VIEWING ADS THROUGH ROSE-COLORED GLASSES:
THE PERSUASIVE EFFECTS OF SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS IN PRODUCT AND
ADVOCACY ADVERTISING

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ABSTRACT

CHRISTINA VALERIE MALIK: Viewing Ads Through Rose-Colored Glasses: The Persuasive Effects of Self-Brand Connections in Product and Advocacy Advertising (Under the direction of Sriram Kalyanaraman)

Consumers’ affiliations with brands can run much deeper than merely holding favorable or unfavorable attitudes. In fact, consumers can form complex relationships with certain brands and use them to meet self-definitional needs and construct identity (e.g., Escalas & Bettman, 2003). When a relationship develops between a consumer and a brand, a self-brand connection (SBC) can form. SBCs comprise the extent to which a brand has been integrated into one’s self-concept (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Two studies were conducted to further understand the role of SBCs in the processing of advertising messages and the findings suggest that SBCs influence information processing and persuasion in novel ways.

Specifically, two experiments were run to explore the role of SBCs in the processing of advertising messages – one in the context of traditional product advertising and the other in the context of advocacy advertising. The first study employed a 2 (SBC strength: strong, weak) X 2 (product attribute importance: important, unimportant) X 2 (task importance: high, low) between-subjects factorial experiment to explore the role of SBCs in the processing of traditional product advertising within the theoretical framework of the heuristic-systematic model (HSM; Chaiken, 1980). The second study builds on the first study to understand the persuasive effects of SBCs in advocacy advertising within the theoretical framework of the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM; Friestad & Wright, 1994) by employing a 2 (SBC
strength: strong, weak) X 2 (brand-cause congruency: congruent, incongruent) plus control (nonprofit source) between-subjects factorial experiment.

As predicted, across both studies, SBCs were found to have direct persuasive effects on several brand- and product/cause-related dependent variables. Furthermore, these studies suggest that SBCs can have the power to overcome two important barriers to persuasion – unimportant product attributes in product advertising and consumer suspicion of advocacy advertising. The findings from study one suggest that SBCs encouraged the defense-motivated processing of product-related information such that strong SBCs resulted in persuasion regardless of the importance of the product attributes presented in the advertisement. The findings from study two suggest that strong SBCs can reduce consumer suspicion of advocacy advertising resulting in increased persuasion. As expected, this effect was amplified when the brand and the cause were incongruent (e.g., a fast-food restaurant promoting physical fitness activity). Across the two experiments, perceived advertiser credibility was found to mediate the relationship between SBC strength and persuasion on certain outcome variables.

Overall, this dissertation offers evidence that brands, specifically self-brand connections, matter in persuasive communications. Furthermore, these studies explore the processes through which such persuasion occurs within the context of two types of advertising messages: product advertisements and advocacy advertisements. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed, and recommendations are made regarding future research.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND SELF-BRAND CONNECTIONS

From the first time that Frank and Sally met, they knew that they had something in common. As usual, Frank was proudly wearing a Nike t-shirt and sneakers. Sally was proudly displaying a Nike sticker on her notebook and wearing a baseball cap displaying a large Nike logo. For Frank and Sally, Nike is not just a sneaker brand. It is a part of their self-concept and they use the brand to communicate their identity to themselves and to others.

A few weeks ago, Frank and Sally carefully viewed an advertisement for a new Nike sneaker, but they found that the product description in the advertisement included product attributes that were unimportant...Who cares if the sneaker has colored shoelaces? Will the ad be ineffective due to the less-than-compelling description of the product or will Frank and Sally’s strong connection to Nike result in persuasion regardless of the product attributes presented in the advertisement?

Later that week, Frank and Sally were flipping through a magazine with Sally’s best friend, Pat, who has no connection with the Nike brand. The three of them viewed another advertisement sponsored by Nike. This advertisement promoted physical fitness activity as a way to reduce one’s risk of cardiovascular disease, without promoting any Nike products. Pat was suspicious of Nike’s motives behind creating this advertisement (“Is Nike just trying to make money by promoting a pro-
social health issue?""). Will Sally and Frank share Pat’s suspicion of Nike’s possible ulterior motives or will their strong connection to the brand attenuate such suspicion? Overall, will Frank and Sally be more persuaded by this advertisement than Pat?

Introduction

As this narrative illustrates, people can form deep connections with brands and such self-brand connections may influence the processing of persuasive messages that are sponsored by those brands. It is widely accepted that brands have become a ubiquitous presence in American culture, with the power to shape society and persuade individuals (e.g., Aaker, 1991, 1996; Evans & Hastings, 2008; Keller, 1993). Recent scholarship has shown that one particularly important way in which brands influence persuasion is via the complex connections that consumers form with certain brands, and that these relationships can not just aid purchase decisions, but also be used to meet self-definitional needs and construct identity (Aaker, 1997; Ball & Tasaki, 1992; Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Kleine, Kleine, & Kernan, 1993; Richins, 1994).

Escalas and Bettman (2003) developed a self-brand connection (SBC) scale, which captures this construct. While people may have associations with a plethora of brands, the SBC construct posits that brand associations are more meaningful when they are linked to the self. Escalas and Bettman (2003) conceptualized and operationalized SBCs as the extent to which a consumer has incorporated a brand into his or her self-concept. Thus, SBCs capture an important part of a consumer’s construction of the self and may influence subsequent attitudes and behaviors regarding the brand and its products.
Interestingly, a substantial body of scholarship on self-brand connections has explored SBCs as a dependent variable. This body of research has contributed greatly to the literature by exploring the various conditions under which people are likely to form self-brand connections. However, less is known about the impact of self-brand connections on the processing of persuasive messages. In other words, research has identified several conditions under which SBCs are likely to be formed, but comparatively little scholarship has explored the effects of SBCs once they have been developed and are stored in the consumer’s memory.

The aim of the following studies was to further the understanding of the influence of self-brand connections in the processing of advertising messages by exploring SBCs as an independent variable. This approach provides the opportunity to build on the heuristic-systematic model (HSM; Chaiken, 1980) and the persuasion knowledge model (PKM; Friestad & Wright, 1994) to explore the impact of SBCs on information processing and, ultimately, persuasion.

Specifically, study one explored the effects of SBC strength on the information processing of an advertisement promoting a consumer product (an advertisement for sneakers) when either unimportant or important product attributes are presented in the ad. Study two, explored the role of SBC strength in the processing of an advocacy advertisement that promoted a pro-social health issue (participation in physical fitness activity), especially when the brand was incongruent with the cause (e.g., a fast food brand sponsoring advertising that promotes physical fitness behavior). In summary, these studies proposed several persuasive effects of SBCs and posited that strong SBCs may overcome some
traditional barriers to persuasion (e.g., unimportant product attributes in product advertising and consumer suspicion of an advertiser’s motives in advocacy advertising).

The remainder of this chapter reviews the literature regarding SBCs and, based on this literature, hypotheses are presented. Chapter Two describes the theoretical framework (HSM), hypotheses, method, and results for study one. Chapter Three describes the theoretical framework (PKM), hypotheses, method, and results for study two. Chapter Four concludes by discussing the overall findings from this dissertation and its theoretical and practical implications. Finally, the limitations of this dissertation and proposed directions for future research are presented.

Self-Brand Connections

Defining Brands

As large factories began mass-producing consumer goods during the mid-19th century, brands were developed to differentiate parity products and show ownership. Like their name sake “brandr” – meaning to burn, as exemplified by livestock that are marked by their owners through the process of the branding of the owner’s identification symbol onto their hides (Tennent, 1994) – brands were initially little more than names or symbols physically marked or “branded” on packaging to distinguish one product from another. In fact, the American Marketing Association (AMA) still defines brand as “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers, and to differentiate them from those of other competitors” (American Marketing Association, n.d.).

However, the academic literature regarding brands renders this definition incomplete. Modern brands have become much more than simple names or symbols – they are powerful
and persuasive marketing tools laden with social, cultural, and personal meaning (Fournier, 1998; McCracken, 1986). Given the understanding that a brand is a more complex concept than originally considered, the academic literature defines brand in terms of the collection of assets (e.g., brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand equity, brand associations) that are linked to a brand’s name and symbol (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). A subset of this literature explores brands in terms of the relationships that consumers form at both the individual and community level (e.g., Fournier, 1998; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001).

Central to these conceptualizations of brands is the notion that a brand is not merely an external name or symbol, but is comprised of distinct knowledge structures and psychological associations in a consumer’s mind that are influenced by both personal experience (e.g., how much do I like the brand’s products?) and cultural context (e.g., what types of people use this brand?). This consumer-centric approach posits that a person’s relationship with a brand is comprised of a collection of associations, which are created based on the consumer’s interpretation of the multiple dimensions of that brand. Thus, while companies spend billions of dollars each year to define and communicate a certain brand message to the audience, consumer perceptions of a brand are contingent on their interpretation of that information (Aaker, 1996).

Within the literature, there is a conceptual distinction made between the identity of a company and the identity of a company’s brand(s). For example, Bhattacharya and Sen (2003, p. 76) state that “…whereas brands are often emblematic of their producing organizations, a brand’s identity (e.g., Marlboro cigarettes) is often distinct from that of the company (e.g., Phillip Morris).” Furthermore, Agenti and Druckenmiller (2004) specify that a corporate brand spans an entire company and conveys expectations of what the company
will deliver in terms of products, services, and the customer experience. A corporate brand can have multiple underlying brands, each of which may have distinct brand attributes. For example, Unilever is a corporate brand whose disparate underlying brands include Axe, Dove, Slim-Fast, and Hellman’s, among several others. While the distinction between a corporate brand and its underlying brands is an important one, research has shown that consumers can form deep connections with both brands (e.g., SBC; Escalas & Bettman, 2003) and their parent companies (e.g., C-C Identification; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003).¹

Consumer-Brand Relationships

Consumers’ relationships with brands are relational in nature. The way in which consumers form relationships with brands is similar to the formation of interpersonal relationships between humans (Fournier, 1998). Like interpersonal relationships, consumer-brand relationships form over time and are based on multiple personal interactions between the consumer and the brand (Escalas, 2004). During these interpersonal (e.g., using a brand’s products) and mediated brand-encounters (e.g., watching a commercial for the brand on TV), brand associations form and become stored in memory. Thus, the potential influence that a brand may have on a consumer is rooted in the type, strength, and valence of the associations that are stored in the consumer’s memory about the brand (Fournier). These brand associations can lead to the formation of a relationship between the consumer and the brand (Fournier).

¹ It appears that the same theoretical constructs (e.g., social identity theory) inform both literatures, the psychological processes underlying both types of connections are similar, and both connections with brands and connections with parent companies result in analogous outcomes (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Thus, in the interest of parsimony, this dissertation addresses these two concepts together and refers to both parent brands and a corporation’s underlying brands as “brands.”
Under some circumstances, the brand associations may be based on utilitarian qualities such as product value, consistency, and convenience (e.g., “I have a favorable attitude toward Starbucks because it is located on campus and easy for me to go to before class.”), while in other situations there is a higher-order connection, such as a SBC, that can form between a consumer and a brand (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Escalas & Bettman, 2003). When these high-order connections occur, a brand goes beyond fulfilling a mere utilitarian need (e.g., an eighty-year-old women who has never stepped foot on a motorcycle buying and wearing a Harley Davidson leather jacket because it was on sale and it keeps her warm), and can satiate a psychological need within the consumer (e.g., a biker wearing a Harley Davidson leather jacket to show that he is free-spirited and tough).

Several scholars posit that the most powerful of these higher-order consumer-brand connections occur when a person identifies with a brand in such a way that they link that brand to their construction of self (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Escalas, 2004). Thus, during relationship formation, some brands become directly associated with one’s identity (Escalas, 2004). When a brand becomes integrated into a consumer’s self-concept in this way, a self-brand connection (SBC) is formed (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). In other words, the SBC construct captures the extent to which a consumer has integrated a particular brand into his or her identity (e.g., this brand is a part of who I am; this brand is a part of who I want to be).

**Antecedents to SBC Formation**

There are several factors that contribute to the likelihood of strong SBC formation. Since SBCs are linked to a person’s self-concept, these connections are unique to each individual’s relationship with each brand. For example, SBCs are more likely to form when
the image or personality of a brand is directly related to the consumer’s personal experience with that brand and when the brand fulfills a psychological need in the consumer (Escalas, 2004). Brands can fulfill the psychological need for creating, maintaining, and communicating one’s self. Research has found that brand connections are more likely to form when the consumer perceives a brand to be aligned with their self-image (e.g., Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Escalas and Bettman (2003) found that SBCs are more likely to form when consumers have a strong association between a reference group and a particular brand and when they imagine that the prototypical user of a brand is very similar to either their actual or desired self-concept. Furthermore, this study found that people who were motivated to enhance their self-concepts formed SBCs with brands that are used by reference groups they aspire to belong to, but, when people were motivated to verify their self-concept, they formed SBCs with brands used by reference groups that that they already belonged to.

While people form SBCs with brands to fulfill their need to align with a particular social group, Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) propose that people may also use brands to distinguish themselves from others. Therefore, the more distinctive consumers perceive a brand’s identity to be on a particular trait they value, the more likely they are to use that brand to fulfill their need for self-distinctiveness, and the stronger the connection will be between that consumer and that brand.

While very limited research has explored the amount of effort required for SBC formation to take place, some research suggests that the process of SBC formation may require little cognitive effort. Escalas (2004) found that the narrative processing of an advertisement encouraged SBC formation with the brand sponsoring the ad. This study suggests that SBC formation may occur in a somewhat automatic manner that does not
require a substantial amount of cognitive resources. Thus, it is possible that people may form SBCs during brief brand encounters (e.g., under conditions of low motivation or during incidental brand exposure) as long as the brand fulfills some self-definitional need of the consumer.

**Effects of SBCs**

Few studies have explored the effects of self-brand connections on information processing and persuasion. Scholarship that has examined the effects of SBCs in a persuasion context has shown that SBCs can foster meaningful brand-consumer relationships and can influence consumers’ attitudes and behaviors. Strong SBCs have been found to be positively related to favorable brand attitudes and purchase intentions (Escalas, 2004; Moore & Homer, 2007).

In a study by Escalas (2004), participants viewed storyboards for advertisements for several brands. The study found that there was a positive relationship between SBC strength and attitudes toward the brand. Furthermore, there was also a positive relationship between SBC strength and purchase intention. In other words, when participants formed a stronger SBC, they were more likely to evaluate the brand as more favorable and indicated that they were more likely to purchase the product that was advertised. Similarly, a survey by Moore and Homer (2007) found a positive relationship between SBC strength and brand attitudes. Both of these studies have provided evidence that SBCs can have favorable outcomes on several marketing-related measures (e.g., attitudes toward the brand, purchase intention).

Based on this literature, the following hypotheses are presented for both studies one and two. (For a summary of all hypotheses pertaining to study one and study two, see Table 1 on page 89).
**H1 (study one) & H13 (study two):** Strong SBCs will result in more favorable attitudes toward the brand than weak SBCs.

**H2 (study one) & H14 (study two):** Strong SBCs will result in more favorable attitudes toward the advertisement than weak SBCs.

**H3 (study one) & H15 (study two):** Strong SBCs will result in greater purchase intentions than weak SBCs.

Limited research has explored the effects of brand connections on a consumer’s promotion of the brand and its products to others or a consumer’s willingness to display brand markers (e.g., a t-shirt with the brands logo). Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) proposed that the more consumers identify with a brand, the more likely they are to promote that brand and its products to others and physically adopt company markers (e.g., wearing the brand’s logo), but these propositions have not received much empirical examination or attention. Based on this literature, the following hypotheses are proposed for study one.

**H4:** Strong SBCs will result in the positive promotion of the product to others.

**H5:** Strong SBCs will result in the positive promotion of the brand to others.

**H6:** Strong SBCs will be result in the adoption of brand markers.
Perceived Advertiser Credibility

Research has shown that credibility (or perceived credibility) influences attitudes and persuasion (see Metzger, Flanagin, Eyal, Lemus, & McCann, 2003). Within the framework of dual process theories, evidence suggests that a credible source is perceived as more persuasive than a noncredible source, particularly under low involvement conditions (e.g., Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). A brand that sponsors an advertisement is likely to be considered the source of the message, and a person who has a strong connection to that brand is likely to also consider that brand to be credible. In the context of the current study, it is reasonable to expect strong SBCs to foster increased perceptions of credibility. In addition, perceived advertiser credibility is expected to mediate the relationship between SBC strength and product-related dependent variables (purchase intention and the promotion of the product to others).

**H7:** The relationship between SBC strength and purchase intention will be mediated by perceived advertiser credibility.

**H8:** The relationship between SBC strength and promotion of the product to others will be mediated by perceived advertiser credibility.
CHAPTER 2

STUDY ONE

Introduction

Chapter one provided a review of the literature regarding brands and, specifically, SBCs. Based on this literature, hypotheses regarding the main effects of SBC strength on several dependent variables were presented. Building on the SBC literature, this chapter details study one of this dissertation. Study one is a 2 (SBC strength: strong, weak) X 2 (product attribute importance: high, low) X 2 (task importance: high, low) between-subjects factorial design. The aim of this study is to explore the effects of SBC strength within the theoretical framework of the HSM. This framework allows for the further understanding of the effects of SBCs on the information processing of an advertisement promoting a consumer product (e.g., an advertisement for sneakers) when either unimportant or important product attributes are presented in the ad. Furthermore, the effects of SBC strength and product attribute importance are studied under conditions of both high and low task-importance to determine if involvement with the message impacts the type of processing that occurs.

Bhattacharya & Sen (2003) proposed that consumer-brand identification may impact a consumer’s resilience to negative information about the company or its products. The authors suggested that a strong relationship with a brand would result in the consumer potentially downplaying or overlooking negative information, especially when the negative information is relatively minor. The authors suggest that identification with a company may
cause a consumer to view the company with compassion and, therefore, minimize or forgive the company’s flaws or mistakes.

Previous research has found that brand names can serve as heuristics. Therefore, under conditions of high-task-importance, persuasion was based primarily on the product attributes presented in a message, not brand name information. For instance, Maheswaran, Mackie, and Chaiken (1992) found that products with important attributes were evaluated more favorably than products with unimportant attributes, regardless of the brand of the product. However, it is plausible that consumers may overlook or justify unimportant product attributes if they have a strong connection to the brand and, thus, persuasion may occur despite the unimportant product attributes presented in an advertisement. In this study, I proposed that SBCs may influence the way in which consumers’ process product-related information and, ultimately, persuasion.

