

Effects of Brand Awareness on Choice for a Common, Repeat-Purchase Product

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Results of a controlled experiment on the role of brand awareness in the consumer choice process showed that brand awareness was a dominant choice heuristic among awareness-group subjects. Subjects with no brand awareness tended to sample more brands and selected the high-quality brand on the final choice significantly more often than those with brand awareness. Thus, when quality differences exist among competing brands, consumers may "pay a price" for employing simple choice heuristics such as brand awareness in the interest of economizing time and effort. However, building brand awareness is a viable strategy for advertising aimed at increasing brand-choice probabilities.

One of the major goals of advertising in situations of low interest or involvement is to generate and maintain brand awareness (McMahon 1980). According to Bogart (1986, p. 208), advertisers use repetition to impress "the advertised name upon the consumers' consciousness and make them feel comfortable with the brand." Presumably, advertisers expect that awareness will keep the brand in the consumer's evoked set, thereby increasing the probability that the brand will subsequently be purchased.

However, research findings on this issue have been mixed. Some studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between advertising and sales (e.g., Bass and Clarke 1972; Bass and Leone 1983). Others have found no relationship (Bogart 1986). Part of the problem is that these studies are purely correlational examinations at an aggregate level. Studies that pinpoint the impact of brand awareness on the individual-level choice process are badly needed. This article takes a first step toward filling this void by examining the nature of brand-awareness effects on the purchase of a common household product.

BACKGROUND LITERATURE

In this research, brand awareness is defined as a rudimentary level of brand knowledge involving, at the

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least, recognition of the brand name. Awareness represents the lowest end of a continuum of brand knowledge that ranges from simple recognition of the brand name to a highly developed cognitive structure based on detailed information. Recognition is taken here to be the process of perceiving a brand as previously encountered (Mandler 1980). Thus, the distinction between awareness and recognition is a subtle one, the former denoting a state of knowledge possessed by the consumer and the latter a cognitive process resulting from awareness.

Effects of Brand Identification

Previous research has consistently shown that consumers in blind taste tests are unable to detect their own preferred brand. Allison and Uhl (1964) had beer drinkers with well-established preferences rate several brands in a blind taste test and again when the brands were identified. They found that the beer drinkers tended to rate the taste of their preferred brand significantly higher when it was identified than they did in the blind taste test. Moreover, the beer drinkers were unable to distinguish their preferred brand from the others tasted in the blind taste test. However, this study did not investigate questions related to choice and sampling of brands.

The present study explores the effects of brand awareness on choice, brand sampling, and the frequency with which the highest-quality brand is chosen following a series of trials. Furthermore, the consumers in the Allison and Uhl study were highly experienced (drank beer at least three times a week). In an attempt to isolate the effect of simple brand awareness, the present study employs novice consum-

ers with no prior purchase experience with the test product.

Effects of Prior Exposure of Stimuli

Very little empirical work has been done on the effects of brand awareness on consumer choice. A considerably greater amount of work has examined the effects of more elaborate knowledge structures (see Alba and Hutchinson 1987). A growing body of evidence, however, suggests that the consumer in many purchase situations is, at best, a passive recipient of product information and one who tends to spend minimal time and cognitive effort in choosing among brands (Hoyer 1984). In situations involving common, repeat-purchase products, the consumer may choose a brand on the basis of a simple heuristic (e.g., brand awareness, pricing, packaging) and then evaluate the brand subsequent to purchase (Ray et al. 1973). In such instances, awareness results mainly from exposure to advertising and other sources of information.

Although prior experimental research has not specifically examined the effects of brand awareness on consumer choice, several lines of investigation provide reason to expect a positive relationship. Several streams of research have reported perception of familiar stimuli to be associated with positive affect. For example, Titchener (1912, p. 408) comments, "What . . . is the feeling [i.e., that experienced upon recognition]? In experiments upon recognition it is variously reported as a glow of warmth, a sense of ownership, a feeling of intimacy, a sense of being at home, a feeling of ease, a comfortable feeling. It is a feeling pleasurable in its affective quality, diffusively organic in its sensory character."

