

PROMOTION HURTS BRAND PERSONALITY AND CONSUMER RESPONSES

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of promotional offers on consumer perceptions of brand personality and their subsequent behavioral intentions. Research employs a between-subjects design with two conditions: exposure to an advertisement with a promotional offer versus no offer. The results reveal that promotional offers significantly affect perceptions of several brand personality traits, notably reducing the perception of traits such as 'spirited', 'outdoorsy', and 'upper class'. Moreover, the study examines how individual differences in consumer price sensitivity and brand affinity moderate these effects, indicating that the impact of promotional offers varies across different consumer segments. Mediation analyses further demonstrate that the perceived changes in brand personality traits due to promotional offers significantly mediate the relationship between advertising conditions and consumer responses, such as willingness to pay a premium and likelihood of visiting the brand's retail outlets. These findings suggest that promotional offers can alter consumer perceptions of brand personality. This study provides essential insights for marketers on how promotional strategies can be optimized to influence consumer attitudes and behaviors effectively, offering a nuanced understanding of the interplay between promotional offers, brand personality perception, and consumer behavior.

Keywords

Brand Personality, Promotional Offerings, Consumer Behavior, Perception Value, And Marketing Strategy

1- Introduction

Brand personality is the sum of human characteristics that are associated with brands and that help them build relationships with their customers. It sets brands apart and strikes a deep chord with customers (Aaker, 1997; Keller & Richey, 2006). Identity theory-influenced research explores how consumers' choices are self-meaningful and how their behavior aligns with their essential identities (Arnett et al., 2003; Reed, 2002; Farhana, 2014). Viewed from this angle, customer-brand interactions are examined, and'me' and 'not me' are distinguished (Kleine et al., 1995). Innovative marketing methods are employed by firms to effectively engage customers and develop loyalty in the face of harsh market rivalry. Like human connections, brands are individual entities with special features that develop relationships and encourage loyalty (Becheur et al., 2017). Advertising that incorporates promotional incentives encourages client loyalty and draws in new viewers. But it's crucial to assess how they affect brand perception and consumer engagement, particularly with deal-seeking customers.

The purpose of this study is to look at how promotional offers in advertising affect consumers' perceptions of brand personality and their consequent behavioral intentions. It is postulated that the existence of promotional offers may affect consumers' perceptions of a brand's personality, hence mediating their behavioral intentions towards the brand. The hypothesis is based on theories of brand personality and consumer behavior.

Specifically, this research aims to: 1. Examine how promotional offers in advertisements affect consumers' perceptions of brand personality. 2. Assess the degree to which customer behavioral intentions and ad conditions are mediated by brand personality perception. 3. Examine the moderating impact of customer affinity for brands and pricing.

2- Literature Review

2.1- Introduction to Brand Personality

A brand's personality forms its essence, fostering emotional connections and favorable customer perceptions. Sales and engagement thrive when brands align their qualities with consumer desires, showcased through promotions and advertisements. Appiah and Ozuem (2019) emphasize the importance of market research for resonating with target audiences. Aaker's Brand Personality Framework, employing traits like seriousness and excitement, shapes brand distinctiveness and emotional connections (Becheur et al., 2017; Sheena & Naresh, 2012). Despite criticism for its US-centric bias, Aaker's taxonomy revolutionized marketing by providing a heuristic for navigating market saturation (Kim & Sullivan, 2019). Brand personality builds trust, loyalty, and advocacy by resonating with consumer values, deepening emotional connections.

2.2- Impact of Promotional Offers on Brand Perception

Through a variety of theoretical frameworks, promotional offers have a significant impact on how consumers perceive a brand:

- Economic Theory: Economic theory states that customers are logical agents that want to maximize utility (Kroes et al., 2009). Brand value and favorability are increased by discounts and promotions because they reduce perceived expenses (Levy, 1997; Zey, 2001; Redmond, 2000).
- Psychological Theories: Numerous psychological theories clarify how promotional offers affect consumers' perceptions of brands. Prospect theory encourages risk-taking and enhances brand impression, while cognitive dissonance justifies purchases (Bose & Sarker, 2012; Jonas et al., 2014; Zhang & Younghwan, 2023; Telci et al., 2011).
- Social Influence Theories: Social influence theories like social proof and compliance may also be used to understand promotional offerings. Brand popularity and attractiveness are increased by social proof and conformance (Liang et al., 2024; Gass, 2015).

