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Branding Strategies, Marketing Communication, and Perceived Brand Meaning: The Transfer of Purposive, Goal–Oriented Brand Meaning to Brand Extensions

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This article develops and tests a conceptual model of the transfer process whereby perceived similarity organized around shared goals facilitates the transfer of knowledge and affect from a parent brand to an extension of that brand. Empirical results, based on two well-known brands and two hypothetical product extensions for each brand, demonstrate that the availability of well-formed, goal-derived categories associated with a parent brand establishes an organizing framework for consumers' assessments of similarity that facilitates the transfer of consumer knowledge and attitude from the parent brand to a brand extension in another product category. This facilitating effect of similarity does not occur in the absence of goal-derived categories. The results also reveal how marketing communication can be used to facilitate the transfer process by framing similarity in terms of common goals. Implications are discussed for the organization of consumer knowledge and affect across product categories and for understanding prior research findings on brand extension.

Keywords: *branding strategies; communication strategies; goals; attitudes*

A brand name is among the most fundamental and long-lasting assets of a firm. Marketing managers seek ways to enhance the value of brands by leveraging this value through brand extensions and other means. Two sets of factors can potentially affect the leveraging of a brand's meaning: (1) awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions associated with the parent brand are transferred to a new brand extension and (2) when such transfer occurs, the costs of introducing an extension may be lower than launching a completely new brand. Critical to the realization of such leverage is the degree to which, at a given cost, transfer occurs from the parent brand to a brand extension. That such transfer may occur is well established, and prior research makes clear that perceived similarity between a parent brand and an extension of that brand plays a role in facilitating transfer. However, previous research also suggests that there are a variety of different measures of similarity, and empirical results have not consistently shown that similarity facilitates transfer even when the same measures of similarity are examined. These mixed results and the varieties of measures of perceived similarity that have been suggested in prior research suggest a need to examine the cognitive and affective process(es) that mediate perceived similarity and facilitate or impede the transfer of cognitive and affective associations from a parent brand to an extension. From the perspective

of a manager, identification of the processes underlying consumers' development of summary perceptions of similarity or fit would provide guidance for identifying those potential brand extensions most likely to be successful and those marketing actions, such as strategies for marketing communication, that will increase the probability of success of a given brand extension.

This article contributes to research and theory on brand extensions and brand associations by developing and testing a model of the process by which transfer occurs based on two related theories: goal-derived categorization (Barsalou 1985) and attitude accessibility (Fazio 1986). The model offered in this article moves beyond a focus on perceived similarity and offers a model of the processes by which consumers select information and make judgments about similarity. The role of these processes and the type of perceived similarity involved in the facilitation of cognitive and affective transfer are specifically addressed through the model featured in this article. Thus, the model provides a means for reconciling earlier work that has employed different measures of perceived similarity and for explaining the inconsistencies in previous research findings. The model developed and tested in this article is shown to be a general, robust predictor of the transfer of knowledge and attitudes from a well-known brand in one product category to an extension of that brand in another product category. It extends the methodological work of Martin and Stewart (2001) on dimensions of brand similarity by examining process-oriented measures (e.g., reaction time) that have not been systematically examined in previous brand-extension research.

This article also examines the role and impact of marketing communications and, more specifically, the content of such communications on perceived similarity and the facilitation of transfer of knowledge and affect. While much of the research on brand extension ignores the role of communications on the transfer process, some research suggests that communication may play an important role in facilitating, or impeding, transfer (Bridges, Keller, and Sood 2000; Lane 2000). Associations between a parent brand and an extension can be learned in a variety of ways, including marketing communication (Ratneshwar, Mick, and Huffman 2001). This article examines the role of marketing communications within the context of the general conceptual model of consumers' perceptions of similarity and the transfer of knowledge and affect that accompany consumers' responses to brand extensions.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Prior Research on Brand Extensions

Virtually all prior research on brand extensions rests on the premise that knowledge and attitudes ("brand mean-

ing") associated with an established brand are part of a network of associations that includes the brand name, concrete and abstract product attributes, and usage occasions, among other things, that may be transferred to an extension of the brand. A key element of this research is the notion that the more similar two products, the more likely the transfer of cognition and affect from the parent brand to the extension (Larkin 1978; Novick 1988). The focus of much of the research on brand extensions is on the identification of various indices of "fit" or measures of perceived similarity, either concrete or abstract, and the relationship of such indices and measures to consumers' responses to brand extensions (Aaker and Keller 1990; Boush and Loken 1991; Broniarcyzk and Alba 1994; Martin and Stewart 2001; Morrin 1999; Park, Milberg, and Lawson 1991). Prior research leaves little doubt that the extendibility of a brand is a function of cognitive and affective processes for both product class and brand-specific associations. Thus, feature-based similarity, brand-specific associations, brand concept (schema) consistency, shared goals and usage occasions may all be associated with an increased likelihood of cognitive and affective transfer from a parent brand to an extension. The literature is far less clear about which shared characteristics are most relevant, how such shared characteristics facilitate transfer and how these shared characteristics might be used to predict the success of a brand extension. In fact, the literature is not even clear about those product and brand characteristics that consumers use to form judgments of perceived similarity or "fit."

An important distinction among studies of brand extensions revolves around differences in the product and brand attributes (e.g., brand-specific associations) used to define measures of similarity and indices of fit. Four approaches to the definition and measurement of product similarity are proposed in brand-extension research: feature-based similarity, usage-based similarity, brand-concept similarity, and goal-based similarity (Martin and Stewart 2001; Klink and Smith 2001). Measures suggested by these alternative approaches to the definition and measurement of "fit" are correlated, but the degree of association is contingent on a variety of factors (Martin and Stewart 2001). Indeed, even the same measure of perceived similarity is not always associated with the transfer of cognition and affect. For example, Park et al. (1991) found that knowledge and affect transferred from a parent brand to an extension when the parent brand was perceived as a "prestige" product. Such transfer did not occur for a more utilitarian parent brand even when the extension was perceived as similar.

Broniarczyk and Alba (1994) demonstrated that the role of product category similarity is strongly moderated by brand-specific associations. Indeed, these authors found that "evaluation of the extension may be inversely related to similarity depending on the brand-specific asso-

ciations" (Broniarczyk and Alba 1994:227). These authors speculate that such moderating effects may be due to a goal-directed inferential process involving consumers' assessments of an extension's ability to deliver desired benefits. However, these authors did not identify or examine the nature of such inferential processes and they call for further research, including work on the *process* by which consumers evaluate extensions. There is a need to identify a higher order organizing framework that determines which of the many potential product and brand-specific associations are used by consumers when making judgments of perceived similarity. Such an organizing framework would, in turn, suggest which product or brand-specific attributes should serve as the basis for an index of similarity or fit and which features and associated measures of similarity or fit are relevant to the transfer of knowledge and attitudes from a well-known brand to an extension (Goodman 1972; Murphy and Medin 1985). Indirect evidence of the existence of such an organizing framework finds support in work using scanner panel data. Swaminathan, Fox, and Reddy (2001) find that experience with a parent brand facilitates the likelihood of trial of an extension. This finding suggests that past experience, and the cognitive and affective associations produced by such experience, facilitates the transfer of positive evaluations.

Martin and Stewart (2001) demonstrate that structural models that include a latent organizing construct—an aggregation of various measures of product similarity (brand meaning)—explained more variance in affect and purchase intent toward a brand extension than models that included only a direct link between various measures of similarity and measures of affect and purchase intention for a brand extension. Interestingly, these authors find that such a latent construct provides a better fit even when the parent brand and brand extension are goal incongruent, though the fit is especially strong in cases where the parent brand and brand extension are goal congruent. Thus, consistent with the literature on categorization and accessibility (Barsalou 1985; Fiske and Pavelchak 1986; Shocker, Stewart, and Zahorik 1990), the Martin and Stewart (2001) study demonstrates that perceptions of product similarity are mediated by a latent organizing construct or process. While these authors suggest that this mediating construct is related to consumers' goals, they focus on a comparison of alternative models of measurement and do not examine the processes that may give rise to these differential measurement models.

An understanding of the processes that produce summary judgments of perceived similarity or fit is important for both theoretical and practical reasons. From a theoretical perspective it is important to differentiate among alternative processes. Schema are the result of summary processes and Park et al. (1991) rely on this construct as the basis for their notion of brand concept similarity. Similarly, common-use occasion (Shocker et al. 1990) might

be viewed as an organizing construct. Thus, although Broniarczyk and Alba (1994) and Martin and Stewart (2001) find support for the role of a mediating construct and ascribe this construct to a benefit-related or goal-derived process, neither of these articles offers a test of whether a goal-driven process or some other latent organizing process is involved. Development of a theory of the transfer of knowledge, affect, and behavioral intention would be advanced by a demonstration that the process is goal-driven, as recent work on the role of goals suggests (Huffman, Ratneshwar, and Mick 2001; Shah, Higgins, and Friedman 1998), or driven instead by some other process.

