthropology, sociology (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2006) and cognitive science (Mayrhuber, 2000) it is no surprise to find an increased publishing of literature of consumer behaviour (Grewal, Mangleburg & Sirgy, 2000 or Blattberg & Neslin, 1990). With the flood of different suggestions the traders must choose for a promotional mix which attracts their consumer group and differentiate them from other traders.

The present study focuses on the psychological approach of consumer behaviour which has a large range of interest with studies of motivation, attitudes, perception and personality (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2006). The following suggestions give rise to the importance of the psychological focus on consumer behaviour. Early investigations showed that the choice for a product takes place during the first 45 seconds of the product perception (Branding, 2004). Thus research wants to examine the factors which influence the decision processes during the first 45 seconds. The results can be applied to different fields as for instance the usage of factors increasing the sales in order to improve the economy. The product can include factors which are emphasized without consciousness by a specific group of consumers or which differentiate them from its competitors. For example, it is difficult to find a Porsche on sale as the consumer group is able to afford it without having any price reductions. The fear of price reductions might be explained due to a higher number of customers being able to afford the item, resulting in a loss of exclusivity of the upper class. Health environments and politics

can use the factors for influencing consumer use of alcohol or tobacco for example by prohibition of high or low price reductions of Alco pops and cigarettes. The consume of healthy food could be made more attractive for different consumer groups such as young people via ads with or without price reduction and congruence with the consumer.

It follows the question what psychological aspects are in this study important. In modern literature a product includes both functional and symbolical criteria (Sirgy, 1982). Functional aspects are, for example, rational aspects such as the durability or material stability. The symbolical aspects consist of emotions and attitudes such as the prestige of a product (Sirgy, 1982). Within the context of symbolical criteria, Aaker (1997) introduced a definition of brand personality as a set of human characteristics associated with a brand. Human personality and brand personality are similar in their conceptualization, but the two constructs of personality vary in their distinct objectives and their antecedents which they serve (Bosnjak, Bochmann & Hufschmidt, 2007). Brands are imbued by personality trait associations arising from person-related trait inferences (Aaker, 1997). According to Aaker (1997) person-related attributes are traits transferred from persons associated with the brand, whereas product related trait interferences originate from the logo design or its performance characteristics. Thus brands are inanimate objects and do not behave at all in a consistent manner (Bosnjak, Bochmann & Hufschmidt, 2007). The golden rule of marketing states that individuals prefer those brands matching their own personality (Herrmann, Huber, Lee, Kressmann & Sirgy, 2006). This hypothesis of congruence between human and brand personality is emphasized by research on the symbolic use of commercial brands (Mayrhuber, 2000).

This experiment will explore to what extent the congruence of human and product personality influences emotional reactions (such as pleasure) and the perception of product quality. Above all, the focus lies on the question of how much the extent of congruence between human and product personality affects price strategies. These give rise to the following questions such as whether congruence of both human and product personality affects perceived functional aspects of the product. The present study examines the symbolical and perceived functional criteria of a product. Is the assessment of functional aspects such as product quality resistant over price reductions? To what extent does the stability of quality judgement depend on the height of price reduction?

Theory

The role of congruence

Personality can be reduced to five traits of importance such as Openness, Consciousness, Extraversion, Agreeability and Neuroticism (Cattell & Tsujioka, 1964). These traits differ in their degree with regards to their behaviour in every single person (Schout, 2007). The traits of personality are helpful for the distinction of consumer behaviour in interaction with social, cultural and economical moderators (Bernstein, 1997).

In 1960, the AMA (American Marketing Association) defined a brand as a symbol, which helps people to recognize and to distinguish goods and services of the different dealers (Chernatony, & Dall'Olmo 1998). Thus a brand is more than just a logo. It acts in specific manners with the environment (Schout, 2007). Many experts enrich the subject with their own explanations; according to Aaker (1997) the personality of a brand is a consequence of human qualities which are associated with the brand. Aaker (1997) developed and introduced a scale for the brand personality. The usage of the scale of human personality is not recommended as a brand is imbued by personality trait associations arising from product-related trait inferences (e.g. logo design) and person-related attributes, which are traits transferred from persons associated with the brand (Aaker 1997). The perception of brand personality can be influenced by direct and indirect interaction of the consumer and brand (Plummer, 1985). The personalities also share a similar conceptualization, but they are formed differently (Epstein, 1997). With the help of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, Aaker (1997) developed a theoretical framework of the brand personality construct by determining the number and nature of dimensions of brand personality (Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness). Aaker asked individuals to rate a set of commercial brand encompassing a variety of personality attributes derived from scales used to developed and refine variants of the Five-Factor Model of personality, personality scale by marketers and qualitative research (Aaker, 1997). There are three connected dimensions of traits: extraversion and excitement, competence and conscientiousness, and sincerity and agreeableness (Aaker, 1997). Moreover, there is no relationship of the two Big Five dimensions ruggedness and sophistication due to the differences in both human being and consumer behaviour (Briggs, 1992).

This experiment concentrates on the relationship of excitement and extraversion since these dimensions are general over different cultures (Aaker, 1997). The factor extraversion expresses how much the individual is focused on her or his environment. The trait excitement of a brand stands for energy, fantasy and modernity (Aaker, 1997). The consumer research tries to focus on the relationship between brand personality and consumer personality. When both human and product personality are in agreement, this state is called congruence (Herrmann, Huber, Lee, Kressmann & Sirgy, 2006). When the consumer scores high on the extraversion scale and the brand scores high on the excitement scale,

there is a state of congruence. But under conditions of low scores on these scales for consumer and brand, there is a state of incongruence. The present study has also the variable strength of congruence which describes the extent of agreement between the personality trait extraversion/ excitement of brand and consumer.

