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Three studies examine the influence of brand-elicited affect on consumers' evaluations of brand extensions. When a brand spontaneously elicits affective reactions, consumers appear to form an initial impression of the brand's new extension based on these reactions. The affect that they experience for other reasons and attribute to the brand can influence this impression as well. Their later evaluations of the extension are then based on this impression. This is true regardless of the similarity between the extension and the core brand. These results contrast with evidence that affect influences brand extension evaluations through its mediating impact on perceptions of core-extension similarity. This latter influence occurs only when consumers are explicitly asked to estimate the extension's similarity to the core before they evaluate it.

Does Loving a Brand Mean Loving Its Products? The Role of Brand-Elicited Affect in Brand Extension Evaluations

Laboratory research suggests that the influence of a highly regarded brand name on evaluations of a brand extension depends on perceptions of how well the extension "fits" the core brand category (Aaker and Keller 1990; Bottomley and Holden 2001). In practice, however, it is not uncommon to observe successful extensions that fit poorly (see Klink and Smith 2001). This discrepancy between the implications of prior research and marketplace observations could be due in part to a difference in the role of brand-elicited affect in evaluating brand extensions in the two situations. Specifically, prior research has often assumed that consumers assess an extension's fit at the time they evaluate it. This assessment requires a deliberative identification of specific characteristics of the extension and a comparison of these characteristics with those of the core. However, when consumers encounter a product in the marketplace, they are unlikely to engage in extensive cognitive deliberation. Rather, they may base their evaluations of a brand extension

on their subjective affective reactions to the core brand without considering any specific features that the extension might have. That is, they interpret these reactions as an indication of how much they like the extension and form an initial impression of it based on these feelings alone. To this extent, consumers who feel good about a core brand may evaluate its extension favorably, even if the extension is highly dissimilar to the core.

The current research provides evidence of these affect-based impressions and their influences on extension evaluations, and it circumscribes the conditions in which they occur.¹ We begin with a review of the existing literature on brand extension evaluations. Next, we discuss the research on stimulus-elicited affect and its theoretical implications for brand extension evaluations. We then report three experiments that confirm these implications.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Evaluations of brand extensions are often assumed to be governed by categorization processes (e.g., Boush and Loken 1991; Boush et al. 1987). Specifically, consumers who encounter a new extension product assess the extent to

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¹The affective reactions that a brand elicits should be distinguished from the construct of "brand-affect" that has been used in prior research on brand extension evaluations. Brand-affect is often treated as a global evaluative concept (Aaker and Keller 1990; Keller 2002). In contrast, brand-elicited affect is conceptualized in this research as subjective feelings that consumers experience when they encounter a brand (Wyer, Clore, and Isbell 1999). With few exceptions (Barone, Miniard, and Romeo 2000), the impact of brand-elicited affect on brand extension evaluations has not been fully explored.

which it exemplifies a general concept, or prototype, that they have formed of the core brand category (Aaker and Keller 1990). In making this assessment, they may consider not only the extension's physical similarity to products that are typically identified with the core brand but also its similarity in function or the context in which it is used (Aaker and Keller 1990; Broniarczyk and Alba 1994; for a review, see Keller 2002). Consumers who perceive a good fit between the extension and the core brand category may consider the extension a member of this category, and thus they may base their evaluation of it on their previously formed attitude of the core (Boush et al. 1987; for a similar assumption, see Fiske and Pavelchak 1986). Conversely, consumers who perceive a lack of fit between the two are less likely to transfer their attitude of the core to the extension and may even generate undesirable beliefs about the extension (Aaker and Keller 1990).

As we noted previously, however, this categorization process requires cognitive effort. Therefore, it is unlikely to be performed spontaneously. Rather, it may occur only when consumers are called on to make a judgment or a decision. Nevertheless, core brands could exert their influence on extension evaluations at an earlier stage of information processing. For example, consumers may often form an initial impression of a product based on its brand name alone, before they learn about its specific features. After this impression is formed, it could influence extension evaluations independently of any deliberative categorization processes that occur subsequently. We elaborate on this possibility in the next section.

