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**DOES POOR FIT ALWAYS LEAD TO NEGATIVE EVALUATIONS? EXTENSION
ADVERTISING AND PERCEIVED BRAND QUALITY**

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Abstract

This article investigates the moderating roles of advertising strategy (relational vs. elaboration) and perceived parent brand quality on the influence that parent brand–extension fit exerts on consumer evaluations of both extensions and the parent brand. Two studies manipulate fit in terms of either brand concept consistency or product feature similarity. Lower fit results in negative consumer responses, yet an elaborational advertising strategy mitigates the negative effects of lower fit on extension evaluations. This mitigating effect is stronger for high quality than for average quality brands. The results also indicate extension feedback effects for the parent brand, suggesting that elaborational advertising strategies may reduce the impact of fit on parent brand feedback effects. This latter link is not moderated by parent brand quality.

Keywords: Advertising, extension, perceived fit, brand quality, parent brand feedback effect

1. Introduction

The importance of new products is evident from both consumer (diffusion of innovations; Rogers 2010) and firm value (Pauwels et al. 2004) perspectives. Most new product introductions are extensions of established brands (e.g., Estes et al. 2012; Völckner & Sattler 2006), because extensions enhance the brand's diffusion in the market, attract new target audiences, and spread the brand into new usage occasions and product categories. When managed well, brand extensions provide new sources of revenue while also reinforcing brand meaning, such that they help build brand equity (Keller & Sood 2003). Yet some estimates suggest the failure rates for extensions are as high as 84% (Tait 2001). Failed extensions can harm the parent brand's image, which constitutes a feedback effect (Dall'Olmo Riley et al. 2013; Völckner et al. 2008). Another negative feedback effect can arise even for successful extensions, such as when they induce brand dilution or cannibalization (Carter & Curry 2013; Völckner et al. 2008).

To lower the potential for such failures, most research suggests the need for perceived fit between the parent brand and the new extension (e.g., Bottomley & Holden 2001; Czellar 2003; Hem et al. 2003; Pina et al. 2013). Perceived fit, which refers to the number of shared associations between the brand and the extension (Czellar 2003), comprises two main dimensions (Buil et al. 2009; Carter & Curry 2013; Grime et al. 2002): perceived brand concept consistency, which reflects the ability of the extension to accommodate the brand concept or image, and product feature similarity, which emerges from the functional relationship between the brand's existing products and its extensions (Lau & Phau 2007; Park et al. 1991). However, the fit effects detailed in prior research might be misleading (Carter and Curry (2013), because this research has failed to consider significant interactions among variables that might influence an extension's success (Ahluwalia 2008; Monga & Roedder John 2010; Spiggle et al. 2012). As a result, there is

still a lack of clarity on the conditions under which fit will play a role.

In response, the current study investigates two potential moderators of the fit effect. The effect that fit has on extension evaluations and parent brand feedback effects might be (partly) offset by the extension's advertising strategy, and these influences also might depend on the perceived quality of the parent brand. First, firms launch new products and extensions using advertising campaigns, yet few studies research the moderating role of different advertising strategies on extension acceptance or parent brand feedback effects (Bambauer-Sachse et al. 2011; Bridges et al. 2000; Dens & De Pelsmacker 2010b; Lane 2000). Two general advertising strategies apply for extensions: (1) Provide a cue to consumers about quality or other associations with the original brand (brand focus, relational strategy), to make positive aspects of the brand more salient, or (2) elaborate on the attributes of the extension to inhibit any potentially negative inferences among consumers (extension focus, elaborational strategy).

Second, perceived parent brand quality refers to consumers' global assessments and judgments of the superiority or excellence of a product (Zeithaml 1988). Favorable perceptions of a high quality parent brand should spill over as positive impressions of an extension (Aaker & Keller 1990; Carter & Curry 2013), but not all brands that introduce extensions have high perceived quality. In combination, this research therefore tests the extent to which perceived fit is important to average versus high quality brands and the extent to which the impact of an advertising strategy differs for brands of average versus high quality. Figure 1 depicts the proposed framework.

Figure 1 here.

Considering the need to understand how advertising might mitigate negative effects on extension and parent brand attitude, as well as how it does so differently for brands of varying perceived quality, this study offers several contributions. In particular, this article represents the

first study of a potential three-way interaction among extension fit, perceived parent brand quality, and advertising strategy, with likely effects on both extension and parent brand outcomes. Despite their great relevance to the fit effect, advertising strategy and perceived brand quality have not previously been integrated as moderators in the same study. In doing so, this study shows marketers how to improve the chances of success for extensions that fit relatively poorly with the parent brand, by adapting their advertising strategies for extensions and taking perceived brand quality into account. Furthermore, by including parent brand feedback effects, this study specifies some boundary conditions of the fit effect and identifies two relevant moderators that offer new possibilities for enhancing consumers' evaluations of brand extensions and parent brands.

As a methodological contribution, this study adds ecological validity to brand extension research by testing the focal advertising strategies for new extensions of real brands (cf. fictitious brands in prior research (Bridges et al. 2000)), which represent both functional and symbolic categories (cf. sole focus on either functional brands (e.g., Czellar 2003) or symbolic brands (e.g., Lau & Phau 2007)). In addition, the sample for this study is more representative of a general adult population in terms of both age and education (cf. previous studies that rely on university staff members (Bridges et al. 2000) or students (Martínez et al. 2009; Park et al. 1991)). Ultimately, by extending categorization theory and existing brand extension research, this study arrives at a more comprehensive understanding of how consumers evaluate brand extensions and the resulting effects for the parent brand. The results thus should help brand managers, responsible for both average and high quality brands, select advertising strategies that can benefit both their new extension and their parent brand.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

As noted previously, perceived fit, or the number of shared associations between the brand and the extension, improves consumers' evaluations of an extension (Aaker & Keller 1990; Völckner & Sattler 2006). According to categorization theory (e.g., Fiske & Pavelchak 1986; Lau & Phau 2007), when they need to make evaluations, people first attempt to classify the object into a category by using salient cues and assessing individual feature matches and mismatches. A successful categorization enables the person to retrieve stored information from her or his memory, then transfer the remembered, associated affect and beliefs from the category (e.g., parent brand) to the new object (extension). Thus, the evaluation of extensions according to their similarity with the original brand category constitutes a category-based processing phenomenon (Park & Kim 2001). Furthermore, associative network theory indicates that activation can spread from one memory node (i.e., parent brand) to related nodes (i.e., extension), depending on the strength of their associations. Higher fit between an extension and its parent brand thus should cause associations to transfer from the parent brand to the extension through spreading activation. Lower fit instead may leave the corresponding memory nodes remote in the associative network, which reduces the transfer of parent brand associations (Keller 1993).

In line with these theoretical foundations, the positive effect of fit appears consistently in prior research, whether the studies define fit according to the product category (Bhat & Reddy 2001; Dacin & Smith 1994), the brand image (Bhat & Reddy 2001; Park et al. 1991; Völckner & Sattler 2007), or goal congruency (Martin et al. 2005). The fit effect also is supported for both functional and symbolic brands (Martínez Salinas & Pina Pérez 2009; Park et al. 1991) and induces a range of positive outcomes, such as perceived quality (Völckner & Sattler 2006), favorable evaluations (Aaker & Keller 1990; Hem & Iversen 2009; Martínez et al. 2009), willingness to pay a premium (DelVecchio & Smith 2005) and monetary value (Hennig-Thurau

et al. 2009). Considering the strength of this evidence, the current study does not offer hypotheses about the fit effect but instead focuses on novel propositions about factors that might moderate this well-supported influence.

