The Role of Self Concept in Consumer Behavior

Marisa Toth

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, marisa.toth@unlv.edu
The Role of Self Concept in Consumer Behavior

Marisa Toth
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Introduction

Understanding the processes that underlie consumer behavior has become an increasingly important area of research, especially for businesses and marketers. One of the most commonly studied variables believed to impact consumer behavior is self-concept.

The purpose of the current study is to examine the influence of self-concept in consumer behavior and identity factors that influence the relationship. Specifically, what is the relationship between different aspects of the self-concept and the consumption of publicly and privately consumed luxuries and necessities? Furthermore, how will this relationship be affected by the level of self-monitoring in an individual display?

Method

A total of three online surveys were conducted. Each survey was administered online to undergraduate students at UNLV.

Pretest 1

The objectives of the first survey, Pretest 1, was to identify products that are more familiar in the demographic sample and that were used in the public/private, luxury/necessity dimensions. Eight products, ten for each condition, were included for use in the main study. Ninety responses were recorded and used in analysis.

Public Luxury:
- Ray-Ban Sunglasses
- Range Rover SUV

Private Luxury:
- Baldwin Piano
- Brunswick Pool Table

Private Necessity:
- Dove Soap
- Crest Toothpaste

Pretest 2

The objectives of the second survey, Pretest 2, was to obtain dimensions on which product images and self-images would be used in the main study. One hundred and one responses were recorded and used in analysis. Fifteen dimensions were determined relevant to all aspects of the brands and were included in the main study.

- Pleasant/Unpleasant
- Peppy/Cynical
- Rapida/Slow
- Unhappy/Emotive
- Not Self-confident/Self-confident
- Reliable/Unreliable
- Delicious/Bad
- Rural/Urban
- Delicate/Rugged
- Simple/Complicated
- Light/Heavy
- Economical/Extravagant
- Self/Other
- Distinctive/Confusing
- Untrue/True
- Ideal/Actual

Product Evaluation

Two hundred and fifty responses were recorded and used in analysis.

Self Monitoring

Self-monitoring was assessed using Snyder's self-monitoring scale. High self-monitors are more concerned with the appropriateness of one's self-presentation, while low self-monitors are more concerned with their behavior in particular situations. The psychology of self-maintaining was assessed using Snyder's self-monitoring scale.

Self/Monitoring

Self-monitors. High self-monitors are more concerned with the appropriateness of one's self-presentation, while low self-monitors are more concerned with their behavior in particular situations.

Low/Monitoring

Low self-monitors. Low self-monitors are more concerned with the appropriateness of one's self-presentation, while high self-monitors are more concerned with their behavior in particular situations.

Main Study

One pretest year complete, the brands and image dimensions were plugged into the main study. The main study consisted of three sections: 1) product evaluation; 2) image measures (both product and self); and self-monitoring scale. Two hundred and fifty-four responses were recorded and used in analysis.

Results

The results of the main study were used to analyze the relationship between different aspects of the self-concept and the consumption of publicly and privately consumed luxuries and necessities. The study also examined the influence of self-concept in consumer behavior.

Acknowledgments

I am not usually one for acknowledgments, but this study would not have been possible without the help and guidance from a selective few. Dr. Gregory Borchard, Dr. Julian Kilker, Dr. Robert Futrell and Dr. Paul Traudt (the members of my committee) is worth an end of itself. First, the support of my committee (Dr. Gregory Borchard, Dr. Julian Kilker, Dr. Robert Futrell and Dr. Paul Traudt) is worth an end of itself. Second, the support of my chair, whose support and dedication to this project is nothing short of a phenomenon, and that was the ability of this project to make it all possible. Finally, an extra special thank you to the hundreds of students who showed up to take my survey, because without them, there would be no study.

Works Cited


Further Information

For more information about this study, or to read the thesis in its entirety, please contact the author, Marisa Toth at tothm2@unlv.nevada.edu.