Empirical studies show that promotions have a double effect on brand image: they can increase brand awareness and loyalty while also running the danger of devaluation due to excessive reductions. A balanced promotional plan is necessary to maintain brand equity (Rohmad et al., 2022; Araújo et al., 2023; Stojanović et al., 2018; Yi & Yoo, 2011). Promoting in line with the brand's personality enhances perception and trust, both of which are necessary for long-lasting client connections (Pullig et al., 2006; Choy & Kim, 2013; Loken & John, 1993).

2.3- Brand Personality and Consumer Behaviour

Through the mediation of elements like emotional connection, loyalty, distinctiveness, and brand-customer fit, brand personality has a major impact on customer behavior throughout the consumer journey (Feng et al., 2023; De La Paz Toldos-Romero & Orozco-Gómez, 2015). Brands that align with consumers' values tend to attract them because they create emotional connections, brand loyalty, and advocacy (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2020; Mostafa & Kasamani, 2020; Loureiro et al., 2012). According to Švrakić and Arslanagić-Kalajdžić (2023), brand personality plays a pivotal role as a mediator in the connection between advertisements and consumers, molding the latter's perceptions and reactions. While emotional resonance and brand identification increase the effect of the message and change attitudes and purchase intentions, consistency with brand attributes fosters trust (Coelho et al., 2019; Zhao et al., 2022; Sama, 2019). Case studies exemplify how shifts in brand personality impact consumer behavior, such as luxury firms transitioning to inclusivity, fast food restaurants targeting adventure-seeking youth, and automakers prioritizing innovation over reliability (DeAcetis, 2023; Radón, 2012; Chun & Nyam-Ochir, 2020; Qin, 2022).

2.4- Consumer Attitudes towards Pricing and Promotions

Price sensitivity has a significant impact on customers' perceptions of brands. They assess a brand's value in relation to its price, choosing competitive pricing for high-quality goods (Verma & Gupta, 2004). Marx's valuebased marketing places a strong emphasis on moral behavior that puts the needs of society and customers first (Ye et al., 2022; Gupta et al., 2020). Luxury companies use the relationship between cost and value to uphold their high standards for both project progress and pricing. Price affinity, or the propensity of customers to accept particular costs or reductions, influences how promotional offerings affect a brand's identity. Perceived value and loyalty are influenced by affinity, and customized marketing may increase brand loyalty (Morgan, 2000). Consumer views of value for money and brand personality attributes interact closely to influence attitudes and behavior toward brands. Reliability and honesty are examples of qualities that brands exhibit. These aspects create positive resonance and affinity and match customers' value judgments (Lin, 2010). High perceived quality is positively correlated with strong brand loyalty and trust, which improves perceptions of dependability and quality (Verma & Gupta, 2004). Value perceptions have a crucial role in consumer purchase choices in competitive marketplaces. Brands that are able to successfully communicate their value propositions are able to attract and retain consumers. In general, customer behavior and brand performance in the marketplace are influenced by the interaction between value perceptions and brand personality features.

2.5- Brand and Promotional Influence

Brand has several aspects, such as: behavioral loyalty shown by consistent purchases, which reflect a commitment to the brand; positive emotions, identification, and trust, which are all components of attitude loyalty and promote affinity (Bandyopadhyay & Martell, 2007); conative loyalty, which indicates a will to keep buying and supporting the brand; and brand switching behavior, which shows a persistent commitment to a brand by refusing to switch (Oliver, 1999). Depending on how committed a client is to a business, promotional offers have varying effects on them. For ardent supporters, promotions bolster their perception of value and emotional connections (Vrtaňa & Křižanová, 2023; Kim & Sullivan, 2019). Promotions bring in new customers, acquainting them with the brand and maybe establishing a lasting rapport (Casado & Erdmann, 2021). Customers who are less devoted to a brand could switch for better deals, particularly if they are price conscious (Miller et al., 2021). Effective offers increase brand value, but overzealous marketing might weaken loyalty by diluting value (Igau et al., 2013). Studies indicate that promotions draw in consumers with varying degrees of brand affinity; yet, in order to influence brand perception, they must be consistent with the personality traits of the brand (Palazn-Vidal & Delgado-Ballester, 2005). It is crucial to preserve brand uniqueness when using promotions since excessive usage of promotions without taking brand personality into account runs the danger of weakening brand identification and equity (Keller, 1993; Pullig et al., 2006). The perceived personality and affinity of a brand affects customer perception, which in turn affects how successful promotions are. Disparate messaging can reduce the impact of marketing and damage consumer confidence (Busser & Shulga, 2019).