2.1 Advertising Strategy

Consumers use an array of cues as information surrogates to infer the quality of a product and reduce their perceived risk (Sichtmann & Diamantopoulos 2013). As a powerful cue, advertising influences what people elaborate and thus can bias knowledge formation (Lane 2000). For extensions, two advertising strategies are common (Aaker & Keller 1990; Bridges et al. 2000): relational or elaborational. The former focuses on the parent brand, in an effort to encourage associations between it and the extension. The latter instead highlights the extension, to stress its novel offerings and benefits.

2.1.1. Relational Advertising and Extension Evaluations

Because of its explicit references to the parent brand, a relational advertising strategy should reinforce categorization and affect-transfer effects (Sheinin 1998). Categorization should lead to positive effects if consumers perceive the extension to fit well with the parent brand, because the relational advertisement reminds consumers of their shared associations (Bridges et al. (2000). However, if the perceived fit is low, categorization effects already are inhibited, such that consumers may have difficulty linking their brand beliefs to the extension. For example, when Colgate introduced frozen dinners (Kitchen Entrees), consumers failed to make the connection between the two, leading to insufficient meaning transfer from the parent brand (Nan 2006) and the failure of the extension. Therefore, relational advertising that emphasizes parent brand cues should help customers assign the focal extension to an existing brand category and build links with the parent brand, prompting improved consumer evaluations of the extension

(Bambauer-Sachse et al. 2011; Martin et al. 2005), as long as the perceived fit is high. Because the parent brand cue primes consumers to consider the relations between the extension and the parent brand, it also could draw their attention to differences and lead them to evaluate a dissimilar extension more negatively (Gierl & Hüttl 2011).

Accessibility–diagnosticity theory (Ahluwalia & Gürhan-Canli 2000) also asserts that people only use information that they deem relevant to evaluate a target object. If the perceived fit is low, consumers might not consider parent brand quality at all when evaluating the extension (Spiggle et al. 2012), even after seeing a relational advertisement. Instead, because the new extension cannot be integrated into an existing cognitive structure (Gierl & Hüttl 2011), consumers create a new, ad hoc mental category to accommodate it, which is unlikely to facilitate the transfer of favorable attributes from the parent brand to the extension (Carter & Curry 2013). They even might regard relational advertising with skepticism, because it provides little specific information about the extension or its quality. Faced with such missing information, most people tend to make negative inferences (Bridges et al. 2000). For example, if they suspect that the brand is making undue use of its name to extend to a poorly fitting category, they likely develop a negative evaluation about the extension, as well as about the parent brand, as detailed in the next section.

2.1.2. Relational Advertising and Parent Brand Feedback

Consumers' image of the parent brand, after an extension, depends on their evaluation of the extension and its perceived fit such that a higher perceived fit allows extension evaluations to affect evaluations of the parent brand more powerfully (e.g., Dens & De Pelsmacker 2010b; Iversen & Hem 2011; Martínez Salinas & Pina Pérez 2009). As the theory of stereotypic belief change proposes, the severity of a category change, such as adjustments to consumers' evaluations of the parent brand, can vary from minimal to maximal depending on the degree of fit

(Milberg et al. 1997). As Milberg et al. (1997) show, when fit is salient, parent brand beliefs change more.

A relational advertising strategy should increase the salience of perceived fit, because it emphasizes the links between the parent brand and the extension (Gierl & Hüttl 2011). If perceived fit is high, the extension gets readily incorporated into the parent brand category structure, as predicted in the previous section. If consumers evaluate the extension positively, they might use these shared associations to develop an even more improved attitude toward the parent brand. However, if perceived fit is low, a relational advertisement likely stimulates heightened elaboration, as consumers seek to resolve the incongruence between the brand and the extension (Ahluwalia 2008). The relational strategy cannot help them resolve this incongruence, so it may prompt a negative feedback effect, in that consumers focus on the lack of fit between the extension and the parent brand, as predicted in the previous section (Bambauer-Sachse et al. 2011). Dilution effects then might arise (Ahluwalia & Gürhan-Canli 2000). Therefore, lower fit extensions should harm the parent brand more than higher fit extensions, especially when the brand uses a relational advertising strategy to introduce the extension. Combining these predictions, this study offers the following predictions:

H₁: Higher fit extensions have more positive influences on (a) attitude toward the extension (A_{ext}), (b) extension purchase intention (P_i) and (c) attitude toward the parent brand (A_{pb}) than do lower fit extensions when advertising uses a relational strategy.

2.1.3. Elaborational Advertising and Extension Evaluations

In contrast to relational ads, advertising that elaborates on the characteristics of the extension should have distinct effects. As noted previously, low perceived fit between an extension and the parent brand leads consumers to seek to resolve the incongruence (Ahluwalia

2008). By differentiating or distancing the extension from the parent brand, an elaborational advertising strategy can help resolve perceptions of their inconsistencies (e.g., Dall'Olmo Riley et al. 2013), in line with categorization theory. That is, consumers evaluate the extension on the basis of a piecemeal processing of its core attributes and benefits (de Ruyter & Wetzels 2000), so they make positive, salient associations between the extension and its product category, rather than with the parent brand. Elaborational advertising also provides more information about the attributes of the extension (Bridges et al. 2000; Chen & Liu 2004)), so such advertisements make the degree of fit less relevant and should benefit extension evaluations. As Dens and De Pelsmacker (2010a) show, extension information in advertisements reduces the relative influence of perceived fit on attitudes toward the extension. Therefore, the fit effect should be weaker when advertising highlights the positive attributes of the extension, rather than focusing on the parent brand.

2.1.4. Elaborational Advertising and Parent Brand Feedback

Research acknowledges that differentiating an extension from the parent brand through an elaborational advertising strategy can help resolve consumer perceptions of inconsistencies, which reduces the risk of brand image dilution (Dall'Olmo Riley et al. 2013). In line with categorization theory, atypical instances should be considered exceptions and categorized as subtypes that invoke a separate sets of beliefs (Gürhan-Canli & Maheswaran 1998). The formation of this subcategory limits the impact of information about the extension on the parent brand. Milberg et al. (1997) also argue that subbranding allows consumers to transfer positive equity from the parent brand to the new extension while also differentiating the extension from the other products under the same brand umbrella, which mitigates potential negative feedback effects. An elaborational advertising strategy should encourage this effect.

H₂: Elaborational advertisements reduce the effect of fit on (a) attitude toward the

extension, (b) extension purchase intention and (c) attitudes toward the parent brand.

2.2 *Perceived Parent Brand Quality*

2.2.1. *Extension Evaluation*

Together with fit, perceived parent brand quality is an important determinant of extension evaluations (e.g., Bottomley & Holden 2001). High quality brands are usually well established, with an elaborate, strong, positive network of associations (schema) in consumers' memories (Braun-LaTour & LaTour 2004). In relational advertising, the strong associative cue created by the brand might decrease the perceived similarity between the parent brand and its extension though, which would negatively affect extension evaluations (Gierl and Hüttl (2011).

Furthermore, in line with categorization theory, poor perceived fit leads consumers to put the extension in a separate subcategory, limiting the transfer of meaning from the parent brand, regardless of whether the parent brand is of high or average quality. That is, perceived parent brand quality should not influence the effect of relational ads on lower fit extension evaluations, despite the salience of the parent brand, because the brand cannot compensate for the negative inferences consumers make about the extension product in the absence of specific information about it.