The remainder of this article focuses on the development and testing of a goal-driven process model that explains consumers' judgments of similarity and consequent differences in the transfer of knowledge, affect, and intention from a parent brand to an extension in another product category. In contrast to previous research on brand extensions, this article includes specific examination of process measures—measures of reaction time—intended to reveal the extent to which underlying processes are driven by goals or some other construct. Also, this research examines the extent to which marketing factors other than the product itself, namely marketing communications, may play a role in mediating the transfer of knowledge, affect, and intention from a parent brand to an extension of that brand.

Goal-Driven Categorization

A candidate for a framework of the process by which consumers judge similarity is found in the goal-derived categorization literature, which is receiving increasing attention in marketing and consumer psychology (Barsalou 1985; Huffman and Houston 1993; Martin and Stewart 2001; Ratneshwar, Mick, and Huffman 2001; Ratneshwar, Barsalou, Pechmann, and Moore 2001). It is well recognized that judgments of similarity are context and task dependent (Murphy and Medin 1985) and attributes used to judge similarity will differ depending on goals salient at the time of judgment (Barsalou 1985). Thus, two products may be perceived as more or less similar depending on the degree to which they are associated with common goals. Knowledge and attitude transfer will also be most likely to occur when consumers create a link between products and the products' ability to fulfill a goal or set of goals (Barsalou 1985). Hence, a brand extension should be most successful when a consumer readily links a goal associated with the parent brand to that of an extension. The less congruent the goal(s) between the parent brand and the extension, the less likely cognition and affect will transfer from the parent brand to the extension. This view is different from other approaches in brand extension research. Prior research has treated the product category or the

brand name, including any *brand-specific associations*, as organizing elements; on the other hand, the goal-congruency approach treats the individual's *goal(s)* as the organizing framework that link(s) the extension to the parent brand.

For some brand extensions, the goals associated with the parent brand and an extension of that brand may be readily apparent based on consumers' prior experiences, characteristics of the product, or other factors. Such congruity makes it easy for the consumer to draw inferences about the extension since an existing goal-derived category structure guides information processing and transfer. When an individual does not associate similar goals with the parent brand and the extension, the individual must construct a new category to explain the relationship between the parent brand and the extension.[2] Mandler (1982:14) suggests "incongruency leads to the activation or formation of an [associational network] that fits the new information." This new network, an *ad hoc category*, will be based on whatever shared characteristics are immediately prominent, such as shared product features or usage similarity (Barsalou 1991; Fiske and Neuberg 1990; Martin and Stewart 2001). The *ad hoc category* will be less well organized and, as a result, the transfer of cognition and affect from the parent brand to the extension will be diminished. This suggests that goal-related measures will account for more variance in consumer response to extensions than perceived similarity measures that are not based on shared goals (Barsalou 1985:640). This greater explanatory power is consistent with the view that goal-derived categories provide a stronger, more robust basis for explaining the transfer of knowledge and affect from a parent brand to an extension. The primacy of a goal-based approach was demonstrated by Martin and Stewart (2001) and, as a necessary condition for the subsequent examination of process measures, this article seeks to replicate this effect. Thus:

> *Hypothesis 1:* Goal congruency between a parent brand and an extension category will have greater explanatory power (account for more variance) in measures of attitude and purchase intent toward a brand extension than traditional measures of perceived similarity.

A common goal shared between two products will facilitate greater transfer of cognition and affect than will goal-incongruent products. Consumers exposed to a goal-congruent extension should access information and affect more readily and produce perceptual and evaluative judgments faster than consumers exposed to an incongruent extension (Barsalou 1985; Fazio 1986). Using a common measure of accessibility, reaction time (RT) measures, Fazio (1986) demonstrated that attitudes that are highly accessible are more likely to guide behavior than attitudes

that are less accessible. Thus, measures of accessibility, such as reaction time (RT), should demonstrate that consumers make faster judgments in the case of goal-congruent extensions (Barsalou 1985; Herr, Farquhar, and Fazio 1996). Because congruent goals elicit product information (features, usage occasions, and other attributes) and attitudes that are organized in the goal-derived category, the attitude toward the parent brand should be transferred to the extension (Boush and Loken 1991; Novick 1988). An attitude associated with the extension that is similar to that associated with the parent brand provides evidence that this process has happened. When the goal associated with an extension is incongruent with that of the parent brand, such transfer is less likely (Mandler 1982; Meyers Levy and Tybout 1989). Thus,

> *Hypothesis 2:* Individuals exposed to a brand extension associated with a goal that is congruent with that of the parent brand will exhibit: (a) higher goal-related knowledge (ideals, goodness-of-fit) and a closer fit (e.g., overall perceived similarity, manufacturing similarity); (b) more readily accessible knowledge, attitudes, and purchase intent (as evidenced by a faster reaction time); (c) a higher purchase likelihood than individuals exposed to a goal-incongruent extension; and (d) given a positively evaluated brand, participants exposed to a goal-congruent brand extension will have more positive attitudes toward the extension than those exposed to a goal-incongruent extension.

The Role of Communication

Although goal congruency is a primary driver of the transfer of knowledge and attitudes, there remains the question of how consumers become aware of such congruency. In some cases, goal congruency may be obvious upon exposure to an extension. Common product features that are associated with particular goals or obvious commonality in use or in usage occasion may readily suggest goal congruency. On the other hand, this may not always be the case, especially when the parent brand and extension are in very different product categories where common product features are not present. However, there may be other means for helping consumers make such associations. A new product is often accompanied by communication vehicles, such as advertising, packaging, sales pitches, and in-store advertising, that may emphasize goal-related associations between a parent brand and its extension (Batra, Aaker, and Myers 1995; Chakravarti et al. 1991). The role of marketing communication in facilitating acceptance of brand extensions has received only modest attention in the literature (Boush 1993; Bridges et al. 2000; Lane 2000).

Prior research suggests that goal-oriented communications play an important role in establishing linkages

among products. Simonson and Tversky (1992) suggest that external information, such as advertising, may influence or act as a reminder of which goals are salient. Marketing communications that identify shared goals directly or indirectly should facilitate the cognitive and affective transfer from the parent brand to the extension. It should be possible for marketing communication to reinforce, if not create, the linkages between a parent brand and its extension. Thus, it is reasonable to hypothesize communication main effects similar to the congruency main effects stated in *Hypothesis 2a* to *Hypothesis 2d*. That is, communications that reinforce or suggest goal congruency should influence perceived similarity and facilitate the transfer of cognition and affect more than communications that do not focus on goals or that suggest noncongruent goals. There are also other reasons, determined through prior empirical research, to expect such communication effects.

Boush (1993) demonstrates that brand slogans for extensions that focus on product attributes similar to those of a fictitious "brand" produced evaluations of those extensions by consumers that are more positive and more similar to the parent brand than slogans that did not focus on similar attributes. However, the focus of the Boush study is on fictitious brands and product attributes. Hence, the Boush study really demonstrates that communication can facilitate the formation of an ad hoc category by drawing attention to specific information. Such research, while clearly demonstrating the potential importance of marketing communications in positioning a brand extension as similar to a parent brand, fails to examine the richness of cognitive structures associated with well-known, highly familiar brands (Klink and Smith 2001). Bridges et al. (2000) investigate the impact of a communication strategy on brand extensions that are perceived by consumers to possess a high degree of fit with the parent brand. These researchers demonstrate that the most effective communication strategy for the extension focuses on the salient parent-brand associations. Such a strategy serves to elicit associations that improve the consumers' perceptions of the fit between the parent and the extension. The Bridges et al. study also demonstrates that communication can play an important role in brand extension. However, the Bridges et al. research did not examine the differential impact of message content linked to the goal congruence of the extension or the impact of different communications on the perceived fit, attitude, and purchase intent of an extension. Further limiting the Bridges et al. (2000) study was its use of generic products rather than actual brands.

Lane (2000) also examined the effects of communication on brand extensions and did so in the context of incongruent extensions. She investigates the differential impact of repeated advertising exposures on consumers' perceptions of and attitudes toward incongruent extensions, using messages that focused on either peripheral cues or brand benefits. Lane's study finds that moderately incon-

gruent extensions benefit from numerous exposures to both peripheral and benefit brand associations—that is, frequent communication has the potential to overcome at least some of the perceived incongruity between the parent brand and an incongruent extension over time. This finding may be the result of repeated communications facilitating consumers' creation of ad hoc categories. Interestingly, for extremely incongruent extensions, repeated exposure to advertising messages that focus on brand benefits, but not messages that focus on peripheral cues, reduce the perceived incongruity of the extension category. These findings are consistent with the view that goal congruence (a focus on benefits) influences consumer response to an extension and that advertising has the potential to influence such a response. Thus, the few studies that have examined communication effects within a brand extension context suggest that advertising has the potential to influence consumers' perceptions of a brand extension. Such influence, however, appears to be contingent on the degree of the extension's goal congruency. While these studies are useful and indicate an important role for marketing communication in determining the success of brand extensions, they do not examine the differential impact of goal congruent and goal incongruent *messages*, nor do they examine the interaction of product congruency and message congruency.