2.6- Summary of findings, literature research gap and topic justification

Customers' brand related behavior and the development of emotional ties are greatly aided by brand personality. Promotions have two advantages, but if they don't meet a brand's core values, they run the danger of devaluing it. Consumer behavior is influenced by perceived value, brand personality consistency, and loyalty; reactions to promotions are affected by excessive loyalty dilution. Maintaining the integrity and credibility of a brand requires striking a balance between efficient marketing and brand personality upkeep. Current research, however, ignores the possible negative effects of promotions on brand engagement and personality. In order to close this gap, this study will investigate how promotions might compromise brand personality and customer involvement. It will also advance consumer psychology and marketing while revealing possible drawbacks.

3- Hypothesis

Several hypotheses were put forward in this study:

- Hypothesis 1: The presence of promotional offers within advertisements will negatively affect the perception of brand personality traits
- Hypothesis 2: The alteration in brand personality perception will mediate consumer behavioral intentionsconsumers' willingness to pay extra for the brand's products and brand store visiting intentions.
- Hypothesis 3: The negative effect of promotional offers on brand personality perceptions will be more pronounced among consumers with a high affinity for low prices
- Hypothesis 4: The negative effect of promotional offers on brand fit perceptions will be more pronounced among consumers with a high affinity for brands.

4- Methodology

Using CloudResearch controls to ensure data quality, the study enlisted a sample of 100 people using the online Mechanical Turk platform. The age range of the participants was 19–73, with a mean age of 38.8 (SD = 11.5). There were 46 females (46%), and 54 males (54%) in the gender distribution. To ensure group comparability, participants were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions: either they were exposed to an advertising with a special offer for a new apparel brand, or they weren't.

Measures:

The study used separate measurements based on Aaker's brand personality scale to evaluate the advertisement's effect on brand perception. Using a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from "Not at all descriptive" (1) to "Extremely descriptive" (7), participants rated various brand personality attributes, such as down-to-earth, honest, wholesome, daring, spirited, imaginative, up-to-date, reliable, intelligent, successful, upper-class, and charming (Aaker, 1997; Malär et al., 2011; Venable, 2005). Measures such as personal fit with the brand, emotional connection, willingness

to visit the brand's shop, and readiness to pay more for branded items were also included to assess customer attitudes and intentions. Items evaluating general opinions toward brands and pricing were also added to put these attitudes into context.

Data Analysis:

For the main effects analysis, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the main effects of the presence or absence of promotional offers on participants' perceptions of brand personality attributes and consumer attitudes and intentions. Also, moderation analyses were performed to explore the moderating effects of consumer affinity for low prices and brands on the perception of brand personality attributes. Mediation analyses were conducted to investigate the mediating effects of brand personality traits on the relationship between advertisement conditions (brand only vs. brand with promotion) and consumer responses, specifically in terms of willingness to pay extra and the likelihood of visiting the brand store.

5- Results

5.1- Main effects

The inclusion of a promotional offer in the advertisement significantly influenced perceptions of the brand's personality across several dimensions (Table 1). For the attribute 'spirited', there was a significant difference between the condition without a promotional offer ($M_{brandingonly}=5.64$, SD=1.174) and with one ($M_{withpromotionaloffe}r=4.92$, SD=1.397, F(1,95.2)=7.78, p=.006, $\eta^2=.08$). Similarly, the perception of the brand as 'outdoorsy' was significantly affected, with higher ratings in the absence of a promotional offer ($M_{brandingonly}=5.44$, SD=1.373) compared to its presence ($M_{withpromotionaloffer}=4.92$, SD=1.158, F(1,95.3)=4.19, p=.043, $\eta^2=.04$). Additionally, perceptions of the brand as 'upper class' significantly differed between conditions, with higher ratings observed without a promotional offer ($M_{brandingonly}=4.08$, SD=1.536) versus with one ($M_{withpromotionaloffer}=3.48$, SD=1.568, F(1,98)=3.73, p=.056, $\eta^2=.04$).