In contrast, the effect of elaborational advertising should vary for brands with different levels of perceived quality. Because high quality brands typically evoke an elaborate and strong network of positive associations, their quality should be salient to consumers who see a single mention of the brand name in an advertisement. Because an elaborational advertising strategy can improve perceived fit between an extension and a parent brand (Bridges et al. (2000), it increases the chance that parent brand (quality) associations transfer to an extension. With greater

perceived fit, the nodes that represent the parent brand and its extension are cognitively closer in consumers' memory networks; therefore, the more positive the perceived parent brand quality, the more an extension stands to gain (Carter & Curry 2013). Even with poor perceived fit, an elaborational advertisement could help resolve the incongruence by highlighting the benefits of the new extension in the new category, so a high quality brand name serves as a further lever of this positive effect. Average quality brands transfer less positive meaning to a lower fit extension, even with an elaborational advertisement, because consumers do not expect this brand to offer high quality products in general. Therefore,

H_{3a}: Perceived parent brand quality does not moderate the effect of fit on (a) attitude toward the extension and (b) extension purchase intention with relational advertising strategies.

H_{3b}: Perceived parent brand quality moderates the effect of extension fit on (a) attitude toward the extension and (b) extension purchase intention with elaborational advertising strategies, such that an elaborational advertising strategy mitigates the effect of extension fit more for higher perceived quality brands.

2.2.2. Parent Brand Feedback

Supphellen et al. (2004) show that ads for brand extensions can boost parent brands that suffer from image problems. However, advertising an extension of a high quality parent brand using relational advertising strategies may offer limited benefits for the parent brand, due to ceiling effects. That is, high quality brands evoke well-established, relatively stable consumer attitudes, which single advertisements are unlikely to affect (Derbaix 1995; Stammerjohan et al. 2005). Most consumers already have positive attitudes toward these brands, which are difficult to improve further by emphasizing the brand again in a relational extension advertisement (Carter &

Curry 2013). High quality brands are also less sensitive to the impact of lower fit extensions. In contrast, for brands with average quality, relational advertising draws consumers' attention to the (lack of) fit, such that it may influence the average quality parent brand feedback effects more than it would for high quality brands.

Extending the prior reasoning that, through subtyping, elaborational advertisements should reduce the effect of perceived fit on attitude toward the parent brand (H2c), this study predicts that this assumption will hold regardless of perceived parent brand quality. The extension likely gets classified as a subcategory anyway, so its feedback effect is limited; extension information appears less diagnostic for the parent brand (Ahluwalia & Gürhan-Canli 2000). Therefore, with an elaborational advertising strategy, consumers base their parent brand evaluations on their prior experience or beliefs about that brand, and the effect of fit is weaker for both high and average quality brands.

H_{4a}: Perceived parent brand quality moderates the effect of fit on attitude toward the parent brand with relational advertising, such that the effect is stronger for an average compared with a high perceived quality brand.

H_{4b}: Perceived parent brand quality does not moderate the effect of fit on attitude toward the parent brand with elaborational advertising strategies.

3. Methodology

Two separate experiments serve to test these hypotheses. Most prior research notes two dimensions of parent brand–extension fit (Carter & Curry 2013): product feature similarity and brand concept similarity. The former type of functional fit (Carter & Curry 2013), or feature-based “taxonomic similarity” (Estes et al. 2012), reflects the functional and physical overlap

between the parent brand and the extension; it can be defined as “the degree to which an extension and its parent satisfy the same consumer needs, are used in the same situations and have common physical features” (Carter & Curry 2013, p. 256). The latter type of brand image fit (Carter & Curry 2013), or relation-based “thematic similarity” (Estes et al. 2012), is defined as “the degree to which an extension shares global brand concept feelings and associations,” such as prestige and value (Martínez Salinas & Pina Pérez 2009, p. 52). Specifically, Study 1 tests the moderating effects of advertising strategies and perceived parent brand quality when brand concept consistency defines the level of perceived fit and its impact on extension and parent brand evaluations. Study 1 also manipulates advertising strategy (relational vs. elaborational) and measures perceived brand quality as moderators. The focal products are both functional and symbolic, extending into both functional and symbolic product categories. Study 2 replicates the hypotheses tests for different products and brands and with a different conceptualization of perceived fit, achieved by manipulating the product feature similarity perceptions between the parent brand and the extension. Study 2 also explicitly manipulates perceived parent brand quality.

4. Study 1

The experimental set-up for Study 1 consists of a 2 (advertising strategy: relational vs. elaboration) \times 2 (parent brand concept: functional vs. symbolic) \times 2 (extension product category: functional vs. symbolic) \times 2 (parent brand product category: cars vs. fashion) full-factorial, between-subjects design, in which the last factor serves as a replication factor. The selected brands and extensions emerged from a pretest. In this study, perceived parent brand quality is not explicitly manipulated but rather is measured for use in the subsequent analysis.

4.1 Pretests: Brand and Extension Category Selection

Two parent brand categories, cars and fashion, contain an array of both functional and symbolic brands. A pretest ($n = 15$) resulted in the selection of two highly symbolic brands, Mini (high-end, fun cars, produced by BMW) and Louis Vuitton (French luxury brand that makes handbags and fashion accessories), and two more functional brands, Kia (relatively inexpensive Korean car brand that offers long warranties) and H&M (Swedish fashion and accessories brand with relatively low-priced offerings). The brands differed significantly in their brand concepts (not unique – unique, necessity – luxury, functional – not functional, cheap – expensive, brand is mainly bought to assume a certain image; seven-point scales: $M_{\text{Mini}} = 6.11$, $M_{\text{Kia}} = 2.30$, $p < .001$; $M_{\text{LV}} = 6.44$, $M_{\text{H\&M}} = 2.19$, $p < .001$). The brands also were highly familiar (familiar, informed, know a lot, experienced) to consumers ($M_{\text{Mini}} = 6.07$, $M_{\text{Kia}} = 4.77$, $M_{\text{LV}} = 5.90$, $M_{\text{H\&M}} = 6.55$). The choice of well-known, real brand names is deliberate, to ensure that participants already have formed schema about them (Klink & Smith 2001).

The pretest also resulted in three extension product categories (champagne, sunscreen, and office furniture) that differed significantly in their product concepts (symbolism) (I mainly buy X for [a functional reason] (reversed), I mainly buy X to distinguish myself from the rest, Buying a certain brand of X says something about your personality; $M_{\text{champagne}} = 4.04$, $M_{\text{sunscreen}} = 1.62$, $M_{\text{office furniture}} = 1.62$, $p < .001$). However, they did not differ notably in purchase decision involvement (unimportant – important decision, a decision that requires little – a lot of thought, a decision with little – much to lose when you make the wrong decision; $M_{\text{champagne}} = 4.51$, $M_{\text{sunscreen}} = 3.80$, $M_{\text{office furniture}} = 4.40$, $p = .344$). The fashion brands extended into sunscreen, and the car brands offered office furniture as functional extensions. Both cars and fashion parent brand categories offered champagne as a hypothetical new symbolic extension; this product category provided the best results in terms of symbolism and involvement in the pretest.

Finally, a second pretest ($n = 26$) confirmed that perceived product category similarity (i.e., physical product characteristics, product usage, product functions) did not differ significantly ($p > .10$) across the pairs of cars and office furniture ($M = 2.31$), cars and champagne ($M = 2.14$), fashion and sun protection ($M = 2.64$), or fashion and champagne ($M = 2.59$).