According to Hasher and Zacks (1984), an automatic frequency-counting mechanism records relative frequency information regarding the instantiation of various phenomena. This relative frequency information can be used as the basis for making inferences regarding product quality (Baker et al. 1986). For example, if the automatic frequency-counting mechanism counts substantially more instances of communications about brand A than about brand X, then an inference may be made to the effect that brand A is better known, so it must be popular and probably better (Baker et al. 1986; Hasher and Zacks 1984).

Berlyne (1970) argues that novel stimuli tend to be highly arousing and trigger aversive reactions. As a person gains familiarity with a stimulus through repeated exposure, however, positive affect and an approach tendency form. Perceived risk tends to decline and positive affect tends to increase with repeated exposure (Baker et al. 1986; Obermiller 1985).

Research by Zajonc (1980) and his colleagues on the mere exposure effect also indicates that familiar

stimuli tend to be better liked than unfamiliar ones, even in the absence of recognition. The results of Zajonc and his colleagues, which have been extended in consumer research by Janiszewski (1989), suggest that familiarity leads to greater liking, even without the mediation of conscious awareness. It might thus be argued that the effects of awareness on choice cannot be separated from those of affect. Although it is clear that attempting to separate affect from awareness requires extremely tight internal laboratory controls, such experimental controls were not feasible in this study of consumer choice and brand sampling. The questions of interest in this study are how brand awareness affects choice probability and sampling of a common, repeat-purchase product under varying conditions of brand quality and awareness. Recent work by Smith and Swinyard (1983) suggests that consumers tend not to form strong brand affect until after a product trial experience. Hence, steps were undertaken to ensure that subjects in the study to be described had not actually purchased or consumed the brands used as experimental stimuli.

One objective of this study was to investigate the extent to which a simple heuristic based on awareness, such as "buy the best known brand," was utilized in a simple choice task. Specifically, the following hypothesis is offered.

H1: Brand awareness serves as a dominant choice tactic among inexperienced consumers presented with a brand-selection task.

The awareness heuristic should be particularly important in the first purchase of a product. In accordance with the model of Ray et al. (1973), who posited a hierarchy of effects when involvement is low, the first purchase of the product should be followed by trial and evaluation. Subsequent purchases from the product category should be based on the outcome of the trial-and-evaluation process (Smith and Swinyard 1983). Thus, the influence of awareness as a choice tactic should decline on choices subsequent to the first. The known brand may be chosen on the first occasion because of a belief that it is probably the best. Then, if the experience is judged satisfactory, the decision heuristic may shift to "buy the brand I bought last time because it was satisfactory." Under these circumstances, consumers will have little motivation to sample unknown brands and will be unlikely to discover any quality differences that may exist between competing brands.

When the consumer has no prior knowledge or awareness of any brand in a choice set, simple and reliable choice tactics may be less immediately available. This would most likely result in a more effortful decision-making process, but one that would perhaps be relatively free of any biases and distortions caused by use of a simple heuristic in the interest of cognitive economy (Hogarth 1980; Tversky and Kahneman

1974). With a simple rule such as "buy the best-known brand" unavailable, the decision maker must resort to other selection criteria. By providing an opportunity to sample among brands across several selection experiences, this study tested the prediction that subjects who cannot rely on the awareness heuristic will take greater advantage of the opportunity to sample.

H2: Consumers choosing among a set of unknown brands are likely to sample more brands across product trials than consumers who choose among a set of brands that includes one well-known one.

When no known brand is available in a choice set and consumers are given an opportunity to sample brands, their perceptions of quality are likely to be unaffected by the biases and distortions that previous exposure to the brand through advertising or word of mouth may create (Deighton 1984; Hoch and Deighton 1989; Hoch and Ha 1986). Thus, they may be more likely to detect true quality differences among brands and select the highest-quality brand on a final choice following a series of trials.