The impact of congruence on emotion

At first the present study investigates the effect of congruence on pleasure. The pleasure dimension from Hoolbrook and Batra (1987) describes affection, delight and pride (Strebinger, 2001). The brand personality scale from Aaker (1997) is used in order to measure both the consumer and the brand personality, enabling an easier comparison with the trait of excitement/ extraversion. The more the consumer and the brand personality agree, the higher is the strength of congruence. Following the golden rule of marketing which consists of individuals preferring those brands which match their own personality (Herrmann, Huber, Lee, Kressmann & Sirgy, 2006). One expects high scores of the emotion pleasure when the agreement or strength of congruence, of the trait excitement / extraversion is high. The greater the agreement between the scores of consumer and brand in the trait excitement, the higher the scores on the pleasure scale.

 H₁: The greater the congruence between the consumer personality and the Brand personality in the trait excitement, the greater the pleasure response of consumers.

The impact of congruence on perceived quality

The present study also investigates the effect of congruence on the perceived product quality. In 2000, Brucks, Zeithaml en Naylor identified different dimensions of quality for the judgement of long-time application goods (supplement 2). Their scale contains the following dimensions such as ease of use, versatility, durability, serviceability, performance and prestige. The aspect of quality describes a function of price and brand name (Strebinger, 2001).

One expects high scores of perceived product quality when the score of the congruence between brand personality and consumer personality is also high. This can be explained by the preference for brands matching the consumer personality and the influence of biasing- effects. Researchers like Sirgy (1991) assumed that there is a biasing-effect caused by the congruence. For consumers it is easy to think about brands as if they were celebrities or famous historical figures (Rook, 1985) and the way they relate to oneself (Aaker, 1997). Consumers prefer and evaluate those brands matching their own personality in a positive manner (Bosnjak, Bochmann & Hufschmidt, 2007). Therefore one expects that the greater the congruence, the higher the perceived quality of the product as the consumer is biased by the match of the brand personality and his own personality (Aaker, 1997). The bias is a prejudice (Wolf, 1978). The consumer evaluates the product quality more subjectively than objectively due to the biasing- effect, when there is congruence. People tend to rate themselves in a more positive way. So one expects that the consumers evaluate the product quality more positively when the brand matches their own personality, because the consumer associates a set of human characteristics with the preferred brand (Aaker, 1997). Sirgy (1982) addresses the self-concept as a cognitive referent in evaluation processes. When consumers have a positive self- concept of themselves, they tend to associate positive characteristics to a product (Sirgy, 1982). Further, the congruence takes place before the evaluation of the functional product aspects (Sirgy, 1991).

Based on this discussion, the conclusion is that the congruence works directly via the consumer behaviour such as the perception of product quality (Sirgy, 1991). Therefore, the greater the congruence, the higher is the perceived quality of the product.

H₂: The greater the congruence of the trait excitement between consumer and brand, the better the evaluation of the product quality.

The impact of congruence on the effect of price strategies

The present study also investigates the effect of price reduction on pleasure and the perceived product quality under situations of congruence and incongruence. Here congruence is a nominal moderator variable. We use the promotion depths of 0, 10 and 30% price reduction.

Price is unquestionably one of the most important marketplace cues (Bauer, Klieger & Koper, 2004). In the field of micro-economy people strive after the best quality for the lowest price (Ockenfels & Roth, 2002). The choice of promotion depth is positively related to the face value of a promotion (Leone & Srinivasan, 1996), which makes an increase of the promotion depth attractive. But price promotion can undermine future choice by lowering consumer's perceptions of brand quality, by training consumers to wait for promotions or by lowering consumer's price expectations for the brand (Monroe, 1971). Thus stores must weigh the immediate benefits of depth promotion against their negative effects on purchase decision. In 2006, DelVecchio, Henard and Freling found that promotions in excess of 20% of the product value have a negative effect on post promotion preference.

First we investigated the effect of price reduction on pleasure under conditions of congruence and incongruence. We expect that the effect of price reduction on pleasure is more evident under conditions of incongruence than under conditions of congruence. In Germany, the company "Saturn" introduced a marketing slogan called 'stinginess is hot' and had higher sales of 3, 3% in the year the slogan was introduced (Bauer, Klinger & Kopka, 2004). Under conditions of incongruence consumers are happy over the cheap product as they are able to save money. In general, people tend to rate themselves in a more positive way (Wolf, 1978), and the consumer has stereotypic images of users of a product (Sirgy, 1982). In this study we propose that consumers score lower on pleasure under conditions of congruence as they cannot hold on the positive image of the brand personality caused by the negative effects of promotion. For example, it is difficult to find a Rolex on sale as the consumer group is able to afford it without having any price reductions. The fear of price reductions might be explained due to a higher number of customers being able to afford the item, resulting in a loss of exclusivity of the upper class. The consumers of Rolex do not want to be less exclusive or associated with groups other than the upper class. Even the actual bad situation on the American house market cannot be find on the high price market. Only the low price houses are concerned and will be sold under their value. The pleasure dimension describes affection, delight and pride (Strebinger, 2001). Under the situation of congruence the consumers score slightly lower on pleasure because they are not proud of the price reduction of the product which matches their personality. Under conditions of incongruence people react happier because they enjoy the economy and do not care about images of products with price reduction.

