

The effects of perceived product-extrinsic cue incongruity on consumption experiences: The case of celebrity sponsorship

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Abstract The level of congruity is determined by the degree of match or mismatch between an object and its associated attribute. Product evaluations are positively influenced when there is moderate incongruity between a product and its association; this finding is termed the moderate schema incongruity effect (Mandler 1982). The purpose of the current study was to investigate the influence of incongruity between a product and one of its extrinsic cues on consumers' product evaluations. Furthermore, we examined the moderating role of consumers' level of product knowledge. Incongruity was created by partnering a product with a sponsor. We found that consumers who were highly knowledgeable of the product gave the highest taste evaluations to the moderately incongruent product–sponsor pairing, whereas taste evaluations for consumers with low product knowledge did not differ across product–sponsor pairings. The results of our study have important practical implications for marketers, namely that product–sponsor fit can enhance consumers' consumption experiences.

Keywords Schema · Incongruity · Fit · Consumption · Evaluation · Sponsor · Celebrity

Imagine you are in a shop looking to purchase wine. Upon inspecting the label of a classic-looking bottle of rosé more closely, you realize that it was launched by Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie (ABC News 2013). How will your perceptions of product characteristics, such as its taste (i.e., intrinsic cues), be influenced by these peripheral

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features of the brand (i.e., extrinsic cues)? Although the product's intrinsic cues (i.e., characteristics directly related to the core product, such as the wine inside the bottle) are not altered based on its celebrity sponsor (i.e., extrinsic cues that are “outside” of the product; Olson and Jacoby 1972), a large body of research suggests that consumers' subjective evaluations of a product's intrinsic cues can indeed be influenced by extrinsic cues (e.g., Mandler 1982; Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989; Peracchio and Tybout 1996). In other words, consumers' taste evaluations can be influenced by external characteristics (e.g., marketing activities), without changing product inputs or ingredients.

Celebrity sponsorship is one such marketing tool that could affect consumers' taste evaluations. Product sponsorships range from logical (e.g., Nike and Michael Jordan) to less predictable (e.g., NASCAR driver Bobby Labonte and *Passion of the Christ* film). Given the wide variety of celebrity sponsorships, the goal of the current research is to investigate whether consumers provide more favorable taste evaluations when a product's extrinsic cue (e.g., its sponsor) is more or less congruent in terms of fit with the product. Furthermore, consumers differ in both the level and nature of product knowledge; high knowledge consumers have extensive knowledge gained through product use and, in some cases, formal or informal education of the product category, whereas low knowledge consumers have rudimentary knowledge of the product category (Latour and Latour 2010). As such, consumers with more or less product knowledge rely differently on intrinsic and extrinsic cues when evaluating products (Rao and Monroe 1988). Therefore, we also examine a key moderator of the effect of congruity on consumer preferences—consumers' level of product knowledge (e.g., Fiske 1982).

By investigating the influence of perceived incongruity between a product and one of its *extrinsic cues* on taste evaluations, we provide an important contribution to both the consumer behavior and cognitive psychology literatures. First, we focus on *extrinsic cue* incongruity, rather than *intrinsic cue* incongruity, which has been the focus of previous work on this topic (Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989; Peracchio and Tybout 1996; Stayman et al. 1992). For example, Meyers-Levy and Tybout (1989) examined taste evaluations after they manipulated product description by describing a beverage as either all natural or containing preservatives (this characteristic describes the product's ingredients and, therefore, is an intrinsic cue). Instead, we manipulate a product's extrinsic cue and examine taste evaluations.

More importantly, this is the first study to examine the moderating role of product knowledge by using an objective measure of knowledge rather than using a proxy for knowledge (Peracchio and Tybout 1996). Given that consumers' knowledge level influences their reliance on extrinsic or intrinsic cues (Rao and Monroe 1988), high and low knowledge consumers' reaction to product–*extrinsic cue* incongruity could be substantially different than their reaction to product–*intrinsic cue* incongruity.