H3: After a series of product choices, consumers choosing among a set of three totally unknown brands are more likely to choose the high-quality brand than are consumers who choose among a set of brands that includes one well-known and two unknown brands, especially when the well-known brand is not the high-quality brand.

METHOD

The hypotheses were tested with an experimental procedure that asked subjects to make a series of decisions regarding a brand choice for peanut butter. After each selection, subjects were asked why they chose a particular brand and then were permitted to taste it. Following each trial, subjects answered several short diagnostic questions. After five trials, a series of product-usage and experience questions were presented to complete the session.

Subjects

Assessing the effects of brand awareness in a novel choice context required finding experimental subjects with no previous purchase or usage experience with the test brands. Therefore, freshman college students at a large southwestern university ($N = 173$) who were inexperienced in the purchase of peanut butter participated in the experiment. A majority of these subjects had never purchased peanut butter for themselves, and the rest indicated they had purchased peanut butter only a few times at most. To be included

in the pool, subjects had to have never purchased any of the brands used in the experiment.

Test Product

Several factors led to the selection of peanut butter as the test product. A pretest study revealed that many freshmen college students had not purchased the product before. Also, the product category contained a number of well-known, easily identifiable brands and several lesser-known, unadvertised brands. This enabled a convenient manipulation of the awareness construct. Additionally, the pretest study showed wide variations in perceived quality across different brands of peanut butter, which facilitated manipulation of product quality. Finally, peanut butter can be tried or tasted quite easily in an experimental situation, permitting an assessment of the influence of awareness on brand evaluations.

Independent Variables

Awareness. Awareness was operationalized as a two-level blocking factor consisting of awareness and no-awareness conditions. In the awareness condition, subjects were presented with three brands of peanut butter. The first of these was a well-known national brand that had been advertised heavily. A pretest demonstrated high recognition for this brand. Two unknown brands from other regions of the country completed the three-brand set. To be included in the awareness condition, subjects had to be aware of the well-known brand (i.e., through advertising) without ever having purchased or tried it (as determined by a pretest questionnaire). They also had to exhibit no awareness of the other two brands in the set.¹

In the no-awareness condition, subjects were presented three totally unknown brands. Two of these brands were the same as those utilized in the awareness condition. The third was another unknown brand from another region of the country. To be included in the no-awareness condition, subjects had to be totally unfamiliar with all three brands in the set. Thus, these subjects faced the task of choosing among and evaluating a set of brands that were totally unfamiliar to them.

Quality. To identify high- and low-quality brands, eight brands of peanut butter were evaluated

¹Price of the brands was also manipulated to enhance the realism of the choice task. For example, one of the brands was marked with a higher price than the other two (\$1.79 vs. \$1.29). A pretest indicated that this difference was perceived to be significant. A counterbalancing procedure determined which brand was marked as high priced, so that each brand (within both awareness and no-awareness conditions) was marked as high priced approximately the same number of times. This manipulation had little effect on subjects' choices and was orthogonal to the other manipulations. Hence, it is not discussed further.

by a group of pretest subjects ($N = 62$) in a blind taste test. These brands ranged from presumably high-quality brands (e.g., well-known national brands) to those of presumably lower quality (e.g., store and generic brands). Pretest subjects rated the brands on a five-point scale anchored by "very low quality" and "very high quality."

Two brands were selected for the quality manipulation based on the pretest results. The brand with the highest pretest rating (a well-known national brand, $\bar{X} = 4.09$) and the brand with the second lowest rating (a generic brand, $\bar{X} = 2.32$) were selected to represent high- and low-quality brands, respectively. Testing indicated a significant difference in perceived quality between these two brands ($t = 10.73, p < .001$). The lowest-rated brand in the pretest was not selected because its extremely low rating raised apprehension that its use would make the manipulation transparent.