In the present study we also investigate the effect of price reduction on perceived product quality under conditions of incongruence and congruence. Consistency among an individual's beliefs about an object is associated with positive affect (Wolf, 1978). Applied to consumer's product quality

judgments predicts that consumers view congruence between the brand personality and their own personality as an attractive property (DelVecchio, Krishnan, & Smith, 2007). We expect that the effect of price reduction on perceived product quality is more evident under conditions of incongruence than under conditions of congruence. Under conditions of congruence consumers evaluate the product quality higher because they are biased. When consumers have a positive self-concept of themselves, they tend to associate positive characteristics to a product (Sirgy, 1982). We also expect that under the situation of incongruence consumers score slightly lower on perceived product quality, because they are not biased. In 1984, Cialdini proposed that the association of low price and low quality perception is a conditioned stimulus for product judgements. Thus, under conditions of incongruence the consumers use this heuristic for the evaluation of the product quality. Here, the price reduction implies low product quality. But it will be expected that this heuristic of low price and low product quality does not work in the same way under conditions of congruence because these people are biased and implies positive attributes to the product quality caused by the match of their personality with the brand personality (conditions of congruence).

- H₃: The effect of price strategy on the stimulus perception is influenced by the congruence of the trait excitement between consumer and brand
 - H_{3.1}: The effect of price strategy on pleasure is more evident under conditions of incongruence than under conditions of congruence
 - H_{3.2}: The effect of price strategy on the perceived product quality is more evident under conditions of incongruence than under conditions of congruence

Figure 1

The conceptual model



This conceptual model consists of the emotion pleasure, the perceived product quality, and the different price strategies of 0, 10 and 30 %, the consumer, the brand and the congruence. In this study we will look at the variable congruence of the trait excitement/ extraversion between the personalities of brand and consumer. The variable congruence will be examined as scale and nominal variable. The present study investigates the effect of congruence on the emotion pleasure and perceived product quality.

Summary of Hypotheses

- H₁: The greater the congruence between the consumer personality and the brand personality in the trait excitement, the greater the pleasure response of consumers.
- H₂: The greater the congruence of the trait excitement between consumer and brand, the better the evaluation of the product quality.
- H₃: The effect of price strategy on the stimulus perception is influenced by the congruence of the trait excitement between consumer and brand
 - H_{3.1}: The effect of price strategy on pleasure is more evident under conditions of incongruence than under conditions of congruence
 - H_{3.2}: The effect of price strategy on the perceived product quality is more evident under conditions of incongruence than under conditions of congruence

Methodology



Research Design

The effects of price strategies in relation to congruence on pleasure and perceived product quality were examined with the following variables in a 2×3 design. The moderator variable is the variable congruence of the trait extraversion/ excitement of the consumer and the brand "Wolfskin". The independent variables are the strength of congruence and the price strategy of reduction of 0%, 10% and 30%. The dependent variables are the perception of product quality and pleasure.

Procedure and Subjects

Two questionnaires of the webpage www.studentenonderzoek.com with price reductions of 0% and 10% for the questionnaire 1, as well as 0% and 30% for the questionnaire 2 were send of via the link www.thesisthools.com/olivia from 27.05.2008 to 28.08.2008 (supplement 1). Each questionnaire is based on the same structure. Also, each participant was aselect chosen via email due to the danger of counterbalance. First of all, demographical information like gender, nationality, educational graduates needed to be given. Further, it followed the measure of Aaker's scale of excitement. After that, they had some general questions over market attitudes. Then the participants had to look at a picture with the stimulus and the price reduction of 0%, and they had to fill in Aaker's scale of excitement, the scale of pleasure and of quality evaluation. The stimulus with the price reduction of 10 or 30% as well as the filling in of the scale of pleasure and perceived product quality followed. Last but not least, some general questions over the brand and price reduction got answered. The last scale which had to be filled in was over the rational or emotional decisions.

The participants consist of 108 subjects (39 males, 67 females, 2 unreported gender), aged from 18 to 28 years (mean= 22; S.D. =2, 30) who are from the University of Twente, Netherlands. They administered both questionnaires (questionnaire 1=57, questionnaire 2=49) via internet.

Stimuli



Figure 2: ads of the questionnaires

The requirement for the stimulus was the expression of excitement. The backpack of the brand "Jack Wolfskin" was chosen with the help of literature. The stimulus is for all genders and the brand has an international acknowledgement. Different studies mentioned the brand for the expression of excitement (for example, Strebinger, 2001). The backpack of this brand was selected as most people need one for travel experiences which are adventurous such as a tour through the Highlands. This should guarantee the

involvement of the participant, especial those who are extraverts. Experimenters found that people with little knowledge of a product are using the conditioned quality/price strategy more frequently than experts (Gardner, 1970). The backpack of the brand "Wolfskin" used as stimulus in this study is new and will be on the European market in September 2008. The colour orange of the stimulus has no specifically gender preferences, and offers a flashy attention. Also, the advertisement was created by the experimenter. Thus, we assumed that there will be no expert in the group of participants with specific knowledge and experience about this stimulus. The participant was asked whether he or she has any knowledge and/ or experience with the brand "Wolfskin".

Figure 3: ads of the questionnaires





In 2006, DelVecchio, Henard and Freling found that promotions in excess of 20% of the product value have a negative effect on post promotion preference. The present study uses the price reductions of 10 % and 30 % to underline the price reductions over and under 20 %, and its positive and the negative effects of depth promotion, as well as using an authentic price reduction. Beside the depth of promotion, the frame of the discount plays an important role. The study focuses on percentage-off, because DelVecchio, Krishnan and Smith (2007) reported that perceived promotions are key determinants of expectations, which influence consumer behaviour. They also found that the influence of promotion is higher when promotions are framed in percentage-off than cent-off terms. Following from this, we use percentage-off promotions in the present study.