1 Literature review

Intuitively, it may seem that consumers would provide more favorable taste evaluations when the product's extrinsic cues fit in a congruent manner (e.g., Pelee Island label vs. Fat Bastard label). Indeed, the match-up hypothesis suggests that a celebrity

sponsorship positively influences consumer perceptions when the characteristics of the product are congruent with those of the brand image (Kahle and Homer 1985; Kamins 1990). However, research on schema incongruity supports a view contrary to this intuitive prediction. Consumers rate products more favorably when there is only a partial match between a product and its association compared to when there is either a complete match or a complete mismatch (Mandler 1982; Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989); this observation is termed the moderate schema incongruity effect (MSIE).

Mandler (1982) theorized that responding to different levels of schema incongruity influences one's response toward an object, such as a product. A schema is an individual's knowledge structure of an object and serves as a frame of reference in forming judgments. Activation of a schema occurs when an object stimulates a concept or feature that is stored in a consumer's memory (Cohen and Ebbesen 1979). For example, when a consumer sees a bottle of Coca-Cola, their soft drink schema is activated and concepts within this schema such as carbonation, sweet, preservatives, and cola come to mind. The level of congruity (incongruity) is determined by the degree of match (mismatch) between the attributes of an object and the related schema (Mandler 1982; Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989; Stayman et al. 1992).

Congruity occurs when an object and the activated schema match perfectly. Consumers likely perceive Coca-Cola to be congruent with their soft drink schema because the product does not possess any features that mismatch with the product category. High incongruity occurs when an object and the activated schema are a complete mismatch. Such information can only be reconciled through a fundamental change to the existing cognitive structure or simply cannot be resolved. For example, consumers likely perceive Orbitz (noncarbonated fruit-flavored beverage containing edible gelatin balls) to be highly incongruent with their soft drink schema because the brand possesses only the most general characteristics of a soft drink (non-alcoholic, highly sweetened beverage); all other product characteristics (gelatin balls) are completely incongruent with their soft drink schema. To reconcile high incongruity, consumers can redefine their soft drink schema by thinking that specialty soft drinks, like Orbitz, can contain gelatin balls (e.g., bubble tea; Mandler 1982; Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989).

Moderate incongruity occurs when an object and the activated schema are a partial match, but can be resolved successfully and easily without prompting a significant change in the consumer's existing cognitive structure. For example, consumers likely perceive Orangina to be moderately incongruent with their soft drink schema because this brand contains features that are both congruent and incongruent with their soft drink schema (carbonation and fruit juice, respectively). Resolution of moderately incongruent information is achieved by assimilating, subtyping, or activating an alternative schema. Assimilation occurs when consumers place the moderately incongruent information into their existing schema by thinking that Orangina is just another brand of soft drink. Subtyping occurs when consumers filter out incongruity and encode it as a special case, such as by thinking Orangina is a soft drink, but one that just happens to also have fruit juice. Activating an alternative schema occurs when consumers use another existing schema to understand similarities between the incongruent information and their existing schema by thinking that Orangina is not really a soft drink but more like a carbonated fruit juice (Mandler 1982; Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989).

The level of schema congruity influences both the valence (positive/negative evaluation) and degree (intense/mild evaluation) to which an individual affectively responds to the object (Mandler 1982). Consumers do not perceive congruity as surprising; therefore, congruent information results in no significant change to their current affective state. Conversely, consumers perceive both moderate and high incongruity as surprising, and the mismatch of information increases the amount of cognitive elaboration and affective arousal. Consumers easily resolve moderate incongruity, and, in turn, experience a positive affective response, which is misattributed to product evaluations. However, unlike moderate incongruity, consumers cannot easily resolve high incongruity and, in turn, experience frustration (negative affective response), which is misattributed to product evaluations (Mandler 1982; Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989; Peracchio and Tybout 1996).