The two brands selected were then used to create two levels of the quality manipulation. In each condition, subjects were presented with a set of three different brands of peanut butter. In the quality-difference condition, one of the brands actually contained the high-quality brand, while the other two brands contained the low-quality brand. A counterbalancing procedure ensured that each of the three brands contained the quality brand an approximately equal number of times. This was accomplished by altering the contents of the jars. Thus, the well-known brand's jar did not always contain the high-quality peanut butter; rather, two-thirds of the time, the high-quality peanut butter was contained in the jars of the unknown brands.

In the no-quality-difference condition, all three jars contained the low-quality peanut butter. This group served as a control against which to compare the results of the quality-difference condition to assess the influence of brand awareness on quality judgments in a situation in which no actual quality differences existed.

Dependent Variables

Choice Tactics. To assess the extent to which the awareness heuristic was utilized in making an initial choice, subjects were asked, "Can you tell me why you selected the brand you have chosen?" The question was intended to elicit immediate postdecision responses regarding why a particular brand was selected. In accordance with Hoyer (1984), it was strictly "free response," with no probes, to allow subjects to describe their choices in their own terms.

Although Nisbett and Wilson (1977) have argued strongly against the ability of subjects to give accurate reasons for judgments and choices in experimental tasks, Wright and Rip (1980) and Rip (1980) have argued just as strongly for the value of self-reports. In

the present research, subjects had little reason to believe that accurate self-reports would cause them any embarrassment or have any other detrimental effect and should have had no reason to intentionally mislead the experimenter. Thus, while self-reports may not be an ideal measure for capturing precise choice tactics, they have proved useful in describing consumer decision-making processes (Bettman 1971; Rip 1980; Wright and Rip 1980) and are particularly useful when supported by converging evidence from other measures.

Number of Brands Sampled. The number of brands sampled was measured by counting the number of brands from a set of three alternatives that subjects sampled across a series of five trials.

Choice of Quality Brand. Choice of quality brand was operationalized as whether a subject's final choice following a series of five trials was actually the high-quality brand. A "hit" was recorded if the subject finally chose the brand that contained the quality peanut butter, and a "miss" was recorded if the subject finally chose a brand other than the one that contained the high-quality peanut butter. This analysis involved only subjects in the quality-difference condition ($N = 88$).

Procedure

Experimental sessions were conducted individually for each subject. Upon arriving, they read a short introduction to the experiment and then were told that they would be asked to make a choice between different brands of peanut butter. They were asked to pretend that they were in a grocery store and to make the choice exactly as they would if they were in the store. The experimenter emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers and that there was no one brand that the experimenter wanted them to choose. Rather, all that was asked was that they make a choice of peanut butter.

Subjects were then led over to the peanut butter display. The display consisted of a shelf on which the three brands of peanut butter were positioned (four jars of each brand). In the awareness condition, the well-known brand and two unknown brands were displayed; in the no-awareness condition, the three unknown brands were displayed. Subjects were then told to take as little or as much time as they wanted and to select whichever brand they desired. After selecting a brand, subjects were immediately asked to indicate which brand they had chosen and why. The experimenter took a sample of peanut butter from the designated jar, placed it on a cracker, and gave it to the subject to taste. Subjects were asked to repeat the selection and sampling process four more times. (A pretest of the experimental procedure had demonstrated that five trials were sufficient to allow subjects

to make a final selection.) Subjects were provided with drinking water between selections.

To conclude the session, subjects completed a series of posttask questions. These included items designed as checks on the "purity" of the sample: (1) whether subjects had ever purchased peanut butter, (2) whether they had heard of any of the brands prior to the experiment, and (3) whether their families had ever used any of the brands in the experiment. Also, to check for possible demand characteristics, subjects were asked what they thought was the purpose of the study. None indicated a suspicion that the study concerned the effects of brand awareness. Subjects were then debriefed and thanked for their participation in the experiment.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 held that when brand awareness is present in an initial choice task subjects will be significantly more likely to base their decision on brand awareness. This hypothesis was examined by observing actual choices and by eliciting subjects' free responses about their choice strategies. Subjects' initial choices (in a series of five) provide strong support for the hypothesis. Specifically, 93.5 percent of the subjects in the awareness condition selected the familiar brand, with only 1.1 percent choosing unknown brand A and 5.4 percent choosing unknown brand B. Thus, it appears that when inexperienced decision makers are faced with a choice situation in which a known brand competes with unknown brands they are considerably more likely to choose the known brand.