4.2 *Advertisements*

The first two pretests resulted in eight extension propositions: by Kia, Mini, H&M, and Louis Vuitton into champagne (symbolic extension for all four brands), by Kia and Mini into office furniture and by H&M and Louis Vuitton into sunscreen (functional extensions). The manipulation of brand concept consistency thus reflected the variation between the extension product category concept and the parent brand concept. A functional brand (H&M or Kia) extending into a functional product category (sunscreen or office furniture) represents high brand concept consistency, whereas a functional brand extension into a symbolic product category (champagne) indicates low brand concept consistency, and vice versa for symbolic brands (Louis Vuitton or Mini). Each possible parent brand–extension combination needed two different advertisements, focused on either the parent brand (relational strategy) or the new extension (elaborational strategy). The former included the parent’s brand name or logo five times, in a relatively large size. The copy also related to the parent brand concept (e.g., for Louis Vuitton: French fashion designer & world leader in elegance and luxury). The latter ads instead featured a smaller brand logo that appeared only three times. The copy stressed the attributes of the new extension (e.g., for champagne: Experience an intense taste sensation ... matured in the rustic idylls of the Champagne region). In total, we created 16 different advertisements for this study (see the Appendix for examples).

To ensure that the manipulations successfully represented elaborational and relational strategies, respondents in a third pretest ($n = 28$) rated all 16 advertisements separately and in a random order on a four-item, seven-point Likert scale (In this advertisement, the brand strongly leaps to the eye; This advertisement stresses the general features of the brand, and not so much the new product being introduced; This advertisement clearly emphasizes the new product, rather than the brand [reversed]; This advertisement teaches me something new about the product [reversed]). The results of paired samples t-tests showed that for each parent brand–extension combination, the differences between relational and elaborational ads were significant ($p < .001$).

4.3 Main Experiment: Design, Participants, and Measures

For the main experiment, respondents were recruited by e-mail from a database collected by the researchers for prior studies. A convenience sample of 544 Belgian respondents was randomly assigned to the 16 conditions through an online survey (52% men, average age = 30 years, 84% educated past high school level). Chi-square tests confirmed that the characteristics of the final sample (gender, age, education) did not differ significantly between conditions ($p > .10$). The sample represents a relevant group for testing the effects of advertising strategies for the selected products. Only respondents who indicated they knew the test brand completed the survey. Respondents scored all constructs on multi-item, seven-point semantic differential scales. They first completed the manipulation checks for perceived brand concept (not unique – unique, weak – strong image, necessity – luxury, inferior – superior product, cheap – expensive, brand is mainly bought to assume a certain image; $\alpha = .898$) (based on Bhat & Reddy 2001) and perceived fit (bad – good fit, (un)logical, (in)appropriate; $\alpha = .971$) (Dens & De Pelsmacker 2010a) between the brand and the proposed extension category. They rated their general attitudes toward the parent brand, prior to seeing the advertisement (bad – good, negative – positive,

(don't) like; $\alpha = .950$) (Dens & De Pelsmacker 2010b), which provided a control for prior brand attitude; their brand familiarity ((not) familiar not at all – very well informed, don't know anything – know a lot about, (in)experienced; $\alpha = .931$) (Dens & De Pelsmacker 2010c); and their perceptions of the parent brand's quality (inferior –superior, not at all – very likely to try, low – high quality; $\alpha = .665$) (Keller & Aaker 1992). While the reliability of this factor is a bit lower than .7, which is often used as the benchmark, manuals suggest that .6 is acceptable (e.g., George & Mallery 2013). Next, they viewed one of the advertisements and responded to measures of their attitude toward the extension (A_{ext}) (bad – good, negative – positive, (don't) like; $\alpha = .968$) (Dens & De Pelsmacker 2010a), extension purchase intention (Pi) ((im)probable, (un)likely, (im)possible; $\alpha = .974$) (Dens & De Pelsmacker 2010a), and post-exposure attitude toward the parent brand (same items as before the advertisement; $\alpha = .969$). As a control for prior brand attitude, the measure of parent brand attitude prior to the advertisement was deducted from the post-exposure measure, revealing the difference in parent brand attitudes (A_{pbdiff}), which represented the dependent variable for the analyses. Construct scores were computed by averaging the scores of the separate items.

In the manipulation check, similar to the pretest, respondents rated the brand concept of the symbolic brands, Louis Vuitton ($M = 5.97$) and Mini ($M = 5.63$), significantly more symbolic or prestige-oriented and less function-oriented than H&M ($M = 3.52$, $t_{(278)} = 25.470$, $p < .001$) and Kia ($M = 3.16$, $t_{(262)} = 26.653$, $p < .001$).

4.4 Results

Moderated regressions used the replication factor, the three independent variables in the design, and the interactions between the replication factor and the independent variables (second-order to fourth-order), with A_{ext} , Pi, and A_{pbdiff} as dependent variables. These analyses revealed

no significant main effect of the replication factor, nor significant interactions with it, with the exception of the two-way advertising focus \times replication interaction for Pi ($p = .043$) and the perceived fit \times replication interaction for A_{pbdiff} ($p = .012$). The higher-order three- and four-way interactions were not significant, so it was appropriate to pool the subsequent analyses across the replication factor. For the hypotheses tests, we entered advertising strategy (relational = 0, elaborational = 1), perceived fit (continuous, mean centered), perceived parent brand quality (continuous, mean centered), and their two- and three-way interactions in a moderated regression with A_{ext} , Pi, and A_{pbdiff} as the dependent variables (Table 1).

Insert Table 1 here.

The results of the regressions show a positive main effect of fit for A_{ext} ($\beta = .304, p < .001$), Pi ($\beta = .274, p < .001$) and A_{pbdiff} ($\beta = .230, p < .001$). As the relational advertising strategy served as the baseline, these effects support H₁. The advertising strategy \times perceived fit interaction is negative and significant for A_{ext} ($\beta = -.151, p = .014$), but not for Pi ($\beta = .033, p > .10$) or A_{pbdiff} ($\beta = -.028, p > .10$). Therefore, we can conclude that, in partial support of H₂, elaborational advertising strategies reduce the effect of perceived fit on extension attitude (but not on purchase intention or parent brand attitude).

The perceived parent brand quality \times perceived fit interaction is not significant for either A_{ext} ($\beta = -.057$) or Pi ($\beta = .031$) ($p > .10$). That is, as H_{3a} predicted, parent brand quality does not moderate the effect of fit on extension attitude and purchase intention with relational advertising strategies. Contrary to H_{3b}, however, the fit effect is also not moderated by parent brand quality with elaborational advertising strategies (three-way interaction: A_{ext} $\beta = .070$, Pi $\beta = .041, p > .10$). For A_{pbdiff} , the perceived parent brand quality \times perceived fit interaction is marginally significant ($\beta = -.119, p = .051$). As predicted in H_{4a}, parent brand quality moderates the effect of

fit with a relational advertising strategy, such that the parent brand feedback effects are weaker for higher perceived quality brands. Also in line with H_{4b}, the three-way interaction is not significant; any effect of fit is not moderated by parent brand quality in the case of elaborational advertising strategies ($\beta = .029, p > .10$).

To control for the potential effects of prior brand familiarity and socio-demographic characteristics, the three regressions were rerun with brand familiarity, gender, age, and education (two categories per socio-demographic variable) as covariates (Table 1). Of all these factors, only education exerted a marginally significant effect on A_{ext} ($p = .088$). More importantly, adding the covariates did not affect any of the results for the hypotheses tests.