In addition to perceived incongruity influencing consumers' product evaluations, it also influences how they perceive their sensations. Although consumers objectively receive information through their senses, they subjectively interpret these sensations as perceptions (Peck and Childers 2008). For example, when congruity was established between the ambient scent of a store and the product category (e.g., chocolate scent and candy products, floral scent and flowers), participants engaged in variety-seeking behavior and spent more time processing information than participants who were in an environment with an incongruent ambient scent (chocolate scent and flowers, floral scent and candy products; Mitchell et al. 1995).

2 The moderating role of consumer knowledge

Evaluating a food or beverage product does not solely depend on consumers' gustatory and olfactory perceptions of the product's intrinsic cues; consumers' product evaluations and judgments are also influenced by their level of product knowledge (Fiske 1982). High product knowledge consumers have extensive perceptual and conceptual knowledge regarding the product category, whereas low product knowledge consumers have limited perceptual and conceptual knowledge (Latour and Latour 2010). Accordingly, high knowledge (HK) and low knowledge (LK) consumers rely on extrinsic and intrinsic cues differently when evaluating products (Rao and Monroe 1988). For example, when participants evaluated wine and were provided with information about the wine's price and oak level, LK participants' evaluations were positively influenced by a greater price tag (\$5 vs. \$15 per bottle) but were not affected by oak level (0 % oak level vs. 30 % oak level). The opposite trend was observed for HK participants' evaluations (Lockshin and Rhodus 1993).

The level of product knowledge that a consumer has influences the architecture of their product schema, including the number and configuration of associations (Collins and Loftus 1975). Therefore, not all associations within a consumer's schema are created equal—some associations are more essential to their schema and are activated faster than other associations. This occurs because consumers' schema network is organized based on semantic similarity, such that the more properties two objects have in common (e.g., wine and its sponsor), the more relational links that connect these two objects. Additionally, the more an association

is related to the schema, the “shorter” the relational link (Collins and Quillian 1972). For example, in a typical consumer's wine schema, the concepts grapes and red likely have shorter relational links—that is, are more congruent—than grape jelly and yeast.

HK consumers have an extensive product schema with many associations. Congruent associations (e.g., grapes, sponsors who have a prestigious image) have shorter relational links to wine than do moderately or highly incongruent associations (e.g., grape jelly, sponsors who have a less prestigious). We expect that HK consumers have a sufficiently extensive product schema to perceive the subtle differences that lie along the congruity spectrum. Although HK consumers tend to rely more heavily on intrinsic cues when evaluating a product (Rao and Monroe 1988), they will then turn to extrinsic cues when there is no noticeable difference in intrinsic cues. In line with the MSIE, we expect that HK consumers will perceive the congruent product–celebrity pairing to be familiar and the moderately (highly) incongruent product–celebrity pairing to be novel and the discrepancy to be easy (difficult) to rationalize.

Conversely, LK consumers have a rudimentary product schema with only a few product associations. We expect that LK consumers' schema is so limited that they are unable to perceive the subtle differences along the congruity spectrum. Given that LK consumers do not perceive any differences in product–celebrity fit, we predict that LK consumers' product evaluations will not differ across different product–celebrity pairings. Thus:

- H1 HK participants will provide the highest product evaluations to the moderately incongruent product–celebrity pairing.
- H2 LK participants' product evaluations will not differ across product–celebrity pairings.

3 Study

We used wine in our study because it is an experiential product and factors other than intrinsic cues strongly affect consumers' purchasing behavior (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). In addition, there is an established questionnaire that can objectively identify consumers who are more and less knowledgeable about wine (Hughson and Boakes 2001).

We used well-known celebrity athletes as sponsors because, unlike other celebrities, they have a relatively narrow brand image given that they are strongly associated with the sport they play and little else. We had two key criteria in choosing athletes as stimuli for our study. First, we wanted to control athlete familiarity and likability. All else equal, the more a consumer is familiar with and likes a sponsor, the more positive the consumer's attitude toward the sponsored product will be (Meenaghan 2001). Second, we wanted our selected athletes to vary with regard to congruity with the product. It was expected that athletes who compete in more prestigious sports (e.g., tennis and golf) would be perceived to be more congruent with wine than athletes who compete in aggressive sports (e.g., wrestling and hockey).