Variables	Mean (Branding Only)	SD	Mean (With Promotional Offer)	SD	F-statistic	p-value	η²
Spirited	5.64	1.174	4.92	1.397	7.78	0.006	0.08
Outdoorsy	5.44	1.373	4.92	1.158	4.19	0.043	0.04
Upper Class	4.08	1.536	3.48	1.568	3.73	0.056	0.04
Down-to- Earth	5.26	1.322	4.72	1.565	1.86	0.065	0.04
Honest	4.90	1.249	4.70	1.474	0.73	0.466	0.01
Wholesome	5.14	1.195	4.82	1.521	1.17	0.245	0.01
Daring	4.00	1.616	3.76	1.479	0.77	0.440	0.01
Imaginative	4.98	1.378	4.56	1.680	1.37	0.175	0.02
Up-to-Date	5.22	1.389	4.86	1.578	1.21	0.229	0.01
Reliable	4.68	1.392	4.50	1.488	0.62	0.534	0
Intelligent	4.64	1.425	4.60	1.498	0.14	0.891	0
Successful	4.64	1.481	4.34	1.636	0.96	0.339	0.01
Charming	4.80	1.309	4.62	1.652	0.60	0.547	0

Branding Only: condition without a promotional offer; With Promotional Offer: condition with a promotional offer. **Table 1: Effects of promotional offers on brand personality perception: a comparative analysis**

5.2- Modertors

Table 2 illustrates significant moderating effects of consumer affinity for low prices and love for brands on personality perception within the conditions. Specifically, a notable negative moderating effect of affinity for low prices was observed on the perception of the brand as 'Outdoorsy' ($\beta = -0.462$, p = .04194). This implies that the positive association between the brand-only condition and the perception of 'Outdoorsy' diminishes with stronger preferences for low prices. Additionally, a significant negative moderating effect of love for brands was detected on perceived personal fit with the brand ($\beta = -0.383$, p = .02990), indicating that the positive impact of the brand-only condition on perceived personal fit decreases as fondness for brands intensifies. The limited effect on specific traits was visible due to stimuli focused on boosting of an outdoor/spirited personalities of the brand.

Condition	Response Variable	Moderator	Coefficient	p-value
Brand Only vs. Brand with Promotion	Perception as 'Outdoorsy'	Affinity for Low Prices	-0.462	0.042
Brand Only vs. Brand with Promotion	Perceived Personal Fit	Love for Brands	-0.383	0.030

Branding Only: condition without a promotional offer; With Promotional Offer: condition with a promotional offer. **Table 2: Moderating Effects of Consumer Attitudes on Brand Personality Perception in Advertisement Conditions**

5.3- Mediations

The mediation analysis revealed significant effects of brand personality traits 'Spirited' and 'Outdoorsy' in mediating the relationship between advertisement conditions (brand only vs. brand with promotion) and consumer responses. Specifically, the perception of the brand as 'Spirited' negatively mediated willingness to pay extra and the likelihood of visiting the brand store. This mediation effect was robust, with an estimated effect of -4.11 and a confidence interval of [-7.99, -1.08]. Additionally, the 'Outdoorsy' trait mediated the impact on willingness to pay extra, albeit to a lesser extent, with an estimated effect of -2.37 and a confidence interval of [-5.50, -0.06]. Similarly, the likelihood of visiting the brand store was mediated by the perception of 'Outdoorsy', with an estimated effect of -0.24 and a confidence interval of [-0.59, -0.01]. These findings underscore the significant role of brand personality in shaping consumer responses to promotional advertisements.

Mediators	Response Variables	Coefficients	CI Lower	CI Upper
Spirited	Willingness to Pay Extra	-4.11	-7.99	-1.08
Spirited	Visit Brand Store	-0.50	-0.95	-0.14
Outdoorsy	Willingness to Pay Extra	-2.37	-5.50	-0.06
Outdoorsy	Visit Brand Store	-0.24	-0.59	-0.01

 Table 3: Mediating Effects of Brand Personality Traits on Advertisement Conditions and Consumer Responses

6- Discussion

This study provides valuable insights into the complex relationship between consumer behavioral intentions, brand personality perception, and promotional offers within advertisements. By analyzing main effects, moderators, and mediations, several key insights are revealed that have important ramifications for advertisers and marketers.