It is unlikely that the effect of a goal congruent/incongruent brand extension and the effect of a goal congruent/incongruent advertising message will be additive, though empirical research to date offers little guidance with respect to the relative strength of such main effects and interactions. It is likely that there is an interaction of goal congruency with respect to perception of the parent brand itself and goal congruency with respect to the advertising message used for the extension. When an extension is goal-congruent with the parent brand, the degree of congruency in a message should have a differential impact on the cognitive and affective transfer across categories. A message that reinforces goal congruence should facilitate transfer while a message that is incongruent should diminish transfer. In addition, even if a brand extension is not obviously congruent with the goals associated with the parent brand, communication strategies may create links that would otherwise not be present. Thus, a communication strategy might indicate to consumers how a parent-brand's goals and those of the extension are related even if they are not immediately obvious. Nevertheless, it is likely that product congruency will dominate communication effects. Advertising messages that focus on goal congruency are unlikely to fully compensate for products that are not obviously goal congruent and this will place a greater cognitive burden on the consumer when processing information about the extension. On the other hand, it is likely that goal congruency between products may compensate for communications that

do not focus on goal congruency. However, it is unreasonable to expect that these compensatory effects will be symmetrical—that is, that the effect of product congruency/incongruency will be stronger than the effect of message congruency/incongruency. In fact, Lane (2000) demonstrated an interaction between advertising frequency and degree of incongruity. There is also reason to hypothesize an interaction between the degree of congruity/incongruity of the product extension and the degree of congruity/incongruity of the advertising message. Thus,

Hypothesis 3: Relative to other combinations of extension and message congruency, consumers exposed to a goal-congruent extension *and* a congruent message will exhibit: (a) higher goal-related knowledge (e.g., ideals, goodness-of-fit) and a closer fit (e.g., overall perceived similarity, manufacturing similarity); (b) more readily accessible knowledge, attitudes, and purchase intent (as evidenced by a faster reaction time); and (c) higher purchase likelihood between the extension and the parent brand than consumers in the other three conditions.

Hypothesis 3a-c: There will be a specific interaction effect as follows: A goal-congruent extension with an incongruent message will produce more positive outcomes than a goal-incongruent extension with a congruent message, which in turn will exhibit more positive outcomes than a goal-incongruent extension using an incongruent message.

Hypothesis 3d: Given a positively evaluated brand, those exposed to a goal-congruent extension and recipients of a goal-congruent message will have more positive attitudes toward the extension than those exposed to a goal-congruent extension and a goal-incongruent message. (The same order effects defined in Hypothesis 3a-c apply to the order of attitudinal preference.)

Prior research on the advertising of brand extensions suggests that advertising may have a general effect regardless of its congruency with the goals of the parent brand or the congruency between the product and the extension (though the results of Lane 2000 implies otherwise). Marketing communication for a brand can suggest a relationship between two products even if this would contradict the beliefs that a consumer may form without such information (Batra et al. 1995). Communication calling attention to a link between two products, even if that link is only a common brand name, may facilitate the formation of ad hoc categories. For example, Zinkhan and Martin (1987) demonstrate that consumers possess attitudes toward a brand name that are somewhat independent of attitudes toward the product or brand itself. Characteristics of brand names, such as their sound or how memorable they are, may also facilitate formation of ad hoc categories (Hansen and Zinkan 1984). Even the absence of information about an extension could lead to elaboration that facilitates formation of ad hoc categories. Any communication, regardless of congruency, may have the ability to stimulate elaboration, resulting in the creation of ad hoc categories and the formation of associations across product categories. MacInnis, Nakamoto, and Mani (1992) have evidence that consumers are capable of making links, however abstract or obscure, between even seemingly noncomparable products. Advertising may act as a cue to facilitate the production of such associations while defining the relationships between noncomparable products (Bridges et al. 2000). Thus,

Hypothesis 4: Consumers exposed to marketing communication for a brand extension will have the following: (a) higher goal-related knowledge (e.g., ideals, goodness-of-fit) and a closer fit (e.g., overall perceived similarity, manufacturing similarity), (b) more readily accessible knowledge and attitudes (as evidenced by a faster RT), and (c) higher purchase likelihood than consumers who are not exposed to any marketing communication.

The sections that follow report the design and results of a study that tested these hypotheses.

METHOD

Klink and Smith (2001) have observed that research on brand extensions bears a considerable burden to demonstrate external validity. Since brands represent phenomena that develop through the experience of the consumer, it is critical that research on brands and brand extensions assure that brand-related stimuli be realistic and consistent with the experience of consumers. Thus, research on brand extensions requires extensive pretesting to develop potential extensions and to identify brands that will satisfy the requirements of the experimental manipulations while still providing control for extraneous factors. Likewise, the manipulation of goal congruency is linked to the types of brands and product categories selected. With this in mind, two pretests were conducted to select products, identify brand names, and develop both the goal manipulation and the message stimuli suitable for manipulation and hypotheses testing. Since the use of brand extensions in the marketplace is based on the premise that individuals are familiar with the parent brand, it is important to select product categories and brand names that are familiar to the participants involved in the study.

Pretest—Goal Congruency Manipulation

The first step in the pretest was to identify two brands and two potential extension categories for each of the two brands. A sample of undergraduate students, similar in

composition to that used in the main study, was asked to generate and evaluate the relative goal congruency of brand extensions for a variety of brands. For each brand, a goal-congruent extension and a goal-incongruent extension was identified. This was done through a series of individual in-depth interviews and focus groups to develop a list of potential brand names, product categories, and the goals that consumers associate with them. Numerous iterations of this process resulted in the selection of Reebok and Benetton as the brand names and dress leather shoes and cotton spandex athletic wear as the product categories. The goal-congruent extension for Benetton was dress leather shoes and for Reebok was cotton spandex athletic wear. The goal-incongruent extensions simply involved a reversal of the brand names and the product categories to which they were extended — Benetton to athletic wear and Reebok to dress leather shoes. An important point is that the participants in this pretest suggested the degree of goal congruency, thus ensuring that goals were established from the *consumer's* perspectives, *not* the researcher's.[3]

Next, a new sample of 45 students was randomly assigned to one of four possible extension categories. These participants were asked to rate how well the extension fit with the parent brand, the presence of ideal attributes, and the level of similarity between the extension and the parent brand on several dimensions. Following the completion of these measures,[4] all participants were asked to list the goal(s) that they associated with the brand. The results confirmed the findings of the focus groups and depth interviews.[5] The use of these product categories as goal-congruent and goal-incongruent, therefore, was empirically supported.

Pretest—Message Congruency Manipulation

The second pretest developed a set of messages that were goal congruent or goal incongruent with the advertising strategy of each parent brand. Congruency was defined in terms of whether participants perceived the message to have an appropriate fit with the marketing communication strategy of the parent brand. The executional elements of the messages were as similar as possible in order to avoid confounding based on differences in the message layout. The same messages were used for both brand names, changing the brand name to fit the respective brand. Since the products were gender–specific, there were two sets of messages for a total of 16 messages. The messages developed through this process were ultimately produced as finished color print ads by a professional graphic illustrator. (See Appendix A for an example of ads used as the message stimuli.)

Verifying messages as goal-congruent and goal-incongruent with the advertising strategy of the parent brand involved the same two-step process as in Pretest 1. A

sample of students was brought together for a series of interviews in which they were asked to explain how well the message fit with the parent brand and its advertising strategy. The criteria used to judge congruency included how suitable the message was in communicating the goal associated with the parent brand. Participants were also asked to evaluate the degree to which each message exemplified the type of advertising that the brand typically uses for its products. For example, the congruent Reebok ad featured a serious cyclist in a race wearing full cycling gear, including Reebok's athletic wear. In the goal-incongruent version, the ad featured a cyclist wearing Reebok clothing but with a focus on fashion rather than athleticism. Following these interviews, a new sample of 60 students was used to verify the degree of message congruency. A difference of means test was run within each brand to determine whether the congruent message was perceived as a better fit with the type of advertising that the parent brand uses.[6] The pretests provided empirical evidence that the proposed extensions and marketing communications were perceived as relatively congruent with the goals of the parent brand by a group of participants representative of those used in the main study.

THE MAIN STUDY

Experimental Design

The main study employed a $2 \times 2 \times 3$ between participants design. The first independent variable was extension congruency (goal congruent vs. goal incongruent). The goals of the two parent brands that were identified in the pretesting were (Reebok) "athletic wear that is designed to be worn by the serious athlete" and (Benetton) "apparel that is designed to be high quality, stylish, and colorful" (see Appendix B). These two goals were reversed for the goal-incongruent conditions so that the Reebok goal was linked to the incongruent Benetton extension and the Benetton goal was linked to the incongruent Reebok extension. The second independent variable, brand (Reebok vs. Benetton), provided a means for testing for brand-specific effects and a means of replicating the tests if brand-specific effects were not present. Thus, we used two brand names with two extension categories (dress leather shoes and athletic wear) for each brand. The same two extension categories were used for both brand names, but they were reversed for the goal-incongruent condition. The third independent variable was a three–level message factor (congruent vs. goal-incongruent vs. no message). The no-message condition was used as a control to isolate the general effect of advertising without regard to content.

