

SIX OF ONE, HALF DOZEN OF THE OTHER

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Introduction

The ubiquitous *6-pack* has been a mainstay of consumer purchases in the beverage industry since before WWII. While the 6-pack concept has not proliferated the wine market as it has with the beer industry, wine promotions, particularly through direct or online sales, often involve six or twelve bottle deals. A winery 6-pack offer often bundles two or three different wines from the same label exposing consumers to multiple product offerings and providing a key tactical implement in a product-development strategy. By bundling, the value proposition may frame the purchase in a manner more conducive to high-level (i.e., abstract) construals. Relatively high-level construals can be encouraged further by the manner in which quality and time availability are communicated. The research explores the potential role of construal level in focusing on how consumers react to the presentation of single-brand, bundled, wine offers presented in manners that could encourage high-level (abstract) over low-level (concrete) thinking.

Preliminary Literature Review

Previous research highlights the potential effects of psychological distance and construal on consumers either through a habitual personality trait or contextual factors (Trope, Yaacov, Liberman, 2010). Consumer's evaluation of price and quality, have been shown to be malleable due to different construal levels and psychological distances (Bornemann & Homburg, 2011; Yan & Sengupta, 2011). Abstract thinking promotes reliance on desirability while concrete thinking focuses on feasibility. The use of bundling in the context of psychological distance and construal is certainly of interest given bundling's ability to influence consumer's evaluation and choice (Engeset & Opstad, 2017).

Problem under investigation

The main research question concerns how consumers react to the presentation of a bundled 6-pack wine promotion presented in contrasting contexts associated with different psychological distances. Construal level theory (CLT) predicts that the manner of construal (low – high-level construal) will mediate the effects of the presentation on cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes.

Research Methodology

A 2x2 (product availability timing by rating specificity) between-subjects experimental design will be presented to experimental subjects through an electronic survey instrument including several attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. Product availability is manipulated with either a close or distant time frame, "Ready for immediate shipment" or "Ready for shipment next spring," quality rating is presented in the form of expert ratings presented as either a specific value, "92," or a range of values, "90-94." After the experimental conditions subjects respond to scales representing key measures such as purchase intention, perceived quality, price fairness, affect, and familiarity. Behavioral outcomes captured include actual shopping behaviors such as click through rates and time spent viewing the brand's page. A novel CLT classification task is used to assess the impact of specificity on construal, which serves as the

mediator of experimental effects, manipulation checks are included, and both subjective and objective product knowledge are assessed.

Preliminary findings, conclusions and managerial implications or recommendations

A preliminary experiment was conducted in the fall of 2018 with findings being presented during the conference. Results show good predictive validity for a model of purchase intentions. The exploratory findings suggest significant effects of the grouping (construal) consistent with greater purchase likelihood with more abstract construals. In addition, the effect of rating specificity also contribute to greater purchase probability. However, as in other research, the role of CLT appears relatively limited compared to direct effects of perceived quality. A second study is underway involving a fine wine context to contrast with the results of this first study, conducted in a mass-market type wine context.

Citations

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