Theory and Hypotheses

The Heuristic-Systematic Model

While scholars have proposed numerous dual process theories (see Chaiken & Trope, 1999, for review), the Heuristic Systematic Model (HSM) is one of the predominant frameworks employed in attitude research (Chaiken et al., 1989; Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999). Dual process frameworks generally suggest that information processing occurs along a continuum with deliberate, controlled, and effortful processing at one extreme, and processing that requires minimal effort and limited cognitive capacity at the other (Moskowitz, Skurnik, & Galinsky, 1999). The HSM, like other dual process theories, posits that people process information via two routes. During heuristic processing, one conserves cognitive resources by making judgments based on cues (e.g., brand name or logo) rather
than the careful scrutiny of the arguments within a message (Maheswaran et al., 1992). During systematic processing, one is able and motivated to process a message carefully and persuasion is based primarily on the strength of the arguments in the message – not cues such as brand name or logo (Chaiken & Trope, 1999). Existing research has consistently demonstrated that attitudes based on heuristic processing are less predictive of behavioral intentions than attitudes formed via the systematic route (Petty & Wegener, 1999).

Conversely, attitudes based on systematic processing tend to be long lasting and more predictive of behavioral intention (Petty & Wegener). The HSM also suggests that systematic and heuristic routes of processing can be used in tandem, as long as the person is motivated and able to do so (Chaiken, 1980; Chaiken, Liberman, & Eagly, 1989).

**Heuristic processing.** Chen and Chaiken (1999) posit that heuristic processing takes minimal cognitive effort on the part of the perceiver. Thus, when task involvement is low, people are likely to rely on heuristic processing, in which cues in the message activate heuristics that are used to evaluate the message (Chen & Chaiken). Heuristics are judgmental rules or simple decision rules that are previously learned, stored in memory, and are activated during heuristic processing (Chen & Chaiken). Cues in a message can serve as heuristics when there is an applicable decision rule that is available in memory and easily accessible. For example, an expert source can serve as a heuristic cue. The presence of an expert source may activate the decision rule that “an expert’s statements can be trusted.” Thus, a person may positively evaluate information presented by an expert without systematically and carefully evaluating all of the information that is being presented in the message (Chaiken, Liberman & Eagly, 1989). As this example illustrates, during heuristic
processing, people make evaluations based on a sufficiently minimal amount of information (Chen & Chaiken; Eagly & Chaiken, 2005).

In order for a heuristic rule to be effective, the heuristic must be available, accessible, and applicable (Chen & Chaiken, 1999). The availability of a particular heuristic refers to whether or not the heuristic is stored in memory. In order for heuristic processing to take place, one must have previously learned the heuristic to use it. Provided that the heuristic is available, it must also be accessible. Chen and Chaiken discuss accessibility as the activation potential of stored knowledge. Thus, to apply a heuristic, the activation potential of the knowledge structure that contains that heuristic must reach a certain threshold and be activated. Heuristics can be activated by internal factors such as being used often and, therefore, becoming chronically accessible, or by external factors, such as activation from exposure to a cue in a message (e.g., brand name or logo). If a particular heuristic is easily accessible, it is more likely to be used and may be more likely to increase confidence which, in turn, may decrease one’s need for systematic processing. In other words, heuristics that easily come to mind may result in the decreased need for systematic processing to obtain adequate judgmental confidence (Chen & Chaiken).

Provided that a heuristic is available and accessible, it must also be applicable to the context. Applicability refers to a person’s judgment regarding whether or not the particular heuristic should be applied in the given context (Chen & Chaiken, 1999). A person judges the applicability of a heuristic based on the match between the heuristic and the situation, the extent to which the particular heuristic has been used in other similar contexts, and the user’s perceived reliability of the heuristic (Chen & Chaiken).
Brand names and logos can act as heuristic cues when they are available, accessible, and applicable to the situation. Maheswaran et al. (1992) suggest that knowledge structures such as brand name can generate expectations about a product by providing diagnostic information about the product’s likely quality. Maheswaran et al. manipulated the valence of the brand name (favorable or unfavorable brand) and found that, when heuristic processing occurred (low-task-importance conditions), people invoked a heuristic such as “if the brand name has a good reputation, then the product must be of good quality” and people relied on the brand name to make their product evaluations rather than expending the cognitive effort to carefully process the product attribute information.

Central to this dissertation is the concept that when a person forms a SBC with a particular brand, the associations stored in memory directly link the brand to that person’s self-concept (Escalas, 2004). Therefore, a cue in a message that is related to a SBC (e.g., brand name and logo) may evoke a heuristic (e.g., “If this brand is me, then its products are for me”). Due to the fact that people are motivated to believe favorable thoughts about their identity (Baumeister, 1998), people are likely to favorably evaluate brands (and the brand’s products) with which they have a strong SBC.

Systematic processing. While heuristic processing is implemented as a low-effort, efficient method of making judgments based on the application of simple decision rules that are stored in memory, systematic processing involves a careful and effortful scrutiny of the information presented in a message. The HSM predicts that, when people are motivated and able to carefully process a message, they will engage in systematic processing and evaluations will be based on careful analysis of the information in the message (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Existing research has consistently shown that
attitudes based on systematic processing are longer lasting and more predictive of behavioral
intentions than attitudes based on heuristic processing (Petty & Wegener, 1999).

In messages about consumer products, the judgment-relevant information in the
message often takes the form of product attributes. Previous studies that have looked at
product evaluations within the HSM framework have manipulated the strength of the
judgment-relevant information in the message by providing either important or unimportant
product attributes (Maheswaran, et al., 1992). This research found that, when people
systematically process a message, they evaluate the product based on the attributes that are
provided (e.g., a cordless phone that has a special interference reducing circuit) not the cues
in the message (e.g., brand name or logo). In other words, when motivated (e.g., high-task-
importance), people evaluate a product with important product attributes as more favorable
than the product with unimportant product attributes, regardless of the consumer’s
favorability of the brand.

Based on this research regarding heuristic and systematic processing, the following
hypotheses are presented:

**H9:** There will be an interaction between task importance and SBC strength
such that SBC strength will exert a greater influence on product evaluations
when task importance is low than when task importance is high.

**H10:** There will be an interaction between task importance and product
attribute importance such that product attribute importance will exert a
stronger influence on product evaluations when task importance is high than when task importance is low.

*The co-occurrence of heuristic and systematic processing.* Central to the HSM is the idea that both systematic and heuristic processing can co-occur. Fundamental to this concept is the premise that, while people want to limit their cognitive effort, they are also motivated to make confident judgments (Chen & Chaiken, 1999). The HSM proposes that there is a judgmental confidence continuum with a person’s actual confidence at one end and their desired level of confidence at the other. The desired level of confidence that one needs to meet to be sufficiently confident in their judgment is called the sufficiency threshold. If able, people will use cognitive effort until their sufficiency threshold is reached indicating that the gap has closed between their actual and desired levels of confidence. To be cognitively efficient, people are likely to first rely on low-effort, heuristic processing. However, when one’s sufficiency threshold is increased (i.e., when the task is important, or, when there is a decrease in one’s confidence) one is likely to also engage in systematic processing in an effort to make a more confident judgment (Chen & Chaiken). In other words, people who are motivated and able to make accurate judgments will exert as much cognitive energy as is needed to process information until they reach a sufficient degree of confidence in their judgment.

When systematic and heuristic information result in congruent judgments and both paths exert influence on persuasion, their effect is compounded, as predicted by the additivity hypothesis of the HSM. A study by Maheswaran et al. (1992) found additivity effects when participants were asked to evaluate a cordless phone after viewing a booklet about the
product. In a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ (Task Importance X Brand Name Valence X Product Attribute Importance) experiment, participants were randomly assigned to one of eight conditions. Each participant was given a booklet that included the task importance manipulation, as well as product information about a cordless telephone. The first page of the booklet contained the task importance manipulation. In the high-task-importance conditions, participants read that the telephone would soon be available in their area and the manufacturer was interested in their opinions as potential customers. They were also told that they were one of a select number of people whose opinions were very important. In the low-task-importance conditions, participants were informed that they were part of a large opinion survey, their responses were not very important, and the product would not be available in their area. The second page of the booklet contained information about the brand, which served as the brand valence manipulation. Subjects read five product attributes that were either important or unimportant, as determined by a pretest, which served as the product attribute importance manipulation.

Maheswaran et al. (1992) found that when the judgment formed via the heuristic processing of the brand name was congruent with the judgment that resulted from systematic processing of the product attributes (favorable brand/important attributes or unfavorable brand/unimportant attributes), motivated participants (i.e., high-task-importance conditions) based their product evaluations on both heuristic and systematic processing. Thus, when cognitive resources are available and a heuristic-cue (e.g., brand name) is congruent with

\[ \text{Brand name valence was determined via a pretest. AT&T was determined to be the favorable brand and Cobra was determined to be the unfavorable brand.} \]
other available judgment-relevant information (e.g., product attributes) the additivity effect is demonstrated (Chen & Chaiken, 1999; Maheswaran et al., 1992).

Alternatively, when a heuristic/cue (e.g., brand name) is incongruent with other available judgment-relevant information (e.g., product attributes), attenuation effects are likely to occur (Chaiken et al., 1989). When attenuation effects occur, judgments that result from systematic processing reduce the impact of heuristic processing. In the Maheswaran et al. (1992) study discussed above, attenuation effects occurred when judgments resulting from heuristic processing of the brand name were incongruent with the judgments formed from by the systematic processing of the product attributes (favorable brand name/unimportant attributes or unfavorable brand name/important attributes). In these conditions, product evaluations were based on the systematic processing of the product attributes. The judgments resulting from heuristic processing of the brand name were attenuated by those formed via further systematic processing of the product attributes.

In summary, Maheswaran et al. (1992) found that, under conditions of high-task-importance, participants engaged in both heuristic and systematic processing to reach a sufficient level of confidence that their product evaluations were accurate. In congruent conditions (favorable brand/important attributes or unfavorable brand/unimportant attributes), product evaluations aligned with both the favorability of the brand the importance of product attributes. In incongruent conditions (favorable brand name/unimportant attributes or unfavorable brand name/important attributes), product evaluations were determined by the strength of the product attributes.
**H11a:** In conditions of high-task-importance, participants will engage in accuracy-motivated processing and important product attributes will result in more favorable product evaluations than unimportant product attributes.

*Defense-motivated processing.* People are motivated to hold accurate attitudes and beliefs and, thus, accuracy motivation is central to many of the HSM’s predictions. However, within this framework, research has also shown that other motives may coexist with, or supersede, the motivation to be accurate. Chen and Chaiken (1999) discuss two additional motives within the model: defense motivation and impression motivation. The HSM posits that all three motivations can co-exist and puts forth ways in which heuristic processing and systematic processing may be influenced by these motivations distinctly or in tandem. Of particular interest to this dissertation is defense motivation.

Defense motivation is based on one’s desire to hold attitudes and beliefs that are congruent with his or her self-definitional attitudes and beliefs. Within the HSM literature and the SBC literature, self-definitional attitudes and beliefs are defined as those attitudes and beliefs that are closely related to the self. For example, as Chen and Chaiken (1999) state, self-definitional attitudes and beliefs may involve one’s values, social identities, or personal attributes. When a self-brand connection forms, the brand is being used to meet one or more self-definitional needs and has been incorporated into one’s self-concept. When a person is defense motivated, he or she aims to process information in such a way as to preserve the self-concept. Since SBCs are directly related to the self-concept, the presence of a logo from a brand with which a person has a strong SBC may result in heightened defense motivation.
When defense motivation is high and cognitive resources are available, the HSM predicts that defense-motivated processing will occur, in which the viewer processes information in a way that will uphold one’s self-concept. Like accuracy-motivated processing, defense motivated processing also adheres to the sufficiency principle. In accuracy-motivated processing, the sufficiency threshold is determined by whether or not the processing results in confidence in the accuracy of one’s judgment. However, in defense motivated processing, the sufficiency threshold is determined by whether or not the processing results in a judgment that reinforces one’s self-definitional attitudes and beliefs (Chen & Chaiken, 1999). Thus, the heuristic processing of information that is congruent with one’s self-definitional attitudes and beliefs (e.g., SBC strength) may result in a narrowing of the confidence gap and, thus, a decrease in systematic processing (Giner-Sorolla & Chaiken, 1997).

The bias hypothesis of the HSM posits that heuristic processing of cue information can also result in the subsequent biased systematic processing of judgment-relevant information. The majority of research supporting the bias hypothesis has found that this result occurs when judgment-relevant information is ambiguous or not present in the message (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994). For example, a study by Chaiken and Maheswaran found that highly motivated participants who were exposed to ambiguous information from a high-credibility source elaborated on the information more favorably than participants who were presented the same ambiguous information from a low-credibility source. However, when the information was unambiguous and the evaluations formed from systematic processing of the judgment-relevant information contradicted the evaluations formed during heuristic
processing of source credibility, the attenuation effect occurred, and attitudes were based primarily on the evaluation of the judgment-relevant information.

Research has also found that other factors, such as threats to self-worth (Wyer & Frey, 1983) and peoples’ prior attitudes (Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979) can result in bias processing of information, even when the information provided is unambiguous. In a study by Wyer and Frey, people were provided with false (either positive or negative) feedback regarding how well they scored on an intelligence test. After taking the test and receiving feedback on their score, participants read a report with expert information about intelligence tests. All participants read the same report. Participants who received negative feedback about their score on an intelligence test rated the test as less favorable than those who received positive feedback about their scores. Furthermore, those who received negative feedback about their results recalled more arguments in the report that were favorable about intelligence tests than the subjects who received positive feedback. This suggests that participants did not reduce their systematic processing of negative information in an effort to maintain a positive self-concept but, rather, engaged in increased processing and counter-argued the information that supported the validity of the negative feedback they received (Wyer & Frey). Conversely, subjects who received positive feedback about their scores on the intelligence test did not engage in counter-arguing. These findings suggest that people may counter-argue information provided in a message when that information is a threat to their self-concept.

Ahluwalia, Burnkrant, and Unnava (2000) found similar results occurred when people were presented with negative information about a company to which they were highly committed. In this study, participants who had either high or low commitment to a brand
were exposed to news articles that contained either favorable or unfavorable information about the attributes of a brand’s product. Consumers who were highly committed to the brands counter-argued the negative product attribute information more than those who had a low commitment to the brand. Based on this research, I predict that under conditions of high involvement, participants will engage in defense-motivated processing.

**H11b:** In conditions of high-task-importance, participants will engage in defense-motivated systematic processing with strong SBCs resulting in more favorable product evaluations than weak SBCs. The relationship between SBC strength and product evaluation will be mediated by the favorability of attribute-related thoughts. (valenced attribute-related thought index; VAT).

**Method**

All participants \((N = 200)\) in a 2 (task importance: high/low) X 2 (SBC strength: strong/weak) X 2 (product attribute importance: important/unimportant) fully-crossed, between-subjects factorial design experiment were randomly assigned to one of eight experimental conditions. In each condition, participants read an introduction to the study, which served as the task importance manipulation, and viewed an advertisement, which served as the SBC strength and product attribute importance manipulations. After participants’ exposure to the advertisement, they completed a post-exposure questionnaire.
Participants

200 male and female participants were recruited from the undergraduate student research pool in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight experimental conditions and were equally distributed across all conditions with twenty-five participants per cell. Informed consent was obtained according to the University of North Carolina’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) stipulations and all participants signed an informed consent form (Appendix A) prior to their participation in the study.

Of the 200 participants, 79% were female \( (N = 158) \) and 21% were male \( (N = 42) \). The participants ranged in age from 18 to 28 years old. The mean age of participants was 20.8 years old \( (SD = 1.22) \) and the median age was 21. Most participants identified themselves as White/Caucasian \( (78\%; N = 156) \). 9.5\% \( (N = 19) \) identified themselves as Black/African American, 6.5\% \( (N = 13) \) as multiple ethnicities or “other,” 3.5\% \( (N = 7) \) as Latino or Hispanic, and 2.5\% \( (N = 5) \) as Asian. The majority \( (81\%; N = 162) \) of participants indicated that they lived in North Carolina when not at school. When not at school, 15\% \( (N = 30) \) indicated that they lived in other eastern states, 3\% \( (N = 6) \) in Midwest or central states, and 1\% \( (N = 2) \) lived in west coast states.

The majority of participants were either juniors \( (42\%; N = 84) \) or seniors \( (40\%; N = 80) \) with only 17.5\% \( (N = 45) \) reporting that they were sophomores and .5\% \( (N = 1) \) indicating that she was a freshman. 94.5\% \( (N = 189) \) of the participants had declared a major within the School of Journalism and Mass Communication (e.g., journalism,
advertising/public relations) and 5.5% \((N = 11)\) had declared a major in another department (e.g., business, economics).

**Independent Variables**

*Task importance.* The task importance manipulation was adapted from Maheswaran, et al. (1992). Once seated at a computer, participants were asked to click on a link provided on the computer screen, which brought them to an introduction page for the study. The task importance manipulation was contained on this page (Appendix B). In the high-task-importance condition, participants were informed that the sneaker for which they were about to view an advertisement is a new product that would soon be available in the area and the manufacturer is interested in their opinions as potential future users of the product. They were also informed that they were part of a small, select group that were chosen and that the opinions they gave were extremely important. In the low-task-importance condition, participants were informed that they are part of a large opinion survey. They were informed that their individual opinions were not very important because all of the responses to the survey would be averaged. Furthermore, they were informed that the product would not be available in the North Carolina area.

*Self-brand connection (SBC) strength.* To determine which brands to use as the SBC manipulation, an initial pretest was conducted with a group of participants similar to those who participated in the final study. Participants were recruited through the UNC undergraduate student research pool. This pretest was adapted from the procedure recommended by Bettman and Escalas (2004). Participants \((N = 53; 28\% \text{ Male}, 72\% \text{ Female}; \text{Mean Age} = 21.28 \text{ years})\) were asked to list five sneaker brands that they considered to be “really cool” and five that they “would never use.” The brands that were listed the
most frequently were then used in the next part of the pretest.

For the next part of this pretest, a separate group of participants were recruited from the undergraduate student research pool and completed the SBC scale (Escalas & Bettman, 2004) for several brands including those most frequently listed in part one of the pretest ($N = 70$; 30% male, 70% female; Mean Age = 20.91 years). The Nike brand had the highest SBC score and the Reebok brand had the lowest SBC score. A paired-samples $t$-test indicated that the SBC scores were significantly different between the Nike brand and the Reebok brand, $t(69) = 7.69, p < .001$, such that the mean SBC score was significantly higher for Nike ($M = 3.50, SE = .20$) than for Reebok ($M = 1.90, SE = .14$).