TABLE 1
Dependent Measures

1. Feature-based perceived similarity measures:
   (a) Overall Perceived Similarity (OPS): (α = .75)
      "How similar\typical is Benetton leather shoes and Benetton clothing?"
   • Scales anchored by: 1 = *not at all similar* to 5 = *very similar* and 1 = *not at all typical* to 5 = *very typical*.
   (b) Manufacturing Similarity (MS):
      "What is the ability of Benetton to manufacture and produce dress leather shoes\clothing?"
   • Scales anchored by: 1 = *very low amount* to 5 = *very high amount*.
2. Usage Similarity (US): (α = .82)
   "How similar are Reebok athletic shoes and Reebok dress leather shoes in terms of how\when they are used?"
   "How likely are you to use Reebok athletic shoes and Reebok dress leather shoes together?"
   "How appropriate is it to use Reebok athletic wear to exercise?"
   • Scales anchored by: 1 = *not at all similar* to 5 = *very similar*, 1 = *not at all likely* to 5 = *very likely*, and 1 = *not at all appropriate* to 5 = *very appropriate*.
3. Attitude toward the parent brand (A_B): (α = .83)
   "How favorable\likable\pleasing are Reebok athletic shoes?"
   "How favorable\likable\pleasing is the category of athletic shoes?"
   • Scales anchored by: 1 = *not at all favorable\likable\pleasing* to 5 = *very favorable\likable\pleasing*.
4. Goal-derived categorization measures:
   (a) Goodness-of-fit (GOF): (α = .69)
      "How well does Benetton's leather shoes fit with the goal of wanting high quality, colorful clothing?"
      "How consistent is Benetton's dress leather shoes with the goal of wanting high quality, colorful clothing?"
      "How well does Benetton's dress leather shoes exemplify the goal of wanting high quality, colorful clothing?"
   • Scales anchored by: 1 = *not at all well* to 5 = *very well*, 1 = *not at all consistent* to 5 = *very consistent* and 1 = *extremely poor example* to 5 = *extremely good example*.
   (b) Ideal Attributes (Ideals): (α = .79)
      "To what degree would Reebok dress leather shoes have bright colors that you can mix and match with your wardrobe?"
      "How likely is it that Reebok dress leather shoes would have bright colors that you can mix and match with your wardrobe?"
      "How likely is it that dress leather shoes would be made of high quality, soft, pliable leather\bright, stylish colors to complete that fashion-
         able, yet casual image\bright colors to mix and match with your wardrobe?"
   • Scales anchored by: 1 = *very low amount* to 5 = *very high amount* and 1 = *not at all likely* to 5 = *very likely*.
5. Attitude toward the extension (A_{EXTN}): (α = .86)
   "How favorable\likable\pleasing is Reebok athletic clothing?"
   "How favorable\likable\pleasing is the category of athletic clothing?"
   • Scales anchored by: 1 = *not at all favorable\likable\pleasing* to 5 = *very favorable\likable\pleasing*.
6. Purchase intention (PI): (α = .59)
   "How likely are you to purchase\frequent a store that sells Benetton athletic wear?"
   "How often have you purchased products made by Benetton?"
   • Scales anchored by: 1 = *not at all likely* to 5 = *very likely*, 1 = *never been in one* to 5 = *as often as possible*, and 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very often*.

Dependent Measures

The literature on brand extensions reviewed earlier in this article was examined to identify measures of product similarity (see Martin and Stewart [2001] for a review of these measures). The measures of similarity selected were intended to be broadly representative of the various types of measures that have been used in prior research on brand extensions. The perceived feature-based similarity measures used in the research are based on Aaker and Keller (1990), Boush and Loken (1991), and Broniarcyzk and Alba (1994) and include two measures of *overall perceived similarity* and one measure of *manufacturing similarity*. The three *usage-similarity* measures are based on

Ratneshwar and Shocker (1991) and Chakravarti et al. (1991). The *brand concept consistency* measures are derived from Park et al. (1991) and Shavitt (1989) and include six measures of attitude toward the parent brand and the category. Measures of parent-brand attitudes are a variation of the affective measures developed by Fazio (1986) and are used to examine the similarity of the affect (attitude) evoked by products. (For a description of the dependent measures, see Table 1.)

Two of the most common and useful of the goal-derived measures are ideals and goodness-of-fit (Barsalou 1985, 1991). *Ideals* refer to the attributes of products or brands that are most closely associated with the goal that forms the nexus of the category. Similarly, measures of

TABLE 2
Manipulation Checks, Covariate Measures, and In-depth Probes

1. Manipulation check scales:
   (a) Goal congruency: ($\alpha = .73$)
       "How similar is the goal that you associate with Benetton clothing and the goal that you associate with Benetton athletic wear?"
       "How similar is the reason for using Benetton clothing and the reason for using Benetton athletic wear?"

• Scales anchored by: 1 = *not at all similar* to 5 = *very similar.*

   (b) Message congruency: ($\alpha = .69$)
       "How similar is the type of advertising that you associate with Reebok and the type of message that you see here for Reebok?"
       "How well does this message exemplify the type of advertising that Reebok uses for its other products?"
       "How consistent is this message with the type of advertising that Reebok uses for its other products?"

• Five point scales anchored by: 1 = *not at all similar* to 5 = *very similar*, 1 = *extremely poor example* to 5 = *extremely good example* and 1 = *not at all consistent* to 5 = *very consistent.*

2. In-depth probes used for the goal congruency manipulation:
   "What goal or goals do you associate with Reebok athletic shoes\Reebok athletic wear\Reebok dress leather shoes?"
   "Does it make sense that Reebok would introduce athletic wear\dress leather shoes? Why or why not?"
   "Do you like the ideas that Reebok is considering introducing athletic wear\dress leather shoes? Why or why not?"

3. In-depth probes used for the message congruency manipulation:
   "Please describe the type of advertising that Reebok\Benetton uses for its products?"
   "Does this ad fit with the type of advertising that Reebok\Benetton uses for its products?"
   "How does it fit or not fit with the type of advertising that Reebok\Benetton uses for its products?"
   "If you were to develop an advertisement for Reebok athletic wear\dress leather shoes how should it look so that it fit with the type of advertising that Reebok uses for its other products? (The same question was also asked for Benetton.)"

4. Familiarity and experience measures: ($\alpha = .91$)
   "How familiar are you with Reebok\Benetton?"
   "How familiar are you with Reebok athletic shoes\Benetton clothing?"
   "How familiar are you with retail stores that carry Reebok\Benetton products?"
   "How familiar are you with the type of advertising that Reebok\Benetton currently uses?"
   "How familiar are you with athletic shoes\high-quality clothing in general?"
   "How familiar are you with cotton spandex athletic wear\dress leather shoes in general?"
   "How much experience do you have with Reebok products\Benetton products?"

• Five point scales anchored by: 1 = *not at all familiar* to 5 = *very familiar* and 1 = *no experience at all* to 5 = *much experience.*

5. Reaction time measures
   This is a common process measure used to assess attitude and knowledge formation and accessibility (e.g., Fazio, Lenn, and Effrein 1984; Shah, Higgins, and Friedman 1998). Before beginning the substantive part of the survey, participants engaged in a practice task to establish baseline RT measures. These practice scales were used to control for individual differences in reading speed and response speed (Fazio 1990). The raw RT data revealed substantial positive skewness typical of such measures, indicating that a log transformation to normalize the data was needed (Fazio 1990, Kirk 1995). The analysis of variance results are based on a natural logarithmic transformation of the data.

goodness-of-fit are obtained for a particular context, that is, the extent to which the products are perceived to be associated with the goal-derived category. *Purchase intention* with respect to the brand extension was also measured. All dependent variables are composite measures of two or more items. Measures of internal consistency were compatible with the use of composite measures (see Table 1). Finally, RT for the knowledge and evaluative measures was used to assess differences between the congruent and the incongruent extensions with respect to accessibility and transfer of both knowledge and attitudes. Accessibility is a process measure that establishes the strength of the link between the extension and the parent brand (Fazio 1986). A strong link between a congruent extension and a parent brand should facilitate relatively rapid retrieval of the information and attitudes held for the brand upon presentation of the new extension and, thus, a faster response to individual items related to knowledge and affect. On the other hand, an incongruent extension should require consumers to spend more time processing information about the extension since strong preexisting associations are not readily accessible and therefore response to individual items related to knowledge and affect should be slower (Shah, Higgins, and Friedman 1998).

Control Variables

Several variables designed to provide information about the participants' familiarity and experience with the brands and product categories were also obtained. Seven measures of familiarity and expertise with the brand, the product category, and the purchase location were used (see Table 2). Each participant's familiarity with each brand was then evaluated. Since brand familiarity is critical to evaluating a brand and assessing its salient goal (Broniarczyk and Alba 1994), participants who were not

familiar with the brands were not included in the study. The composite measure of familiarity had a bimodal distribution that was used to determine which participants were "familiars" and which were "unfamiliars." Measures of goal congruency for the extension and the message were obtained as manipulation checks (see Table 2).

Sample

The final sample consisted of 256 participants drawn from the student populations of three universities (56% male and 44% female). The product categories and brand names used in the study have a high degree of familiarity within this target group. The population from which the participants were selected reported that they were regular users and purchasers of Reebok and Benetton products. They also reported having extensive knowledge about the advertising for these products and the types of stores where these products are sold.