5. Study 2

Study 2 focuses on product feature similarity rather than brand concept consistency to manipulate perceived fit; it also explicitly manipulates parent brand quality, as opposed to just measuring the construct. Furthermore, this study was conducted with a sample representative of the Flemish population, whereas Study 1 relied on a convenience sample.

5.1 Pretests

The product category selected for this study was laundry detergent. A pretest ($n = 37$) identified two laundry detergent brands, Dash and Bonux, that differed significantly in their perceived brand quality ($M_{\text{Dash}} = 5.61, M_{\text{Bonux}} = 4.08, t_{(36)} = 6.563, p < .001$). Both brands had been on the Belgian market for more than 30 years and produced only laundry detergent at the time of the study. A second pretest ($n = 26$) showed that Dash and Bonux did not differ in their perceived parent brand concepts (not unique – unique, necessity – luxury, functional – not functional, cheap – expensive, brand is mainly bought to assume a certain image; $M_{\text{Dash}} = 3.22, M_{\text{Bonux}} = 3.09, t_{(25)} = 1.050, p > .10$). This pretest further confirmed that fabric softener ($M = 4.83$)

and a flatiron ($M = 2.92$) represented significantly different extensions, in terms of perceived product feature similarity with laundry detergent ($t_{(25)} = 5.989, p < .001$).

5.2 Main Study: Design and Participants

The study comprises a 2 (product feature similarity: moderately low vs. high) \times 2 (parent brand quality: average vs. high) \times 2 (advertising strategy: relational vs. elaboration) full-factorial, between-subjects design. The two laundry detergent brands, with their distinct perceived parent brand quality (average Bonux, high Dash), offered a hypothetical new extension that fit either very well (fabric softener) or relatively less well (flatiron) with the original product category in terms of product feature similarity.

The extension proposals were identical for both brands. Each possible parent brand–extension combination required two advertisements to display either the relational or elaborational advertising strategy, such that eight different advertisements were developed (see the Appendix). The elaborational ad showed a prominent picture of the new product, and the copy stressed its attributes or benefits, with a small brand logo in the lower right-hand corner. The relational advertisement also showed the new product, but the center featured a bottle of the laundry detergent. The brand logo was placed prominently, and the copy stressed the quality of the parent brand.

For the main experiment, a professional agency recruited a sample of 244 respondents from its online consumer panel through an online survey (66.8% women, 22–65 years, average age = 45 years, 49.8% educated past high school), 81% of whom indicated they were the main party responsible for the purchases for their households. Software randomly assigned participants to different conditions, and the sample characteristics (gender, age, and education) did not differ significantly across conditions ($p > .10$). Only respondents who indicated they had experience

buying or using laundry detergent were allowed to complete the survey, which ensured that the respondents were familiar with the product category and thereby enhanced its external validity. Every participant saw and rated a single advertisement. Prior to the ad exposure, we measured respondents' brand familiarity with the test brands, as well as perceived brand quality.

In addition to this main experiment, a control sample of 131 respondents from the same consumer panel completed the manipulation check. The advertising strategy manipulation needed to be measured in a control group, because exposure to both advertisements might confound the results for the outcome measures. The control sample possessed characteristics similar to those of the main study sample (84% responsible for purchase, 64.1% women, aged 20–64 years average age = 45 years, 42% educated beyond high school), as confirmed by chi-square tests ($p > .10$). The software allocated respondents in the control group to the conditions, again in highly comparable groups. For each parent brand–extension combination, approximately 30 respondents rated both test advertisements (elaborational and relational strategy) for the manipulation check.

5.3 Measures

Respondents first completed the pre-exposure measure of parent brand attitude (bad – good, negative – positive, don't like – like; $\alpha = .967$), brand familiarity (not familiar – familiar, not at all – very well informed, don't know anything about – know a lot about, inexperienced – experienced; $\alpha = .939$) and perceived parent brand quality (inferior – superior, not at all – very likely to try, low – high quality; $\alpha = .926$) measures. After seeing one of the test advertisements, they indicated their perceptions of the fit of the parent brand with the proposed extension (bad – good fit, (un)logical, (in)appropriate; $\alpha = .980$), attitude toward the extension (A_{ext}) (negative – positive, bad – good, (don't) like, low – high quality, (not) worth trying, inferior – superior product; $\alpha = .951$), extension purchase intention (P_i) ((im)probable, (un)likely, (im)possible; $\alpha =$

.960), and post-exposure attitude toward the parent brand (same items as pre-exposure measure; $\alpha = .965$), on seven-point semantic differential scales. The scores on the individual items were averaged to compute the construct scores.

For the control group, the survey indicated that the company was considering two different advertisements to help launch its new extension. These respondents rated the relational and elaborational advertisements separately on four-item, seven-point Likert scales (In this advertisement, it is especially the brand that leaps to the eye; This advertisement stresses the general features of the brand, and not so much the new product being introduced; This advertisement clearly emphasizes the new product, rather than the brand [reversed]; This advertisement teaches me something new about the product [reversed], $\alpha = .754$). In addition, they saw both advertisements together and indicated which one focused most strongly on the extension as opposed to the parent brand.

The manipulation checks showed that, similar to the pretest, perceived brand quality was significantly higher for the high quality brand, Dash ($M = 5.44$), than for the average quality brand, Bonux ($M = 4.31$; $t_{(129)} = 5.312$, $p < .001$). The control group also perceived the fit of the lower fit extension, the flatiron ($M = 3.31$), as significantly lower than that of the higher fit extension, fabric softener ($M = 4.98$; $t_{(129)} = 5.744$, $p < .001$). Finally, the advertising strategy manipulation check confirmed that respondents perceived that the relational advertisement stressed the brand rather than the extension ($M = 4.95$), significantly more so than the elaborational advertisement ($M = 3.30$; $t_{(130)} = 13.191$, $p < .001$). When asked which of the two ads focused most on the extension, 96.1% of the respondents correctly identified the elaborational advertisement.

5.4 Results

The analyses consist of three moderated regression analyses, with advertising strategy (relational = 0, elaborational = 1), perceived parent brand quality (continuous, mean centered), perceived fit (continuous, mean centered) and their two- and three-way interactions as the independent variables, and A_{ext} , P_i , and A_{pbdiff} (difference between the post- and pre-extension parent brand attitudes) as the dependent variables (Table 2).

Insert Table 2 here.

The results of the regressions for A_{ext} ($\beta = .672, p < .001$), P_i ($\beta = .451, p < .001$) and A_{pbdiff} ($\beta = .193, p = .023$) showed a positive main effect of fit, in further support of H_1 . The advertising strategy \times perceived fit interaction was marginally significant for A_{ext} ($\beta = -.121, p = .057$), but not for P_i ($\beta = -.003, p > .10$). At least in terms of A_{ext} , the effect of fit decreases with an elaborational advertising strategy, as predicted in H_2 . The advertising strategy \times perceived fit interaction is not significant for A_{pbdiff} ($\beta = .113, p = .189$), though in a simple slope analysis, the slope for elaborational advertising was only marginally significant ($p = .090$), whereas that for relational advertising was significant ($p = .023$), suggesting partial support for H_2 .

The perceived parent brand quality \times perceived fit interaction is not significant for A_{ext} ($\beta = .088, p > .10$); as predicted in H_{3a} , parent brand quality did not moderate the effect of fit on A_{ext} with a relational advertising strategy. The effect on P_i is significant though ($\beta = .222, p = .002$), rejecting H_{3a} for P_i .