A pilot study was conducted to determine a set of three athletes to be used in the study. Participants ranked, in descending order, a list of ten male athletes and a separate list of six female athletes based on their liking, familiarity, and perceived fit with wine (1=most liked/most familiar/best fit). We chose one set of three athletes, which included Vijay Singh (golfer), Jeremy Wotherspoon (speed skater), and Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson (wrestler), that met the required criteria for the main study. One-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) revealed that there was no significant difference in liking ($M_{\text{Singh}}=6.83$, $M_{\text{Wotherspoon}}=6.50$, $M_{\text{The Rock}}=7.08$; all $p>0.61$) and familiarity ($M_{\text{Singh}}=8.08$, $M_{\text{Wotherspoon}}=7.08$, $M_{\text{The Rock}}=6.67$; all $p>0.17$), but a significant difference in perceived congruity with wine among these three athletes ($M_{\text{Singh}}=3.08$, $M_{\text{Wotherspoon}}=5.83$, $M_{\text{The Rock}}=8.58$; all $p<0.01$). Participants perceived Singh to be the best match with wine and The Rock to be the worst match, with Wotherspoon in between.

4 Participants

From a medium-sized North American university and the local community, 115 participants (52 male) took part in a “Wine Evaluation Study”. In return, participants received either course credit or \$5. Participants' mean age was 22.55 years (min=19, local legal drinking age; max=64; SD=5.43).

5 Design and procedure

The experiment employed a within-subjects design with three levels of congruity (high, moderate, and low) between wine and its sponsor. Participants tasted three wine samples and each sample was associated with one of the three athletes; tasting order was counterbalanced.

At a tasting station (which included a laptop), participants were provided with three 20-ml samples of wine (unbeknownst to participants, all samples were from the same bottle), an empty cup in which to spit the wine, a cup filled with water, and a small bowl with unsalted soda crackers (Ross and Weller 2007). The experimenter informed participants that they would taste three different brands of the same grape varietal of wine. Participants were led through the experiment via computer prompts, which specified the wine–athlete pairings, the sport in which the athlete competed, and gave them proper wine tasting instructions. Participants rated the wine samples based on their taste evaluations and willingness to buy (WTB; Wszelaki et al. 2005) on a seven-point scale (seven indicating the highest taste rating), and indicated their willingness to pay in dollar value (WTP; open-ended question; Siegrist and Cousin 2009). Participants also provided their thoughts about why they thought the athletes sponsored the wine, answered demographic and lifestyle questions, and completed a wine knowledge scale (Hughson and Boakes 2001). Last, we included the pilot study items as a check for the congruity manipulation. Upon completion of the study, the experimenter offered participants a slice of cheese and crackers. Before leaving, participants were given a breathalyzer test to ensure that their blood alcohol content did not exceed the legal limit.

6 Results

Data from 14 participants were removed because they either properly guessed that all wine samples were identical or had missing data. Thus, the following analyses are based on 101 participants. There was no systematic effect of demographic or lifestyle variables so these variables are not discussed further. Given that there was no reference point for the WTP variable, participants' responses were log transformed and analyses for log(WTP) will be reported unless mentioned otherwise. The manipulation check for perceived congruity was replicated and all three athletes were significantly different from one another ($M_{\text{Singh}}=3.33$, $M_{\text{Wotherspoon}}=4.92$, $M_{\text{The Rock}}=6.67$; all $p<0.001$).