Thus, the strong SBC conditions in the main study consisted of an advertisement for Nike sneakers and the weak SBC brand conditions consisted of an advertisement for Reebok sneakers. To provide further assurance of this manipulation, participants in the main study completed the SBC scale after viewing the stimulus materials as part of the post-stimulus questionnaire.

**Product attribute importance.** Attribute importance was manipulated by varying the product attributes that were listed in the advertisements. The ads used in the important product attribute conditions included five important product attributes and the ads used in the unimportant product attribute conditions included five unimportant attributes. Pretest procedures from Maheswaran et al. (1992) were used to determine which product attributes to include in each version of the advertisement.

In the pretest, participants ($N = 53$) were asked to list up to 10 product attributes that they felt were extremely important and 10 product attributes that they felt were extremely unimportant when considering purchasing a pair of sneakers (“List up to 10 product
attributes or features that are very important to you when you are shopping for a pair of sneakers. In other words, what features would a pair of sneakers have that would make you really want to buy them”; “List up to 10 product attributes or features that are not at all important to you when you are shopping for a pair of sneakers. In other words, what features would a pair of sneakers have that would make absolutely no difference in whether or not your purchase them”). Subsequently, a separate group of participants ($N = 70$) were asked to rate the extent to which each of the attributes listed in the first pretest would be important in their decision to buy a pair of sneakers on a 7-point scale from not very important (1) to extremely important (7). Five important and five unimportant attributes for sneakers were selected based on these ratings and used in the stimulus materials (Appendix C).

Procedure

This study used a 2 (task importance: high/low) X 2 (SBC strength: strong/weak) X 2 (product attribute importance: important/unimportant) fully crossed, between-subjects, factorial experimental design. After obtaining informed consent for participation in the study (Appendix A), each student was asked to sit at a computer. Once all participants were present, the researcher instructed them to click on a link shown on the computer screen in front of them. This screen informed participants that they were about to view information about a new pair of sneakers and also served as the task importance manipulation (Appendix B). Next, participants viewed a large logo on the computer screen (Nike or Reebok), which served as part of the SBC strength manipulation, and were asked to click on the logo to continue to see more details about the product. In the “important attributes” condition, the next page consisted of an advertisement for the sneaker that listed several important
attributes of the sneaker, as well as a picture of the sneaker, the brand name, and the brand logo. In the “unimportant attributes” condition, participants viewed an identical ad, but it included several unimportant (instead of important) attributes related to the product (Appendix C). After viewing the advertisement, participants proceeded to fill out an online questionnaire with the dependent and control measures (Appendix D). After completing the questionnaire, participants were given a debriefing form (Appendix E), thanked for their participation, and dismissed.

**Dependent Variables**

*Attitudes toward the brand.* Attitudes toward the brand were measured using eight 7-point semantic differential scales (adapted from Mackenzie & Lutz, 1989) – appealing/unappealing, good/bad, pleasant/unpleasant, attractive/unattractive, favorable/unfavorable, likeable/dislikable, high quality/low quality, and cool/uncool. These items formed the attitudes toward the brand index (α = 0.92).

*Attitudes toward the advertisement.* Attitudes toward the advertisement were measured using an index made up of sixteen semantic differential measures (e.g., “Appealing/Unappealing,” “Good/Bad”) anchored on a 7-point scale, which was adapted from previous studies (e.g., Ivory & Kalyanaraman, 2007). These items formed the attitudes toward the advertisement index (α = 0.91).

*Purchase intention.* Purchase intention was measured by asking participants to respond to the following three statements on a 7-point scale (Strongly Disagree/Strongly Agree):

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3 The image of the sneaker varied slightly between the strong and weak SBC conditions. To ensure that participants’ evaluations of the style of the sneaker as shown in the image did not vary across conditions, an ANOVA was run with participants’ rating of the style of the sneaker as the dependent variable. No significant results emerged.
Agree): “I am likely to try this product,” “I am likely to buy this product,” and “If I were to buy a pair of sneakers in the next three months, I would purchase this pair of sneakers (e.g., Bruner, James, & Hensel, 1992). These items were averaged to form one purchase intention index (α = .90).

**Word-of-mouth product promotion (WOM-product).** The WOM-product scale included three items on a seven-point scale anchored by “Not at all likely” and “Very Likely.” (e.g., How likely are you to recommend this product to a friend who seeks your advice?) These three items averaged to form the WOM-product index (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996; α = 0.96).

**Word-of-mouth brand promotion (WOM-brand).** The WOM-Brand scale included four items on a seven-point scale anchored by “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree.” (e.g., I will talk-up this brand to my friends.) These four items averaged to form the WOM-brand index (α = 0.98).

**Adoption of brand markers.** Since there is no widely accepted scale to measure the adoption of brand markers, this measure was operationalized by asking participants to indicate on a 7-point Likert-type scale how likely or unlikely they would be to engage in five behaviors: putting the brand’s logo on their Facebook page, becoming a fan of the brand on Facebook, wearing a shirt with the brand’s logo or name, putting a bumper sticker on their car with the brand’s logo or name, and displaying the brand’s name or logo on their possessions. These five items were averaged to form the adoption of brand markers index (α = 0.87).

**Product evaluations.** Product evaluations were measured by asking participants to indicate their attitudes on three items on a 7-point Likert-type scale: how useful is this
product; how favorable is this product; how good is this product (Maheswaran et al., 1992). These items were averaged to form one product evaluation index ($\alpha = 0.88$).

Potential Mediating Variables

Cognitive responses. Thought listing is a widely used measure to ascertain the amount of thinking that people engaged in while viewing a message (Brinol, Petty, & Tormala, 2004; Cacioppo & Petty, 1981). Immediately after viewing the advertisement, participants were asked to take approximately three minutes and list the thoughts that went through their minds as they viewed the advertisement. They were provided with twenty blank spaces to list their thoughts with one thought being listed per space. After data collection was complete, two independent judges coded the thoughts that were listed by each participant.

The coding criteria were adapted from Maheswaran et al. (1992). The thoughts were classified as product attribute related, brand related, advertisement related, or other. These thoughts were further categorized as either positively, negatively, or neutrally valenced thoughts. Inter-coder agreement was 72% and discrepancies were resolved through discussion. From the thoughts listed two valenced thought indexes were created (Maheswaran et al., 1992). The Valenced Attribute Thought index (VAT) was created by subtracting the number of negative attribute related thoughts from the number of positive attribute related thoughts listed by each participant. The Valenced Brand Thought index (VBT) was created by subtracting the number of negative brand related thoughts from the number of positive brand related thoughts listed by each participant. In both indices, higher numbers indicate more favorable thoughts.
Perceived advertiser credibility. The perceived advertiser credibility measure was adapted from the corporate credibility scale (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001). These items were measured on a 7-point scale anchored by “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree.” The items were averaged together to form the overall perceived advertiser credibility scale ($\alpha = .90$).

Controls and Manipulation Checks

Task importance. The task importance manipulation check was adapted from Maheswaran et al. (1992). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they were motivated to read the advertisement, interested in the advertisement, and involved in the advertisement on 7-point scales anchored by “not at all” and “highly.” These three measures formed a task importance index ($\alpha = 0.91$).

Self-brand Connection. To determine the efficacy of the SBC manipulation, participants completed the SBC scale (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). The SBC scale consists of seven items (e.g., “Brand X reflects who I am” anchored between “not at all” and “extremely well”; “I feel a personal connection to Brand X” anchored between “not at all” and “very much so”) on a 7-point scale. These items were highly correlated and were averaged to form a single measure of SBC ($\alpha =0.91$).

Importance of product attributes. Participants’ perceptions about the importance of the product attributes were assessed by asking them to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that the ad listed few or many important and unimportant product features (Maheswaran et al., 1992). These four items formed the attribute perception index (API), with higher API indicating more favorable perceptions of the attributes ($\alpha =0.77$).
Brand and product recall. Open-ended recall measures were included in the questionnaire to ensure that participants were aware of the brand name and product in the advertisement. Based on procedures suggested by Petty, Cacioppo, and Shumann (1983), participants were asked: “For what brand did you just view an ad?” and “For what product did you just view an ad?”

Brand, product, and advertisement familiarity. Brand familiarity was measured by asking three single-item measures. Participants were asked to answer “yes” or “no” to indicate if they had ever heard of the Nike (Reebok) brand before? Participants also indicated their familiarity with the brand on a 7-point scale anchored with “not at all familiar” and “very familiar,” and were asked whether they had ever used a product by the Nike (Reebok) brand before (yes/no).

Product familiarity was measured by asking participants to indicate if they had ever heard of the Nike (Reebok) Edge11 sneaker before that day (yes/no) and to indicate how familiar they were with the product on a 7-point scale anchored between “not at all familiar” and “very familiar.”

Advertisement familiarity was measured by asking participants to indicate their familiarity with the specific ad they viewed on a seven-point scale anchored with “not at all familiar” and “very familiar” and to indicate if they had ever seen the advertisement before that day (yes/no).

Demographics. Relevant demographic data was collected including age, gender, ethnicity, current year in school, major, and state in which they reside when not at school.
Results

Manipulation Checks

Task importance. To test the efficacy of the task importance manipulation, an ANOVA was run with SBC, task importance, and attribute importance as independent factors and the task importance index as the dependent variable. The ANOVA revealed a statistically significant main effect for task importance $F(1, 192) = 4.51, p < .05$, with perceived task importance higher for the high-task-importance conditions ($M = 3.09, SE = .14$) than for the low-task-importance conditions ($M = 2.66, SE = .14$). The effects of SBC and product attribute importance on the perceived task importance index were not statistically significant, nor were any interaction effects between SBC strength, product attribute importance, and task importance. Therefore, the ANOVA on the task importance measure indicated that the task importance manipulation was successful. (Results for manipulation check analysis are shown in Table 2)

SBC strength. To test the efficacy of the SBC strength manipulation, an ANOVA was run with SBC strength, product attribute importance, and task importance as independent factors and the SBC index as the dependent variable. The effect of SBC on the perceived SBC index was significant, $F(1, 192) = 56.60, p < .001$, such that perceived SBC scores were higher for the strong SBC condition ($M = 3.67, SE = .12$) than for the weak SBC condition ($M = 2.35, SE = .12$).4 Neither the main effect of task importance or attribute importance nor

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4 It is acknowledged that the strong SBC mean could be considered low (3.67 on a 7-point scale). In general, the literature shows that SBC means do not usually reach the high-end of the scale. For example, the highest SBC scores in seminal SBC work by Escalas & Bettman
the interaction effects between SBC and argument strength attained statistical significance. Therefore, the ANOVA on the SBC measure indicated that the SBC manipulation was successful and participants in the strong SBC conditions had a stronger SBC with the brand sponsoring the message than the participants in the weak SBC conditions.

**Attribute importance.** The ANOVA on product-attribute-importance was consistent with expectations. An ANOVA was run with SBC, task importance, and product-attribute-importance as independent factors and the product-attribute-importance index as the dependent variable. The ANOVA revealed a statistically significant main effect for product-attribute-importance $F(1, 192) = 25.39, p < .001$, with the product attributes being rated as more important in the important-attribute-conditions ($M = 4.63, SE = .13$) than the unimportant-attribute-conditions ($M = 3.72, SE = .13$). The effects of SBC and task importance on the measure of attribute importance were not statistically significant, nor were the interaction effects between SBC, attribute importance, and task importance. Thus, the manipulation of attribute importance was successful with participants in the important-attributes-conditions rating the product advertisement as having more important and superior attributes than participants in the unimportant-attributes-conditions.

**Brand name recall.** To ensure that participants recalled the brand from which they just viewed an ad, they were asked to recall the brand name immediately after viewing the advertisement (Petty et al., 1983). All participants accurately recalled the brand for which they just viewed an advertisement.

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(2003) remained under 4.0 on a 7-point scale. In another study (Escalas & Bettman, 2005), a 100-point scale was used and the highest SBC means remained under 62.
Tests of Hypotheses

**H1 – H3: Main effect of SBC strength.** Hypotheses one, two, and three predicted that there would be a main effect for SBC strength on attitudes toward the brand (H1), attitude towards the advertisement (H2), and purchase intentions (H3). The data were analyzed using a series of 2 x 2 x 2 between-subjects ANOVAs (A summary of the analysis for main effects is in Table 3).

An ANOVA with attitude toward the brand as the dependent measure revealed a significant main effect for SBC strength, with strong SBCs eliciting more positive attitudes toward the brand ($M = 5.89, SE = .10$) than weak SBCs ($M = 4.41, SE = .10$), $F (1, 192) = 101.34, p < .001, \eta^2 = .35^5$. This main effect of SBC strength on participants’ attitudes toward the brand offered support for H1.

H2 predicted a main effect for SBC on attitude toward the advertisement with strong SBCs resulting in more favorable attitudes toward the advertisement than weak SBCs. A between-subjects ANOVA with attitude toward the advertisement as the dependent variable indicated no significant main effect for SBC, $F (1, 192) = 2.76, p > .05, \eta^2 = .01$. However, the results of this analysis indicated that the means were in the hypothesized direction, with strong SBCs eliciting more favorable attitudes toward the brand ($M = 3.71, SE = .09$) than weak SBCs ($M = 3.50, SE = .09$). While in the hypothesized direction, these results were not statistically significant, and, therefore, H2 was not supported.

Although no formal hypotheses guided these findings, the ANOVA revealed that there was a main effect for product attribute importance on attitude toward the advertisement, with important product attitudes resulting in more favorable attitudes toward the

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5 It should be noted that all effect sizes are reported as partial eta-squared.
advertisement ($M = 3.74, SE = .09$) than weak product attributes ($M = 3.47, SE = .09$), $F(1, 192) = 4.41, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02$ (Table 3). Furthermore, there was also a significant three-way interaction among SBC strength, product attribute strength, and task importance, $F(1, 192) = 8.99, p < .01, \eta^2 = .45$.

Interpretation of the three-way interaction revealed that under conditions of high-task-importance, the importance of the product attributes did not affect evaluations when strong SBCs were present. However, when weak SBCs were present, participants had a more favorable attitude toward the advertisement when it contained important (vs. unimportant) product attributes. Under conditions of low-task-importance, neither SBC strength nor the importance of the product attributes significantly influenced attitudes toward the advertisement. (See Table 4 for summary of means for three-way interaction on attitudes toward the advertisement) (See Figure 1 for graph of task importance X SBC strength X product attribute importance interaction effect on attitudes toward the ad).

H3 predicted a main effect for SBC on purchase intention. A between-subjects ANOVA with purchase intention as the dependent variable revealed a main effect for SBC with strong SBCs resulting in an stronger intention to purchase the product ($M = 3.16, SE = .14$) than weak SBCs ($M = 2.36, SE = .137$), $F(1, 192) = 16.82, p < .001, \eta^2 = .08$ (Table 3). Therefore, H3 was supported indicating that intention to purchase the product was affected by SBC, but not product attribute strength or task importance.

**H4 – H5: Main effect of SBC on product and brand promotion.** H4 predicted that strong SBCs would result in the promotion of the product to others and H5 predicted a main effect for SBC strength on promotion of the brand to others. A between-subjects ANOVA with word-of-mouth product promotion as the dependent variable indicated a main effect for
SBC, with participants indicating a stronger desire to promote the product to others in the strong SBC conditions ($M = 3.15$, $SE = .15$) than the weak SBC conditions ($M = 2.66$, $SE = .15$), $F (1, 192) = 5.07, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$, lending support for H4 (Table 3).

A similar pattern emerged for the word-of-mouth promotion of the band with strong SBCs resulting in a greater desire to promote the brand to others ($M = 4.10$, $SE = .16$) than weak SBCs ($M = 2.03$, $SE = .16$), $F (1, 192) = 79.98, p < .001, \eta^2 = .29$. As predicted, neither product attribute strength nor task importance emerged as a significant factor in the word-of-mouth promotion of either the brand or the product, nor any interaction effects. Thus, H5 was also supported (Table 3).

**H6: Main effect of SBC on adoption of brand markers.** H6 predicted that strong SBCs would result in the adoption of brand markers. The between-subjects ANOVA with adoption of brand markers as the dependent variable indicted a significant main effect for SBC, with strong SBCs resulting in a stronger desire to adopt brand markers ($M = 3.30$, $SE = .14$) than weak SBCs ($M = 2.09$, $SE = .14$), $F (1, 192) = 40.94, p < .001, \eta^2 = .18$. The direction of these findings indicates support for H6.

Although no formal hypotheses guided these findings, the ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between SBC strength and task importance on adoption of brand markers, $F(1, 192) = 6.63, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$. Follow-up analysis of the means revealed different effects under conditions of high task involvement and low task involvement. Under conditions of high involvement, strong SBCs resulted in higher willingness to adopt brand markers than weak SBCs. Under conditions of low-task-importance, SBC strength did not have this effect. (See Table 5 for summary of means and $F$ values for two-way interaction between SBC strength and task importance on attitude toward the adoption of brand bakers.)
(See Figure 2 for graph illustrating SBC strength X task involvement interaction effect on the adoption of brand markers.)

**H7: Perceived advertiser credibility as a mediator of purchase intention.** H7 predicted that the relationship between SBC strength and purchase intention would be mediated by perceived advertiser credibility. A mediation analysis based on procedures recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2004) was performed to test whether the relationship between SBC strength and purchase intention was mediated by perceived advertiser credibility. Using the bootstrapping method, the estimate of the indirect effect of SBC strength on purchase intention through advertiser credibility was significant. The indirect effect was estimated between .0775 and .4257 with 95% confidence ($p<.05$). The mediation analysis revealed a significant total effect of SBC strength on purchase intention, $p < .001$ ($\beta = .79, t = 4.10$). The path from SBC strength to perceived advertiser credibility was also significant, $p < .001$ ($\beta = .77, t = 5.64$), as was the path from perceived advertiser credibility to purchase intention, $p < .01$ ($\beta = .33, t = 3.33$), indicating that perceived advertiser credibility did mediate the relationship between SBC strength and purchase intention. This mediation was only partial as indicated by the significant direct-effect path from SBC strength to purchase intention, $p < .01$ ($\beta = .54, t = 2.66$) (see Figure 3). Thus, H7 was supported.

**H8: Perceived advertiser credibility as a mediator of WOM product promotion.** H8 stated that the relationship between SBC strength and promotion of the product to others would be mediated through perceived advertiser credibility. Using the same method

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$^6$ Because zero is not in the 95% confidence interval, the indirect effect is considered to be different from zero at $p<.05$, two-tailed.
discussed above, the estimate of the indirect effect of SBC strength on promotion of the product to others through advertiser credibility was significant. The indirect effect was estimated between .0418 and .4158 with 95% confidence ($p<.05$). The mediation analysis revealed a significant total effect of SBC strength on promotion of the product to others ($\beta = .49, t = 2.27, p < .05$). The path from SBC strength to perceived advertiser credibility was also significant, $p < .001$ ($\beta = .77, t = 5.64$), as was the path from perceived advertiser credibility to promotion of the product to others, $p < .01$ ($\beta = .30, t = 2.69$), indicating that perceived advertiser credibility mediated the relationship between SBC strength and purchase intention. The not significant direct-effect path from SBC strength to promotion of the product to others provides clear evidence for complete mediation, $p > .10$ ($\beta = .26, t = 1.14$) (see Figure 4).