Experimental Procedure

All participants were randomly assigned to one of the 12 experimental conditions by means of a subject scheduler in an interactive computer program, Micro Experimental Lab (MEL; Schneider 1990). Goal congruency was manipulated through a two-paragraph description of the new extension product that included the relevant goal (see Appendix B). Participants were told that they were part of a marketing study designed to select the next line of new products being considered by either Benetton or Reebok. The product description and goal-congruency manipulation developed in Pretest 1 used a procedure similar to that used in other research on consumer goals (e.g., Huffman and Houston 1993). Participants were also given a message (developed in Pretest 2, see Appendix A for an example) for the respective product (except in the "no message" condition). To control for elaboration, they were given 2 minutes to view the information.

All dependent measures were obtained via MEL so that RT measures could be taken to determine knowledge and attitude accessibility for the transfer process (see Table 1 for additional information on the reaction time methodology). RT measures were taken as participants answered each of the dependent measures. The keyboard was covered except for the one to five number keys. The computer measured the speed with which each question was answered. Participants were instructed to respond to each question as quickly as possible. First, they were given a series of practice trials to reduce the variability in the response data. This was followed by a set of filler questions to get a baseline speed of responding for each subject. This methodology is consistent with the generally accepted norms for the collection of reaction time data (Fazio 1990; Morrin 1999).

The order of presentation of the dependent measures was designed to ensure that exposure to the knowledge measures did not influence participants' attitudes toward the core and the extension. Affective measures were taken first, followed by the knowledge measures. As is customary in such research, the order of presentation of items was intended to assure that respondents did not create attitudes in the course of answering questions about their knowledge. After finishing the interactive portion of the experiment, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions as manipulation checks on the extension and message congruency conditions. Finally, participants were debriefed regarding their understanding of the purpose of the research. The debriefing indicated that while respondents were aware that the study was concerned with the evaluation of specific brand extensions, they were not aware that goal congruency was the primary focus of the study.

ANALYSES AND RESULTS

An initial test for the effect of brand name and differences in the three student populations produced no significant differences for any of the dependent measures. Hence, the data were collapsed across the two brand names and the three populations for all other analyses, creating a 2×3 between participants design with extension congruency (goal congruent vs. goal incongruent) and message congruency (goal congruent vs. goal incongruent vs. no message) as the independent variables.

Manipulation Checks

The extension congruency manipulation check showed a significant difference between the goal-congruent and the goal-incongruent extensions (M = 4.52 vs. 2.38, $F_{1,249}$ = 67.62, $p < .05$, $\eta = .48$). The manipulation of message congruency was also successful (M = 3.52 vs. 2.61, $F_{1,167}$ = 4.06, $p < .05$, $\eta = .15$). A second manipulation check for both the extension and message congruency involved analysis of verbal protocols. (Questions used in the in-depth interviews are in Table 2.) The purpose was to confirm that the goal(s) and brand meaning(s) were similar to those identified in Pretests 1 and 2, as well as to further uncover the transfer process in each condition. Allowing all participants 2 minutes to view the ad and the experimental manipulations controlled elaboration. The result was a difference in elaboration across the various conditions that could not be attributed to a difference in time to process. Instead, this difference can be attributed to the congruency manipulation. This view is consistent with MacInnis et al. (1992) who argued that consumers engage in different levels of processing based on a number of

TABLE 3
Examples of Goal Hierarchies

Sample goal hierarchy for Reebok athletic wear:
  Attribute-level goal: "I want athletic wear that is comfortable"
  Benefit-level goal: "Athletic wear that is comfortable makes exercising easier and helps me to perform at my best"
  Value-level goal: "I want to feel good about myself (high self-esteem)"
Sample goal hierarchy for Reebok dress leather shoes:
  Attribute-level goal: "Reebok dress leather shoes would look like fancy athletic shoes"
  Benefit-level goal: "They would provide comfort at the expense of style and good looks"
  Value-level goal: "I don't want to feel foolish and embarrassed (low self-esteem)"
Sample goal hierarchy for Benetton dress leather shoes:
  Attribute-level goal: "Benetton has bright colors that you can mix and match"
  Benefit-level goal: "Wearing Benetton would allow me to stand out and be different"
  Value-level goal: "I want to be different and seen as an individual"
Sample goal hierarchy for Benetton athletic wear:
  Attribute-level goal: "Benetton athletic wear would be worn by someone who wants to make a fashion statement, not a serious athlete"
  Benefit-level goal: "It would help them fit in"
  Value-level goal: "They are more concerned with fashion than being a true athlete"

factors, including participants' motivation and the presence of affect-laden stimuli in the ad.

A content analysis conducted by two judges blind to the hypotheses indicated that participants in the goal-congruent condition had longer, more detailed elaborations than participants in the goal-incongruent condition. (Intercoder agreement was 82 percent with differences resolved by discussions between the two coders.) Participants used attribute-level goals (i.e., comfortable shoes, colorful clothing) or benefit-level goals (i.e., makes exercising easier, stands out in a crowd) as a way to tap into their goal hierarchies. Using the laddering technique, these individuals were able to verbalize how seeking attributes led to the fulfillment (or not) of a desired benefit, which in turn resulted in fulfilling a more abstract goal or value (Little 1989). For example, Barsalou (1991) finds that individuals can access a goal-derived category at different levels of specificity that is consistent with the Means-end Chain framework (Reynolds and Guttman 1988) as well as the goal literature in general (Austin and Vancouver 1996). In addition, 93 percent of the verbal protocols for the participants in the goal-congruent condition identified similar goals for the core and the extension. For example, an individual would start by stating that "having brightly colored clothing" was the reason for buying Benetton clothing, then he or she would elaborate by adding the desire "to have high quality, well styled clothing" that is "socially acceptable." Such sequences demonstrate a goal hierarchy—concrete goals lead to more abstract goals. Table 3 offers examples of the goal hierarchies from the verbatim responses.

Participants were also more likely to attach attributes, both concrete and abstract, to the goal-congruent extension. For example, they were more likely to associate a variety of colors, well-made stitching, or a good fit with Benetton's dress leather shoes than with Benetton's cotton spandex athletic wear. The same pattern emerged for the Reebok athletic wear versus dress leather shoes. Those brand-specific associations included information about the parent brand that was transferred across product categories in the goal-congruent but not in the goal-incongruent condition, consistent with Broniarcyzk and Alba (1994). Participants in the goal-incongruent condition were less likely to provide any elaboration about shared goals. A total of 84 percent of participants identified dissimilar goals associated with the two products. They described why they did not like the extension and why it did not make sense. This is further evidenced in the sample goal hierarchies for Benetton athletic wear and Reebok dress shoes found in Table 3.

A further breakdown by the message condition revealed an interesting pattern of results. In the congruent extension condition, the degree of message congruency had some influence on whether a shared goal was identified for the two products. In the goal-congruent message group, all participants offered goals that were shared by the advertising strategy used by the two products. In the goal-incongruent condition message group, 10 percent cited goals that were not shared by the advertising strategy of the two extensions (12% in the no-message condition). The reverse pattern appeared in the goal-incongruent extension condition. The effect of goal congruency in the message appeared to be mediated by the degree of extension congruency. The results from the analysis of verbatims provide support for the extension and message congruency manipulations and the role of goals in the transfer of attitudes and knowledge across noncomparable product categories.

TABLE 4
Partial Correlations for Perceived Similarity Measures after the Removal of Variance of the Goal–Derived Measures

Measure	Goal Congruent	Goal Incongruent
Goal-derived categorization measures:		
A_{extn} – ideals	.62	.51
A_{extn} - GOF	.73	.68
PI – ideals	.46	.29
PI – GOF	.43	.21
Perceived similarity measures:		
A_{extn} – OPS	.12	.78
A_{extn} – US	.11	.53
PI – OPS	.02	.46
PI – US	.04	.39

NOTE: GOF = goodness-of-fit, OPS = perceived similarity, US = usage similarity, PI = purchase intention, A_{extn} = attitude toward the extension. There is a reduction in relationship of perceived similarity measures to attitude and purchase intention measures when the brand extension is goal-congruent.

Goal-Derived Versus Perceived Similarity Measures (Hypothesis 1)

To test the differential explanatory power of various perceived similarity measures, a test was conducted to confirm the unique predictive power after accounting for variance associated with the goal-related measures. This method is consistent with that used by Barsalou (1985, p. 637) in his comparison between goal-derived and taxonomic measures of perceived similarity. Each independent variable was correlated with each dependent variable after the other three measures were partialled out. This was done for the goal-congruent and the goal-incongruent conditions. As shown in Table 4, the original relationship between the perceived similarity measures almost completely disappears in the goal-congruent condition. In the goal-incongruent condition, the perceived similarity measures and the goal-derived measures accounted for significant amounts of the unique variance. Thus, goal-derived measures were found to be better indicators of "fit" than perceived similarity measures used in past brand extension research in the goal congruent condition, providing additional support for *Hypothesis 1*. In addition, the results for the goal-incongruent condition exemplify a taxonomic category structure in contrast to a goal-derived category structure. What this implies is that consumers, in their effort to make sense of even goal-incongruent extensions, will categorize extensions based on their physical features rather than their "fit" with the parent brand. These findings are consistent with Martin and Stewart (2001) and Barsalou (1985). Thus, we were able to replicate effects associated with goal congruency obtained in prior research and establish a basis for further examination of the cognitive and affective processes that gave rise to these effects.