Informational Influences of Brand-Elicited Affect on Brand Extension Evaluations

A product's physical appearance can often elicit affective reactions spontaneously as soon as consumers encounter the product (Pham et al. 2001), and consumers could use these reactions as a basis for both evaluations of the product and decisions to acquire it (Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999; Yeung and Wyer 2004; for a summary of evidence that people use the affect they are experiencing as a basis for judgment, see Schwarz and Clore 1996). However, a product's brand name could also trigger affective reactions. This could occur for several reasons. For example, the brand may have high or low prestige value. Alternatively, consumers may have had positive or negative experiences with a brand in the past, and the affect that these experiences elicited may have become associated with the brand. In addition, consumers might misattribute the affect they are experiencing for other reasons to their feelings about the brand. In each case, consumers who are exposed to a brand in the context of a brand extension may use the affect it appears to elicit as an indication of their feelings toward both the brand itself and the extension and, in turn, their liking for them (Schwarz and Clore 1996; Wyer, Clore, and Isbell 1999).

The impact of brand-elicited affective reactions on extension evaluations has received little attention. However, the results of other consumer judgment research are suggestive. Yeung and Wyer (2004) find that consumers often form an initial impression of a product based on the affect elicited by the product's picture and that this impression, after it is formed, influences consumers' final judgments of the product regardless of the criteria they might otherwise apply.

Although a picture stimulated participants' initial impressions in Yeung and Wyer's studies, brands could have a similar effect. That is, consumers who encounter an affect-eliciting brand may use the affect it elicits as a basis for their impressions of a product with which the name is associated (i.e., a brand extension). In turn, this impression could provide the basis for their subsequent evaluations of the extension. This could occur independently of their perceptions of core-extension similarity.

H_1 : When consumers evaluate an extension of an affect-eliciting brand, the affect it elicits can have a positive impact on their evaluations of the extension (i.e., they will evaluate it more favorably if this affect is positive than if it is negative), regardless of whether the extension is similar or dissimilar to the core brand.

However, not all brands are likely to stimulate consumers' affective reactions. These reactions may not occur unless they have become associated with the brand. When a brand does not elicit affect, consumers' impressions of the brand extension and their subsequent evaluations of it are presumably based on other judgment-relevant criteria (e.g., goodness of fit).

Influences of Affect on Information Processing

Although our rationale for H_1 is straightforward, we also consider other influences of affect on brand extension evaluations. For example, people who experience positive affect are inclined to use broad categories in comprehending information and to identify relationships among stimuli that others are less likely to consider (Isen and Daubman 1984; Kahn and Isen 1993). Consistent with this reasoning, Barone, Miniard, and Romeo (2000; see also Barone 2005) find that when the fit of an extension to the core brand category is ambiguous, inducing participants to feel happy increases their perceptions that the extension belongs to this category. In turn, this perception leads them to evaluate the extension more favorably. However, when extensions are unambiguously either very similar or dissimilar to the core, participants' affect has no impact on either their perceptions of similarity or their evaluations of the extension. The affect that Barone, Miniard, and Romeo examine is externally induced rather than elicited by the brands. However, brand-elicited affect could have similar effects. In summary, this stream of research suggests that the influence of affect on extension evaluations is mediated by perceptions of core-extension similarity.

The possibility that the influence of affect on extension evaluations is mediated by perceptions of core-extension similarity might appear to contradict H_1 . However, Barone, Miniard, and Romeo (2000) asked participants explicitly to estimate the similarity of the extensions to the core brands before they evaluated the extensions. The demand to consider core-extension similarity may induce participants to engage in categorization processes that they might otherwise not perform and to use the implications of this categorization as a basis for their subsequent judgments. However, when participants are not explicitly asked to consider core-extension similarity before making their judgments, they may base these judgments on purely affective criteria, and so the contingencies that Barone, Miniard, and Romeo identify may be less apparent. Indeed, Barone (2005) finds that when participants have little personal involvement in

the product evaluations they are asked to make, they may base their evaluations on the affect they are experiencing alone, and core-extension similarity may have little influence unless the participants are explicitly asked to consider it before reporting their judgments.