**H9: 2-way interaction of task importance and SBC strength on product evaluations.** H9 predicted an interaction effect between task importance and SBC strength such that SBC strength would only exert an influence on product evaluations when task importance was low. A between-subjects ANOVA with the product evaluation index as the dependent variable revealed a two-way interaction between SBC strength and task importance, $F(1, 192) = 3.97, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02$. Follow-up analysis revealed that different patterns emerged under conditions of high task involvement and low task involvement. Under conditions of low task involvement, SBC strength did not influence product evaluations (Strong SBC: $M = 4.63, SE = .16$; Weak SBC: $M = 4.67, SE = .16$). However, under conditions of high-task-importance, strong SBCs resulted in more favorable product evaluations ($M = 4.97, SE = .16$) than weak SBCs ($M = 4.36, SE = .16$) (See Table 6 for summary for
Means and $F$ Values for two-way interaction between SBC Strength and task importance on product evaluations.) (See Figure 5 for graph of interaction)

Therefore, while the predicted interaction effect was significant, the results were in the opposite direction of what was hypothesized and H9 was disconfirmed.

H10: 2-way interaction of task importance and product attribute importance on product evaluations. H10 predicted that there would be an interaction between task importance and product attribute importance on product evaluations. Under conditions of high-task-importance, product attribute importance was expected to exert a greater influence on product evaluations when task importance was high with important product attributes resulting in more favorable product evaluations. A between-subjects ANOVA with the product evaluation index as the dependent variable revealed a no significant two-way interaction between task importance and product attribute importance, $F (1, 192) = .03, p > .1, \eta^2 = .00$. Thus, H10 was not supported.

H11a & H11b: Competing hypotheses for processing motivation. Hypotheses 11a and 11b proposed competing hypotheses. Hypothesis 11a predicted that, in conditions of high-task-importance, participants would engage in accuracy-motivated processing and important product attributes would result in more favorable product evaluations than unimportant product attributes. The between-subjects ANOVA with the product evaluation index as the dependent variable revealed a nonsignificant interaction effect between task importance and product attribute importance, $F (1, 192) = .03, p > .10, \eta^2 = .00$.\textsuperscript{7} This

\textsuperscript{7} Because H11a and H11b only pertain to high-task-importance conditions, an analysis was also conducted after splitting the data file between task importance conditions and running
indicates that product attribute importance did not influence product evaluations in high-task-importance conditions.

When people engage in accuracy-motivated processing, they are motivated to form evaluations that are accurate. In the context of this study, accuracy-motivated processing would suggest that people would evaluate the products based on the attribute-related information in the message, with important product attributes resulting in more favorable products evaluations than unimportant product attributes (Maheswaran et al., 1992). At a minimum, this finding indicates that even when people were able and motivated to carefully process the information in the advertisement, their product evaluations were not influenced by the importance of the product attributes listed in the ad and suggests that people may not have engaged in accuracy-motivated processing. However, this does not imply that product evaluations were not based on attribute-related thinking. In fact, these findings do not provide insight as to how participants arrived at their product evaluations.

Hypothesis 11b posited that in conditions of high-task-importance, participants will engage in defense-motivated systematic processing and stronger SBCs will result in more favorable product evaluations than weak SBCs and the relationship between SBC strength and product evaluation will be mediated by valenced attribute-related thoughts (VAT). The between-subjects ANOVA with the product evaluation index as the dependent variable revealed a two-way interaction between SBC strength and task importance, $F(1, 192) = 3.97, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02$. Under conditions of high-task-importance, strong SBCs resulted in more favorable product evaluations ($M = 4.97, SE = .16$) than weak SBCs ($M = 4.63, SE = .16$) (See Table 6 for summary for Means and $F$ Values for two-way interaction between SBC the ANOVA on only the high-task-importance subjects. The same pattern of results emerged and no significant results emerged for product attribute importance on product evaluations.
Strength and task importance on product evaluations.) (See Figure 5 for graph of interaction). Thus, these findings revealed that SBC strength influenced product evaluations under conditions of high-task-importance and suggests support for defense-motivated processing, but do not provide insights into the process through which people arrived at these evaluations.

To explore the type of processing that resulted in product evaluations, the two valenced-thought indexes, VAT and VBT, were analyzed (Maheswaran et al., 1992). An ANOVA with VAT as the dependent variable indicated main effects of both SBC strength, $F(1,192) = 6.50, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$, and product attribute importance $F(1,192) = 12.13, p < .01, \eta^2 = .06$. Participants in the strong SBC conditions had more favorable attribute-related thoughts ($M = .35, SE = .20$), as indicated by a higher VAT score, than those in the weak SBC conditions ($M = -.36, SE = .20$). Participants in the important attribute conditions had more favorable attribute-related thoughts ($M = .48, SE = .20$) than those in the unimportant product attribute conditions ($M = -.49, SE = .20$). (See Table 7 for summary of means and $F$ Values of main effects on IVs on cognitive measures.) As evidence of further support for defense-motivated processing under conditions of high involvement, the ANOVA on VAT revealed a task importance X SBC strength interaction, $F = 4.49 (1, 192), p < .05, \eta^2 = .02$, indicating that SBC strength had a greater influence on the favorableness of attribute-related thinking when task importance was high (see Figure 6).

A mediation analysis was conducted to test whether VAT mediated the relationship between SBC strength and product evaluations under conditions of high involvement. First, the data file was split so high-task-importance conditions could be analyzed separately from low task important conditions. In the high-task-importance conditions, the estimate of the
indirect effect was estimated between .1342 and .6893 with 95% confidence, \( p < .05 \). The total effect of SBC on product evaluations was confirmed, \( p < .05 \) (\( \beta = .61, t = 2.60 \)). The path from SBC to VAT was significant, \( p < .01 \) (\( \beta = 1.3, t = 3.38 \)), as was the path from VAT to product evaluation, \( p < .001 \), (\( \beta = .31, t = 5.94 \)). The effect of SBC strength on product evaluation was fully mediated by the favorableness of attribute-related thoughts (VAT), as indicated by a nonsignificant direct effect from SBC to product evaluation after mediation, \( p > .1 \), (\( \beta = .20, t = 0.94 \)) (see Figure 7). Thus, hypothesis 11b was supported.

Summary of Results

This study found support that self-brand connections can elicit effects on consumers’ attitudes about both the brand and its products. As predicted, main effects for SBC strength emerged on the dependent variables that were directly related to evaluations of the brand with stronger SBCs resulting in more favorable attitudes toward the brand, greater word-of-mouth promotion of the brand, and stronger adoption of brand markers (e.g., displaying the brand’s logo on a bumper-sticker or t-shirt) than weak SBCs. Moreover, as predicted, SBCs elicited main effects on behavioral intentions regarding the product, not just the brand. Specifically, SBC strength influenced product purchase intention and word-of-mouth promotion of the product, with stronger SBCs resulting in stronger intentions. Surprisingly, product attribute importance did not yield any significant effects on these dependent variables. This suggests that brands matter and, importantly, self-brand connections matter.

As expected, perceived advertiser credibility mediated the influence of SBC strength on purchase intention and word-of-mouth promotion of the product. The effect of SBC strength on word-of-mouth product promotion was fully mediated by perceived advertiser credibility and purchase intention was partially mediated. This suggests that the persuasive
effects of SBCs on purchase intention and word-of-mouth promotion of the product occur, at least in part, through the consumer’s perceptions of the brand’s credibility.

Interestingly, on the dependent variable of the adoption of brand markers, task importance interacted with SBC strength in an unpredicted way. Specifically, the effect of SBC strength on the adoption of brand markers was amplified under conditions of high involvement, with stronger SBCs resulting in a greater intention to adopt brand markers. Under conditions of low involvement, SBCs exerted little influence. A similar pattern emerged for evaluations of the product with SBCs exerting an influence on product evaluations under conditions of high-task-importance, but having little impact under conditions of low-task-importance.

A possible explanation for this interaction effect is that, under conditions of low-task-importance, people disengaged with the message and the independent variables exerted little influence. This decidedly post-hoc explanation is further supported by the (unhypothesized) three-way interaction that emerged for attitudes toward the ad. Under conditions of low-task-importance neither SBC strength nor product attribute importance exerted an influence on attitudes toward the advertisement. However, under conditions of high-task-importance, a different pattern emerged.

Under conditions of high-task-importance, product attribute strength exerted an influence on attitudes toward the advertisement, but only when weak SBCs were present, with important attributes resulting in more favorable evaluations of the ad. Interestingly, when strong SBCs were present, product attributes did not influence attitudes toward the advertisement.
Two competing hypotheses were presented in this study predicting the types of information processing that may occur under conditions of high involvement – accuracy-motivated processing or defense-motivated processing. The hypothesis for accuracy-motivated processing proposed that product evaluations would be based on product-attribute importance, with important product attributes resulting in more favorable product evaluations than unimportant product attributes. No significant effect for product attribute importance on product evaluations emerged suggesting that participants may not have engaged in accuracy-motivated processing. Instead, under conditions of high involvement, purchase intention was influenced by SBC strength.

There are two plausible explanations for the type of information processing that led to this pattern of results. Participants may have engaged in heuristic processing of brand information (VBT) or participants may have engaged in defense-motivated systematic processing of attribute-related information (VAT). To explore the type of processing that occurred, an ANOVA was conducted with the VAT index as the dependent variable. The ANOVA revealed the same pattern of results that emerged for product evaluations. Specifically, the effect of SBCs on the VAT index was amplified under conditions of high-task-importance, with strong SBCs resulting in more favorable product-attribute related thoughts than weak SBCs. This suggests that participants engaged in defense-motivated processing.

A mediation analysis of the effect of SBC strength on product evaluations by VAT provided further evidence of defense motivated processing. In fact, under conditions of high involvement, the influence of SBCs on product evaluations was fully mediated by the VAT index. This provided support that strong (weak) SBCs resulted in more (less) favorable
product attribute thinking, which, in turn, resulted in more (less) positive product evaluations. Thus, these findings provide support that SBC strength may have encouraged the defense-motivated systematic processing of product attribute information.

The ANOVA with VBTs as the dependent variable revealed no significant effects of SBC strength, product attribute importance, or task importance. Furthermore, a mediation analysis revealed that VBTs did not mediate the influence of SBCs on product evaluations (path from SBC to VBT not significant). This suggests that product evaluations were not based on the favorability of brand-related thoughts, which would have suggested heuristic processing (Maheswaran, 1992).

In summary, study one provides initial evidence of the persuasive effects of self-brand connections. Interestingly, this study found that SBCs not only exert an influence on brand related measures (e.g., attitudes toward the brand) but, also, on product related measures (e.g., purchase intention). Furthermore, perceived advertiser credibility mediated the effects of SBC strength on several product-related measures. Analysis also revealed that for certain dependent variables, such as product evaluations, the effects of SBCs were amplified under conditions of high-task-importance. Moreover, this research discovered that, under conditions of high-task-importance, the effects of SBC strength on product evaluations were fully mediated through the favorability of product attribute-related thoughts. These findings provide support that SBCs may promote the defense-motivated systematic processing of attribute-related information.
CHAPTER 3

STUDY TWO

Introduction

Study one provides initial evidence for the persuasive effects of SBCs. Specifically, it suggests that an advertisement that contains unimportant product attributes, which could weaken the effectiveness of the advertisement, may still be effective when it is from a brand with which the consumer has a strong SBC. In other words, this study suggests that, under particular circumstances, strong SBCs may have the ability to overcome certain barriers to persuasion.

While both study one and study two explore the persuasive effects of SBCs on the processing of advertising messages, study two expands on study one to explore the extent to which SBCs can overcome another barrier to persuasion - consumer skepticism of corporate advocacy advertising. Specifically, study two considers the potential effects of SBCs on the effectiveness of an advertisement promoting physical fitness activity (products are not mentioned in the advertisement) from brands that are either congruent with the physical fitness activity (e.g., sneaker brands) or incongruent with the topic (e.g., fast-food brands).

Theory and Hypotheses

Advocacy Advertising

Advocacy advertising constitutes a specific form of advertising in which corporations express viewpoints on issues of public importance (Sethi, 1979). In advocacy
advertisements, the products sold by the brand are not promoted -- sometimes they are not even mentioned. Instead, the entire message focuses on promoting a particular social issue or behavior. While advocacy advertising is similar to public service announcements and public health campaigns in that they promote social issues and behaviors, they differ in that advocacy advertising also focuses on protecting a company’s market (Sinclair & Irani, 2005). In other words, the content of an advocacy advertisement may be identical to a public service announcement, only the sponsor of the message (e.g., logo on the advertisement) and the intent behind the message differs.

Though controversial, corporate brands are sponsoring an increasing number of advocacy advertising initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles (Kraak, Kumanyika, & Story, 2009). Because advocacy advertisements are sometimes utilized to deflect criticism of a company or its products and services (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994), people can become suspicious of the sincerity and corporate motives behind such campaigns. Examples of current advocacy campaigns include Anheuser Busch’s promotion of the responsible drinking of alcoholic beverages (http://www.beeresponsible.com/) and Nestlé’s Healthy Steps for Healthy Lives campaign, which promotes the importance of proper nutrition and physical activity to children. These campaigns promote pro-social health messages and, in doing so, deflect the potential criticisms that their products may have negative effects on society (e.g., alcoholism, childhood obesity).

Advocacy advertising can benefit the corporation by signaling to consumers their corporate social responsibility (CSR). Corporate social responsibility is defined rather broadly as a company’s activities that are related to its societal obligations (Brown & Dacin, 1997). In recent years, corporations have placed a strong emphasis on CSR. In fact, almost
seventy percent of companies stated that CSR efforts are vital to their profitability (Argenti & Druckenmiller, 2004). Research by Creyer and Ross (1997) has shown that consumers have positive reactions to corporations that exhibit CSR and that they take a company’s CSR into account when making product purchase decisions. Furthermore, CSR efforts have been shown to enhance the overall reputation of a company (Creyer & Ross) and extensive research suggests that consumers often have positive attitudes toward companies that promote social causes, which can positively influence product evaluations and purchasing decisions (Barone, Miyazaki, & Taylor, 2000; Brown & Dacin, 1997; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001).

As this research illustrates, it is clear that advocacy advertising can lead to positive outcomes for corporations. However, far less emphasis has been placed on the effectiveness of such campaigns in persuading people to engage in the pro-social behavior that is being promoted in the advertisement. The research that has been conducted in this area suggests that advocacy advertising may be more beneficial for the corporation than for the cause being promoted. For example, several studies have found that consumers are less likely to be persuaded to engage in pro-social behaviors when messages are sponsored by a corporation rather than a nonprofit organization (Craig & McCann, 1978; Szykman, Bloom, & Blazing, 2004). A study by Craig and McCann found that people were more likely to conserve energy when they received an in-mail insert promoting energy conservation that was sponsored by a nonprofit conservation group than people who received the same information from the electric company. Similarly, an experiment by Szykman et al. found that anti-drunk driving messages sponsored by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) were more effective than the same message purportedly sponsored by Budweiser. Based on the findings from these
studies, I predict that messages sponsored by for-profit brands will be less effective in promoting a health behavior than the same message from a non-profit organization.

**H12:** Messages sponsored by for-profit brands will be less effective in motivating people to exercise than messages sponsored by a nonprofit organization.

While it is somewhat intuitive that nonprofit or government organizations may be more effective in promoting pro-social health behaviors, very little is known regarding the conditions under which a corporate sponsor may be effective. However, researchers have explored some of the potential reasons that corporate-sponsored messages may be less effective than government or nonprofit sponsored messages. Szykman, Bloom, and Blazing (2004) suggest corporate-sponsored messages may not be effective in promoting pro-social behaviors because consumers may question the motives behind such messages. In other words, this research suggests that consumers may become skeptical of the corporate sponsor (e.g., “this company is only running this ad to try to get me to buy something”), and such suspicion of ulterior, profit-driven motives may result in decreased persuasion. The persuasion knowledge model (PKM; Friestad & Wright, 1994) provides an ideal framework in which to further explore this topic.

*The Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM)*

The persuasion knowledge model (Friestad & Wright, 1994) posits that persuasion is influenced by a consumer’s knowledge about persuasion and persuasion attempts. For example, and of particular interest to the proposed study, the PKM posits that persuasion can
be influenced by the extent to which a person considers that a persuasion strategy may be laced with a ulterior motivation (Friestad & Wright).

According to the PKM model, there are three types of knowledge that can influence persuasion attempts: persuasion knowledge, topic knowledge, and agent knowledge. Persuasion knowledge includes an audience member’s knowledge regarding the motives, strategies, and tactics used by a persuader and the knowledge regarding the outcomes of the persuasion attempt. For example, persuasion knowledge would include a consumer’s knowledge that a particular company created an advocacy advertisement with the motive of increasing brand loyalty and sales, not with the altruistic motivation to benefit society. Topic knowledge includes a consumer’s knowledge regarding the topic of the persuasion attempt. For example, if a person is shopping for cereal and knows that higher fiber cereals are better for their health than those cereals high in sugar, this piece of knowledge would be considered topic knowledge. Agent knowledge includes a person’s beliefs about the persuasion agent. In terms of advertising messages, the persuasion agent is likely to be the brand sponsoring the message. SBCs are likely to be related to agent knowledge in that people would probably hold strong, favorable beliefs about brands with which they have a strong SBC. Moreover, these beliefs would be related to the consumer’s identity and sense of self.

One’s level of persuasion, agent, and topic knowledge can have either a negative or positive influence on persuasion. Research has shown the effects of persuasion knowledge within the context of corporate-sponsored pro-social marketing messages. As mentioned, literature on this topic has shown that both cause-related marketing (Szykman, Bloom, & Blazing, 2004) and advocacy advertising (Menon & Kahn, 2003) may raise a consumer’s
suspicion of a company’s motives leading to the discrediting of the message and, in-turn, decreased persuasion.