To examine H1 and H2, participants were categorized into LK ($n=64$) or HK ($n=37$) groups based on their score on the wine knowledge scale (Hughson and Boakes 2001). If participants scored above (below) the median, they were categorized as HK (LK). A mixed-model ANOVA with congruity level (low, moderate, high) as the within-subjects variable and knowledge level (low, high) as the between-subjects variable found that there was a significant interaction effect for taste evaluations ($F(2, 198)=3.38$, $p<0.04$, $\text{MSE}=1.21$; Fig. 1), WTB ($F(2, 183)=3.30$, $p<0.05$, $\text{MSE}=1.81$; Fig. 2), and log(WTP) ($F(2, 186)=3.36$, $p<0.04$, $\text{MSE}=0.01$; Fig. 3 for raw WTP data).¹

To further investigate this interaction, paired-samples t tests were conducted. For HK participants, taste evaluations for the moderately incongruent pairing ($M_{\text{HK Wotherspoon}}=4.05$) was significantly higher than their ratings for both the congruent pairing ($M_{\text{HK Singh}}=3.46$; $t(36)=2.83$, $p<0.01$) and the highly incongruent pairing ($M_{\text{HK The Rock}}=3.41$; $t(36)=2.16$, $p<0.04$). There was no significant difference between the congruent and highly incongruent pairings ($t(36)=0.19$, $p>0.85$). For LK participants, there was no significant difference across congruity levels (all $p>0.39$).

For HK participants, WTB for the moderately incongruent pairing ($M_{\text{HK Wotherspoon}}=3.51$) was significantly higher than their rating for the congruent ($M_{\text{HK Singh}}=2.86$; $t(36)=2.21$, $p<0.04$) and highly incongruent pairings ($M_{\text{HK The Rock}}=2.84$; $t(36)=1.75$, $p<0.09$). There was no significant difference between the congruent and highly incongruent pairings ($t(36)=0.09$, $p>0.92$). For LK participants, there was no significant difference across congruity levels (all $p>0.22$).

For HK participants, WTP for the moderately incongruent pairing ($M_{\text{HK Raw Wotherspoon}}=\14.95 , $M_{\text{HK Log(Wotherspoon)}}=1.14$) was significantly higher than their rating for the congruent ($M_{\text{HK Raw Singh}}=\12.62 , $M_{\text{HK Log(Singh)}}=0.08$; $t(35)=2.86$, $p<0.01$) and highly incongruent pairings ($M_{\text{HK Raw The Rock}}=\12.62 , $M_{\text{HK Log(The Rock)}}=1.09$; $t(34)=1.89$, $p<0.07$). There was no significant difference between the congruent and highly incongruent pairings ($t(34)=-0.26$, $p>0.79$). For LK participants, there was no significant difference across congruity conditions (all $p>0.21$). Results for taste evaluations, WTB, and WTP support H1 and H2 are as follows: HK participants gave the highest evaluations

¹ Different degrees of freedom are reported due to sphericity assumptions and log transformation. For taste evaluations, sphericity is assumed; however, for willingness to buy, sphericity is not assumed and therefore the Greenhouse–Geisser correction is reported. For willingness to buy, given that some participants reported that they were willing to pay \$0 for a bottle, this data was set as missing values when the raw data was log transformed and was not included in the analysis.

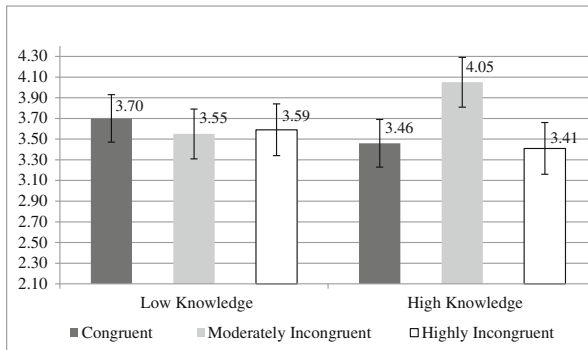


Fig. 1 Overall liking, by knowledge level

to the moderately incongruent product–extrinsic cue pairing, whereas LK participants' evaluations did not differ across congruity levels.

To rule out alternative explanations, we examined whether there was any difference in participants' sponsorship attributions across samples. A chi-square analysis of participants' responses revealed that participants were equally likely to think that the athlete–sponsors entered into the partnership because they either liked the taste of the wine or wanted to gain personal profit ($p > 0.21$). Additionally, there was no significant difference in terms of how much participants thought the athletes were paid for the sponsorship ($M_{\text{Singh}} = \$1,188,173.08$, $M_{\text{Wotherspoon}} = \$612,744.81$, $M_{\text{The Rock}} = \$565,805.95$; all $p > 0.21$). We note that this contrast might be nonsignificant because of high variance in the measure. Despite the large nominal difference in estimates, there are no statistically significant differences in participants' perceptions of pay across conditions.