To directly assess the extent to which subjects used awareness as a choice heuristic, they were asked to give their reasons for selecting a particular brand following their first trial and their final choice. Table 1 presents the results of the open-ended question regarding choice criteria for the two points in time. The table shows substantial reported reliance on awareness as a choice tactic by subjects in the awareness condition on the first trial, with 60 percent reporting use of this tactic. Another 22 percent reported basing their decision on a combination of awareness and some other tactic. The remaining portion of awareness-condition subjects reported using a variety of other evaluative criteria.

By contrast, the largest proportion of no-awareness subjects (45.2 percent) reported a choice based on liking of the package, while the second-largest group employed a combination of price and some other criterion (14 percent). Another 10.8 percent of the no-awareness subjects reported basing their decision on the ingredients.

Overall, these results suggest that first-time buyers may rely on awareness as a cue for choosing a brand

when a clear distinction between brands exists on this dimension. However, when no brands are known, other criteria such as packaging, ingredients, and price (in combination with other factors) are likely to be employed.

The results reported in Table 1 also reveal differences in choice criteria between awareness-condition and no-awareness-condition subjects for the final choice. A significantly higher proportion of subjects in the awareness condition continued to report awareness as the basis for their decision (17.8 percent vs. 5.4 percent, $Z = -2.76, p < .05$). The fact that 17.8 percent of the subjects reported basing their decision on awareness after trying other brands suggests its importance in brand-choice decisions among inexperienced decision makers. It also suggests that the influence of awareness may persist across a series of choices and trials. Another interesting result is that no-awareness-condition subjects reported basing their final decision on taste significantly more often than awareness-condition subjects (62.4 percent vs. 41.1 percent, $Z = 3.04, p < .01$).

Some noteworthy changes occurred in the reported choice tactics between the first and the final trial. For the awareness group, use of awareness as a choice criterion decreased substantially (82.2 percent vs. 33.3 percent, $Z = 9.83, p < .001$). Thus, although awareness remained an important choice criterion, other factors such as taste became more important as subjects gained experience with the decision task. The most notable change in tactics for the no-awareness-condition subjects was a large increase in the reported use of taste as a decision criterion on the final choice. On the final choice, 62.4 percent of the no-awareness subjects reported taste as the basis for their final selection. The reported use of package and of ingredients as decision criteria by the no-awareness subjects declined to zero by the final trial. Thus, when no awareness exists initially, subjects report greater reliance on taste perceptions than they do when brand awareness is present.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 predicted that subjects in the no-awareness condition would tend to sample more brands across a series of five trials than subjects in the awareness condition. This hypothesis would be supported by a significant main effect of awareness in the two-way awareness-by-quality ANOVA. A significant main effect for awareness does in fact emerge from the analysis ($F(3, 169) = 7.87, p < .01$). Neither the main effect of quality nor the two-way interaction approached significance. This result supports Hypothesis 2. Comparison of the mean number of brands sampled between awareness and no-awareness conditions ($\bar{X} = 2.67$ vs. $\bar{X} = 2.29, t = 3.49, p < .001$) indicates that subjects in the no-awareness condition tended to

TABLE 1
CHOICE CRITERIA

Criterion	First selection			Final selection		
	No awareness (%)	Awareness (%)	Z	No awareness (%)	Awareness (%)	Z
Known brand	0	60.0	11.11**	5.4	17.8	2.76*
Taste texture	4.3	0	NS	62.4	41.1	3.04*
Lowest price	2.2	0	NS	3.2	1.1	NS
Ingredients	10.8	3.3	2.16*	0	1.1	NS
Package	45.2	4.4	6.95**	0	3.3	NS
Try new brand	1.1	0	NS	4.3	7.8	NS
Known brand and taste	0	3.3	NS	6.5	13.3	NS
Known brand and other	0	18.9	4.41**	0	2.2	NS
Price and taste	1.0	0	NS	5.4	3.3	NS
Price and other	14.0	4.4	2.63*	1.1	3.3	NS
Other	21.4	5.7	...	11.7	5.7	...

