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**Brand Extension Strategies of FMCG Products-A Study**

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**ABSTRACT**

Gender identification behaviour has altered drastically within the last decade. Consequently, there has been a noteworthy rise in the amount of androgynous individuals. Gender identity congruity theory posits that individuals display more favorable behavioral outcomes towards brands that possess similar images or identities to their own. Further, contemporary consumers express their identities via their brand choices.

**Keywords:** gender identity, gendered brand, androgynous brand, brand extension, product category, brand evaluation

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**INTRODUCTION**

During the past decade, gender identification behaviour of individuals in Western societies has changed considerably (Robbie & Neale, 2012). Society has witnessed a broad scale condemning of gender stereotyping, a rise in the frequency of cross-gendered societal behaviour, and an erosion of previously rigid gender boundaries, for a softer, more fluid understanding of gender (Fugate & Philips, 2010). This drastic alteration in gender identification by both sexes is best personified by a sex role convergence, in which the conventional condemnation of cross-sexed behaviour has dissipated (Robbie & Neale, 2012). Witness, for example, the global acceptance and positive attitude towards Caitlin Jenner, the now transsexual Bruce Jenner: Former Olympic decathlon champion and party to Kardashian fame.

**OBJECTIVES**

Against this backdrop, the intention of this study is to answer the following research question: Does gender identity influence an individual's evaluation of an androgynous brand extension? If so, is this relationship impacted by self-concept, product category type or gender of the parent brand?

1. To determine whether self-concept has a direct effect on the evaluation of an androgynous brand extension.
2. To determine whether there is a difference between the evaluation of an androgynous brand and a masculine or feminine parent brand

Consumption behaviour is understood to be in line with an individual's gender identity (Fugate & Philips, 2010). Particularly, gender identity has been found to affect an individual's level of cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, product involvement, purchase intent and males' responses to advertisements (Fischer & Arnold, 1994; Martin & Gnoth, 2009; Reed, Forehand, Puntoni & Warlop,

2012; Robbie & Neale, 2012; Ye & Robertson, 2012). Individuals typically purchase in manners that are in alignment with their notion of self (Sirgy, 1982).

### **Brand Image and Gendered Brand Image**

Utilitarian dissimilarities amid products and services are progressively eroding, with individuals conducting purchase resolutions relative to product or brand image (Cova, 1996; Parker, 2009). As such, it is vital that marketers understand brand image and the influence that it may exert on consumer behaviour. Unfortunately, despite the fact that brand image remains a fundamental tenet of self-congruity (Parker, 2009) and consumer behaviour research (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990), little focus has been placed on it (Parker, 2009).

The majority of brands attempt to create or reinforce strong gender connotations via advertising efforts, narratives and packaging (Veg & Nyeck, 2007). Furthermore, despite the deteriorating dichotomization of men and women in society, brand gendering prevails as one of the most commonly employed strategies to differentiate a brand and appeal to target audiences (Robbie & Neale, 2012).

### **Brand Extension**

Literature asserts that gender identity may exert a significant direct effect on individuals' evaluations of an androgynous brand extension. Moreover, literature affirms that the exploration of gender identity is more appropriate than sex in a postmodern context given the former's superior predictive power (Robbie & Neale, 2012). Additionally, extant literature proclaims that self-concept, product category and the gender of parent brand affect behavioural outcomes and as such, may influence the relationship between gender identity and brand extension evaluation. Informed by this existing state of the literature, this research was guided by the following research questions:

Does gender identity influence an individual's evaluation of an androgynous brand extension? If so, is this relationship impacted by self-concept, product category type or gender of the parent brand?

### **IMPORTANCE**

This study endeavored to contribute to brand extension, gendered brand and consumer behaviour literature by testing whether an individual's gender identity influences their evaluation of an androgynous brand extension. Few studies explore gender identity congruence with an androgynous extension, and fewer still with empirical data. Investigating this gender identity gendered brand relationship within an extension context has the potential to generate numerous noteworthy contributions to marketing.

Marketing literature is saturated with studies that employ biological sex as the exclusive determinant of gender-related behaviour. However, this dichotomized approach disregards imperative dissimilarities amidst sex and gender which results in misrepresentations of complicated gender-associated marketing phenomena (Hirschman, 1993; Palan, 2001; Ye & Robertson, 2012)..

Given the repeated affirmation that gender identity dictates consumption behaviour (Fischer & Arnold, 1994; Martin & Gnoth, 2009; Robbie & Neale, 2012; Ye & Robertson, 2012), as well as it being a superior explanatory variable than biological sex, gender identity and its potential influence on brand evaluation comprises the central relationship under investigation in this dissertation. Another fundamental aspect of the self, namely self-image (or self-concept) is now addressed.