The current research examines these possibilities. In Experiment 1, we presented core brands that differed in terms of the affect they elicited, and we asked participants to evaluate extensions that were either moderately similar or dissimilar to these brands. This experiment provided evidence that brand-elicited affect influences evaluations of brand extensions regardless of core-extension similarity. Experiment 2 confirmed this influence in conditions in which we experimentally manipulated participants' perceptions of the affect elicited by the brands they considered through the use of a mood-misattribution procedure (e.g., Schwarz and Clore 1983). In a third experiment, in which we again used a mood-misattribution procedure to manipulate participants' perceptions of brand-elicited affect, the results reinforced this conclusion and also showed that when participants estimated core-extension similarity before evaluating the extensions, the impact of affect on their evaluations was mediated by its influence on perceptions of core-extension similarity in the manner that Barone, Miniard, and Romeo (2000) suggest.

EXPERIMENT 1

In Experiment 1, we examined the basic notion that when consumers evaluate an extension of an affect-eliciting brand, the affect this brand elicits can influence the evaluations of the extension, regardless of whether the extension is similar to the core brand. To show that the affect a brand elicits, not the favorableness of the brand per se, influences extension evaluations, we chose brands that varied independently in their favorableness and their level of affect elicitation. We exposed participants to one of the following situations: (1) a favorable brand that elicited positive affect, (2) a favorable brand that did not elicit any affect, (3) an unfavorable brand that elicited negative affect, or (4) an unfavorable brand that did not elicit any affect. Then, we asked participants to evaluate an extension that was either moderately similar or dissimilar to the core brand category. We predicted that when the core brand elicited affect, participants would evaluate the extensions more favorably when the affect elicited was positive than when it was not, regardless of core-extension similarity. In contrast, when the core brand did not elicit affect, its influence on extension evaluations would be a function of core-extension similarity. That is, participants would evaluate the moderately similar extensions as similar in favorableness to the core brand, whereas their evaluations of dissimilar extensions would not depend on the core brand's favorableness.

Method

Selection of brands. The main study required the identification of four brands that vary independently both in favorableness and in the extent to which they elicit affect. We chose international airlines as the category because participants were familiar with a wide range of brand names. We asked 270 students in an Asian university who were not involved in the main study to evaluate 1 of 18 airlines on a scale that ranged from -5 ("highly unfavorable") to +5

("highly favorable") and to report their subjective feelings toward the airline on a scale that ranged from -5 ("very bad") to +5 ("very good"). To ensure that they distinguished between the two measures, we gave them instructions similar to those that Pham and colleagues (2001) use. Specifically, we told them, "[N]ote that your evaluation of an airline and your subjective feeling toward the airline are two different things; you may not necessarily feel good about a favorably evaluated airline, and similarly, you may not necessarily feel bad about an unfavorably evaluated airline. For example, one [person] may evaluate US Airways favorably and have a good feeling toward it, but another person may evaluate it favorably without having any feeling toward it." To facilitate participants' recognitions of the brands, the brands' logos were also printed on the questionnaires.

On the basis of these data, we selected Japan Airlines and Air China as the favorable and unfavorable affect-eliciting brands, respectively. The mean evaluations of these airlines were 1.80 and -1.49, and the subjective feelings they elicited averaged 1.80 and -1.83, respectively. We selected Lufthansa and Alaska Airlines as the favorable and unfavorable non-affect-eliciting brands, respectively. The evaluations of these airlines were comparable to those of the corresponding affect-eliciting brands (1.71 and -1.49, respectively), but the subjective feelings they elicited were much less extreme (.31 and -.29, respectively).²

Selection of brand extensions. We selected two extension products (a suitcase and flight socks) that were moderately similar to the core category in terms of the context in which they were found and two others (a backpack and running shoes) that were very dissimilar in this respect. These differences in similarity were confirmed by data from 15 students who rated each product's relationship to airline services on a scale that ranged from -5 ("not at all") to +5 ("very"). Ratings of a suitcase and flight socks averaged -.18 and -.58, respectively, whereas ratings of a backpack and running shoes averaged -3.99 and -4.13, respectively.