In contrast with the results of Study 1, the three-way advertising strategy \times perceived fit \times perceived quality interaction is significant for both A_{ext} ($\beta = -.126, p = .046$) and P_i ($\beta = -.159, p = .026$), in line with H_{3b} . Elaborational advertising strategies reduce the effect of fit more strongly for extensions of parent brands with higher perceived quality. In contrast with H_{4a} , the perceived

parent brand quality \times perceived fit interaction is not significant ($\beta = -.048, p > .10$), indicating that parent brand feedback effects with a relational advertising strategy are not further moderated by parent brand quality. The three-way interaction also is not significant ($\beta = -.045, p > .10$), so the fit effect is not moderated by parent brand quality in the case of an elaborational advertising strategy, in support of H_{4b}.

Similar to Study 1, rerunning the three regressions with brand familiarity, age, gender, and education as covariates (Table 2) helped control for effects of prior brand familiarity and socio-demographic characteristics. These results revealed only a marginally significant effect of gender on A_{ext}. Importantly, adding the covariates again did not affect any of the results.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

6.1 Discussion

Prior research indicates that the two types of fit may influence extension evaluations differently (Estes et al. 2012), so their operationalizations appear in two separate studies for the present research. In both studies, we corroborate the main effect of fit, in that a higher perceived fit leads to more positive extension evaluations and parent brand attitude. What is new, however, is that we show how these effects are moderated by advertising strategy and perceived parent brand quality, such that the negative effects of lower fit are mitigated under certain circumstances.

First, elaborational advertising strategies mitigate the effect of fit on attitudes toward an extension (but not purchase intentions). The results support this effect for both brand concept consistency and product feature similarity. According to previous research, advertising of extensions may improve consumers' evaluations by establishing explanatory links (Bridges et al. 2000). In both studies in this article, elaborational advertising mitigate the negative effects of

lower fit on consumer responses toward the extension, in line with findings that suggest that as extension-related information becomes available, the influence of perceived fit diminishes (Dens & De Pelsmacker 2010a; McCarthy et al. 2001). With a relational advertising strategy, the advertisement focuses prominently on the parent brand, so consumers evaluate lower fit extensions significantly more negatively than they do a higher fit option. This result extends Bridges et al.'s (2000) finding that a relational advertising strategy effectively communicates about higher fit extensions, by creating an explicit comparison with an elaborational ad (rather than just a no advertisement baseline) and by using extension attitudes and purchase intentions as outcome variables (rather than measures of perceived fit). The results also show that this effect is not influenced by prior brand familiarity or socio-demographic characteristics. Furthermore, the current article advances Bambauer-Sachse et al. (2011) finding that using advertising elements typically associated with the core brand builds links between the extension and the core brand, and thus enhances the perceived fit, by specifying the influence of relational advertising as a type of prime for consumers' considerations of fit.

The current research is also the first to our knowledge to investigate the three-way interaction among fit, perceived quality, and advertising focus. The results of Study 2 provide evidence of a moderating role for perceived parent brand quality in the fit \times advertising strategy interaction. Elaborational advertising strategies reduce the effect of fit more strongly for extensions of parent brands with higher perceived quality than for those with lower perceived quality. As previous studies show (e.g., Aaker & Keller 1990; Dens & De Pelsmacker 2010a; Patro & Jaiswal 2003), perceived quality is not sufficient to ensure positive extension evaluations if the fit between them is low. However, elaborational ads that highlight the benefits of the extension in a new category can establish explanatory links, allowing the quality associations of

the high quality brand to transfer to the extension. Average quality brands offer less leverage; their associated schemata are less favorable.

The three-way interaction was significant in Study 2, in which fit was manipulated as product category similarity. Yet when fit was manipulated as parent concept consistency (Study 1), an elaboration advertisement reduced the effect of fit, regardless of perceived parent brand quality. The two types of fit are distinct and contribute independently to consumers' evaluations of brand extensions (Batra et al. 2010; Estes et al. 2012; Spiggle et al. 2012); some evidence also suggests that brand concept consistency is a stronger determinant of brand extension success than product category similarity (Batra et al. 2010; Estes et al. 2012). This reasoning could explain why the effect of brand concept consistency is not further moderated by perceived parent brand quality.

The effect of fit on extension attitude with relational advertisements is not moderated by quality in either of the two studies, as expected. Some earlier studies indicate no or weak support for the two-way fit \times quality interaction (e.g., Chowdhury 2007; Patro & Jaiswal 2003). Our results suggest that this lack of effect could be due to the fact that these studies did not provide any specific extension information. Therefore, consumers are likely to consider the parent brand as the main source for their extension evaluation, but in a failure to accommodate the extension within the existing parent brand category, respond negatively to the extension, regardless of the parent brand quality.

The results of the current research for parent brand attitude confirm that a lower fit extension can harm the parent brand, especially with a relational advertising strategy. This effect was partly mitigated by elaboration advertisements in Study 2 (but not in Study 1). However, the effect of fit was moderated by perceived parent brand quality in Study 1, such that high quality

brands seem more robust to the negative effects of fit with relational advertising. In Study 2, on the other hand, perceived parent brand quality did not moderate the effects of fit.

The general lack of differences in feedback effects might reflect the positions of the brands in this study; regardless of their perceived quality, they were well established in the market. Furthermore, the tested extensions involved different product categories. Consumers' attitudes toward well-established brands are generally very stable (Derbaix 1995), so feedback effects may be minimal in these cases. Other studies also find small or no feedback effects (e.g., Diamantopoulos et al. 2005; Keller & Aaker 1992; Lau & Phau 2007; Loken & Roedder John 1993), especially following a single hypothetical extension exposure. Actual experience with an extension might induce a stronger effect on parent brand attitudes while also limiting advertising effects on extension evaluations.

6.2 *Managerial Implications*

The options for extending a brand are not necessarily limited to products consistent with the parent brand, either in terms of brand concept or product feature similarity, because consumers' evaluations of extensions can be influenced by advertising. Brand managers could introduce extensions that are perceived by consumers as relatively less fitting, as long as they sufficiently elaborate on the qualities of the extension in their advertisements. To induce positive effects for the extension, a higher fit extension will benefit most from a close positioning with the parent brand. However, brand managers wishing to introduce lower fit extensions should advertise the extension on the basis of its own attributes and features. An elaborational strategy can (partly) mitigate the effects of lower fit on extension attitude. The higher the perceived quality of the parent brand, the more the brand can benefit from these effects.

What is less clear is whether the effects of lower fitting extensions on the parent brand

can also be mitigated. Brand managers should realize that distant extensions likely dilute parent brand attitudes, and the evidence is not very strong that advertising strategies and perceived brand quality influence this outcome. Based on Study 1, brand managers of average or lower quality brands should especially steer clear of relational advertising strategies when introducing a lower fit extension, because they are particularly vulnerable to the negative effects. In Study 2, we found partial evidence that elaborational advertising would also reduce the effect of fit on parent brand attitude. However, we would suggest that, if the main goal of advertising is to benefit parent brand evaluations, it seems safer to introduce higher fit extensions. This approach can build strong brand equity for average quality brands, even though Carter and Curry (2013) caution that such an extension might cannibalize parent brand sales. Average quality brands likely benefit more from positive extension evaluations than high quality brands, due to ceiling effects.

Although the perceived fit of the higher fit extension in this research was high, it was not extreme; line extensions, for example, may engender much higher levels of perceived fit and potentially cause more positive feedback effects. In any situation though, extensions are risky for the parent brand, and brand managers should carefully consider the conditions that initiate the strongest enhancement effects.