Measures

Congruence

The consumer often personifies brands, but recent studies showed that the five dimensions are not always optimal for covering the facets of brand personality (Barbaranelli, Caprara & Guido, 2001). Looking upon this knowledge, the scale used for the measure of extraversion of the consumer is

the same as the scale for the measure of excitement of the brand. Aaker (1997) developed the scale which takes the scores of the two correlated properties extraversion and excitement for capturing the trait. It is easier to compare the extent of the focused trait in the consumer and the brand for the development of the variable congruence. Both scales were in Dutch. The scale for extraversion/ excitement (supplement 1) contains eleven items such as jong, cool and creative et cetera. For the consumer the scale is performed via a 7-piont Likert scale with the choice between 'not very fitting/ helemaal niet van toepassing' and 'very fitting/ helemaal van toepassing'. For higher rehabilitee (α = 0.62) one ('hegendaags') of the eleven items was excluded. But for the brand the items of Aaker's (1997) scale are transformed into sentences (supplement 1). For instance are the item cool build up into 'The brand Wolfskin is very cool/ Het merk Wolfskin is helemaal cool' and the item 'jong' into 'The brand Woklfskin is a jong product / Het merk Wolfskin is een jong product'. The scale is performed via a 7-piont Likert scale with the choice between 'not very fitting helemaal oneens' and 'high agreeing/ helemaal eens'. Cronabach Alpha for the scale of ten items was 0.70.

The variable congruence is created via the difference of the totals from the trait scales of the consumer and the brand (Kressmann et al., 2006).

Pleasure

The emotion pleasure was performed via the pleasure scale of the PAD questionnaire, where the experiment used the Dutch translation from Mehrabian and Russel (1974). Originally, the scale is build up in three domains such as pleasure, arousal and dominance. Each of them contains six items with bipolare

(positive and negative) feelings (supplement 1). For example is one item of the pleasure scale 'unlucky/ ongelukkig' and 'lucky/ gelukkig'. Here is a 7-piont Likert scale used for the description of the actual feeling. The participant had to fill in the point which is best fitting. The point 1 stands for the most negative and 7 for the most positive feeling. In the research people calculate a whole score. The scale of Mehrabian and Russel (1974) had to be filled in twice, one for the stimulus of the 0% price strategy (α = 0.73) and one for the 10% or 30% price reduction (α = 0.79). All of them consist on the same structure.

Product quality

The dimensions of the perceived product quality are developed from Brucks, Zeithaml, and Naylor (2000). The scale (supplement 1) follows the search, the experience and the credence with the dimension of ease of use, versatility, durability, serviceability, performance and prestige. The Cronabach Alphas are 0.67 and 0.65 with the deleted item of 'veelzijdig/versatile'. Different structures were used twice where participants had to fill in the Dutch translated scale. They had the items and the 7-piont Likert scale in common. The first scale of the product quality contains sentences for each item; for example the item 'performance' is put into 'Het product heeft een slechte performance/ the product has a bad performance' with the decision between 'disagreement/ helemaal niet me eens' and 'agreement/ helemaal mee eens'. In this case the measure of perceived quality is for the 0% price strategy. The second time, the scale contains bipolar items such as 'the performance is bad/ de performance is slecht' and 'the performance is good/ de performance is goed'. The participant had to fill in the point which is best fitting for the perceived quality of the 10% or 30% price strategy. The point 1 stands for the most negative and 7 for the most positive feeling.

Additional measures

There were also questions over general attitudes over the market perception (supplement 1) such as price-quality attitude, perceived market efficiency, risk aversion and finical concern (Bao, Su & Zhou, 2002). For example is one item for the risk aversion 'ik

probeer altijd nieuwe en verschillende producten uit/ I always try new and different products'. The items were translated in Dutch, and there was a 7-point Likert scale with the ends of 'disagreement/ helemaal niet me eens' and 'agreement/ helemaal mee eens'. Further we found a Cronbach Alpha of 0.53 without the items 'er zijn altijd alternatieven voor een products/ there are always alternatives of a product' and 'elk Euro is voor mij belangrijk/ every Euro is important for me'. In total contains the scale nine items.

Another self developed scale has the questions over the realistically perception of the stimulus (supplement 1). There are four items (α = 0.694 without item 1 of realistic perception of stimulus). One example is the item 'Ik zou mijn vrienden vertellen over deze aanbieding/ I will talk over the sale to my friends '. Also here, the 7-point Likert scale found its use wit the choice between 'disagreement/ helemaal niet me eens' and 'agreement/ helemaal mee eens'. The used language was Dutch.

The last questions (supplement 1) had the content of sentences over rational or emotional treated choices. There are four for the rational decision and four for the emotional decision from Ratchford (1987). An example for the rational decision is 'De beslissing was goed doordacht/ the decision was a lot thought over' and for the other emotional 'Het was een impulsive beslissing/ It was an impulsive decision'. The found Cronbach Alpha was 0.82. One can see the 7-point Likert scale with the choice between 'disagreement/ helemaal niet me eens' and 'agreement/ helemaal mee eens'.

Other questions consisted of the subjects of knowledge of the product price and knowledge over the used brand.

Results



At first, the present study investigates the effect of congruence on pleasure. We expected high scores of the emotion pleasure when the strength of congruence of the trait excitement is high. The dependent variable was pleasure (M= 3.6, SD= 0.8) and the independent variable was the strength of congruence (M=0.9, SD=0.7). The strength of congruence describes the agreement between the trait excitement of consumer and brand. This variable was the result of the difference between scores of the extraversion/

excitement trait of consumer and brand (Kressmann et al., 2006). A linear regression analysis revealed that the strength of congruence was a significant predictor of the pleasure scores ($\beta = .40$, p < .05), accounting for 11% of the variance in pleasure. The higher the agreement between the personalities of consumer and brand, the higher the pleasure of the consumers.