Extension and Message Congruency (Hypothesis 2) Dependent Measures

Table 5 demonstrates the consistent support for both the extension and message congruency main effects (*Hypothesis 2a – Hypothesis 2d*) for all dependent measures. For extension congruency, goal-related knowledge, perceived similarity, and A_{extn} measures are significant. Likewise, for message congruency, goal-related measures, overall perceived similarity, usage similarity measures and A_{extn} are significantly different. Finally, attitude toward the brand and purchase intent were significantly different across the extension congruency conditions but not across the message congruency conditions.

RT Measures

The RT measures provide information about the *structure* of brand information. More important, the RT results, shown in Table 5, provide insight into the *process* that participants use to categorize and evaluate the different extension categories. The RT measures associated with the categorization of the dependent variables, that is, the speed with which participants rated the congruent extension as a better fit with the parent brand, are significantly faster for all measures except purchase intent compared to the incongruent extension (see Table 5). This demonstrates that participants engage in heightened processing of the incongruent ad messages consistent with Meyers Levy, Louis, and Curren (1994). The nonsignificant RT measures for purchase intent may have resulted because knowledgeable consumers know equally quickly whether they will buy the extension or not, regardless of its degree of goal congruency.

For the message congruency RT measures, the results are consistent with the extension-congruency results (see Table 5). The congruent message facilitated the transfer of knowledge and attitude from the parent brand to the new extension. The exceptions were the lack of significant differences for manufacturing similarity, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intent. Since the extension categories are physically dissimilar to the parent brand, the finding of nonsignificance is not surprising. The nonsignificant difference in RT for attitude toward the brand and purchase intent implies that the degree of message congruency does not inhibit the affective transfer process. A comparison of effect sizes between the extension and the message congruency manipulations indicates that the former may have a stronger influence on the dependent measures. Finally, the analyses of main effects appear to obscure some important interactions between the type of extension and the type of message.

TABLE 5
ANOVA Results for Dependent Variables

Dependent Measures	Main Effects— Extension Extension Congruency	Main Effects— Message Message Congruency	Interaction Effects— Extension × Message Congruency
Goodness-of-fit	M = 4.23 vs. 2.63, F = 38.39	M = 3.73 vs. 3.24 vs. 3.17, F = 19.56	F = 11.43
Reaction time for goodness-of-fit	M = 2.37 vs. 2.50, F = 71.38	M = 2.41 vs. 2.45 vs. 2.45, F = 10.02	F = 9.20
Ideals	M = 4.07 vs. 2.67, F = 10.08	M = 3.60 vs. 3.37 vs. 3.00, F = 16.87	F = 14.81
Reaction time for ideals	M = 2.33 vs. 2.50, F = 9.68[a]	M = 2.39 vs. 2.41 vs. 2.43, F = 10.02	F = 19.55
Perceived similarity	M = 3.60 vs. 2.33, F = 28.46	M = 3.20 vs. 2.76 vs. 2.82, F = 7.45[a]	F = 15.45
Reaction time for perceived similarity	M = 2.34 vs. 2.47, F = 48.63	M = 2.39 vs. 2.41 vs. 2.44, F = 16.22	F = 16.22
Usage similarity	M = 3.59 vs. 1.84, F = 69.69	M = 2.79 vs. 2.59 vs. 2.62, F = 4.03[a]	F = 8.61
Reaction time for usage similarity	M = 2.32 vs. 2.49, F = 60.45	M = 2.39 vs. 2.41 vs. 2.44, F = 12.72	F = 12.32
Manufacturing similarity	M = 4.23 vs. 3.77, F = 19.67	M = 4.11 vs. 3.94 vs. 3.90, NS	NS
Reaction time for manufacturing similarity	M = 2.32, vs. 2.49, F = 90.32	2.38 vs. 2.40 vs. 2.44, F = 16.19	F = 8.50
Attitude (extension)	M = 4.22 vs. 2.52, F = 94.90	M = 3.51 vs. 3.32 vs. 3.12, F = 15.41	F = 4.16
Reaction time for attitude (extension)	M = 2.35 vs. 2.46, F = 69.86	M = 2.39 vs. 2.41 vs. 2.41, F = 5.17[a]	F = 5.23[a]
Attitude (brand)	M = 4.06 vs. 3.45, F = 24.62	M = 3.88 vs. 3.74 vs. 3.58, NS	NS
Reaction time for attitude (brand)	M = 2.24 vs. 2.35, F = 8.67[a]	M = 2.25 vs. 2.26 vs. 2.26, NS	NS
Purchase intent	M = 3.60 vs. 2.39, F = 32.95	M = 3.35 vs. 3.10 vs. 3.0, NS	NS
Reaction time for purchase intent	M = 2.35 vs. 2.36, NS	M = 2.36 vs. 2.35 vs. 2.35, NS	NS

NOTE: F-statistics are significant at $p < .05$. Degrees of Freedom = 1,2. NS = not significant.

Interaction of Type of Extension and Type of Message (Hypothesis 3)

As expected, an analysis of the interaction between extension and message congruency showed that there was a significant interaction effect on the goal-related measures, the perceived similarity measures, and the A_{extn} measures, as well as RT measures (see Table 5). To better understand these interactions, simple main effects were examined (see Table 6 for the contrasts). Below, we discuss the results of the structure and process measures for both the goal-congruent extension conditions and, following that, the goal-incongruent extension conditions.

Congruent Extension Conditions

Dependent measures. The hypothesized simple main effects in *Hypothesis 3a* through *Hypothesis 3d* suggest that an incongruent message will have a detrimental effect on a goal-congruent extension category. In general, the results for these simple main effect tests provide support for *Hypothesis 3a, Hypothesis 3b,* and *Hypothesis 3d* (knowledge and attitudinal measures). A *goal-incongruent* message produced lower levels of knowledge transfer (M = 4.0 vs. 4.7, M = 4.3 vs. 4.7, M = 3.9 vs. 4.3 and M = 4.1 vs. 4.5; goodness-of-fit, ideals, use similarity, and manufacturing similarity, respectively), lower overall perceived similarity (M = 3.4 vs. 4.0), and less positive A_{extn} (M = 4.2 vs. 4.6) than a goal-*congruent* message (see Table 6 for F-statistics). Consistent with these results is higher levels of knowledge and attitude transfer for the congruent message over the no-message condition, a finding that provides partial support for *Hypothesis 4a* and

Hypothesis 4c. In contrast, A_B and purchase intent were not significantly lower when participants were exposed to a goal-incongruent message (*Hypothesis 3c* was not supported). Thus, a poor communication strategy will not result in brand dilution or "hurting" the likelihood that a consumer will purchase a goal-congruent extension.

A second set of comparisons involves the test of the order of effects stated in *Hypothesis 3a* through *Hypothesis 3d.* A goal-incongruent message was found to perform no better than no message at all on the goodness-of-fit, overall perceived similarity, A_B, and purchase intent measures (see Table 6). However, the goal-incongruent message did have a significant influence on ideals, usage similarity, and A_{extn} (M = 4.3 vs. 3.3, M = 3.9 vs. 3.6, M = 4.2 vs. 3.9; respectively). This implies that simply receiving information about the extension is more important than receiving no information at all when an individual is attempting to link information about the attributes of a parent brand and the way this product is used with that of the proposed extension. The information that the goal-incongruent message presents, regardless of extension congruency, also improves the evaluation of the extension. This probably occurs because exposure to the communication, even if it is goal-incongruent, causes the message recipient to begin the categorization process. This is consistent with Fiske and Neuberg's (1990) findings on impression formation and category-based versus piecemeal processing.