A study by Menon and Kahn (2003), which used the PKM framework, found that consumers were less skeptical of cause-related marketing (CRM) messages, which promote the sale of a product and promised a percentage of that sale to go to a specific cause, than advocacy advertising messages, which promote a cause without any mention of the brand’s products. The researchers suggest that consumers devote more cognitive resources to the processing of an advocacy-advertising message than a CRM message because advocacy ads are unfamiliar types of messages. Thus, when a brand is promoting a social cause without any reference to a product purchase, consumers elaborated more and started thinking “what’s the catch?” or “why would this company be promoting this social cause?” These types of thoughts led to consumer suspiciousness regarding the company’s motives, resulting in less favorable perceptions of the company’s corporate social responsibility (CSR).

SBCs are a measure of a brand’s integration into a consumer’s self-concept and are therefore hypothesized to attenuate consumer skepticism. Study one of this dissertation found that SBCs can have persuasive effects and consumers may process advertising messages in ways that align with their SBC. Thus, strong SBCs may attenuate consumer skepticism of a company’s motives for creating an advocacy-advertising message (e.g., perception of a company’s vested self-interest). Based on this literature and the SBC literature discussed in chapter one, there are several main effects predicted for SBCs.

**H13:** There will be a main effect for SBC strength on attitudes toward the brand.
**H14:** There will be a main effect for SBC strength on attitudes toward the advertisement.

**H15:** There will be a main effect for SBC strength on purchase intention.

**H16:** There will be a main effect for SBC strength on advertiser intentions.

**H17:** There will be a main effect for SBC strength on perceived corporate social responsibility.

Skepticism regarding the motive behind a persuasion attempt, specifically when the persuasion attempt is an advocacy advertisement can be influenced by the congruency between the brand and the cause or behavior being promoted (Drumwright, 1996; Haley, 1996; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). The PKM posits that consumers may judge the suitability of a particular brand to sponsor a particular message (Friestad & Wright, 1994). One way in which consumers assess the suitability of brand to sponsor a message is by the level of congruency between the brand and the behavior being promoted (Drumwright, 1996; Haley, 1996; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). Within the context of advocacy advertising, research has shown that consumers determine congruency based on information such as an association between the company’s corporate activities (e.g., the types of products that they sell) and the cause being promoted, brand expertise in philanthropy in general, and relevance of the brand’s target audience to the cause being promoted (Haley, 1996).
Research has shown that when a consumer elaborates on the company sponsoring an advocacy advertisement, they are more likely to become skeptical of the company’s motives (Menon & Kahn, 2003). However, when a consumer focuses on the issue being promoted instead of the brand, congruent messages result in positive effects on persuasion (Menon & Kahn). Therefore, when the brand is congruent with the cause (e.g., a sneaker company promoting physical fitness activity), people will be less skeptical of the advertisers’ intentions than when the brand is incongruent with the cause (e.g., a fast-foot restaurant promoting physical fitness activity).

**H18:** There will be a main effect for brand-cause congruency on advertiser motives such that congruent brands will be evaluated as having more sincere motives than incongruent brands.

However, based on the SBC literature discussed in Chapter One, I also predict that strong SBCs will attenuate consumer skepticism, especially when the brand and the cause are incongruent.

**H19:** There will be an interaction between SBC strength and brand-cause congruency, such that SBCs will exert a greater influence on perceptions of advertiser motives in incongruent conditions than congruent conditions.
H20: There will be an interaction between SBC strength and brand-cause congruency, such that SBCs will exert a greater influence on perceived corporate social responsibility in incongruent conditions than congruent conditions.

H21: There will be an interaction between SBC strength and brand-cause congruency, such that SBCs will exert a greater influence on exercise motivation in incongruent conditions than congruent conditions.

Based on the literature pertaining to corporate credibility (discussed in Chapter 2), I predict that perceived advertiser credibility will mediate the relationship between SBC strength and perceived corporate social responsibility and exercise motivation.

H22: The effect of SBC strength on perceived corporate responsibility will be mediated by perceived advertiser credibility.

H23: The effect of SBC strength on exercise motivation will be mediated by perceived advertiser credibility.

Method

Introduction

All participants $(N = 185)$ in a 2 (brand-cause congruency: congruent/incongruent) X 2 (SBC strength: strong/weak) plus control (nonprofit sponsored ad) between-subjects factorial design experiment were randomly assigned to one of five experimental conditions. The control condition was only used in the analysis of H12, which predicted that for-profit
brands would be less effective in motivating people to exercise than the same message purportedly sponsored by a nonprofit organization. All other analyses were conducted based on a 2 (brand-cause congruency: congruent/incongruent) X 2 (SBC strength: strong/weak) experimental design. In each condition, participants viewed an advertisement promoting physical fitness activity. All advertisements were identical except for the name and logo of the brand or organization sponsoring the message, which served as the congruency and SBC strength manipulations. After participants’ exposure to the advertisement, they completed a post-exposure questionnaire.

Participants

185 male and female participants were recruited from the undergraduate student research pool in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the five experimental conditions and were equally distributed across all conditions with thirty-seven participants per cell. Informed consent was obtained according to the University of North Carolina’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) stipulations and all participants signed an informed consent form (Appendix F) prior to their participation in the study.

Of the 185 participants, 84% were female (N = 154) and 16% were male (N = 31). The participants ranged in age from 18 to 38 years old. The mean age of participants was 20.7 years old and the median age was 21. Most participants identified themselves as White/Caucasian (86.5%; N = 150). 5.4% identified as Asian (N = 10) and 4.9% (N = 9) identified themselves as Black/African American. 3.2% (N = 6) as multiple ethnicities or “other,” 3% (N = 6) as Latino or Hispanic, and 0.5% (N = 1) as American Indian or Alaska Native.
The majority of participants were either seniors (53.5%; \( N = 99 \)) or juniors (37.8%; \( N = 70 \)) with only 7.6% (\( N = 14 \)) reporting that they were sophomores and 1.1% (\( N = 2 \)) indicating that she was a freshman.

**Independent Variables**

*Brand-cause congruency.* To determine brand-cause congruency, a pretest was conducted in which participants (\( N = 53 \)) were recruited from the undergraduate research pool at UNC and were asked to rate the congruency between several product categories and physical fitness activity using the perceived congruency scale (Menon & Kahn, 2003). The product category of “sneakers” was determined to be a high brand-cause congruency product category (\( M = 6.15 \)) and the product category of fast food restaurants was found to have low brand-cause congruency (\( M = 1.85 \)). To provide further evidence of this manipulation, participants in the main study completed the brand-cause congruence scale after viewing the stimulus materials as part of the post-stimulus questionnaire.

*SBC strength.* To determine which brands to use as the SBC manipulation, an initial pretest was conducted with a group of participants similar to those who participated in the final study. Participants were recruited from the undergraduate student research pool and completed the SBC scale (Escalas & Bettman, 2004) for several brands within the product categories determined by the brand-cause congruency pretest (sneakers and fact-food restaurants). In the sneaker category, Nike was determined to be the high SBC brand (\( M = 3.50 \)) and Reebok was determined to be the low SBC brand (\( M = 1.90 \)). In the fast food category, Chick-Fil-A was determined to be the high SBC brand (\( M = 3.45 \)) and Burger King the low SBC brand (\( M = 1.93 \)). Thus, the strong SBC/congruent condition in the main study consisted of an advertisement for sponsored Nike sneakers and the weak SBC/congruent
brand condition consisted of an advertisement sponsored Reebok sneakers. The strong SBC/incongruent condition consisted of an ad sponsored by Chick-fil-A and the weak SBC/incongruent condition consisted of an ad sponsored by Burger King. To provide further assurance of this manipulation, participants in the main study completed the SBC scale after viewing the stimulus materials as part of the post-stimulus questionnaire.

Procedure

This study used a 2 (SBC strength: strong/weak) X 2 (brand-cause congruency: congruent/incongruent) plus control between-subjects experimental design. After obtaining informed consent for participation in the study (Appendix F), each student was asked to sit at a computer. Once all participants were present, the researcher instructed them that they were about to view an advertisement and then answer an online questionnaire. Next, participants were instructed to click on a link on the computer screen in front of them and they viewed the advertisement (Appendix G). The advertisements were identical in each condition with the exception of the logo and brand name at the bottom of the advertisement. After viewing the advertisement, participants proceeded to fill out an online questionnaire with the dependent and control measures (Appendix H).

The brands chosen as weak or strong SBC brands were determined via a series of pre-tests identical to those in study one. The brand chosen as congruent or incongruent with physical fitness were determined via a pretest detailed below. The stimulus materials were identical across all conditions except for the manipulations controlled by the researcher. After completing the questionnaire, participants were given a debriefing form (Appendix I), thanked for their participation, and dismissed.
Dependent Variables

Study two contained several of the dependent variables measured in study one including attitudes toward the brand (adapted from Mackenzie & Lutz, 1989; $\alpha = .92$), attitudes toward the ad (adapted from Ivory & Kalyanaraman, 2007; $\alpha = .91$), and purchase intention (adapted from Bruner, James, & Hensel, 1992; $\alpha = .90$). In addition to these measures, the following additional measures were utilized in study two as detailed below.

Exercise motivation. Exercise motivation was measured via two 7-point Likert-type questions that measured participants’ evaluations of how persuasive the ad was in making them want to exercise and how much the advertisement motivated them to exercise. These items were highly correlated and formed the exercise motivation measure ($r = .89$, $p<.001$).

Perceived corporate social responsibility. Perceived corporate social responsibility was measured using Menon and Kahn’s (2003) scale. The scale consists of five items on which participants indicated their agreement or disagreement on a 7-point scale (e.g., “X brand believes in philanthropy and giving generously to worthy causes.”) ($\alpha = .92$).

Advertiser motives. Advertiser motives were measured using an index made up of seven semantic differential measures (e.g., This message was…“Insincere/Sincere,” “Manipulative/Not Manipulative”) anchored on a 7-point scale (adapted from Campbell & Kirmani, 2000, $\alpha = .85$).

Potential Mediating Variable

Perceived advertiser credibility. The same perceived advertiser credibility scale was used in both study one and study two (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001; $\alpha = .90$).
Controls and Manipulation Checks

*SBC strength.* To determine the efficacy of the SBC manipulation, the same scale used in study one was also used in study two (Escalas & Bettman, 2003; $\alpha = .91$).

*Brand-cause congruency.* To test that the brand-cause congruency manipulation was successful, participants completed the perceived congruency scale (Menon & Kahn, 2003), which consisted of six items measured on a 7-point scale anchored between “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree” (e.g., How logically related is the brand of (product) to this social issue?). These six items formed the brand-cause congruency index ($\alpha = .92$).

*Control measures.* The control measures from study one were also utilized in study two including brand name recall, brand familiarity, product familiarity, and advertiser familiarity. Additionally, an open-ended cause recall measure was included in the questionnaire to ensure that participants were aware of the cause promoted in the advertisement. Specifically, participants were asked, “What was the advertisement promoting?”

*Demographics.* Relevant demographic data was collected including age, gender, ethnicity, current year in school, and major.

Results

Manipulation Checks

*SBC strength.* To test the efficacy of the SBC manipulation, an ANOVA was run with SBC strength and brand-cause congruency as independent factors and the SBC index as the dependent variable. The effect of SBC on the perceived SBC index was significant, $F(1,$
144) = 55.96, \( p < .001 \), such that perceived SBC scores were higher for the strong SBC condition \( (M = 3.58, SE = .14) \) than for the weak SBC condition \( (M = 2.06, SE = .14) \).

Neither the main effect of congruency nor the interaction effects between SBC and congruency attained statistical significance. Therefore, the ANOVA on the SBC measure indicated that the SBC manipulation was successful and participants in the strong SBC conditions had a stronger SBC with the brand sponsoring the message than the participants in the weak SBC conditions (Table 8).

**Brand-cause congruency.** To test the efficacy of the congruency manipulation, an ANOVA was run with SBC strength and congruency as independent factors and the brand-cause congruency index as the dependent variable. The effect of congruency on the perceived brand-cause congruency index was significant, \( F(1, 180) = 641.97, \ p < .001 \), such that perceived brand-cause congruency scores were higher for the congruent condition \( (M = 5.57, SE = .10) \) than for the incongruent condition \( (M = 2.10, SE = .10) \). Neither the main effect of SBC nor the interaction effects between SBC and congruency attained statistical significance. Therefore, the ANOVA on the congruency measure indicated that the brand-cause congruency manipulation was successful (Table 8).

**Tests of Hypotheses**

**H12: Source effects on exercise motivation.** H12 predicted that advocacy advertisements sponsored by for-profit brands would be less effective in motivating people to exercise than the same message sponsored by a nonprofit organization. A one-way ANOVA was run with motivation to exercise as the dependent variable and the sponsor of the advertisement as the independent variable. The ANOVA was significant, \( F(4, 180) = 10.10, \ p < .01, \eta^2 = .18 \). Follow-up tests were conducted (Tukeys HSD) to evaluate pairwise
differences among the means. Interestingly, the nonprofit sponsor (The American Heart Association) was more effective in motivating people to exercise than both of the incongruent brands, Chick-fil-A and Burger King, but there was no significant difference in the means between the nonprofit sponsor and either Nike or Reebok, the congruent brands (Table 9). Therefore H12 was disconfirmed.

**H13-H17: Main effects of SBC strength.** H13-H18 predicted that there would be a main effect for SBC strength on attitudes toward the brand (H13), attitudes toward the advertisement (H14), purchase intentions (H15), perceived advertiser motives (H16), and perceived corporate social responsibility (H17). The data were analyzed using a series of 2 x 2 between-subjects ANOVAs and support was found for all hypotheses (A summary of the analysis for main effects of SBCs is in Table 10). An interaction effect was also found for all dependent variables except attitude toward the ad, as discussed below.

An ANOVA with attitudes toward the brand as the dependent measure revealed a significant main effect for SBC, with strong SBCs eliciting more positive attitudes toward the brand ($M = 5.93$, $SE = .13$) than weak SBCs ($M = 4.07$, $SE = .13$), $F(1, 144) = 106.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .43$. Since, SBC strength had a main effect on participants’ attitudes toward the brand, H13 was supported. An (unhypothesized) main effect also emerged for brand-cause congruency, $F(1, 144) = 14.08$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$, on attitudes toward the brand with congruent conditions eliciting more positive attitudes toward the brand ($M = 5.33$, $SE = .13$) than incongruent conditions ($M = 4.66$, $SE = .13$). Furthermore, an (unhypothesized) interaction effect emerged for attitudes toward the brand $F(1, 144) = 4.51$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$, such that congruency did not influence attitudes toward the brand when SBCs were strong.
However, when SBCs were weak, the attitudes toward brand were greater when the brand and the cause were congruent (Figure 8).

An ANOVA with attitudes toward the advertisement as the dependent measure revealed a significant main effect for SBC, with strong SBCs eliciting more positive attitudes toward the advertisement ($M = 3.86, SE = .11$) than weak SBCs ($M = 3.52, SE = .11$), $F (1, 144) = 4.93, p < .05, \eta^2 = .33$. Thus, SBC strength had a main effect on participants’ attitudes toward the advertisement and H14 was supported. An (unhypothesized) main effect also emerged for brand-cause congruency, $F (1, 144) = 22.86, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$, on attitudes toward the advertisement with congruent conditions eliciting more positive attitudes toward the advertisement ($M = 4.05, SE = .11$) than incongruent conditions ($M = 3.32, SE = .11$).

An ANOVA with purchase intention as the dependent measure revealed a significant main effect for SBC, with strong SBCs eliciting stronger purchase intentions ($M = 5.75, SE = .18$) than weak SBCs ($M = 2.87, SE = .18$), $F (1, 144) = 134.92, p < .001, \eta^2 = .48$. The finding that SBC strength had a main effect on participants’ purchase evaluations meant that H15 was supported. However, there was also an (unhypothesized) interaction effect on purchase intention, $F (1, 144) = 9.43, p < .01, \eta^2 = .06$. These results followed the same pattern as was revealed for attitudes toward the brand in that congruency did not influence purchase intention when SBCs were strong. However, when SBCs were weak, the purchase intention was greater when the brand and the cause were congruent (Figure 9).

An ANOVA with advertiser motives as the dependent measure revealed a significant main effect for SBC, with strong SBCs eliciting more positive advertiser motives ($M = 4.86, SE = .12$) than weak SBCs ($M = 4.29, SE = .12$), $F (1, 144) = 10.90, p < .01, \eta^2 = .07$. Thus,
SBC strength elicited a main effect on participants’ perceived advertiser motives and H16 was supported.

An ANOVA with perceived corporate social responsibility as the dependent measure revealed a significant main effect for SBC, with strong SBCs eliciting higher levels of perceived corporate social responsibility ($M = 4.65, SE = .12$) than weak SBCs ($M = 3.60, SE = .12$), $F(1, 144) = 35.77, p < .001, \eta^2 = .20$. Therefore, SBC strength had a main effect on participants’ perceived corporate social responsibility and H17 was supported.

**H18: Main effects of brand-cause congruency.** H18 predicted a main effect for brand-cause congruency on advertiser motives with strong SBCs resulting in more positive advertiser motives than weak SBCs. An ANOVA with advertiser motives as the dependent measure revealed a significant main effect for congruency, with congruency eliciting more positive advertiser motives ($M = 5.13, SE = .12$) than weak SBCs ($M = 4.01, SE = .12$), $F(1, 144) = 42.43, p < .001, \eta^2 = .23$ (Table 10). Therefore, brand-cause congruency had a main effect on participants’ perceived Advertiser Motives and H18 was supported.

**H19-H21: 2-way interaction of SBC strength and brand-cause congruency.** H19-H21 predicted interaction effects between SBC strength and brand-cause congruency. All hypotheses were confirmed with interactions following the same pattern. SBCs were found to exert a greater influence when the brand was incongruent with the cause (fast-food restaurant) than when it was congruent (sneaker brand). The hypothesized two-way interaction for SBC strength and brand-cause congruency on perceptions of advertisers motives was confirmed, $F(1, 144) = 5.89, p < .05, \eta^2 = .04$. When the brand and the cause were congruent, SBCs did not influence perception of advertiser motives, but SBCs did have an effect when the brand and the cause were incongruent (Figure 10).
The hypothesized two-way interaction on perceived CSR was also confirmed, $F(1, 144) = 38.40$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .21$. When the brand and the cause were congruent, SBCs did not exert an effect on perceived CSR. However, when the brand and the cause were incongruent, strong SBCs resulted in greater perception of CSR than weak SBCs (Figure 11). In fact, the ad sponsored by Chik-fil-A (incongruent, strong SBC) elicited the highest perceptions of CSR.

The hypothesized interaction between SBC strength and brand-cause congruency was also confirmed for the dependent variable pertaining to exercise behavior, namely motivation to exercise, $F(1, 144) = 5.38$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .04$. When strong SBCs were present, the congruency of the brand and the cause had little effect on exercise motivation, but, when SBCs were weak, brands that were congruent with the cause resulted in greater motivation to exercise than brands that were incongruent with the cause (Figure 12).