Procedure. We randomly assigned 120 students in an Asian university to one of the eight conditions of a 2 (core brand favorableness: favorable versus unfavorable) × 2 (affect-eliciting nature of core brand: non-affect-eliciting versus affect-eliciting) × 2 (extension type: moderately similar versus dissimilar to the core) factorial design. We provided instructions and conveyed stimulus materials in a short booklet.

The first page informed participants that a company wished to introduce a new product into the market and wanted to know consumers' possible reactions to it. The second page conveyed the company's name along with its logo. On the third page, participants in the moderately similar extension conditions received information either that "the company will introduce suitcases that are made of durable material and come with a three-year warranty" or

²We interviewed a subset of the participants to understand their reactions toward the different airlines. They felt good about Japan Airlines because of its superior service (for those who had flown with Japan Airlines), its prestigious brand image, and the high status of Japanese brands in general. They felt bad about Air China because of the low status of the brand (and of Chinese brands in general) and the old-fashioned design of its logo. Participants' feelings toward Lufthansa and Air Alaska were relatively neutral because they did not have much experience with these airlines and had not seen any of their advertising.

that “the company will introduce flight socks that are made of a compression material and can help prevent aching legs and circulatory problems when traveling.” Participants in the dissimilar extension conditions were told either that “the company will introduce backpacks that are made of durable material and are waterproof and machine washable” or that “the company will introduce running shoes that are made of durable material and are dirt-proof and waterproof.” After participants read the information, they indicated the extent to which they liked the product on a scale that ranged from -5 (“not at all”) to +5 (“very much”). On the last page, they evaluated the core brand, indicated their subjective feelings toward the core brand, and reported their perceptions of core-extension similarity on scales that were identical to those we used in the pretests.

Results

Manipulation checks. The manipulation checks confirmed the results of the pretest. That is, participants liked both Japan Airlines ($M = 2.23$) and Lufthansa ($M = 1.98$) and disliked both Air China ($M = -2.21$) and Alaska Airlines ($M = -1.99$). Conversely, although they had a positive feeling toward Japan Airlines ($M = 2.54$) and a negative feeling toward Air China ($M = -1.84$), they were rather neutral toward Lufthansa ($M = .31$) and Alaska Airlines ($M = -.11$). Furthermore, they perceived that the moderately similar extensions were more similar to the core brands ($M = -.41$) than were the dissimilar extensions ($M = -4.13$; $F_{(1, 116)} = 28.45, p < .01$), and this difference did not depend on the stimulus replication involved ($F < 1$).