The second hypothesis predicts that strength of congruence between the personalities of brand and consumer is positively related to the perceived product quality. We proposed that the higher the agreement between the personalities of brand and consumer, the higher the scores of the perceived product quality. The independent variable was the strength of congruence and the dependent variable was the perceived product quality (M= 4.7, SD= 0.8). Perceived product quality scores were regressed on strength of congruence. This predictor variable accounted for just one percent of the variance in product quality scores ($R^2 = .01$), which was not significant, F(1,104) = 0.8, n.s. The strength of congruence between the trait excitement of brand and consumer (β = - .09, n.s.) demonstrated no significant effects on the perceived product quality scores.

The third hypothesis consisted of two parts. The first part stated that the effect of price strategy on pleasure is more evident under conditions of incongruence than under conditions of congruence. The data was analysed via ANOVA. The factors were the nominal variables congruence and conditions of price reduction (10%, 30%). The nominal variable congruence consists of the congruence group (M = 0.3, SD = 0.2, N = 53) and incongruence group (M = 1.5, SD = 0.5, N = 53), and the dependent variable was the pleasure score. The covariate was the pleasure score of 0% price reduction, because the experimenter measured pleasure of the 0% price reduction at first and it followed the measure of pleasure of the 10% (N= 57) or 30% (N= 49) price reduction for each participant. As can be seen in table 1, no significant support for the first part of the third hypothesis is found via ANOVA. There were no main effects of price strategy, no main effects of congruence of brand and consumer personality, and also no interaction effect of price strategy and congruence.

Table 1

Analysis of Variance for effects of price strategy on pleasure

Source	df	F	Р
Congruence	1	1.01	.32
Strategy	1	.139	.71
Congruence * Strategy	1	2.64	.11
Error	101		

Figure 4





The figure 4 lets see that the mean of pleasure scores are the highest for the price reduction of 10%, it follows the means of the 0% and 30% price reduction under conditions of congruence. But under conditions of incongruence the mean of the pleasure scores are the highest for the price without price reduction (0%), the price reduction of 10% has here the lowest mean of pleasure.

The second part of the third hypothesis stated that the effect of price strategy on the perceived product quality is more evident under the conditions of congruence than under conditions of incongruence. The data was analysed via ANOVA. The factors were the nominal variables congruence and conditions of price reduction (10%, 30%), and the dependent variable was the perceived product quality. The covariate was the perceived product quality of 0% price reduction, because the experimenter measured perceived product quality of the 0% price reduction at first and it followed the measure of perceived product quality of the 10% (N= 57) or 30% (N= 49) price reduction for each participant. As can be seen in table 2, there is a significant main effect of price strategy to find (F (1, 100)= 8.57, p<.001). Thus only the evaluation of the product quality lets see a significant main effect of price reduction as it is to see in figure 5. The means and standard deviations are in table 3. There are no significant interaction effect of congruence and price strategy or a main effect of congruence.

Table 2

Analysis of Variance for effects of price strategy on perceived product quality

Source	df	F	р
Congruence	1	0.14	.71
Strategy	1	8.57	.00
Congruence * Strategy	1	0.02	.88
Error	100		

Note. < .05





Figure 5. Mean of perceived product quality for price reductions of 0% (n = 106), 10% (n = 56) and 30% (n = 49) in conditions of congruence and incongruence.

As can be seen in figure 5, the mean of perceived product quality of the price without reduction (0%) has the highest range; it follows the means of the perceived product quality of the 30% price reduction and of the 10% price reduction.

Table 3- Means and Standard Deviations for testing Hypothesis 3.2:

Depth of price reduction	Condi	tions of
	congruence	incongruence
0%		<u>.</u>
Ν	53	53
M	4.7	4.7
SD	.71	.79
10%		
Ν	28	28
M	3.0	3.1
SD	.75	.84
30%		
Ν	24	25
Μ	3.5	3.6
SD	.67	.59

The effect of price strategy on the perceived product quality is more evident under conditions of incongruence than under conditions of congruence

The additional measures showed no significant effects. The knowledge of the brand (N=106, M=1.4, SD=.24) and experience with the brand (N=106, M=1.6, SD=.23) were asked.

The experiment contained the questions of both knowledge about "Wolfskin" and some experiment which were computed into one score. The MANOVA had the factors of price strategy and congruence, the dependent variables of perceived product quality and knowledge, and the covariate of perceived product quality of 0% price reduction. But there were no significant main effect of knowledge (F (2,103) = 1.9, p > .05).

The scores of perceived product quality could be influenced by congruence and emotional or rational decision making (M=3.60, SD=1.03). But the statistical results of MANOVA also show no significant effects (F(2, 103)= 0.384, p> .05) with the factors of price strategy and congruence, the dependent variables of perceived product quality and emotional decision making, and the covariate of perceived product quality of 0% price reduction .

The used question of the reference price has a mean of 107 Euro (SD= 44), which is close to the price of the market of 120 Euro.

Discussion

The effect of congruence on pleasure

Discussion of results

The results of the regression analyse show that the model of this experiment is in line with other studies which came to similar conclusions. The higher the agreement between the personalities of consumer and brand, the higher will be the pleasure of the consumers. Researchers like Mayrhuber (2000) emphasized the importance of congruence between the personality of the human and of the product. Also Aaker (1997) thought that a consumer prefers products more when they match the personality of the consumer. Here was the hypothesis that a consumer, who matches to a high degree with the brand in the trait extraversion/ excitement, will also score high on the emotion of pleasure. Early investigations showed that the choice for a product takes place during the first 45 seconds of the product perception (Branding, 2004). Thus, the existence of congruence in at least one trait could be one of the factors which influence the product choice within the 45 seconds.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

The linear regression analysis revealed that the strength of congruence is a significant predictor of the pleasure scores ($\beta = .40$, p < .05), but accounting for just 11% of the variance in pleasure.