A fundamental dimension of brand image comprises of gender (i.e. gendered image), typically arising as a result of animism: the act of ascribing human traits to inanimate objects (Romaniuk & Ehrenburg, 2012). This assigning of human characteristics to brands has been identified as a manner of creating enduring relationships with consumers whom have been found to possess an inherent necessity to 'humanize' objects prior to engaging with them (Romaniuk & Ehrenburg, 2012).

### **Gendered Brands**

Alreck (1994) noted that while products can, indeed, be gendered; the process often necessitates substantial investments that involve the alteration of production processes. Certain companies may either not possess or desire to invest so substantially. Conversely, the gendering of a

brand typically only necessitates negligible changes in the product offering and can ordinarily be realised entirely via an alteration of advertising, packaging and sales promotion (Alreck, 1994).

### Brand Extension

Brand extension involves the introduction of either similar or dissimilar products into comparable (Desai & Keller, 2002; Keller 2008; Viot, 2011; Völckner & Sattler, 2006) or diverse markets, utilizing a reputable brand name (Gierl & Huettl, 2011; Panda, 2006; Viot, 2011), termed the parent brand (Thompson & Strutton, 2012; Völckner & Sattler, 2006). Introducing a new brand via a brand extension, rather than as a stand-alone new brand, enables the minimization of both costs and risk (Srivastava & Sharma, 2013).

### METHODOLOGY

**CHI-SQUARE TESTS:**The Chi-square test is intended to test how likely it is that an observed distribution is due to chance. It is also called a "goodness of fit" statistic, because it measures how well the observed distribution of data fits with the distribution that is expected if the variables are independent. The chi-square test is used to determine whether two (or more) categorical variables are associated with each other - that is, whether they are independent or dependent

**CHI-SQUARE FOR GENDER GROUPS AND RESPECTED DETERMINANTS:** Chi-square is conducted in order to understand association between the groups i.e. gender and respected determinants.

HO1: There is no significant impact of brand extension on gender

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.013 <sup>a</sup>	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	24.045	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.912	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	417		

a. 16 cells (42.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .30.

It is evident that from the above table, The above table reveals results that, The Pearson chi-square statistic,  $\chi^2 = 22.013$ , and the  $P < 0.001$ ; the results shown that .000, so null hypothesis rejected, there is a statistically significant impact of Brand Extension on gender groups.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant impact of consumer preferences towards brand extension on gender

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.379 <sup>a</sup>	13	.579
Likelihood Ratio	13.728	13	.393
Linear-by-Linear Association	.008	1	.929
N of Valid Cases	417		

a. 12 cells (42.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .30.

It is evident that from the above table, The above table reveals results that, The Pearson chi-square statistic,  $\chi^2 = 11.379$ , and the  $P < 0.001$ ; the results shown that .579, so null hypothesis accepted, there is no statistically significant impact of Brand Extension on gender groups.

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant impact of consumer perception towards brand extension on gender

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.920 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	16.731	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.837	1	.000

N of Valid Cases	417		
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a. 20 cells (41.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .30.

It is evident that from the above table, The above table reveals results that, The Pearson chi-square statistic,  $\chi^2 = 15.920$ , and the  $P < 0.001$ ; the results shown that .000, so null hypothesis rejected, there is a statistically significant impact of Brand Extension on gender groups.

HO<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant impact of parent brand image towards brand extension on gender

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	41.640 <sup>a</sup>	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	54.901	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.958	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	417		

a. 6 cells (30.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.83.

It is evident that from the above table, The above table reveals results that, The Pearson chi-square statistic,  $\chi^2 = 41.640$ , and the  $P < 0.001$ ; the results shown that .000, so null hypothesis rejected, there is a statistically significant impact of parent Brand image towards Brand Extension on gender groups.

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	121.434 <sup>a</sup>	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	117.026	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.041	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	417		

a. 92 cells (76.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .06.

It is evident that from the above table, The above table reveals results that, The Pearson chi-square statistic,  $\chi^2 = 121.434$ , and the  $P < 0.001$ ; the results shown that .000, so null hypothesis rejected, there is a statistically significant impact of consumer perception towards Brand Extension on education.

HO<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant impact of parent brand image towards brand extension on gender

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	67.992 <sup>a</sup>	5	.067
Likelihood Ratio	68.365	5	.064
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.226	1	.007
N of Valid Cases	417		

a. 49 cells (70.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .06.

It is evident that from the above table, The above table reveals results that, The Pearson chi-square statistic,  $\chi^2 = 67.992$ , and the  $P < 0.001$ ; the results shown that .000, so null hypothesis accepted, there is a statistically significant impact of Parent Brand Image towards Brand Extension on education.

#### CONCLUSION

This study found support for a main direct effect of gender identity on brand extension evaluation. It also found support for both a direct effect of self-concept on brand extension evaluation;

as well as a moderating effect of self-concept on the relationship between gender identity and brand extension evaluation. The study found support for a significant difference in brand extension evaluation in accordance with product category type. It also found support for a significant difference in brand evaluation scores when comparing the androgynous brand extension with the masculine/feminine parent brand.

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