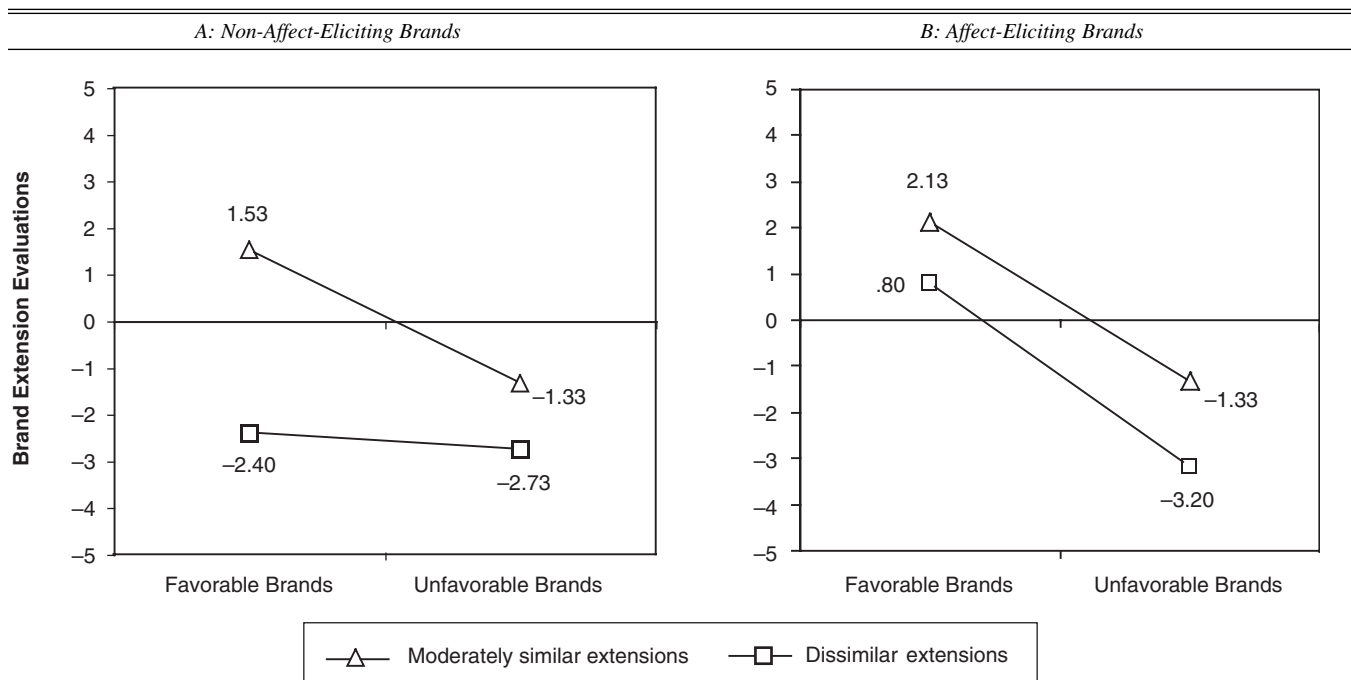
Brand extension evaluations. We expected that when the core brand did not elicit affect, extension evaluations would be a function of the extension’s similarity to the core brand.

However, when the core brand elicited affect, we expected that this affect would influence evaluations regardless of core-extension similarity. A three-way interaction of core brand favorableness, the affect-eliciting nature of the core brand, and core-extension similarity confirmed our expectations ($F_{(1, 112)} = 4.15, p < .05$).³

We convey the nature of the interaction in Figure 1. First, we consider conditions in which the core brand did not elicit any affect (Figure 1, Panel A). In this case, the core brand’s favorableness had a positive impact on participants’ evaluations of extensions that were moderately similar to the core ($M_{\text{favorable}} = 1.53$ versus $M_{\text{unfavorable}} = -1.33$; $F_{(1, 112)} = 14.52, p < .05$), but it had little effect on participants’ evaluations of extensions that were very dissimilar to the core ($M_{\text{favorable}} = -2.40$ versus $M_{\text{unfavorable}} = -2.73$; $F_{(1, 112)} < 1, p > .50$). The interaction that these results imply is statistically significant ($F_{(1, 112)} = 5.67, p < .05$). However, when the core brand elicited affect (see Figure 1, Panel B), participants liked the extensions more when the core brand was favorable ($M = 1.47$) than when it was unfavorable ($M = -2.27$; $F_{(1, 112)} = 49.25, p < .01$), and this difference did not depend on whether the extensions were moderately similar ($M_{\text{favorable}} = 2.13$ versus $M_{\text{unfavorable}} = -1.33$; difference = 3.46) or dissimilar ($M_{\text{favorable}} = .80$ ver-

³In general, participants evaluated moderately similar extensions more favorably than dissimilar ones (.25 versus -1.88, respectively; $F_{(1, 112)} = 32.16, p < .05$), and this was true regardless of whether the core brand was favorable or unfavorable. Although this could be due to an effect of core-extension similarity that is independent of the influence of brand-elicited affect, it could also reflect the influence of idiosyncratic characteristics of the different products rated in these conditions. However, because core-extension similarity is unlikely to enhance extension evaluations when the core brand is unfavorable (Aaker and Keller 1990), the latter possibility seems more plausible.