Now, one could get to the thought that the tested variables were not enough. It is not to suppress that a brand has an important function (Sirgy, 1982). But other research has shown that there are also other variables which might play an important role. People do not just buy products caused by congruence between the personalities of the consumer and the brand. Some consumers might want to express some kind of status with a product or brand, called self- image congruency (Kressmann et al., 2006). This does not have to be in line with their real traits of personality. For example, someone with low scores on extraversion does not like to have the attention on the street and would buy a car with low excitement unless she or he wants to impress others with buying a Porsche with high scores on excitement. Here the score of pleasure might be high caused not by the degree of congruence between brand and consumer, but by the degree of a wished status. Both the agreement of congruence and the degree of wanted status have symbolic character. Another possible variable, which could have some kind of influence on the scores of pleasure, could be involvement. The decision of a consumer can be influenced by the degree of product involvement and perceived risk (Dholakia, 2000). If a consumer sees low risk and have high involvement with the product, the pleasure scores could be also high caused by these two variables. In future it could be adventurous to examine the role of involvement and self-image in relation to our first hypothesis.

The effect of congruence on perceived product quality

Discussion of results

The second hypothesis found no statistical support. There was no significant influence of congruence on the perceived product quality. Moreover, this does not show Sirgy's (1991) or Wolf's (1978) idea who stated that there is a biasing effect caused by the match of personalities of the consumer and the brand. Sirgy (1991) gave the argument that the congruence takes place before the evaluation of the product aspects. Thus, the aspect of a brand is important in context with the existence of congruence. Also there was no evidence for the influence of congruence on the perceived product quality, there are different reasons possible.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

For example the reliability of the scale for the capture of the perceived product quality had only a Cronbach Alpha of 0.67. Maybe a scale with a higher Cronbach Alpha could have resulted in a significant effect of congruence on perceived product quality. Another scale could have used other dimensions of quality than Brucks, Zeithaml and Naylor (2000). The literature research gives often rise to the important role of time during consumer decisions (Kardes, 2001). Here, the participants filled the questionnaire in via internet, so there was no control of time at any scale. When people are under time pressure their decisions lie more on symbolical criteria (Strebinger, 2001; Sirgy, 1982). Further research should control the participants during the questionnaire for the block out of other variables of influence as for example the time, and they should create their own scale for the perceived quality measure.

The effect of price strategy

Discussion of results

The figure 4 lets see that the mean of pleasure scores are the highest for the price reduction of 10%, it follows the means of the 0% and 30% price reduction under conditions of congruence. But under conditions of incongruence the mean of the pleasure scores are the highest for the price without price reduction (0%), the price reduction of 10% has here the lowest mean of pleasure. As can be seen in table 1, there is no significant main effect of congruence, no significant main effect of price strategy and also no significant interaction effect of both variables congruence and price strategy on pleasure.

Under conditions of congruence the price reduction of 10% has the highest mean of pleasure. Following DelVecchio, Henard and Freling (2006) promotions in excess of 20% of the product value have a negative effect on post promotion preference. This could be an explanation for the lower mean of pleasure of the 30% price reduction. Consumers are delighted when they are confronted with a price reduction under 20% and are sceptical with higher price reductions as the used price reduction of 30%. Following Cialdini (1984) the price reduction implies low product quality and consumers use this heuristic. They might react less happy because the consumers cannot hold on the positive image of the brand personality caused by the negative effects of promotion. Thus, consumers those personality matches with the brand personality (conditions of congruence) react happy when they are confronted with a price reduction of 30%, because they can safe money. But they are less happy with a price reduction of 30%, because they have problems with the heuristic of low price and low quality. Also reacts the consumer happier with the low price reduction than with no price reduction, because they can safe money. These results are in line with expectations, but there were no significance of the main effects or of the interaction effects.

Under conditions of incongruence the pleasure of 30% price reduction has the lowest mean and it follows the price reduction of 10%. This is not in line with the expectations. Consumers should enjoy the economy and should not care about images of products with price reduction. The consumers might care about product images more than we had expected.

In the last part of the third hypothesis, the price reduction strategies of 10 and 30% under congruence and incongruence and their effect on perceived product quality were examined. While the expectation was that the bias effect on quality perception caused by congruence is more evident under a situation of low price reduction than under a situation of high price reduction. We only found a main effect of price strategy and not a main effect of congruence. The Halo- effect (Strebinger, 2001) seems not to work. Consumers do not try to see as long as possible the favourite sides of a thing when it supports their personality. This result is in agreement with the micro-economy, where in general one strives after the highest possible quality for the lowest possible price (Ockenfels & Roth, 2002). But like already mentioned, other research suggested that a low price would be linked with low product quality (Diller & Hermann, 2003). From these notions the Halo-effect must be slightly weaker than the conditioned low price- low quality (Cialdini, 1984) or there is no Halo-effect.

As can be seen in figure 5, the mean of perceived product quality of the price without reduction (0%) has the highest range; it follows the means of the perceived product quality of the 30% price reduction and of the 10% price reduction. Congruence had no significant main effect, but the price strategy had a significant effect. Following these results, consumers always use the low price and low quality heuristic (Cialdini, 1984) regardless of the presence of congruence. A product without price reduction is better evaluated than a product with price reduction. The price reduction of 30% should have the lowest mean of perceived product quality, because DelVecchio, Henard and Freling (2006) found that promotions in excess of 20% of the product value have a negative effect on post promotion preference.

