The Effect of Multiple Co-branding: An Exploration through Associative Learning Theory

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ABSTRACT

Co-branding is a popular strategy employed by many companies, some examples being Mercedes-Benz cars with interiors designed by Giorgio Armani and Lining shoes with Michelin rubber soles. The latest trend is for brands to co-branding their products not once but with several brands in succession or simultaneously, such as HP with Intel, AMD, and Vivian Tam. However, research on the effects of multiple co-branding is scant. This thesis extends the co-branding research to encompass multiple co-branding, and specifically looks at co-branding intensity (CI) from the associative learning perspective. The position of a brand in a co-branding (CP) scenario is suggested to moderate the relationship between CI and consumer evaluation of the constituent brands in a co-branding relationship. The results of two studies suggest that CI and CP have an effect on consumer evaluations of the constituent brands, and that the evaluation of the secondary brand is more likely to involve an exemplar-based learning process that benefits from multiple co-branding in similar sets, whereas the evaluation of primary brands is more likely to involve an adaptive learning process. The implications for future research are also discussed.
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