**H22-23: Perceived advertiser credibility as a mediator.** H22 and H23 predicted that perceived CSR and exercise motivation would be mediated by perceived advertiser credibility. The same procedure used in study one was used in the following mediation analyses (see Preacher & Hayes, 2004). The mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect of SBC strength on perceived CSR through perceived advertiser credibility. The indirect effect was estimated between .2744 and .7570 with 95% confidence ($p<.05$).

The total effect of SBC strength on perceived CSR ($\beta = 1.05$, $t = 5.35$, $p < .001$). The path from SBC strength to perceived advertiser credibility was also significant, $p < .001$ ($\beta = .92$, $t = 5.44$), as was the path from perceived advertiser credibility to perceived corporate responsibility, $p < .001$ ($\beta = .56$, $t = 6.68$), indicating that perceived advertiser credibility did mediate the relationship between SBC strength and perceived CSR. This mediation was only
partial as indicated by the significant direct-effect path from SBC strength to perceived corporate responsibility, \( p < .01 \) (\( \beta = .53, t = 2.82 \)) (see Figure 13). Thus, H22 was supported.

The main effect for SBC on exercise motivation was not significant. However, the interaction between SBC strength and brand-cause congruency revealed that SBCs did exert an influence on exercise motivation, but only when the brand and the cause were incongruent. Therefore the file was split and the mediation analysis was only conducted on the conditions in which the brand and the cause were incongruent. The indirect effect of SBC strength on exercise motivation through advertiser credibility was significant, \( p < .05 \). The indirect effect was estimated between .0249 and 1.0642 with 95% confidence. The mediation analysis revealed a significant total effect of SBC strength on exercise motivation (\( \beta = 1.08, t = 3.21, p < .01 \)). The path from SBC strength to perceived advertiser credibility was also significant, \( p < .001 \) (\( \beta = 1.29, t = 6.41 \)), as was the path from perceived advertiser credibility to perceived exercise motivation, \( p < .05 \) (\( \beta = .42, t = 2.19 \)). The path from SBC strength to exercise motivation was not significant, \( p > .1 \) (\( \beta = .54, t = 1.30 \)), indicating that perceived advertiser credibility fully mediated the relationship between SBC strength and Exercise motivation (see Figure 14). H23 was supported (under conditions of brand-cause incongruence).

**Summary of Results**

Overall, the findings from study two provide support for the persuasive effects of strong SBCs in reducing consumer skepticism about an advertiser’s motives, especially when the cause is incongruent with the brand. Importantly, both SBCs and brand-cause congruency influenced how participants evaluated advertiser’s motives with perceived
advertiser motives being more positive in congruent conditions (vs. incongruent) and when SBCs were strong (vs. weak). These main effects were qualified by an interaction indicating that SBCs only exerted an influence when the brand was incongruent with the cause. This suggests that when the brand is incongruent with the cause, consumers grow skeptical of the brand’s motives, but strong SBCs attenuate such skepticism.

While several studies have looked at the influence of advocacy advertising on business outcomes (e.g., perceived corporate social responsibility), few have explored the effects of such ads on the consumer’s motivation to engage in the pro-social behavior being promoted in the advertisement. This study found that congruency had a main effect on the efficacy of the ad in motivating people to exercise with congruent (sneaker brand) brands being more effective. Moreover, an interaction effect revealed that SBCs exerted an influence on exercise motivation only when the brand was incongruent with the cause (fast food restaurant) and this effect was fully mediated by perceived advertiser credibility. This further suggests that strong SBCs may attenuate the consumer skepticism leading to increased persuasion.

Analysis of the dependent variables of perceived CSR, attitudes toward the brand, and purchase intention revealed similar significant interaction patterns. When strong SBCs were present, congruency appeared to have little effect of either purchase intention or attitudes toward the brand. However, when weak SBCs were present, purchase intention was stronger and brand attitudes more favorable in congruent (vs. incongruent) conditions. The interaction effect for perceived corporate social responsibility followed a slightly different pattern – SBCs only exerted an influence in incongruent conditions with the Chick-fil-A advertisement resulting in the most favorable perceptions of CSR.
Overall, these results suggest that strong SBCs may attenuate consumer skepticism of advocacy advertising, especially when the brand is incongruent with the cause (e.g., a fast food restaurant promoting physical fitness activity). Most interestingly, SBCs not only influenced marketing outcomes (e.g., perceived CSR), but also participants’ motivation to engage in the health behavior being promoted. Specifically, when the brand was incongruent with the cause, SBC strength impacted participants’ evaluation of how much the ad motivated them to exercise with strong SBCs resulting in stronger motivation than weak SBCs.
CHAPTER 4

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Discussion

Purpose and Goals

These studies were conducted to further understand the persuasive effects of brands within the context of the processing of advertising messages. Central to this dissertation is the construct of self-brand connections. The SBC construct asserts that people can develop strong relationships with certain brands in which the brand becomes integrated into the consumer’s identity. Thus, SBCs represent a meaningful and potentially persuasive type of consumer-brand relationship. Due to the fact that SBCs are closely aligned with consumer’s identity, I predicted (and found) that SBCs could influence persuasion differently than other brand measures such as brand liking.

Much of the research regarding SBCs focuses on understanding the antecedents of SBC formation but little, if any, research has explored the potential effects of SBCs. This dissertation is one of the first efforts to explore SBCs as an independent variable. Broadly, this study provides support for the assertion that SBC strength can influence information processing and, ultimately, persuasion. In general, I found that advertisements sponsored by strong SBC brands were more persuasive than those sponsored by weak SBC brands. Furthermore, these studies found that strong SBCs could overcome certain barriers to
persuasion, namely unpersuasive product attributes and consumer suspicion of an advertiser’s motives. A summary of the hypotheses and findings presented in this dissertation can be found in Table 1.

Study one explored SBCs within a traditional product-advertising context (e.g., an advertisement promoting sneakers). Within a marketing context, research utilizing the framework of the HSM has found that brand names can act as heuristics and, under conditions of high-task-importance product evaluations are influenced primarily by the attributes of the product, not the brand name. In other words, when people are able and willing to carefully process a message, the brand is not as important as the product’s attributes. However, based on the fact that SBCs are a particularly meaningful type of brand-consumer relationship in which the brand has become incorporated into the consumer’s identity, I predicted that brands would have a greater influence on persuasion than product attributes once a SBC had formed. The findings of study one provided support for this general hypothesis. In other words, SBC strength influenced persuasion and product attributes did not.

Following the HSM framework, study one also proposed an interaction between task importance and SBC strength, such that SBCs would exert a greater influence on product evaluations when task importance was low and an interaction between task importance and product attributes, such that product attributes would exert a greater influence on product evaluations when task importance was high. This pattern of results would be consistent with the idea that people engage primarily in accuracy-motivated processing and brands act as heuristics. However, this dissertation revealed a different pattern of results. Specifically, when people were willing and able to carefully process the message (conditions of high-task-
involvement), SBC strength influenced persuasion and product attribute strength did not. This finding suggests that SBCs affect information processing and persuasion in ways different from mere brand liking, as explored in previous research.

Furthermore, competing hypotheses were presented regarding the type of information processing that SBCs stimulate. H11a proposed that consumers would engage in accuracy-motivated processing. In other words, under conditions of high-task-importance, SBCs would act as a heuristic cue and have a limited persuasive effect. Product evaluations would be determined primarily by the product attributes in the advertisement. H11b proposed that, due to SBCs connection to the self, SBCs would encourage the defense-motivated processing of product attribute information within an advertisement. In other words, under conditions of high-task-importance, product evaluations would be based primarily on SBC strength and the relationship between SBC strength and product evaluations would be mediated by the favorability of attribute related thoughts. Thus, consumers would systematically process the product attribute information, but do so in a way that confirms their SBC. H11b was supported. Importantly, this provides initial evidence that SBCs can encourage the defense-motivated processing of information and suggests that SBCs can overcome an important barrier to persuasion in advertising – unimportant product attributes.

Study two extended study one and proposed that SBCs could overcome another potential barrier to persuasion - consumer suspicion of an advertiser’s motives. This hypothesis was tested within the context of an advocacy advertisement that sponsored physical fitness activity without any promotion of the company’s products. This study hypothesized that people would be least suspicious of a nonprofit organization sponsoring the message and, therefore, the ad purportedly sponsored by the American Heart Association
(AHA) would be more persuasive in motivating people to exercise than the same ad sponsored by a for-profit brand. Importantly, the findings from this study revealed that, under certain circumstances (e.g., when the brand and the cause were congruent), for-profit brands can be as persuasive as nonprofit organizations in promoting health behaviors.

In addition to providing additional support for the main effect of SBCs on persuasion, study two also found that the congruency between the brand and the cause interacted with SBC strength. Specifically, SBCs had a greater influence on persuasion when the brand and the cause were incongruent (a fast food brand promoting physical fitness activity) than under conditions of brand-cause-congruency (a sneaker brand promoting physical fitness activity). These findings provided additional evidence that SBCs can influence persuasion and overcome certain barriers to persuasion, in this case consumer suspicion of an advertiser’s motives.

Interpretation of Findings

Broadly, both studies provided support for the overall assertion that SBCs can influence persuasion and, under certain conditions, overcome barriers to persuasion (e.g. unimportant product attributes and consumer suspicion of an advertiser’s motives). Interestingly, the findings of these studies indicated that SBCs influence both brand-related outcomes and outcomes related to the topic promoted in the advertisement (e.g., the product or the cause being promoted).

As expected, SBCs exerted a main effect on several brand-related measures. In both studies, there was a significant main effect for SBC strength on attitudes towards the brand with strong SBCs resulting in more favorable attitudes toward the brand than weak SBCs.
SBC strength also exerted a main effect on word-of-mouth promotion of the brand and the willingness to adopt brand markers (e.g., wearing apparel featuring the company’s name and logo). There was also an (unhypothesized) interaction between SBC strength and task importance on adoption of brand markers indicating that the effect of SBC strength on the adoption of brand markers was greater under conditions of high-task-importance than conditions of low-task-importance. A possible explanation for this finding is that under conditions of high-task-importance, consumers may think more critically about whether or not they want to publically communicate their connection to a particular brand. When a consumer’s SBC is strong, they may want to closely identify with the brand, but when the SBC is weak, they may want to distance themselves from the brand.

Study one and study two were designed to explore two separate yet related topics and, therefore, will be discussed separately. Study one focused on the role of SBCs in the processing of advertising messages promoting a consumer product (sneakers) within the framework of the HSM. Thus, this study looked at the interplay between SBC strength, product attribute importance, and task importance, and posited an ad sponsored by a brand with which the consumer has a strong SBC may be persuasive regardless of the product’s attributes listed in the ad. In study one, purchase intention was influenced solely by SBC strength, with stronger SBCs resulting in greater intention to purchase the product.\(^8\) Furthermore, in study one, consumers indicated greater intention to purchase the sneaker presented in the ad from Nike (strong SBC) than Reebok (weak SBC) regardless of whether the product’s attributes were important or unimportant, and regardless of whether they were in conditions of high or low-task-importance. Significantly, this is one of the first studies in

\(^8\) The same pattern of results emerged for study two, as detailed later in this section.
which the findings suggest that consumers’ intention to purchase a product after viewing an advertisement is more contingent on the strength of their SBC with the brand than on the product attributes featured in the advertisement, even under conditions of high-task-importance. A similar pattern of results emerged for SBC on word-of-mouth promotion of the product, which provides further support for the assertion that SBC strength can influence product-related intentions regardless of the importance of the product-attributes presented in the advertisement.

It was predicted that the main effect of SBC on purchase intention and word-of-mouth promotion of the product would be mediated by perceived advertiser credibility. Mediation analysis confirmed these hypotheses. Perceived advertiser credibility fully mediated the relationship between SBC strength and word-of-mouth product promotion and partially mediated the relationship between SBC strength and purchase intention. These findings indicate that strong SBCs led the consumer to perceive the brand to be more credible and, in-turn, consumers had stronger intentions to purchase the product themselves and promote the product to others.

Within the HSM framework, brands have been found to serve as heuristic cues. Thus, under conditions of low-task-importance, people are likely to engage in heuristic processing and product evaluations are influenced primarily by the brand, not the product attributes, and, under conditions of high-task-importance, product evaluations are based primarily on the importance of the product attributes. Based on these findings, H9 and H10 predicted that this pattern of results would emerge. These hypotheses were not supported.
The findings of study two revealed that product attribute importance did not influence product evaluations when task importance was high. There was a significant interaction between task importance and SBC strength, but it was in the opposite of direction of what was hypothesized. Under conditions of low-task-importance, SBCs had little influence on product evaluations, but under conditions of high-task-importance, product evaluations were based primarily on SBC strength. A possible explanation of these results is that under conditions of low-task-importance, people became disinterested in the advertisement and based product evaluations on neither the brand or the product attributes, instead they may have just evaluated the product as “average,” regardless of any of the information contained in the ad. A discussion of the results that emerged under conditions of high-task-importance is best understood within the context of competing hypotheses that were presented in study one.

H11a and H11b presented competing hypotheses as to the type of processing that consumers engaged in under conditions of high-task-importance. H11a proposed that consumers would engage in accuracy-motivated processing. H11b proposed that consumers SBCs would encourage defense-motivated processing. This study found that participants did not base product evaluations on product attribute information, suggesting that they were not engaged in accuracy-motivated processing. Instead, product evaluations were based on SBCs with strong SBCs resulting in more favorable product evaluations.

There are two possible explanations for these findings; the brand may have acted as a heuristic and people engaged in heuristic processing or people may have engaged in defense-

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9 No significant findings for product-attribute-importance emerged on the dependent variable of product evaluations under conditions of either high or low-task-importance.
motivated systematic processing of the product attributes. A mediation analysis indicated that the relationship between SBC strength and product evaluation was completely mediated by the favorability of product attribute thoughts, suggesting that SBCs encouraged defense-motivated processing. In other words, strong (weak) SBCs led to more (less) favorable thoughts about the products attributes listed in the ad resulting in favorable (unfavorable) product evaluations. These results suggest that SBCs encourage the defense-motivated processing of information in an advertisement. This finding illuminates the complex nature of brands and brand-relationships in persuasion.

Study two built on study one and explored the role of SBCs in the processing of advocacy advertising (promotion of physical fitness activity) within the framework of the PKM. This study predicted that SBCs would influence persuasion, and this effect would be amplified when the brand and the cause were incongruent. Overall, study two provided support for the notion that strong SBCs can reduce consumers’ skepticism toward advocacy advertising. Specifically, SBCs exerted a direct influence on consumers’ perceptions of the advertiser’s motives, with stronger SBCs resulting in more favorable perceptions of the advertiser’s motives than weak SBCs. Brand-cause congruency also had a main effect on the perception of the advertiser’s motives. Specifically, people held more favorable perceptions of the brand’s motives when the brand and the cause were congruent (sneaker company promoting physical fitness) as opposed to incongruent (fast food company promoting physical fitness activity). Furthermore, as hypothesized, an interaction revealed that the effect of SBCs on consumers’ perceptions of the advertiser’s motives was amplified when the brand and the cause were incongruent. This suggests that consumers may be more
skeptical of an advertiser’s motives in creating advocacy advertising when the brand and the cause are incongruent, but such skepticism is attenuated by strong SBCs.

As predicted, there was a main effect of SBC strength on perceived corporate social responsibility (CSR), with stronger SBCs resulting in more favorable perceptions of CSR. There was also an interaction effect indicating that SBC strength only influenced perceived CSR when the brand and the cause were incongruent. These results suggest that a company such as a fast-food restaurant may benefit from running advocacy advertising promoting physical fitness activity, but only if the audience has a strong SBC with the brand. If a weak SBC exists, the results can damage the company’s perceived CSR. As hypothesized, the effect of SBC strength on perceived CSR was partially mediated by perceived advertiser credibility. Thus, strong (weak) SBCs led to consumers viewing the corporation as more (less) credible, leading to greater (weaker) perceived CSR.

To the best of my knowledge, this dissertation is one of only a few studies that look at the effects of advocacy advertising on the cause or behavior being promoted in addition to its effects on the company (e.g., perceived CSR). Results revealed that the congruency of the brand and the cause had a main effect on the extent to which people felt that the ad motivated them to exercise, with increased persuasion occurring when the brand and the cause were congruent. An interaction effect also revealed that SBCs influenced exercise motivation, but only when the brand and the cause were incongruent. This provides further evidence that strong SBCs may have the ability to help overcome resistance to persuasion. In other words, people were less likely to be motivated to exercise when the physical fitness ad was sponsored by a fast-food brand. However, this decreased motivation to engage in the health behavior was attenuated when strong SBCs were present.
Across the studies, unexpected results emerged regarding the dependent measure of attitudes toward the advertisement. It was predicted that there would be a main effect for SBC strength on attitudes toward the advertisement. In study one, this hypothesis was not supported. Instead, there was a significant (unhypothesized) three-way interaction. Analysis revealed that under conditions of low-task-importance neither SBC strength nor product attribute importance had much of an effect on attitudes toward the ad. However, under conditions of high-task-importance, attribute importance influenced attitudes toward the ad, but only when weak SBCs were present. When strong SBCs were present the advertisement was evaluated favorably regardless of the importance of the product attributes contained in the ad. This suggests that, when people are able and motivated to carefully process the advertisement, strong SBCs have the potential to attenuate the negative influence that unimportant attributes have on consumers’ evaluations of the advertisement.

In study two, as hypothesized, there was a main effect for SBC strength on attitudes toward the advertisement with strong SBCs resulting in more favorable evaluations of the advertisement than weak SBCs. Unexpectedly, there was also a main effect for brand-cause congruency on this dependent variable. Specifically, the advertisement was evaluated more favorably when the brand and the cause were congruent (a sneaker company promoted a physical fitness advertisement) than the incongruent conditions (a fast food restaurant promoting the same physical fitness advertisement). Within the PKM framework, a possible explanation for this unexpected result is that consumer’s may evaluate advocacy advertising more favorably when the brand and the cause are congruent because they feel that the advertisers motives are sincere and the brand does not have ulterior motives. Therefore, not only would SBCs influence evaluations of the advertisement, but congruency would also
matter. Further support is found for this explanation in findings regarding the dependent measure of advertiser motives, which indicated that both both SBC strength and brand-cause congruency influenced perceptions of the advertisers motives, with both strong SBCs and brand-cause congruency resulting in the perception of more sincere advertiser motives. An interaction effect revealed that the effect of SBC strength on advertiser motives was amplified when the brand and the cause were incongruent (fast food company promoting the physical fitness advertisement).