But the perceived product quality of 10% price reduction has the lowest mean, and not the price reduction of 30% as expected. Consumers expect low quality but the low price has economical adventures for them. Therefore a low price reduction implies low quality, but the price has still no adventures for the consumers. Thus the consumers might be disappointed and evaluate the product quality lower.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

These thoughts support a model with more or other independent variables than the covariate congruence. But also other explanations are possible. For example plays the used advertisement as stimulus a role. Here could be mentioned the influence of variables, which influence the way of information processing of the advertisement such as the Need for Cognition or learned pricing signal words strategy (Kahneman et al., 1982). Thus, the participant of this experiment saw the advertisement and as soon as he or she filled in the questionnaire of pleasure and of perceived product quality, other things like his or her involvement with the brand or Need for Cognition could have some kind of influence besides the variable congruence. The knowledge of the brand (N= 106, M=1.4, SD=.24) and experience with the brand (N= 106, M=1.6, SD=.23) were asked. They should be investigated more intensive. Someone with bad experience with the brand will perceive the product in a more negative manner than someone with positive experience. Further research should use a more complex model and a pre-test for the involvement with the ads. The experimenter of the present study thought that the rate of backpack consumers is high under students. The involvement could be to low for involvement.

Further, there could be also an influence of the variable of emotional decision making. The experiment contained the questionnaire of Ratchford (1987) with a high reliability. The scale captured whether a person generally makes decision in a more rational or emotional way. Fore example someone needs more time for a decision under rational aspects. Thus one idea could be that the higher the congruence and the lower the 'emotional decision making' the higher the score of the perceived product quality. When someone relies on rational aspects during consume behaviour, she or he includes especially functional aspects such as product quality in the decision process. The scores of perceived product quality could be influenced by congruence and emotional or rational decision making. But the statistical results show that this idea of a possible model does not fit.

Further, there was also no support for the model of the independent variable knowledge/experience and congruence, and the dependent variable perceived product quality. Further research should have a more complex model and also the control of time during the look at the stimulus and the fill in of the questionnaire as well as a scale of perceived product quality with more reliability.

Effect of the additional measures

Discussion of results

The used question of the reference price has a mean of 107 Euro (SD= 44), which is close to the price of the market of 120 Euro. Researchers also see an important role of reference prices in consumer decisions; it is often a moderator role (Burman & Biswas, 2004). This gives rise to cause this variable to a more complex model.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

In future, other experiences could use the change of blood pressure or the brain activity besides the measure of pleasure via scale for the focus on the surprise effect.

Maybe further research could explore whether the mentality of stinginess or financial concern influences the effect of price strategy on the emotion pleasure under the situations of congruence and incongruence. Also the aspect of cultural influence needs to be explored.

Suggestions for the future

The conclusion of the discussion is that the present study should be improved by additional variables in the model such as involvement and self-concept. Further the experiment should be a laboratorial examination for the control of effects such as time pressure or group influences. The participants should represent a broader range of consumers because it would improve the generalization of study results.

Figure 6

Future model



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Supplement 1

onderzoek over advertenties

Beste mensen, dit is een onderzoek over advertenties. Het is belangrijk dat je alles invult, omdat de gegevens anders niet te gebruiken zijn. De gegevens worden volledig anoniem verwerkt. Bedankt voor jullie hulp

1.	Wat	is je geslacht ?
	Γ	Man
		Vrouw

2.	Wat is je leeftijd ?

3.	Wat	is je opleiding ?
		WO
	Г	HBO
		VWO
		anders

4.	Wat	t is je nationaliteit ?
		Nederlands Duits anders

De volgende stellingen hebben betrekking op hoe je jezelf ziet. Wil je aan je aangeven in hoeverre je het eens bent met elke stelling?

5.	Ik ben							
		Helemaal niet van Helemaal Helemaal Helemaal niet van Helemaa niet van Helemaal niet van Helemaa niet van H						
	gedurfd	0	0	С	0	0	0	0
	trendy	C	С	C	C	C	C	C
	opwindend	C	C	0	C	C	0	0
	bezield	0	C	С	C	C	C	C
	cool	0	C	C	C	0	C	C
	jong	0	С	C	C	C	C	C
	creatief	0	С	С	С	0	0	0
		C	C	С	C	0	0	C

uniek							
mee met de tijd	0	С	С	С	C	C	0
onafhankelijk	С	C	С	С	C	C	0
hedendaags	0	С	С	C	0	С	0

6.	De volgende stellingen hebben betrekking op jouw mening. Wil je aangeven in hoeverre je het eens bent met elke stelling?									
		Helemaal niet mee eens Helemaal mee eens								
	In het algemeen hebben producten met een hoge prijs een hoge kwaliteit hebben.	0	0	C	C	0	C	C		
	Het is waar dat men krijgt waarvoor men betaalt.	0	0	C	0	С	C	C		
	De prijs van een product is een goede indicator voor de kwaliteit.	0	0	0	0	C	С	C		
	Voor het beste moet je altijd meer betalen.	0	0	0	C	0	0	0		
	Er zijn altijd alternatieven voor een product te krijgen.	0	0	0	C	0	0	0		
	Ik kan altijd voldoende informatie over kwaliteit en prijs van een product krijgen.	0	С	0	0	C	C	C		
	Ik probeer altijd nieuwe en verschillende producten uit.	C	С	C	C	0	C	C		

0 0 0 0 0 0 \odot

Kijk naar het plaatje alsjeblieft.



De volgende stellingen hebben betrekking op jouw mening over het merk Wolfskin. Wil je aangeven in hoeverre je het eens bent met elke stelling?