RT Measures

As predicted, there were no significant differences in RT measures for the related dependent variables (see Table

TABLE 6
Contrasts for Simple Main Effects for Dependent Measures

| | Goal-Congruent Extension | | | | | | Goal-Incongruent Extension | | | | | |
| | Goal-Congruent vs. Goal-Incongruent | F-stat | Goal-Congruent vs. No Message | F-stat | Goal-Incongruent vs. No Message | F-stat | Goal-Congruent vs. Goal-Incongruent | F-stat | Goal-Congruent vs. No Message | F-stat | Goal-Incongruent vs. No Message | F-stat |
Dependent Measures												
GOF	4.7 vs. 4.0	25.65	4.7 vs. 4.1	22.12	4.0 vs. 4.1	NS	3.0 vs. 2.6	6.07	3.0 vs. 2.8	NS	2.6 vs. 2.8	NS
RT	2.37 vs. 2.37	NS	2.37 vs. 2.34	NS	2.37 vs. 2.34	NS	2.44 vs. 2.51	15.18	2.44 vs. 2.55	30.55	2.51 vs. 2.55	NS
Ideals	4.7 vs. 4.3	18.44	4.7 vs. 3.3	37.84	4.3 vs. 3.3	22.32	2.7 vs. 2.6	NS	2.7 vs. 2.7	NS	2.6 vs. 2.7	NS
RT	2.34 vs. 2.33	NS	2.33 vs. 2.33	NS	2.34 vs. 2.33	NS	2.44 vs. 2.51	15.62	2.44 vs. 2.56	19.96	2.51 vs. 2.57	9.07
OPS	4.0 vs. 3.4	18.90	4.0 vs. 3.5	18.14	3.4 vs. 3.5	NS	2.6 vs. .2	4.33	2.6 vs. 2.4	NS	2.2 vs. 2.4	NS
RT	2.34 vs. 2.33	NS	2.34 vs. 2.35	NS	2.34 vs. 2.35	NS	2.42 vs. 2.48	18.31	2.42 vs. 2.50	18.83	2.48 vs. 2.53	7.24
US	4.3 vs. 3.9	17.23	4.0 vs. 3.6	22.00	3.9 vs. 3.6	4.16	1.8 vs. 2.0	NS	1.8 vs. 1.7	NS	2.0 vs. 1.7	NS
RT	2.34 vs. 2.33	NS	2.32 vs. 2.32	NS	2.33 vs. 2.32	NS	2.43 vs. 2.50	9.03	2.43 vs. 2.55	15.15	2.50 vs. 2.55	8.57
MS	4.5 vs. 4.1	8.86	4.5 vs. 4.1	9.90	4.1 vs. 4.1	NS	3.7 vs. 3.8	NS	3.7 vs. 3.7	NS	3.8 vs. 3.7	NS
RT	2.31 vs. 2.32	NS	2.31 vs. 2.32	NS	2.32 vs. 2.32	NS	2.44 vs. 2.48	5.44	2.44 vs. 2.55	18.53	2.48 vs. 2.55	14.96
Aextn	4.6 vs. 4.2	9.62	4.6 vs. 3.9	41.95	4.2 vs. 3.9	11.85	2.6 vs. 2.5	NS	2.6 vs. 2.6	NS	2.5 vs. 2.6	NS
RT	2.34 vs. 2.36	NS	2.34 vs. 2.35	NS	2.36 vs. 2.35	NS	2.42 vs. 2.51	7.03	2.42 vs. 2.47	7.53	2.47 vs. 2.48	NS

NOTE: GOF = goodness-of-fit, OPS = overall perceived similarity, US = usage similarity, MS = manufacturing similarity, A_{extn} = attitude toward the extension, RT = reaction time. See Table 1 for descriptions of each of these variables. F-statistics are significant at $p < .05$. NS = not significant.

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6). This provides additional support for the primacy of the effect of extension congruency on the transfer process. In other words, a congruent extension facilitates the transfer of knowledge and affect from parent to extension category. The differences for all the related RT measures were nonsignificant, resulting in a lack of support for *Hypothesis 3b and Hypothesis 4b* (see Table 6). The pattern of results for the RT measures, with a few exceptions, is consistent with the hypothesized transfer process of knowledge and attitudes for the goal-congruent extension. This transfer occurs regardless of whether the message is congruent, goal-incongruent, or whether there is no message, though the goal-congruent message has a facilitating effect and the goal-incongruent message may hinder transfer.

Goal-Incongruent Extension Conditions

Dependent measures. The hypothesized simple main effects in *Hypothesis 3a* through *Hypothesis 3d* state that a congruent message will produce positive effects on goal-related knowledge, similarity, attitudes, and purchase intent for a goal-incongruent extension. With minor exceptions, the results did not support *Hypothesis 3a* through *Hypothesis 3d*, nor *Hypothesis 4a* or *Hypothesis 4c*. Although the congruent message generally performed significantly better than the goal-incongruent message, it did no better than the no-message condition in the goal-congruent extension condition and was significantly lower than the performance of any of the message conditions within the congruent-extension condition. In sum, congruent messages performed better than incongruent messages and no messages for an incongruent extension but did not appear to compensate for the incongruency of goals of the parent brand and its proposed extension (see Table 6). These results suggest that a poor product-selection strategy overrides a good message strategy.

RT Measures

For the most part, the RT measures were significantly different across conditions, providing support for *Hypothesis 3b and Hypothesis 4b* (see Table 6). The comparison between the congruent and incongruent message groups shows that participants reacted significantly faster to the congruent message for all dependent measures except A_B and purchase intent ($M = 2.44$ vs. 2.51, $M = 2.44$ vs. 2.51, $M = 2.42$ vs. 2.48, $M = 2.43$ vs. 2.50, $M = 2.44$ vs. 2.48, $M = 2.42$ vs. 2.51; goodness-of-fit, ideals, overall perceived similarity, use similarity, manufacturing similarity, and A_{extn}, respectively). The results are also significantly different when we compare the congruent message to the no-message condition. Thus, the congruent message facilitates transfer of information across product categories and the goal-incongruent message seems to inhibit this

transfer process much like the results in the congruent-extension condition. In sum, message congruency has little impact on a congruent extension but does have a facilitating effect on the transfer process for a goal-incongruent extension. This is likely to be the result of the communication facilitating initiation of the categorization process. Thus, exposure to the congruent communication reduces perceived incongruency upon exposure to the goal-incongruent extension, consistent with the findings of Lane (2000) and Klink and Smith (2001).

DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide support for the goal-derived categorization framework as a general theory of transfer of brand meaning (cognition and affect) across product categories. In contrast to previous scholarship, which has either speculated that goal-related inferences may be related to the transfer process (Broniarczyk and Alba 1994) or has offered indirect support related to alternative covariance structures among measures that are consistent with a goal-derived categorization view (Martin and Stewart 2001), the present study offers results based on *process measures* (RT and retrospective protocols) that clearly demonstrate that goal congruency is associated with greater accessibility of knowledge and affect and therefore a greater likelihood of consumers transferring such knowledge and affect from a parent brand to an extension in the presence of goal congruency. These results are consistent with the expectations of goal-derived categorization theory, which suggests that individuals organize brand information and attitudes in memory around goals. To the extent that products using the same brand name share goals, the transfer of knowledge and attitudes is facilitated.

The present findings also demonstrate the primacy of product strategy over communication strategy in the context of brand extensions. In other words, poor selection of the extension product overrides a good communications strategy. However, a poor communication strategy is not necessarily a death knell for a good selection of an extension. These results are consistent with the prevailing wisdom in the marketing profession that the best advertising is a good product (Lane 2000; Loken and Roedder John 1993; Roedder John, Loken, and Joiner 1998; Romeo 1991).

The results obtained for the RT measures suggest that goal congruency facilitates the accessibility and transfer of brand meaning for use in responding to questions about a proposed extension.[7] Participants answered all the knowledge and attitudinal questions significantly faster when faced with a goal-congruent extension as compared to a goal-incongruent extension. The implication of this result is that consumers use a top-down inferential process

consistent with goal-derived categorization theory (Barsalou 1985; Broniarcyzk and Alba 1994; Ratneshwar et al. 2001). The open-ended responses also support this view. Participants in the goal-congruent extension condition provided rationales for the proposed extensions that were consistent with their evaluations and with the goals associated with the parent brands. The most frequent responses across the goal-congruent conditions involved inferences and brand associations about the extension consistent with the goals associated with the parent brand. Such goal-related associations were the primary reasons participants gave for purchasing the proposed extension. Thus, purchase intent differed between the goal-congruent and the goal-incongruent extension but the reaction times associated with purchase intent did not differ. It was as "easy" for participants to decide whether they would purchase a goal-congruent extension as it was for them to decide on a goal-incongruent extension.

The inferential process that participants used to categorize and evaluate the message associated with each proposed extension provides further insight. Participants exposed to the goal-congruent condition reacted similarly for all the knowledge and attitudinal measures. This result is consistent with the primacy of the product-selection strategy. In contrast, participants in the goal-incongruent product condition spent more time trying to make sense of the goal-incongruent message compared to those exposed to the goal-congruent message. Thus, they seemed to be trying to make sense of not only a goal-incongruent extension but also a message that did not fit the message strategy of the parent brand. Open-ended responses support this conclusion. Participants struggled with the question of why Reebok would introduce dress leather shoes and why Benetton would introduce cotton spandex athletic wear. For the most part, when presented with either a goal-congruent or a goal-incongruent message as compared to receiving no message, participants spent more time trying to make sense of the goal-incongruent extension. Thus, providing no communication resulted in a more effortful process for participants faced with a new extension that does not fit with the parent brand. From a managerial perspective, this suggests that marketers ought to consider advertising for a new extension prior to the product's introduction, especially when venturing away from the core brand meaning of their product strategy.

As demonstrated above, the types of elaborations made by participants during the post-experimental protocols were consistent with the theory of goal-derived categorization. Individuals in the goal-congruent condition focused on the links between the extension and the parent brand, while those in the goal-incongruent condition focused on what was wrong with the proposed extension as well as on what they perceived as the "ideal" for that particular brand. Thus, participants in the later condition tried to make sense of information by piecing it to-gether from the experimental stimuli and from what they had stored in memory, hence the longer reaction-time measures.