NOTE.—No awareness, $n = 90$; awareness, $n = 83$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

sample more brands than those in the awareness condition.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 predicted that when quality differences existed between brands in a choice set subjects in the no-awareness condition would choose the quality brand on the final selection more often than subjects in the awareness condition, especially when the well-known brand was not the high-quality brand. Of the subjects in the no-awareness/quality-difference condition, 59 percent (26/44) selected the high-quality brand on the final trial. This proportion significantly exceeds the 33 percent hit rate that would be expected owing to chance alone.

In the awareness/quality-difference condition, only 41 percent (18/44) of the subjects chose the high-quality brand. Of this proportion of "hits," however, a large majority (67 percent) were attributable to selections of the known brand when it actually contained the high-quality peanut butter. When the high-quality peanut butter was in the jar of an unknown brand (which it was on two-thirds of the trials), only 20 percent (6/30) of the awareness-condition subjects selected the brand containing the high-quality peanut butter. Seventy-three percent of them (22/30) chose the well-known brand, even though it did not contain the high-quality product. Thus, awareness-condition subjects were considerably less likely to choose the high-quality brand, especially when an unknown brand's jar contained the high-quality product.

To further emphasize the point, across all trials within the awareness/quality-difference condition, the known brand was chosen 77.3 percent of the time (34/44). When the trials during which the known

brand jar contained the high-quality peanut butter are excluded, the known brand was still selected 73.3 percent of the time (22/30).

When awareness was present but no quality differences existed between brands, 74.5 percent (35/47) of the subjects selected the known brand, with 17 percent (8/47) selecting unknown brand A and 8.5 percent (4/47) choosing unknown brand B. These results provide further evidence of the effect of brand awareness on choice.

Thus, the relative quality of the known brand vis-à-vis the unknown brand appeared to have little influence on the final choices of awareness-condition subjects. Whether the quality of the known brand was the same as, better than, or worse than the unknown brands, it was still chosen by a substantial majority of subjects, even after they had sampled other brands. In the control condition (i.e., when no quality difference existed), 74.5 percent (35/47) of the subjects chose the known brand. When quality differences did exist and the known brand was actually the high-quality brand, awareness-condition subjects chose the known brand 85.6 percent of the time (12/14). When quality differences existed and the known brand was not the high-quality brand, awareness-condition subjects chose the known brand 73.3 percent of the time (22/30).

It was also possible that prior usage of the known brand by subjects' families might have affected the observed results. To assess this possibility, an analysis was conducted to compare the choice results of those awareness-condition subjects who reported that their families had previously used the known brand with those of awareness-condition subjects who reported no such previous usage. Subjects whose families had previously used the known brand selected the high-

quality brand only 29 percent of the time compared to 50 percent among those whose families had never used the known brand. Apparently, then, previous brand usage affected choice of the high-quality brand to an even greater extent (i.e., was even more biasing) than did simple brand awareness.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the results indicate that brand awareness may have considerable effect on consumer choice. Subjects who were aware of one brand in a set of three sampled fewer brands over a series of four trials and were considerably less likely to select the high-quality brand on a final choice than subjects who were not aware of any of the brands in the set. When awareness was present in an initial choice situation, subjects reported using it as a decision criterion in a high proportion of cases. After subjects had gained some experience with the choice task and had an opportunity to sample several brands, the use of awareness as a choice tactic declined in importance. A significantly greater proportion of subjects in the no-awareness condition reported using taste as a choice tactic on the final trial than did those in the awareness condition. Concomitantly, perceived product quality increased in importance as a choice tactic as novice consumers gained more familiarity with the task. The behavioral measure of observed brand choice confirmed the self-reported use of awareness as a choice tactic, as a large majority of subjects in the awareness condition selected the known brand on the final trial.