7 General discussion

The goal of the current study was to determine whether participants' perceived product–celebrity fit would influence their product evaluations, and whether there would be a perceived congruity–product knowledge interaction effect. Participants tasted and evaluated three identical wine samples believing that they were different wines of the same

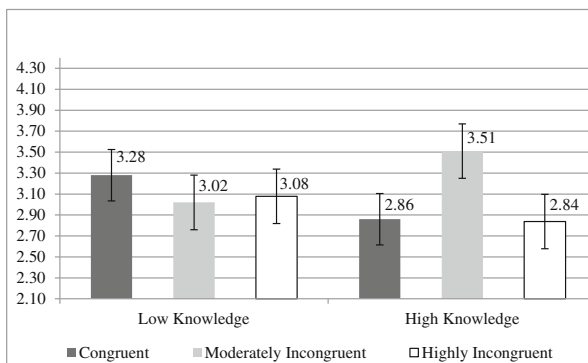


Fig. 2 Willingness to buy, by knowledge level

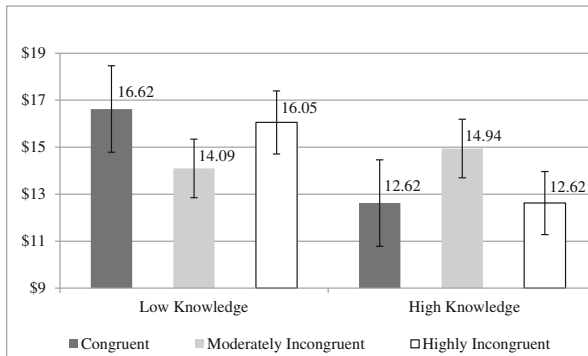


Fig. 3 Willingness to pay, by knowledge level

grape varietal sponsored by these athletes. As hypothesized, the MSIE was observed only among HK participants; these participants not only liked the moderately incongruent athlete–wine pairing the most, but were also more to buy this wine and willing to pay higher prices. On the other hand, the degree of fit between the wine and athlete–sponsor did not affect LK participants' product evaluations.

Our results suggest that HK participants have a sufficiently extensive product schema to perceive subtle differences in congruity. In the absence of any significant difference in taste (intrinsic cue) among the products, HK consumers then rely on the subtle differences in fit between the product and sponsor (extrinsic cue) to judge and evaluate the product. In line with the MSIE, we found that HK consumers gave the highest taste evaluations to the moderately incongruent product–celebrity pairing. Furthermore, our results suggest that LK consumers' product schema is too rudimentary to enable them to perceive subtle differences in congruity. Without any significant difference in intrinsic cues among the products, and without perceiving any difference in product–celebrity fit, LK consumers provide equal taste evaluations across product–celebrity pairings. Alternative explanations such as athlete pay and athlete motivations did not appear to account for the results.

8 Theoretical contributions

The current research provides an important contribution to the consumer behavior and cognitive psychology literatures. To the best of our knowledge, this research is the first to provide evidence that perceived incongruity between an extrinsic product cue and a focal product influences consumers' product evaluations. Extant literature that has investigated the MSIE on taste evaluations has only manipulated *intrinsic* cue incongruity (Allen et al. 2008; Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989; Peracchio and Tybout 1996). Additionally, the current study is one of two, to our knowledge, that has measured participants' product knowledge and provided participants with a sample of the product to consume (Peracchio and Tybout 1996). To this end, our study extends the current understanding of the MSIE. Peracchio and Tybout (1996) found that only *LK* participants demonstrated the MSIE when incongruity was created between a focal product and one of its *intrinsic* cues (i.e., product description). Conversely, our

results showed that only *HK* participants demonstrated the MSIE when incongruity was created between a focal product and one of its *extrinsic* cues (i.e., sponsor).