7.											
		helemaal oneens				he	helemaal mee eens				
	Het merk Wolfskin gaat met de tijd mee.	0	C	C	0	0	C	C			

Het merk Wolfskin is trendy.	С	C	C	C	C	С	С
Wolfskin is een gedurfd merk.	0	C	C	C	0	0	0
Het merk Wolfskin is helemaal cool.	0	C	C	C	C	C	C
Het merk Wolfskin is een jong product.	C	0	C	0	0	0	C
Het merk Wolfskin staat voor creativiteit.	C	C	0	0	0	C	C
Wolfskin is een uniek merk.	0	0	0	0	0	0	C
Wolfskin is een bezield product.	C	0	0	0	0	0	C
Het merk Wolfskin staat voor onafhankelijkheid.	С	С	С	С	C	С	C
Het merk Wolfskin is opwindend.	C	0	0	0	0	0	0

Wil je het rondje aanvinken dat het best aangeeft in welke mate een van de twee woorden jouw gevoel tenaanzien van het **merk Wolfskin** het beste omschrijft?

8.								
	ongelukkig 🔿	0	0	0	0	0	0	gelukkig
	blij 🔿	\odot	\odot	C	\odot	C	0	geirriteerd
	tevreden 🔿	\odot	\odot	C	0	0	0	ontevreden

voldaan 🔿	0	\bigcirc	C	0	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	melancholisch
hoopvol 🔿	0	\odot	C	0	0	\mathbf{O}	wanhopig
verveeld 🔿	\mathbf{O}	\bigcirc	0	0	0	0	ontspannen

9.	De volgende stellingen hebber van het product.	n betrekk	ting op	je opva	tting c	over d	le kw	aliteit
		Helemaa	l niet me	e eens		Helen	naal m	ee eens
	Het product is veelzijdig.	C	С	C	С	0	C	C
	Het product is kortdurig.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Het product is makkelijk te gebruiken.	0	0	C	C	0	0	0
	Het product biedt een goede service.	0	0	C	C	C	C	C
	Het product geeft prestige.	0	C	C	С	C	С	C
	Het product heeft een slechte performance.	C	0	C	C	0	0	C

Bekijk het plaatje heel goed, alsjeblieft. Wij hebben nu de warmste periode van het jaar, de zomer. Probeer je voor te stellen dat je op reis gaat en een tas voor jouw vakantie nog nodig hebt.



10.	Wil je het rondje aanvinke twee woorden jouw gevoe					<u> </u>		
	verveeld 🔿	0	C	С	C	0	0	ontspannen
	hoopvol 🔿	0	C	0	C	C	C	wanhopig
	voldaan 🔿	0	C	0	C	0	0	melancholisch
	tevreden 🔿	0	C	0	C	0	0	ontevreden
	blij 🔿	0	C	0	C	0	0	geirriteerd
	ongelukkig 🔿	0	0	С	C	0	0	gelukkig

Geef een waardering aan over de kwaliteit van het product by deze **aanbieding** !

11.								
	makkelijk gebruik 🔿	C	C	C	C	C	C	moeilijk gebruik
	de service is goed 🔿	0	\odot	\odot	\odot	0	\odot	de service is slecht

het product geeft geen 🔿	C	0	\mathbf{C}	\bigcirc	0	0	
prestige							prestige
het product gaat lang 🔿	$^{\circ}$	\odot	C	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\mathbf{O}	het product gaat kort
mee							mee
de performance is 🔿	\odot	\bigcirc	C	\odot	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	
slecht							productperformance is goed
het product is slecht 🔿	\bigcirc	\odot	\odot	\odot	0	\bigcirc	het product is
voor een ding te gebruiken							veelzijdig

12.	Tenslotte volgen nog een aantal algemene vragen.								
		Helemaal niet mee eens Helemaal mee eens							
	Ik vindt de korting geloofwaardig.	C	0	С	0	0	0	0	
	Ik zou het product kopen.	0	0	С	C	0	0	0	
	Elk euro is voor mij belangrijk.	C	0	С	С	0	0	0	
	Ik zou mijn vrienden vertellen over deze aanbieding.	C	C	0	0	0	C	C	
	Ik zou het product aan mijn vrienden aanbevelen	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	

13.	Hoeveel denk je kost het product van Wolfskin?

14.	Heb je ervaring met het merk Wolfskin?
-----	--

C	ja
0	nee

15.	Ben	je bekend met het merk Jack Wolfskin ?
	0	ja
	0	nee

16.	Stel je voor je hebt besloten het product van Wolfskin te kopen. Waarop is deze beslissing gebaseerd? Wil je bij de onderstaande uitspraken aangeven in hoeverre je het met de uitspraak eens of oneens bent ?							
		helemaal niet mee eens helemaal mee eens						
	Het was een impulsieve beslissing.	0	0	O	C	C	C	0
	De beslissing was rationeel.	0	С	C	C	0	C	С
	De beslissing was gebaseerd op het uiterlijk van het product van Wolfskin.	0	0	C	0	0	0	C
	De beslissing was goed doordacht.	C	С	0	C	0	0	0
	De beslissing was grotendeels op feiten gebaseerd.	0	0	C	C	C	0	C
	Het was een emotionele							

beslissing.		С	С	0	0	С	С	C
De beslissing was gebaseer op de voordelen die het product biedt.	ł	С	C	С	С	C	С	C
De beslissing heeft mij weinig tijd gekost.		0	С	С	0	С	С	0

17.	Hier heb je plaats voor je opmerkingen.

18.	Als je informatie over de resultaten van dit onderzoek wilt hebben, dan kun je een mailtje schrijven of je email aangeven. o.c.t@gmx.de			

Ver<u>s</u>tuur!

Supplement 2

FIGURE 2 Search, Experience, and Credence Properties of Quality Dimensions



In 2000, Brucks, Zeithaml en Naylor identified different dimensions of quality for the judgement of long-time application goods (supplement 2). Their scale contains the following dimensions such as ease of use, versatility, durability, serviceability, performance and prestige.