It would appear from these results that brand awareness provides a convenient cue for choice, but that its use as a simplifying heuristic is not without cost to the consumer. Use of brand awareness as a choice tactic appeared to introduce a bias into the selections of the awareness subjects that was not observed in those of the no-awareness subjects. The latter appeared to engage in a somewhat more effortful selection process characterized by more intensive brand sampling. Without reliance on an awareness heuristic, these subjects more often chose the high-quality brand on their final selection. These results suggest that the presence of a known brand in a choice set may have some negative effects on the consumer's ability to detect differences in product quality across brands. Moreover, these effects were observed after subjects had an opportunity to sample and compare several brands, suggesting that awareness not only influences the first choice, but that it may also affect choice on subsequent selections.

Limitations

The fact that awareness was a measured rather than manipulated variable leaves open the possibility that other psychological variables were correlated with

awareness and in part may have accounted for the observed pattern of results. For instance, although an attempt was made to control for initial brand affect, it was allowed to vary freely over the course of the five trials. Also, it is possible that the choice tactics used by subjects may have been subject to some desirable responding or self-presentation bias. However, the measures used in this study should not have been any more prone to these types of distortions than those most commonly employed in studies of consumer choice. Finally, only a single product category, peanut butter, was investigated. It remains to be seen whether the findings can be replicated in other product categories.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite these limitations, the study demonstrates that brand awareness exerts an influence on choice and brand sampling. In particular, it has shown that (1) brand awareness is a prevalent choice tactic among inexperienced consumers facing a new decision task, (2) subjects who are aware of one brand in a choice set tend to sample fewer brands across a series of product trials, and (3) subjects who are aware of one brand in a choice set tend to choose the known brand even when it is lower in quality than other brands they have had the opportunity to sample.

Other possible effects of brand awareness merit future investigation. The results of this study suggest that brand awareness may trigger differences in information processing. In particular, it appears possible that the use of an awareness heuristic may be associated with a top-down, concept-driven mode of information processing, whereas the absence of a known brand in the choice set may evoke an inductive process of information search and trial. The top-down, concept-driven mode may reflect consumer hypothesis testing of the type described by Deighton (1984), Hoch and Ha (1986), and Hoch and Deighton (1989). Research utilizing process measures to probe for these types of differences could make interesting and valuable contributions.

If, as appears likely, prior exposure to brand information through advertising or other sources results in the formation of a brand-related schema, it would be interesting to explore the effects of this schema on consumer expectations regarding the brand. A closely related question would be how these schema-based expectations affect brand evaluations and satisfaction judgments. Such research might take a step toward integrated research on brand awareness with the long tradition of research on consumer satisfaction.

The results of the present study suggest that consumers' choice tactics in purchase of a common, repeat-purchase product tend to change with increasing experience in making selections. It may be of interest in future research to further explore changes in choice

cues over time to determine whether intrinsic attributes take on increasing importance as experience increases. Also, studies providing stronger manipulations of consumer motivation to detect quality differences across brands may reveal additional insights into the strength of effects of brand awareness. It would be interesting to know how strong such motivation has to be to override the type of brand-awareness effect that has been demonstrated in this study.

In conclusion, this study has presented empirical results suggesting that brand awareness has important effects on consumer choice. The data suggest that advertising targeted at increasing brand awareness may be effective in increasing choice probabilities. Further, the results suggest that the effects of awareness on choice may persist beyond the consumer's first choice from a product category. Although the present study has shown the presence of brand-awareness effects on choice, the task of describing the processes by which these effects operate remains for future research.

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