The inclusion of promotional offers significantly influences perceptions of brand personality across various dimensions. Notably, attributes such as 'spirited', 'outdoorsy', and 'upper class' were significantly negatively affected by the presence of promotional offers. These findings suggest that promotional offers within advertisements can shape consumers' perceptions of brand personality traits, potentially altering their overall brand image and positioning in the market ((Valette-Florence et al., 2011; Zhao et al., 2022; Luffarelli et al., 2022).

The examination of moderators unveils the nuanced role of consumer attitudes towards low prices and brands in shaping the perception of brand personality attributes (Bartsch et al., 2016; Ghorbani et al., 2022). The findings indicate that the impact of promotional offers on brand perception varies based on individual differences in affinity for low prices and brand love (or in a sense, loylty). Specifically, consumers with a stronger preference for low prices exhibit a diminished association between promotional offers and certain brand personality traits, such as 'outdoorsy (Darke & Chung, 2005). Similarly, consumers with a higher fondness for brands show a weakened relationship between promotional offers and perceived personal fit with the brand (Papadopoulou et al., 2023; Phau & Lau, 2000). These moderating effects highlight the importance of considering individual consumer characteristics when crafting advertising strategies incorporating promotional offers (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Alsharif et al., 2022; Šoštar & Ristanović, 2023).

The mediation analysis elucidates the underlying mechanisms through which brand personality traits mediate the relationship between advertisement conditions and consumer responses. Particularly, traits such as 'spirited' and 'outdoorsy' emerge as significant mediators, influencing consumers' willingness to pay extra for branded products and their likelihood of visiting the brand store. These findings suggest that brand personality traits play a pivotal role in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors, serving as intermediaries between promotional offers and consumer responses (Rather et al., 2024; Darke & Chung, 2005).

Overall, the study's findings highlight how intricately promotional offers, perceptions of company identity, and customer involvement interact. Marketers may obtain a more profound comprehension of how promotional offers impact customer perceptions and behaviors by taking into account major impacts, moderators, and mediations. This knowledge can then be utilized to drive strategic choices related to advertising and brand management. Furthermore, the knowledge gained from this study provides directions for future investigations into the dynamic character of consumers' reactions to promotional offers in various market sectors and circumstances.

7- Implications of this study

Theoretical Implications. Overall, this study's theoretical implications add to the continuing conversation in the domains of marketing and consumer behavior by providing insightful information on the processes by which promotional offers affect consumers' perceptions of brands and their ability to make decisions (Darke & Chung, 2005; Krishna et al., 1991).

Practical Implications. The study's practical implications enable advertisers and marketers to make choices that will optimize the efficacy of promotional tactics, enhance consumer connection with brands, and propel company expansion in the cutthroat retail environment of today. Findings offer valuable guidance for strategic brand positioning, carefully designing promotional offers, segmentation and targeting, consumer engagement strategies, and the effectiveness of promotional offers in influencing brand perception and consumer behavior Alsharif et al., 2022; Šoštar & Ristanović, 2023).

The influence of promotional offers in commercials on customer behavior and perceptions of brand personality is examined in this study. It discovers that brand personality traits (in this case "upper class" and "spirited") are greatly influenced by promotions, which in turn shape brand image. Customer reactions are mediated by brand personality features, whereas consumer traits mitigate this influence. In order to implement efficient advertising techniques that can improve brand positioning, encourage customer loyalty, and propel corporate success, it is crucial to match level of promotions with the perception of the brand's personality. Subsequent investigations in this field will enhance advertising strategies to conform to evolving customer requirements and inclinations.

8- Limitations of this study

Despite its insightfulness, this research has limits. Generalizability may be limited by the lack of variety and size of Mechanical Turk sample. Real-world behavior may not always be replicated in simulations. Likert scales might be biased. Brand loyalty and other factors are disregarded. Limitations are also associated with the cross-sectional design and contextual considerations. To achieve a thorough understanding, these gaps need be filled by future study.

9- Future research directions

Subsequent studies on promotional marketing ought to investigate contextual factors, refine tactics for many customer groups, and synchronize promotions with sustainability and morality. Businesses operating in complicated market environments can benefit from enhancing omnichannel strategy and identifying global best practices through the investigation of digital channels, emerging trends, and the development of new effectiveness indicators.

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Appendix

Stimuli : Brand only



Stimuli : Brand+promotion