Although the results obtained from studying the interaction effect of two distinct types of advertising with continuous measures of parent brand–extension fit and parent brand quality perception provide directions for how to advertise extensions, they do not lead to clear-cut rules of thumb for exactly how to advertise brands with different levels of perceived quality and extensions with varying levels of fit. Advertisements can be developed on a continuum, from extremely brand focused to extremely extension focused, including a “middle of the road” strategy that pays equivalent attention to the parent brand and extension characteristics.

Extensions range from extremely higher fitting to extremely low fitting, and brands with very low to very high perceived quality may extend to other categories. The present study cannot dictate a solution for each of these situations and combinations; rather, brand managers should use these results from a graded perspective. Advertisements might need to reflect more or less of an elaborational or relational strategy, or use some combination, depending on the degrees of perceived fit and perceived brand quality. As a starting point, brand managers should measure perceptions of parent brand quality and the level of fit of an anticipated extension, before devising their advertising campaign as relational, elaboration, or a combination of both.

6.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The results in terms of parent brand feedback effects are rather mixed; feedback effects seem to occur, even for well-established brands, but the moderating effects of advertising strategy and perceived parent brand quality were not consistent across the two studies. Further research in this area is needed to clarify the conditions in which parent brand dilution actually occurs.

Additional studies could replicate the results with different parent brands, extension products, and advertising formats, to clarify the underlying effects of parent brand quality as a moderator of fit and advertising effects on advertisement responses, extension evaluations, and parent brand attitudes. For example, Lavack et al. (2008) study the effects of music–brand congruency in radio advertisements, which may be a different way to manipulate a relational advertising strategy. Because advertisements also can range from very relational to very elaboration oriented, further studies should test different advertising strategies on this continuum to specify the extent to which they are effective at varying levels of quality and fit.

Participants were exposed to a single advertisement; the effects of advertising repetition in this context merits further research. Repetition might enhance evaluations of lower fit

extensions (Klink & Smith 2001; Lane 2000). As Lane (2000) finds, moderately incongruent extensions benefit from multiple exposures. Additional studies should determine if positive communication effects result from multiple exposures in the extension situations and types of advertisements studied in this article, as well as how they might differentially influence parent brand evaluations. Similarly, further research might include an explicit test of other potential moderators, such as prior experience with the parent brand or parent brand symbolism.

The present study also captures only an immediate attitudinal response, without determining how these attitudes might evolve over time. Attitudes may return to a “baseline” level after some time has passed. Because the proposed extensions were hypothetical, this article also has no sales data to analyze. It would be an interesting topic for research though, considering that Carter and Curry (2013) show that high parent brand quality can harm an extension’s sales when functional fit is high, due to substitution effects. Another potentially relevant outcome involves memory effects, such as brand recognition or recall, which can differ from attitudinal measures (Dens & De Pelsmacker 2010c; Herrmann et al. 2011). Further research should also dig deeper into the underlying processes of consumer responses by measuring Aad, claim credibility, etc.

The present study only focused on advertising strategies and extension decisions, without taking the full array of marketing instruments into account. For example, the advertisements did not include the price of the extensions. Price communications and pricing strategies might influence consumer responses to higher or lower fit extensions and their parent brands. Furthermore, brands generate visibility in ways other than advertising, such that their power to command retailer shelf space and locate new extensions on the same shelf as the parent brand could be an important determinant of extension success. Studies should incorporate these marketing tools.

This research controlled for several demographic variables and prior brand familiarity, which had no notable impact on the results. However, other potential factors might determine brand or extension choices, so further research should explore other extrinsic forces that may influence responses to extensions, such as peer influences (family and friends), the media, values, individual consumer characteristics, and so forth. Finally, the data for this study were collected in a Western consumption setting, where a focused strategy (i.e., similar to higher fit) tends to work better; a diversified strategy that includes unrelated portfolios of products (i.e., similar to lower fit) often appears more effective in Eastern consumption contexts. Consumers with other cultural backgrounds thus might respond differently to low or higher fit brand extensions, making it necessary to replicate the results of this study in different cultures.

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Table 1**Standardized Regression Weights (Study 1)**

	A _{ext}	Pi	A _{pbdiff}	A _{ext}	Pi	A _{pbdiff}
Ad strategy	.040	.085*	.027	.061	.084°	.047
Perceived fit	.304***	.274***	.230***	.273***	.252***	.191**
Perceived quality	.095	.191**	-.322***	.106	.187**	-.263***
Ad x Fit	-.151*	.033	-.028	-.173**	.044	-.017
Ad x Quality	.049	.033	.134*	.073	.058	.140*
Fit x Quality	-.057	.031	-.119°	-.056	.033	-.138*
Ad x Fit x Quality	.070	.041	.029	.060	.026	.025
Brand familiarity	-	-	-	-.013	.024	-.123**
Gender	-	-	-	.015	-.036	-.013
Age	-	-	-	-.013	-.032	.010
Education	-	-	-	-.079°	-.059	.039
R ² _{adj}	.068	.158	.074	.063	.157	.071
Condition Index	3.384	3.385	3.384	15.109	15.089	15.109

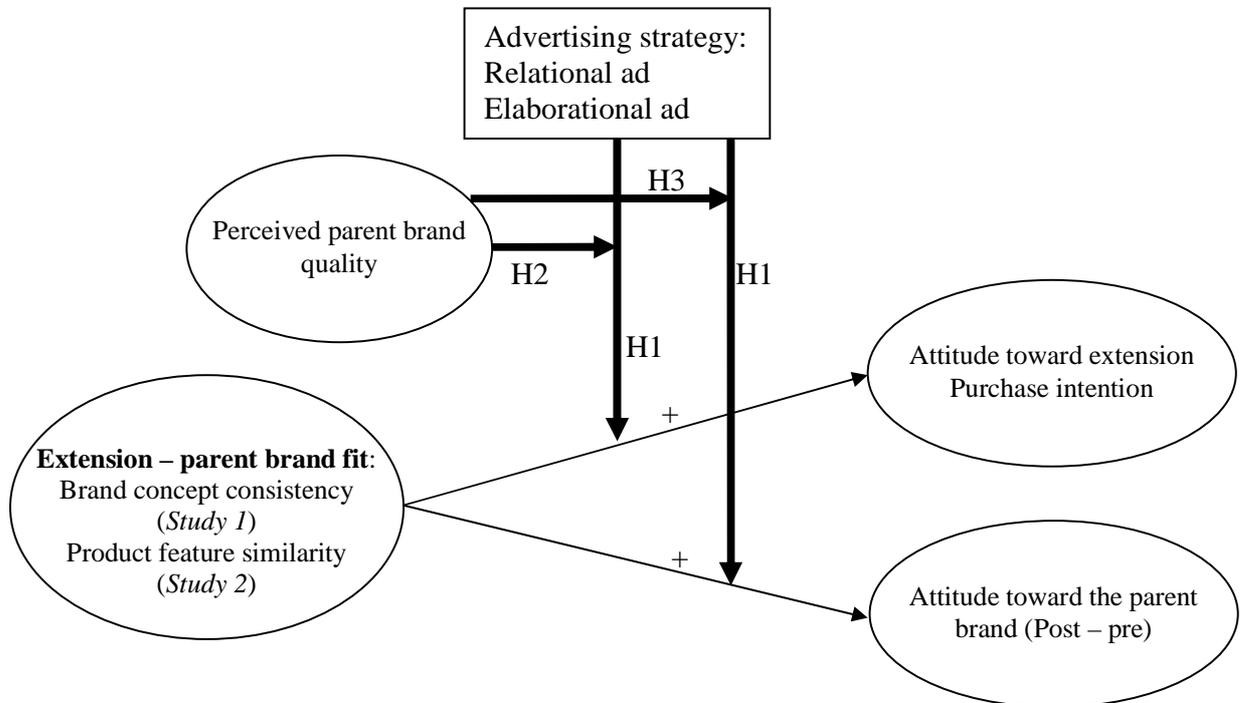
*** $p \leq .001$, ** $p \leq .010$, * $p \leq .050$, ° $p \leq .100$