In summary, the findings of these two studies provide evidence that SBCs can influence a variety of brand, product, and cause related outcomes. SBC strength was found to have a direct main effect on several brand and product related measures, most notably purchase intention. Study one revealed that, under conditions of high-task-importance, SBCs influence product evaluations, regardless of the importance of product attributes. Importantly, this effect was fully mediated through the favorability of attribute related thoughts (VAT). This pattern of results suggests that SBCs may have encouraged defense-motivated processing. Overall, the findings of study two indicated that advocacy is likely to be more effective when the brand and the cause are congruent. However, the findings also suggest that strong SBCs may attenuate the negative effects of consumer skepticism resulting in increased persuasion.

**Implications**

This dissertation has several theoretical and practical implications. First, the theoretical implications on self-brand connections, the heuristic-systematic model, and the persuasion knowledge model are discussed. Next, practical implications are discussed for those developing persuasive messages.
Theoretical Implications

Self-brand connections. The results of this dissertation contribute to a better understanding of the effects of SBCs. The majority of research regarding SBCs has focused on the antecedents of SBC formation and little is known about the effects of SBCs on message processing, attitudes, intentions, or behaviors. These studies contribute to the SBC literature by providing initial evidence of the persuasive effects of SBCs. These studies found that SBCs can influence a variety of important marketing, advertising, and health communication variables including attitudes toward the brand, attitudes toward the advertisement, word-of-mouth brand and product promotion, adoption of brand markers, product evaluations, purchase intention, perception of advertiser’s motives, perceived CSR, and behavioral motivation. Furthermore, these studies found that perceived corporate credibility mediated the relationship between SBC strength and purchase intention, word-of-mouth product promotion, and perceived CSR.

Heuristic-systematic model. The results of study one extend our understanding of the HSM. The HSM posits that people may engage in different types of processing of persuasive messages. In part, this study set out to explore whether SBCs encourage people to engage in accuracy-motivated processing or defense-motivated processing. The results of this dissertation suggest that SBCs may encourage defense-motivated processing, in which people process the information contained in a message in such a way that it confirms one’s self-definitional attitudes and beliefs. When strong SBCs exist, the brand has been incorporated into one’s self-concept. Thus, strong (weak) SBCs caused the consumer to elaborate on the product attributes favorably (unfavorably) leading to more (less) favorable product evaluations. While previous research within the HSM framework has found that
brands act as heuristic cues (Maheswaran et al., 1992), this dissertation appears to have found some initial support for the possibility that brands may also encourage defense-motivated processing. SBCs represent a meaningful type of brand connection and this study has shown that SBCs may influence information processing in novel ways.

Persuasion knowledge model. Study two contributes to our understanding of the PKM by introducing SBCs as a unique type of agent knowledge (e.g., a person’s beliefs about the brand sponsoring an advertisement). The PKM posits that persuasion is influenced by a consumer’s knowledge about persuasion and persuasion attempts, including consumers’ suspicion of a brand’s ulterior motives for creating an advertisement. This dissertation found that when the brand sponsoring a message is incongruent with the cause (fast food restaurant promoting physical fitness), SBCs influence consumers’ perceptions of the advertisers’ motives, such that strong SBCs result in the perception of more sincere motives than weak SBCs. Furthermore, this study found that, when the cause and the brand were incongruent, strong SBCs were more persuasive than weak SBCs on several dependent variables related to both perceptions of the brand and the advertisement.

The majority of studies exploring advocacy advertising focus on understanding how effective advocacy advertising is for the company (e.g., perception of CSR, brand attitudes), with few studies having explored the impact of advocacy advertising on the consumer regarding the activity being promoting. Studies that have explored this topic have found that corporate-sponsored social messages are often ineffective in motivating people to engage in the behavior or cause being promoted (e.g., Szykman et al., 2004). This dissertation provides a slightly new perspective.
This study found that the ad sponsored by the American Heart Association (AHA) was not necessarily more effective than the ads sponsored by for-profit brands in motivating people to exercise. In fact, the brands that were congruent with the cause were as effective as the AHA. Furthermore, when the ads were sponsored by a fast-food company, those sponsored by Chick-fil-A (strong SBC) were more effective than those sponsored by Burger King (weak SBC) in motivating exercise behavior. This suggests that, under certain conditions, for-profit brands may be effective in promoting pro-social causes and behaviors.

Practical Implications

This dissertation has several practical implications for those creating persuasive messages. First, those developing marketing messages should garner from this research that brands can be powerful persuasion tools and cultivating strong relationships between an organization’s brands and its consumers is of the utmost importance. As these studies found, SBCs are a particularly important type of brand-consumer relationships with the persuasive power to influence several important marketing-related outcomes (e.g., purchase intention). Therefore, scholarship should continue to build upon the existing research that explores how to develop strong self-brand connections.

Furthermore, some marketing professionals believe that when a consumer is making a purchase decision regarding a product, the products attributes trump the brand. However, this research found that, in certain circumstances, brands can influence product evaluations and purchase intentions more than product attributes. When a strong SBC has been cultivated, consumers may see that brand and its products through rose-colored glasses. This suggests that marketers should invest in forging deep consumer relationships in which the brand becomes incorporated into the consumer’s identity.
Study two has interesting implications for brands engaging in advocacy advertising campaigns to enhance CSR. This study suggests that CSR managers should take into account both the congruency between their brand and the cause that they are promoting and consumers' connection to the brand. This research suggests that companies should promote causes that align with their brand. However, if a company is creating a CSR campaign that is incongruent with the brand (e.g., a fast-food restaurant promoting physical fitness activity; an oil company promoting an environmental cause), it is essential that research be conducted to understand the strength of the consumers’ SBCs. If the SBC is strong, this type of campaign may be very effective. However, if the SBC is weak, the campaign is not likely to be successful in motivating the consumer to engage in the behavior. Additionally, consumers may form a weak perception of the company’s CSR in these situations.

Most of the current research regarding SBCs, including study one of this dissertation, explores SBC formation within the context of traditional product marketing. However, as study two of this dissertation suggests, there is an important opportunity to extend SBC research into the promotion of pro-social health messages. The field of public health has just recently begun to leverage marketing strategies, such as branding, to promote health behaviors (Evans & Hastings, 2008). However, complex consumer-brand connections have yet to be fully explored within a public health context. This dissertation has found that strong SBCs can overcome barriers to persuasion, such as suspicion of the advertiser’s motives. Based on this finding, it is possible that strong SBCs could make public health messages more effective. Therefore, the health communication field would benefit from a better understanding of how to build public health brands with which the audience has a strong SBC. The findings from this dissertation raise important questions regarding the
possibility that SBCs could overcome barriers to persuasion within a health communication context.

Limitations and Suggestions For Future Research

In addition to the threats to external validity associated with experimental designs, this study has several other limitations. For example, this study used actual brands that the participants were already familiar with before the study. The study designs and conceptual issues related to SBCs excluded the use of fictitious brands in these particular studies, which precluded me from being able to pinpoint the development of SBCs. For instance, participants SBCs may have been based on different aspects of the self, which could also have interesting implications for persuasion. Future research should try to manipulate participants’ SBC strength with a fictional brand and further explore the antecedents of SBC formation.

Furthermore, the SBC scale evaluates the extent to which a consumer has incorporated a brand into his or her self-concept. It is clear that a high score on the SBC scale indicates that a strong SBC has formed, but it is less clear what a low score on the SBC scale indicates. A low score on the SBC scale could indicate that the consumer has an adverse reaction to incorporating the brand into their self-concept or it could mean that they simply have no connection with the brand, either favorable or unfavorable. Future research should focus on scale development to parse out the differences between actively not wanting to relate the brand to the self (e.g., a pro-life advocate’s SBC with Planned Parenthood Federation of America) and being indifferent about how the brand relates to the self.

Another significant limitation is that the SBC manipulation did not accurately reflect truly strong SBCs. In both studies, the means for the strong SBC conditions were below five
on a seven-point scale. The effects found in these studies would likely have been stronger if the strong SBC conditions represented very strong SBC with the brand. Future research should explore using participants that only have a truly strong SBC with the brand being used in the study. This would provide a better understanding of the actual impact of SBCs on persuasion. Additionally, future research should seek to better understand the role of the self in SBCs. This research should explicate (and control for within an experimental setting) several brand-related measures (e.g., brand love, brand liking) to better understand the unique effect of SBCs above and beyond these other brand-related measures.

This dissertation introduced a new measure to the advertising literature – the adoption of brand markers. To the best of my knowledge, a scale measuring the adoption of brand markers (e.g., “friending” the brand on Facebook) does not currently exist. This measure captures an unique behavioral intention that is likely to be related to the consumer’s identity since it incorporates using the brand to display the self. Future research should conduct a confirmatory factor analysis to further refine this measure.

The sample used in these studies was predominantly journalism and mass communication majors, many of whom study advertising. Therefore, in study one, a significant amount of the thoughts listed by the participants focused on details of the ad, not the brand or the product attributes (e.g., “This masking on the image could be better”). Overall, there is a possibility across the studies that participants had a greater knowledge of – and interest in – advertising and persuasion than other sample populations.

In conclusion, these studies are a initial step in understanding how SBCs affect consumers’ attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Future research should build on the persuasive effects of SBCs found in this dissertation to explore other potential barriers to persuasion that
strong SBCs might be able to overcome. While this has important implications for traditional consumer marketing and advertising, my hope is that our understanding of SBCs will continue to be studied and applied in the realm of pro-social communications. As these studies have illustrated, brands matter and SBCs can be powerful. Therefore, I believe that there is an opportunity to use SBCs to promote pro-social messages. Future research should extend SBCs beyond traditional marketing research and leverage their persuasive influence to promote social change.
TABLES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H1: Main effect of SBC strength on attitudes toward the brand</strong></td>
<td>Study One: Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H2: Main effect of SBC strength on attitudes toward the advertisement</strong></td>
<td>Not Supported. An unhypothesized main effect for attribute importance emerged, with ads that contained important product attributes being evaluated more favorably than those that contained unimportant product attributes. This effect was qualified by an unhypothesized 3-way interaction. Under conditions of high-task-importance, the importance of the product attributes influence evaluations only when weak SBCs are present. When strong SBCs were present, ads were evaluated favorably regardless of the importance of the product attributes. This effect did not emerge under conditions of low-task-importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H3: Main effect of SBC strength on purchase intention</strong></td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H4: Main effect of SBC strength on word-of-mouth product promotion</strong></td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H5: Main effect of SBC strength on word-of-mouth brand promotion</strong></td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| H6: Main effect of SBC strength on the adoption of brand markers | Supported  
This effect was qualified by an unhypothesized two-way interaction between SBC strength and task importance. Under conditions of high-task-importance, the adoption of brand markers was influenced by SBC strength, with strong SBCs resulting in more willingness to adopt brand markers. Under conditions of low-task-importance, the effect was attenuated. | n/a |
| H7: Relationship between SBC strength and purchase intention mediated by perceived advertiser credibility | Supported (partial mediation) | n/a |
| H8: Relationship between SBC strength and word-of-mouth product promotion mediated by perceived advertiser credibility | Supported (full mediation) | n/a |
| H9: Interaction between task importance and SBC strength such that SBC strength will exert a stronger influence on product evaluations when task importance is low than when it is high | Not supported.  
Interaction effect in opposite direction. | n/a |
<p>| H10: Interaction between task importance and product attribute importance such that product attribute importance will exert a greater influence on product evaluations when task importance is high than when it is low | Not supported. | n/a |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H11a:</td>
<td>In conditions of high-task-importance, participants will engage in accuracy-motivated processing and important product attributes will result in more favorable product evaluations than unimportant product attributes</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H11b:</td>
<td>In conditions of high-task-importance, participants will engage in defense-motivated systematic processing and stronger SBCs will result in more favorable product evaluations than weak SBCs. The relationship between SBC strength and product evaluation will be mediated by valenced attribute-related thoughts (VAT).</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H12:</td>
<td>Messages sponsored by for-profit brands will be less effective in motivating people to exercise than messages sponsored by a nonprofit organization</td>
<td>Not Supported (only supported for brands that were incongruent with the cause)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H13:</td>
<td>Main effect of SBC strength on attitudes toward the brand</td>
<td>Supported (See H1)</td>
<td>Supported Also an unhypothesized main effect for congruency and an interaction effect. Congruency only had an influence when weak SBCs were present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H14:</td>
<td>Main effect of SBC strength on attitudes toward the advertisement</td>
<td>Supported (See H2)</td>
<td>Supported Also an unhypothesized main effect for congruency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H15: Main effect of SBC strength on purchase intention</td>
<td>Supported (See H3)</td>
<td>Also an unhypothesized interaction effect. Congruency only had an influence when weak SBCs were present.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H16: There will be a main effect for SBC strength on advertiser motives</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H17: There will be a main effect for SBC strength on perceived corporate social responsibility</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H18: Main effect for brand-cause congruency on perceived advertiser motives</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H19: Interaction effect on advertiser motives</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H20: Interaction effect on perceived corporate credibility</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H21: Interaction effect on exercise motivation</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H22: The effect of SBC strength on perceived corporate responsibility will be mediated by perceived corporate credibility</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Supported (Partial mediation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H23: The effect of SBC strength on exercise motivation will be mediated by perceived corporate credibility</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Supported (Full mediation) (Incongruent conditions only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Summary of Means and $F$ Values for Manipulation Checks (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>$F$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Brand Connection (SBC)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product Attribute Importance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unimportant</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task Importance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 3: Summary of Means and $F$ Values for Main Effects (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BrandAtt</strong></td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>101.34***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AdAtt</strong></td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.76 (p&gt;.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PI</strong></td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>16.82***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WOM-P</strong></td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>5.07* (p&gt;.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WOM-B</strong></td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>79.98***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AdoptBM</strong></td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>40.94***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EvalProd</strong></td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>1.49 (p&gt;.10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
### Table 4: Summary of Means for 3-way Interaction on Attitude Toward the Advertisement (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SBC Strength</th>
<th>High-task-importance</th>
<th>Low-task-importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Important Product Attributes</td>
<td>Unimportant Product Attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong SBC</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak SBC</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$F = 8.99 (1, 192), p<.01$

### Table 5: Summary of Means and $F$ Value for SBC Strength X Task Importance Interaction Effect on the Adoption of Brand Markers (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SBC Strength</th>
<th>High-task-importance</th>
<th>Low-task-importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong SBC</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak SBC</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$F = 6.63 (1, 192), p<.05$

### Table 6: Summary for Means and $F$ Value for SBC Strength X Task Importance Interaction on Product Evaluation (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SBC Strength</th>
<th>High-task-importance</th>
<th>Low-task-importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong SBC</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak SBC</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$F = 3.97 (1, 192), p<.05$
Table 7: Summary of Means and $F$ Values for Main Effects on Cognitive Measures (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong Mean</td>
<td>Weak Mean</td>
<td>$F$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAT</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>-.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VBT</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 8: Summary of Means and $F$ Values for Manipulation Checks (Study 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Brand Connection (SBC)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>$F$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>55.96***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand-Cause Congruency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congruent</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>641.97***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incongruent</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 9: Summary of Means and $F$ Values for Source Effects (Study 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>American Heart Association (AMA)</th>
<th>Burger King</th>
<th>Chick-fil-A</th>
<th>Nike</th>
<th>Reebok</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>2.43***</td>
<td>3.51**</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (Indicates significant difference from AMA).
Table 10: Summary for Means and $F$ Values for Main Effects (Study 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DVs</th>
<th>SBC Strength</th>
<th>Brand-Cause Congruency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>$F$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise Motivation</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived CSR</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertiser Motives</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes Toward the Ad</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes Toward the Brand</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
FIGURES
Figure 1: Task Importance X SBC Strength X Product Attribute Importance Interaction Effect on Attitudes Toward the Ad (Study 1)
Figure 2: SBC Strength X Task Involvement Interaction Effect on the Adoption of Brand Markers (Study 1)
Figure 3: Mediation of the Effect of SBC Strength on Purchase Intention by Perceived Advertiser Credibility (Study 1)
Figure 4: Mediation of the Effect of SBC Strength on WOM-Product by Perceived Advertiser Credibility (Study 1)
Figure 5: SBC Strength X Task Involvement Interaction Effect on Product Evaluations (Study 1)
Figure 6: SBC Strength X Task Involvement Interaction Effect on VAT (Study 1)

[Highest VAT scores indicate more positively valenced attribute-related thoughts. Lower VAT scores indicate more negatively valenced attribute-related thoughts]
Figure 7: Mediation of the Effect of SBC Strength on Product Evaluations by VAT (Study 1) (High Task Involvement)
Figure 8: SBC X Brand-Cause Congruency Interaction Effect on Attitude Toward the Brand (Study 2)
Figure 9: SBC X Brand-Cause Congruency Interaction Effect on Purchase Intention (Study 2)
Figure 10: SBC Strength X Brand-Cause Congruency Interaction Effect on Perceived Advertiser Motives (Study 2)
Figure 11: SBC Strength X Brand-Cause Congruency Interaction Effect on Perceived CSR (Study 2)
Figure 12: SBC Strength X Brand-Cause Congruency Interaction Effect on Motivation to Exercise (Study 2)
Figure 13: Mediation of Main Effect of SBC Strength on Perceived Social Responsibility by Perceived Advertiser Credibility (Study 2)
Figure 14: Mediation of Main Effect of SBC Strength on Exercise Motivation by Perceived Advertiser Credibility (Study 2)
(Incongruent Conditions Only)
Appendix A: Study One Consent Form
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Adult Participants
Social Behavioral Form

IRB Study # 10-0427
Consent Form Version Date: March 15, 2010

Title of Study: Consumers’ Evaluations of New Products

Principal Investigator: Christina Malik
UNC-Chapel Hill Department: School of Journalism and Mass Communication
UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number: 310-428-2022
Email Address: cmalik@unc.edu

Faculty Advisor: Sri Kalyanaraman
UNC-Chapel Hill Department: School of Journalism and Mass Communication
UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number: 919-843-5858
Email Address: sri@unc.edu

Study Contact telephone number: 310-428-2022
Study Contact email: cmalik@unc.edu

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary.
You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.
You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researcher named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this research study is to understand how people evaluate new consumer products.
For the purposes of this study you will be reviewing an advertisement. You will be asked to view the advertisement and then you will be asked to answer another set of questions related to the product promoted in the advertisement.

How many people will take part in this study?
If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately 160 people in this research study.

How long will your part in this study last?
The study will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. There will be no follow-ups for this study. Remember that there are other ways to fulfill your research requirement in addition to study participation.