The resulting category structure and process fits the description of Barsalou's (1983) *ad hoc categories* and Fiske and Neuberg's (1990) recategorization and piecemeal processing. These findings are also consistent with the categorization literature (Barsalou 1983, 1985; Fiske and Neuberg 1990) and the view that exposure to a goal-incongruent extension gives rise to the construction of an attitude toward the new extension (Fazio 1986, 1990). The construction process is evident in measures of A_B and A_{extn} and their related RT measures. The empirical results also suggest that goal congruency facilitates the transfer of brand meaning across product categories (Novick 1988; Morrin 1999).

For marketers, the ultimate question is whether consumers will choose their products. In our study, participants were more likely to consider purchasing a goal-congruent extension than a goal-incongruent extension. Surprisingly, marketing communication did not differentially influence the likelihood of selecting either a goal-congruent or a goal-incongruent extension. Unlike Lane (2000), participants in this study were presented both congruent and incongruent ad exposures. The findings for A_{extn} are similar to those for purchase intention. Goal congruency influenced the evaluation of the parent brand, which is consistent with the findings in Lee (1995). In Lee's study, message congruency had a significant effect in the comparable extension condition (line extension), but not in the noncomparable extension condition (brand extension). In contrast, attitude toward the parent brand was not influenced by goal congruency within each extension condition. This finding is consistent with previous research that has found no effect of a brand extension on attitudes toward the parent brand, the so-called dilution effect (Keller and Aaker 1992; Loken and Roedder John 1993; Roedder John et al. 1998; Romeo 1991).

Finally, the goal-derived framework proposed in this study demonstrated, through empirical support for *Hypothesis 1*, that the traditional perceived similarity measures used in the brand-extension research are better linked within the goal framework, consistent with Loken and Ward (1990) and Martin and Stewart (2001). This framework also finds support for both types of extensions and numerous goals and subgoals. The two brands and product categories are very different and the study found empirical support for both, thus demonstrating that the goal framework can subsume the brand schema framework. Thus, the goal congruency approach clearly shows that the consumer's goals, not the brand name, are the organizing framework that facilitates the transfer of brand knowledge and affect from the brand category to the extension. Thus the perceived fit between the brand schema and the new product facilitates the transfer of brand asso-

ciations. This is also consistent with market-related examples of many failed extensions.

Limitations

Like most laboratory studies, the present study suffers from several limitations. Because it examined only two brands and two potential extensions, the degree to which the results generalize to other product categories and brands remains an empirical question. Another limitation is that product descriptions rather than real products were used and only one exposure to a single-print advertisement was used to examine the effects of marketing communications. There could be different results in response to actual products or multiple exposures to advertising (see Lane [2000] for a discussion). Exposure to both the product descriptions and advertising was forced, so effects that might be mediated by attention were not examined.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Brand Meaning

The search for meaning in products and brands has been shown to be an intrinsic part of consumer behavior (Fournier 1998; Levy 1981). Our study suggests that consumers' search for meaning is influenced by a purposive, goal–derived categorization process. This process appears to facilitate the accessibility and transfer of brand meaning. Goal congruency manifests an effect on a variety of quantitative and qualitative measures, including RT measures and verbatim responses of participants in this study. These results suggest that understanding individuals' goals is critical to place behavior in context. This view is consistent with research suggesting that a complete understanding of behavior must begin with an appreciation of the purposiveness of the individual (Ratneshwar, Mick, and Huffman 2001; Pervin 1982). The present findings are also consistent with the suggestion that studying the meaning of objects (i.e., brands) in terms of the goals they serve for the individual is a fruitful avenue of research (Austin and Vancouver 1996).

Some interesting questions are raised about the meaning of brands that might be explored in future research. For example, some products are associated with multiple goals: a designer apparel brand such as Betsy Johnson can satisfy a consumer's goals of "being seen as a trendsetter," "looking thinner and, hence good," and also "conforming to societal norms of choosing an expensive brand." The nature of the brand meaning for such products is more complex than the meanings associated with the products reported in this research. It would be useful to determine the extent to which multiple goals are integrated or whether multiple goals dilute the brand meaning. In addi-

tion, the effect of changing a salient goal associated with a product (such as the extension of Listerine Dandruff Wash to Listerine Oral Care products, or that of Ivory Soap to Ivory Snow) would also be an interesting area for future exploration.
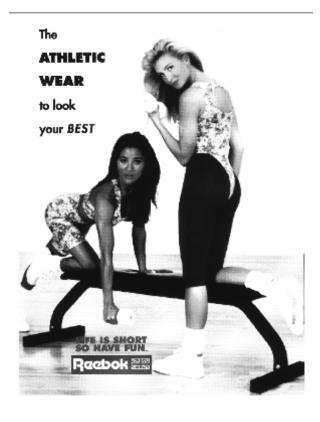
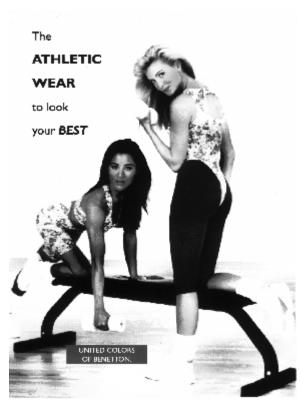## Goal–Driven Categorization

This study provides evidence consistent with previous suggestions that goals influence the network of associations of objects in memory (Aaker and Keller 1990; Barsalou 1991; Chakravarti et al. 1991). The empirical results offered in the present article are consistent with a related stream of research that has investigated the impact of product congruency on the transfer of knowledge and affect from a product to a more general product schema (Mandler 1982; Meyers Levy and Tybout 1989). That research examined product congruency *within* a product category rather than *cross-category* goal congruency that is the focus of the present work.

The Role of Marketing Communication

Marketing communication preceding the introduction of a brand extension does begin the process by which consumers assess similarity between the parent brand and the extension. It can cause the message recipient to begin the categorization process. A goal-congruent extension would need little support in terms of marketing communication, whereas a goal-incongruent extension would need the support of a congruent message for the recipient to start perceiving similarity. An interesting theoretical question concerns the structure of goal-incongruent brand meaning (knowledge and affect associated with a particular brand). The process by which consumers form *ad hoc* categories and the evolution of these categories over time would be a particularly interesting avenue for future research. It can be argued that a goal-congruent message for a goal-incongruent extension can aid the formation of stronger *ad hoc* categories. Exposure to such communication repeatedly, over time, can possibly overcome the disadvantage of a goal-incongruent extension. Though Lane (2000) does find support for the case of ad repetition and ad content on consumer perceptions of incongruent extensions, exploration of how this affects the formation and strengthening of *ad hoc* categories would be valuable. From a marketing perspective, a firm must ensure that their communication strategy is goal-congruent with the parent-brand's strategy. The marketer must approach the brand extension introduction strategy from an integrated perspective that considers not only the appropriate product category to enter but also the appropriate way to communicate about the extension prior to the introduction of the brand extension.

APPENDIX A
EXAMPLES OF THE MESSAGE STIMULI

APPENDIX B

GOAL-CONGRUENT EXTENSION

Reebok has decided to introduce a new Fall line of merchandise. We are interested in your opinion concerning Reebok's choice of new products using the Reebok brand name. One of the product categories that they are considering is a *line of cotton spandex athletic wear.*

The type of athletic wear is made of cotton spandex material for aerobics, basketball, cycling, and running. This cool, stay-dry cotton spandex material ensures maximum comfort with double needle seams. The aerobic wear includes interchangeable pieces in many different patterns and colors. The cycling clothes are designed for anatomical fit, full polypropylene pads, drawstring waist and leg grippers for maximum comfort. The basketball and running clothes are designed with inside drawstring waist for maximum freedom of movement and Coolmax lining to wick away moisture.

This type of athletic wear is designed to be worn by the serious athlete when exercising at home or at the health club. This line of exercise wear will be sold in sporting good stores as well as department stores and specialty athletic stores. Each piece has the Reebok logo embroidered on it to ensure quality athletic wear. It is designed to compete with well-known brands such as Nike, Speedo, Side One, Descente, and others.

GOAL-INCONGRUENT EXTENSION

Reebok has decided to introduce a new Fall line of merchandise. We are interested in your opinion concerning Reebok's choice of new products using the Reebok brand name. One of the product categories that they are considering is a *line of dress leather shoes.*

This line of leather shoes would be for both men and women. The shoes would be made of soft leather and deerskin with padded leather insoles. They are a great alternative to the traditional Reebok shoes because they would come in colors that you can mix and match with your entire wardrobe. These shoes are designed to complete the fashionable wardrobe. They are fashioned as a stylish, quality shoe to wear with a certain outfit and versatile enough to wear in both casual and formal situations. They will come in many different colors, including the more traditional black and brown colors for men as well as women.

This type of leather dress shoe is designed to be high quality, stylish, and colorful. It will be sold in sporting goods stores as well as in the more traditional department and shoe stores. The Reebok logo will be stamped on the sole of these shoes as a mark of distinction. The shoes are designed to compete with such brands as Bally, Bandolino, and Cole-Haan for women. For men, they are designed to compete with brands such as Murphy's, Cole-Haan, and Bally.

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