Table 2
Standardized Regression Weights (Study 2)

	A _{ext}	Pi	A _{pbdiff}	A _{ext}	Pi	A _{pbdiff}
Ad strategy	.070	.075	.029	.064	.079	.033
Perceived fit	.672***	.451***	.193*	.661***	.447***	.196*
Perceived quality	.385***	.436***	-.166°	.436***	.409***	-.164
Ad x Fit	-.121°	-.003	.113	-.121°	.002	.106
Ad x Quality	-.175**	-.142°	-.182*	-.168*	-.150*	-.174°
Fit x Quality	.088	.222**	-.048	.103	.214**	-.037
Ad x Fit x Quality	-.126*	-.159*	-.045	-.122°	-.164*	-.040
Brand familiarity	-	-	-	-.088	.040	-.014
Gender	-	-	-	.087°	-.010	.055
Age	-	-	-	.043	.036	.002
Education	-	-	-	.014	-.048	.068
R ² _{adj}	.514	.382	.102	.519	.377	.095
Condition Index	3.475	3.475	3.475	15.285	15.285	15.285

*** $p \leq .001$, ** $p \leq .010$, * $p \leq .050$, ° $p \leq .100$

Figure 1
Framework



Appendix:
Stimulus Examples (Study 1)



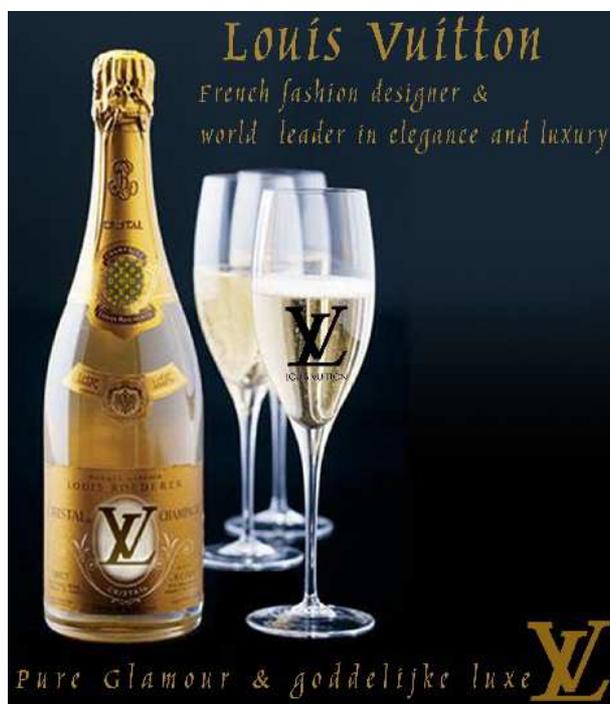
(a) Functional fashion brand, functional extension, elaborational advertisement

(b) Symbolic car brand, functional extension, relational advertisement

(Translation: Take care of your skin with our sun protection...

Provides optimal protection and smells delicious

Also available in spray flask)



(c) Symbolic fashion brand, symbolic extension, relational advertisement

(Translation: Pure glamour and divine luxury)



(d) Functional car brand, symbolic product, elaborational advertisement

(Translation: Experience an intense taste sensation.

...matured in the rustic idylls of the Champagne region)

Stimulus Examples (Study 2)



The advertisement features a blue background with a large white speech bubble on the left containing three women in professional attire. To the right, the word "NIEUW" is written in green, followed by the "BONUX" logo in a red and white oval, and the text "STOOMSTRIJKIJZER" in white. Below this, a white Bonux steam iron and a white bottle of Bonux detergent are shown. The headline "De ideale combinatie..." is centered below the products. At the bottom, there is a paragraph of Dutch text.

NIEUW **BONUX** STOOMSTRIJKIJZER

De ideale combinatie...

Bonux engageert zich om kwaliteitsproducten van een goede waarde te leveren. Voor de dagdagelijkse wasbeurt zorgen Bonux wasmiddelen voor een uitstekend evenwicht tussen prijs en kwaliteit. Gebruik nu ook het Bonux stoomstrijkijzer voor al je wasgoed, een ideale combinatie.

(a) Lower fit, average quality, relational advertisement

(Translation: Bonux is committed to delivering quality products of a fair value. Bonux laundry detergents provide an excellent balance between quality and price for the daily washing. Now try the Bonux steam iron for all your laundry, an ideal combination.)



The advertisement features a blue background with a large white speech bubble on the left containing three women in professional attire. To the right, the word "NIEUW" is written in green, followed by the text "WASVERZACHTER" in white. Below this, a blue bottle of Bonux fabric softener is shown with a red tag that says "HEERLIJK ZACHT". The headline "Houdt de vezels langer als nieuw." is centered below the product. At the bottom, there is a paragraph of Dutch text and the Bonux logo with the word "Wasmiddelen" below it.

NIEUW WASVERZACHTER

Houdt de vezels langer als nieuw.

Ontdek de nieuwe wasverzachter met gepatenteerde "color & shape protection". Deze innovatieve wasverzachter maakt uw was heerlijk zacht en helpt het vervagen van kleuren en het uitrekken van kleding te voorkomen. Zo bewaart uw kleding langer dat "nieuw" gevoel. Verkrijgbaar in Lentefris en Sensitive voor de gevoelige huid.

BONUX
Wasmiddelen

(b) Higher fit, average quality, elaborational advertisement

(Translation: Discover the new fabric softener with patented "color & shape protection". This innovative fabric softener makes your laundry wonderfully soft and helps prevent the fading of colors and stretching of clothing. That way, your clothes will keep their "new" feeling longer. Available in Spring fresh and Sensitive for sensitive skin.)

**NIEUW
STOOMSTRIJKIJZER**

Beschermt uw kleding
bij het strijken.

- Nieuw "Steam Advance" systeem voor extra hoge druk, ook bij lage temperatuur
- Instelbare temperatuur en stoom-functies
- Roestvrij stalen anti-kleef zool
- Geïntegreerd anti-kalksysteem
- Automatische stop

Dash
Wasmiddelen

(c) Lower fit, high quality, elaborational advertisement

(Translation: - New "Steam Advance" system for extra high pressure, even under low temperatures - Adjustable temperature and steam functions - Stainless steel anti-stick sole - Integrated anti scale system - Automatic stop)

NIEUW Dash WASVERZACHTER

De ideale combinatie...

Dash engageert zich om kwaliteitsproducten van een uitzonderlijke waarde te leveren. Voor de dagdagelijkse wasbeurt zorgen Dash wasmiddelen al sinds 1967 voor een optimaal evenwicht tussen reiniging en verzorging. Voeg nu ook Dash wasverzachter toe bij elke wasbeurt, een ideale combinatie.

Dash
BIJ ELKE WASBEURT

(c) Higher fit, high quality, relational advertisement

(Translation: Dash is committed to delivering quality products of an exceptional value. Since 1967, Dash laundry detergents provide an excellent balance between purification and care. Now add Dash fabric softener to every load of wash, an ideal combination.)