**What will happen if you take part in the study?**
First, you will view an advertisement and then you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire to report your opinions related to the topic of the advertisement.

You are one of about 160 people we are asking to participate in this study. We are interested in your response to advertising. Please be assured that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Also, please be assured that you are free to not answer any questions or to end the study at any time. You will receive research credit for your participation in this study.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Christina Malik at (310) 428-2022 or cmalik@email.unc.edu

**What are the possible benefits from being in this study?**
Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. There are no direct benefits to participants.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?**
There are no known risks associated with this research. However, discussing opinions may be uncomfortable for some people. You are free to not answer any question or to end the study at any time.

**How will your privacy be protected?**
We will make every effort to protect your privacy. Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies for purposes such as quality control or safety.

**Will you receive anything for being in this study?**
You will receive one-half hour research credit for participating in this study.

**Will it cost you anything to be in this study?**
There will be no costs for being in this study.

**What if you have questions about this study?**
You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, or concerns, you should contact the researcher listed on the first page of this form.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.
Title of Study: Consumers’ Evaluations of New Products
Principal Investigator: Christina Malik

Participant’s Agreement:

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

_________________________________________  __________________   
Signature of Research Participant               Date

_________________________________________  __________________   
Printed Name of Research Participant

_________________________________________  __________________   
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent          Date

_________________________________________  __________________   
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent
Appendix B: Study One Task Importance Manipulations
Task Importance Manipulations

**Text from introduction page of High-task-importance conditions:**

Thank you for participating in this study. Nike (Reebok) is launching a new sneaker in 2011 and Nike (Reebok) is extremely interested in your feedback regarding this product. In 2011, this product will be available in North Carolina and special promotions for this product will be available to UNC students and alumni.

As a current UNC student and a potential future consumer, Nike (Reebok) is very interested in your opinions about this product. You are part of a small, select group of UNC students who will have the opportunity to provide feedback to Nike (Reebok). Your opinions are extremely important.

After viewing a screen with the Nike (Reebok) logo, you will view an advertisement with the product's features. Please take your time and carefully read all of the information that is provided. After viewing this information, you will be asked several questions regarding your opinions about this product and the Nike (Reebok) brand.

**Text from introduction page of Low-task-importance conditions:**

Thank you for participating in this study. Nike (Reebok) is launching a new sneaker in 2011. In 2011, this product will be launched exclusively on the west coast. Nike (Reebok) does not plan to make this product available in North Carolina. You are being asked questions about your opinions regarding this product as part of a very large opinion survey to explore the possibility of marketing this product only on the west coast next year. Your individual opinions are not very important because all responses in the survey will be averaged. The opinions of people who live on the west coast will be given much more consideration than your responses.

After viewing a screen with the Nike (Reebok) logo, you will view an advertisement with the product's features. Please take your time and carefully read all of the information that is provided. After viewing this information, you will be asked several questions regarding your opinions about this product and the Nike (Reebok) brand.
Appendix C: Study One Sample Stimulus Materials
Study One: Sample Stimulus Materials

Strong SBC/Unimportant Product Attributes

Introducing the new Nike Edge11.

Select Nike Edge11 Features

- Available in twelve hot colors.
- Coordinated color sole.
- Made of nylon and leather materials.
- Durable nylon shoelaces.
- Competitively priced.

www.nike.com
Study One: Sample Stimulus Materials

Weak SBC/Important Product Attributes

Introducing the new
Reebok Edge11.

Select Reebok Edge11 Features

- Extreme comfort design – rated the most comfortable new sneaker for 2011.
- TrueFit technology molds to your feet for a perfect fit.
- Ultra light design provides stability without weight.
- Tested to guarantee extreme durability.
- Quality guaranteed with a money-back warranty.
Appendix D: Study One Questionnaire
STUDY ONE QUESTIONNAIRE

For what brand did you just view an advertisement?

For what product did you just view an advertisement?

We are interested in everything that went through your mind as you viewed the advertisement.

For approximately three minutes, please list all of the thoughts (positive thoughts, negative thoughts, and neutral thoughts) that went through your mind as you viewed the advertisement. You may use single words or full sentences. Ignore spelling, grammar and punctuation.

We have deliberately included more space than we think people will need to ensure that you have plenty of room.

Please be completely honest. Your responses will be anonymous.

Below is the form we have prepared for you to record your thoughts and ideas. Simply write down the first thought you had in the first box, the second in the second box, etc…

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|1  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|2  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|3  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|4  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|5  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|6  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|7  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|8  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|9  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|10 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|11 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|12 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|13 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|14 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|15 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|16 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am likely to try this product.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am likely to buy this product.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I were to buy sneakers in the next three months, I would purchase this</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pair of sneakers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section, you will be asked questions regarding your evaluations of the NIKE (Reebok) Edge11 sneakers, which were promoted in the advertisement that you just viewed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How useful is this product?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How favorable is this product?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good is this product?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How likely are you to do each of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Not at all Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Say positive things about this product to other people.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommend this product to someone who seeks your advice.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage friends and relatives to buy this product.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this section, we are interested in your overall evaluation if the Nike (Reebok) brand.

Notice that some of scales are reversed, so please read both ends of the scale carefully before making your choice.

The Nike (Reebok) brand is….

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeal</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Unappeal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpleasant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pleasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unattractive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Attractive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likeable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dislikeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Quality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>High Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncool</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section, we are interested in your personal feelings regarding the Nike (Reebok) brand.

Notice that some scales are reversed, so please read both ends of the scale carefully before making your choice.

Nike (Reebok) reflects who I am.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Extremely well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I can identify with Nike (Reebok).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Extremely well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I feel a personal connection to Nike (Reebok).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much so</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I can use Nike (Reebok) to communicate who I am to other people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely well</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I think Nike (Reebok) could help me become the type of person that I want to be.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Extremely well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
I consider Nike (Reebok) to be “me” (it reflects who I consider myself to be or the way I want to present myself to others).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Nike (Reebok) suits me well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely well</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please indicate how likely you are to do each of the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Unlikely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would put the Nike (Reebok) logo on my Facebook page.</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5   6   7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would become a fan of Nike (Reebok) on Facebook.</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5   6   7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would wear a t-shirt with the Nike (Reebok) name or logo on it.</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5   6   7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would put a bumper sticker with the Nike (Reebok) name or logo on my car.</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5   6   7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would display the Nike (Reebok) name or logo on my possessions.</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5   6   7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Nike (Reebok) brand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will recommend this brand to lots of people.</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5   6   7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will talk-up this brand to my friends.</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5   6   7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will try to spread the good-word about this brand.</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5   6   7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will give this brand positive word-of-mouth advertising.</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5   6   7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about Nike (Reebok).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This corporation has a great amount of experience.

This corporation is skilled in what they do.

This corporation has great experience.

I trust this corporation.

This corporation makes truthful claims.

This corporation is honest.

This corporation does not have much experience.

I do not believe what this corporation tells me.

In this section, we are interested in your overall evaluation of the advertisement you just viewed.

Notice that some of the scales are reversed, so please read both ends of the scale carefully before making your choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persuasive</th>
<th>Unpersuasive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informative</th>
<th>Uninformative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unexciting</th>
<th>Exciting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boring</th>
<th>Interesting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Bad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pleasant</th>
<th>Unpleasant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dull</th>
<th>Dynamic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clear</th>
<th>Confusing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unattractive</th>
<th>Attractive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favorable</th>
<th>Unfavorable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likeable</th>
<th>Dislikeable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ordinary</th>
<th>Sophisticated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unappealing</th>
<th>Appealing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Logical</th>
<th>Illogical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unconvincing</th>
<th>Convincing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section, we are interested in how motivated you felt while viewing the advertisement.
How motivated were you to read the advertisement? 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How interested were you in the advertisement? 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How involved were you in the advertisement? 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In this section, we are interested in your evaluation of the Nike (Reebok) Edge11 product features listed in the advertisement you viewed.

Please indicate how much you agree of disagree with each of the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This ad listed few important product features.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This ad listed many important product features.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This ad listed many unimportant product features.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This ad listed few unimportant product features.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Have you ever heard of the Nike (Reebok) brand before? 

Yes  No

How familiar are you with the Nike (Reebok) brand? 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all familiar</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very familiar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Have you ever used a product by Nike (Reebok) before? 

Yes  No

How familiar are you with the specific ad that you just viewed? 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all familiar</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Before today, had you ever seen this specific ad before?
Yes  No

Before today, had you ever heard of the Nike (Reebok) Edge11 sneaker?
Yes  No

How familiar are you with the Nike Edge11 sneaker?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all familiar</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very familiar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

What is your age in years (e.g., 20)?


In what state do you reside when not in school?


What is your ethnicity?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino or Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White or Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is your gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is your year in school?

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is your major?


Appendix E: Study One Debriefing Form
Debriefing Form

Consumers’ Evaluations of New Products

IRB STUDY # 10-0427
DEBRIEFING FORM
ORIGINATING FROM: University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
School of Journalism & Mass Communication
Principal Investigator: Christina Malik
Faculty Advisor: Sri Kalyanaraman

Thank you for participating in this study. We’d like to share some information about the research design and questions we were seeking to answer.

- Research begins with a compelling question. In this study, we want to learn:
  - What is the impact of brand name and product attributes on consumers’ evaluations of products?
- Next, a research design is created to tackle the research question.
  - First, we showed you an advertisement that promoted a new sneaker.
  - Next, we asked you questions about your opinions of the product, as well as your attitudes about the brand sponsoring the advertisement and your intention to purchase the product.
  - It is important that you know that this product and this advertisement were created solely for the purposes of this study. This product is fictional.
  - Later, we’ll review your responses along with the other persons in this study. We’ll try to determine what, if any, effect these advertisements had on people’s attitudes and product evaluations.

In order to make sure everyone’s responses are not biased by outside influences, please do not speak with anyone about the study for at least two months. It is very important that others who may participate do not know the purpose of this study beforehand. If you would like to learn more about this topic, you may be interested in reading the following:


If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Christina Malik, at cmalik@unc.edu

Thank you for your participation! We appreciate your help!
Appendix F: Study Two Informed Consent Form
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Adult Participants
Social Behavioral Form

IRB Study # 10-1590
Consent Form Version Date: September 16, 2010

Title of Study: Social Marketing Study

Principal Investigator: Christina Malik
UNC-Chapel Hill Department: School of Journalism and Mass Communication
UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number: 310-428-2022
Email Address: cmalik@unc.edu

Faculty Advisor: Sri Kalyanaraman
UNC-Chapel Hill Department: School of Journalism and Mass Communication
UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number: 919-843-5858
Email Address: sri@unc.edu

Study Contact telephone number: 310-428-2022
Study Contact email: cmalik@unc.edu

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researcher named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this research study is to understand how people respond to advertisements promoting healthy lifestyles. For the purpose of this study you will be reviewing an advertisement. You will be asked to view the advertisement and then you will be asked to answer another set of questions related to the advertisement.

How many people will take part in this study?
If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately 150 adults (ages 18+) taking part in this research study.

How long will your part in this study last?
The study will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. There will be no follow-ups for this study. Remember that there are other ways to fulfill your research requirement in addition to study participation.

**What will happen if you take part in the study?**
First, you will view an advertisement and then you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire to report your opinions related to the topic of the advertisement.

You are one of about 150 people we are asking to participate in this study. Please be assured that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Also, please be assured that you are free to not answer any questions or to end the study at any time. You will receive ½ hour of research credit for your participation in this study.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Christina Malik at (310) 428-2022 or cmalik@email.unc.edu

**What are the possible benefits from being in this study?**
Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. It is the author’s hope that this experiment will further our understanding of the processing of advertising messages that promote healthy lifestyle. This study will aid society by providing researchers with a further understanding of how people are persuaded by brands and advertising messages, and aims to provide information that will help marketers create more effective health communication messages.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?**
There are no known risks associated with this research. However, discussing opinions may be uncomfortable for some people. You are free to not answer any question or to end the study at any time for any reason.

**How will your privacy be protected?**
We will make every effort to protect your privacy. Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies for purposes such as quality control or safety.

**Will you receive anything for being in this study?**
You will receive ½ hour of research credit for participating in this study. You can leave this study at any time for any reason and you will still receive ½ hour of research credit.

**Will it cost you anything to be in this study?**
There will be no costs for being in this study.

**What if you have questions about this study?**
You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, or concerns, you should contact the researcher listed on the first page of this form.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact,
anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

Title of Study: Social Marketing Study
Principal Investigator: Christina Malik

Participant’s Agreement:
I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

________________________________________
Signature of Research Participant

________________________________________
Printed Name of Research Participant

________________________________________
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

________________________________________
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent
Appendix G: Study Two Stimulus Materials
Improve Your Health.

Research has proven that participating in vigorous physical activity at least three times a week can improve your health and help you lose weight. Exercising also reduces the risk of many serious, life-threatening illnesses, helps you live longer, and improves your overall quality of life. What are you waiting for? Start today!
Improve Your Health.

Research has proven that participating in vigorous physical activity at least three times a week can improve your health and help you lose weight. Exercising also reduces the risk of many serious, life-threatening illnesses, helps you live longer, and improves your overall quality of life. What are you waiting for? Start today!
Study Two: Stimulus Materials
(Incongruent Brand-Cause/Strong SBC)

Improve Your Health.

Research has proven that participating in vigorous physical activity at least three times a week can improve your health and help you lose weight. Exercising also reduces the risk of many serious, life-threatening illnesses, helps you live longer, and improves your overall quality of life. What are you waiting for? Start today!

Chick-fil-A
Study Two: Stimulus Materials
(Congruent Brand-Cause/Strong SBC)

Improve Your Health.

Research has proven that participating in vigorous physical activity at least three times a week can improve your health and help you lose weight. Exercising also reduces the risk of many serious, life-threatening illnesses, helps you live longer, and improves your overall quality of life. What are you waiting for? Start today!
Study Two: Stimulus Materials
(Congruent Brand-Cause/Weak SBC)

Improve Your Health.

Research has proven that participating in vigorous physical activity at least three times a week can improve your health and help you lose weight. Exercising also reduces the risk of many serious, life-threatening illnesses, helps you live longer, and improves your overall quality of life. What are you waiting for? Start today!
Appendix H: Study Two Questionnaire
STUDY TWO QUESTIONNAIRE

Who sponsored the advertisement you just viewed?

What was this advertisement promoting?

How persuasive was this advertisement in making you want to exercise?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all persuasive</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very persuasive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How much did this advertisement motivate you to exercise?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In this section, we are interested in your overall evaluation of the advertisement you just viewed based on the following scales.

Notice that some of the scales are reversed, so please read both ends of the scale carefully before making your choice.

This advertisement was…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persuasive</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Unpersuasive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Uninformative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexciting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Exciting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Unpleasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dull</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Confusing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unattractive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Attractive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likeable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dislikeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sophisticated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unappealing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Appealing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Illogical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please indicate how you feel about the message you just viewed.

This message was…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unconvincing</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</th>
<th>Convincing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about Nike (Reebok, Chick-fil-A, Burger King, The American Heart Association).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This corporation has a great amount of experience.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This corporation is skilled in what they do.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This corporation has great experience.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust this corporation.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This corporation makes truthful claims.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This corporation is honest.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This corporation does not have much experience.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not believe what this corporation tells me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Nike) is genuinely concerned about the consumer.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Nike) believes in philanthropy and giving generously to worthy causes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(Nike) is likely to follow employee-friendly rules and policies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Nike is highly involved in community activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Nike is concerned about social issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In this section, we are interested in your overall evaluation if the (Nike) brand.

Notice that some of scales are reversed, so please read both ends of the scale carefully before making your choice.

The (Nike) brand is….

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appealing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpleasant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unattractive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likeable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncool</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How logically related in (Nike) to physical fitness activity?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How relevant is this message to users of (Nike) products?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How compelling is this message for (Nike)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
How strange do you think it was to see (Nike) sponsoring a message like this?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all strange</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very strange</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How congruent was this message with the product attributes of this brand?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all congruent</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very congruent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Overall, how good is the match between this message and this brand?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all good</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements about (Nike) products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am likely to try this product.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am likely to buy this product.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I were to buy sneakers in the next three months, I would purchase this pair of sneakers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section, we are interested in your personal feelings regarding the (Nike) brand.

Notice that some scales are reversed, so please read both ends of the scale carefully before making your choice.

(Nike) reflects who I am.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Extremely well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
I can identify with (Nike).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Extremely well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I feel a personal connection to (Nike).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much so</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I can use (Nike) to communicate who I am to other people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely well</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I think (Nike) could help me become the type of person that I want to be.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Extremely well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I consider (Nike) to be “me” (it reflects who I consider myself to be or the way I want to present myself to others).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(Nike) suits me well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely well</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Have you ever heard of the (Nike) brand before?

Yes  No

How familiar are you with the (Nike) brand?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all familiar</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very familiar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Have you ever used a product by (Nike) before?

Yes  No
How familiar are you with the specific ad that you viewed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all familiar</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very familiar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Before today, had you ever seen this specific ad before?
Yes  No

What is your age in years (e.g., 20)?

In what state do you reside when not in school?

What is your ethnicity?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino or Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White or Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is your gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is your year in school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freshman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is your major?
Appendix I: Study Two Debriefing Form
Debriefing Form
Social Marketing Study

IRB STUDY # 10-1590
DEBRIEFING FORM
ORIGINATING FROM: University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
School of Journalism & Mass Communication
Principal Investigator: Christina Malik
Faculty Advisor: Sri Kalyanaraman

Thank you for participating in this study. We’d like to share some information about the research design and questions we were seeking to answer.

- Research begins with a compelling question. In this study, we want to learn:
  - What is the relationship between a consumer’s connection with a brand, the congruency between the brand and the health behavior being promoted, and consumers’ attitudes toward the behavior?
- Next, a research design is created to tackle the research question.
  - First, we showed you an advertisement that promoted participation in physical fitness activity.
  - Next, we asked you questions about your attitudes toward physical fitness activity, as well as your attitudes about the brand sponsoring the advertisement.
  - It is important that you know that this advertisement was created solely for the purpose of this study. The advertisement that you viewed is not real.
  - Later, we’ll review your responses along with the other persons in this study. We’ll try to determine what, if any, effect these advertisement had on people’s attitudes toward physical fitness activity and toward the brand that sponsored the advertisement.

In order to make sure everyone’s responses are not biased by outside influences, please do not speak with anyone about the study for at least two months. It is very important that others who may participate do not know the purpose of this study beforehand. If you would like to learn more about this topic, you may be interested in reading the following:


If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Christina Malik, at cmalik@unc.edu

Thank you for your participation! We appreciate your help!
REFERENCES


American Marketing Association. (n.d.).