The difference in results might have emerged due to several reasons. One is that extrinsic and intrinsic cues are inherently different and provide consumers with different product information (Rao and Monroe 1988). Therefore, it is unlikely that consumers' reaction to product–intrinsic cue incongruity is the same as their reaction to product–extrinsic cue incongruity. Second, high and low product knowledge consumers rely differently on intrinsic and extrinsic cues when assessing product quality and evaluating products (Lockshin and Rhodus 1993; Rao and Monroe 1988). Given that there was no difference in intrinsic cues across products, HK consumers noticed the subtle differences in extrinsic cues and evaluated product pairings based on this difference.

Last, Peracchio and Tybout (1996) used gender as a proxy for product knowledge; this categorization method could explain the discrepancies with our results. These authors categorized women as highly knowledgeable about dessert/cake products and men as less knowledgeable. However, Peracchio and Tybout (1996) also found that female participants were more preoccupied about their weight compared to male participants. Although the MSIE can have a powerful impact on product evaluations, it is a subtle stimulus, and its effect can “disappear” in the presence of other stronger stimuli. Therefore, using cake as the study's focal product and describing it as a high-calorie dessert, coupled with female participants' preoccupations of calories likely “overpowered” the effect of schema incongruity on female participants' product evaluations. Our study, on the other hand, used a well established and objective measure of product knowledge, rather than gender split for a proxy of product knowledge. We used Hughson and Boakes' (2001) wine knowledge test to measure participants' product knowledge and to categorize participants into low and high knowledge groups. Hughson and Boakes (2001) found support that their measurement items effectively discriminate between wine novices and wine experts.

9 Managerial implications

The results of our study have implications for marketers—especially marketers of experiential products and services. We found that, when sponsor liking and familiarity was controlled, the relative product–celebrity fit is a highly diagnostic cue in consumers' evaluations, particularly for high product knowledge consumers. Therefore, it is important to a company's bottom line to understand the effect of incongruity on consumers' preferences. When consumers' consumption experiences are positively enhanced by perceived moderate incongruity, they are more satisfied with the product, and are more likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth and become repeat purchasers (Newman and Werbel 1973).

However, one caveat for marketers is to avoid the temptation to manipulate a celebrity's “natural” association to become moderately incongruent with the brand. When consumers are provided with information about a celebrity's personal life, or are reminded about how little they know about a celebrity, consumers' celebrity evaluations are negatively affected (Sanbonmatsu et al. 2012). Therefore, if marketers attempt to tweak a celebrity sponsor's image, they may actually do more harm than good, and is worth studying in the future.

10 Directions for future research

Future research might explore the impact of order of product consumption and presentation of extrinsic cue information on product evaluations. For example, would consumers' product evaluations differ based on whether congruent/incongruent information is presented before or after consumption? Extant research suggests that when consumers are given congruent information prior to tasting, they assimilate this information into their consumption experience and give positive evaluations. However, when the same information is provided after tasting, participants contrast this information against their consumption experience and give negative evaluations. Similarly, when consumers are given incongruent information before sampling, they assimilate this into their consumption experience and give negative evaluations; however, when the same information is provided after tasting, participants contrast this with their consumption experience and give positive evaluations (Wilcox et al. 2011).

Future research could generalize our results by examining the influence of extrinsic cue incongruity using products other than wine, and sponsors other than athletes. Using other experiential products, such as chocolate, perfume, music, and movies, would likely lead to promising results. Additionally, other celebrities who have a narrow brand image, such as musicians and media personalities, may replicate our results.

The current findings extend the understanding of perceived extrinsic cue incongruity–product knowledge interaction on taste evaluations. We show that only consumers who possess high product knowledge demonstrate the MSIE and give the highest taste evaluations when there is some mismatch between the product and its extrinsic cue. Understanding the role of perceived moderate incongruity on sensory evaluations will enable marketers to enhance consumers' product evaluations and purchase behavior toward their brand.

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