Figure 1
BRAND EXTENSION EVALUATIONS AS A FUNCTION OF BRAND TYPE, BRAND FAVORABLENESS, AND CORE-EXTENSION SIMILARITY: EXPERIMENT 1



sus $M_{\text{unfavorable}} = -3.20$; difference = 4.00) to the core brand ($p > .10$). Presumably, in these latter conditions, participants based their judgments on the affect that the core brands elicited rather than on the favorableness of the brands per se. If brand favorableness alone had the effect, the results we obtained in the affect-eliciting brand and the non-affect-eliciting brand conditions would be the same, but they were not.

We obtained a further indication of the mediating effects of brand-elicited affect on extension evaluations from a reanalysis of these evaluations in the affect-eliciting brand conditions, using participants' subjective reactions to the core brands as a covariate. The impact of the covariate on judgments was significant ($t_{55} = 7.02, p < .01$), whereas the effect of brand favorableness was reduced to marginally significant ($F_{(1, 55)} = 2.39, p > .10$).

EXPERIMENT 2

Our interpretation of the results of Experiment 1 is somewhat compromised because we used different brands to exemplify different levels of affect elicitation. Thus, the affect-eliciting nature of the brands may have been confounded with other, nonaffective characteristics of the brands. Perhaps more important, the first experiment did not provide a validation of our assumption that brand-elicited affect exerts its influence through its impact on the initial impressions that participants formed of the extensions at the time they were exposed to the core brands. Experiment 2 addresses these issues.

We used a procedure that Schwarz and Clore (1983; see also Pham 1998; Yeung and Wyer 2004) developed to isolate the impact of participants' affective reactions on judgments from other relevant criteria. Specifically, we experimentally induced participants to feel either happy or unhappy for reasons that were objectively unrelated to the evaluation task they performed subsequently. The affective reactions that are elicited by various sources may differ in valence. When elicited simultaneously, however, they may be experienced as a global pleasant or unpleasant feeling rather than several discrete reactions. Thus, people usually cannot distinguish clearly between the different sources of affect they happen to be experiencing at any given time. Therefore, when people use their affective reactions as a basis for judgments, they typically misattribute a portion of the contextual affect to the object they are judging (Schwarz and Clore 1983, 1996), and so this affect also influences the judgments they report. Conversely, suppose people do not consider their affective reactions a relevant basis for judgment. Then, they are likely to base their judgments on other criteria, and so any affect they happen to be experiencing at the time has little effect (for further discussion, see Wyer, Clore, and Isbell 1999).

Several studies (e.g., Adaval 2001; Pham 1998; Yeung and Wyer 2004) use this strategy effectively to identify conditions in which affective reactions have an impact on judgments. For example, in Yeung and Wyer's (2004) study, participants who viewed an affect-eliciting picture of a product based their initial impressions of the product on this affect. However, they confused the extraneous affect they experienced at the time with the affect elicited by the picture. Thus, they perceived the affect elicited by the picture as more positive than it actually was when they were feeling happy and less positive than it was when they were feeling unhappy. As a result, this contextual affect had an influence

on their impressions as well. In contrast, when the picture of the product did not elicit affective reactions, participants apparently perceived their affective reactions as irrelevant to the impression they formed of the product, and they based this impression on other criteria without construing the implications of the feelings they were experiencing. In this case, the contextual affect they experienced had no impact.

We applied a similar reasoning in Experiment 2. That is, we induced participants in some conditions to feel either happy or unhappy by recalling a pleasant or unpleasant life experience before they performed the product evaluation task. When the brand with which an extension is associated normally elicits affective reactions, participants should perceive this affect as relevant to their judgment. Thus, they should form an initial impression of the extension based on this affect and should subsequently use this affect-based impression to evaluate it. In this case, the affect they experience for other reasons is likely to influence their perceptions of the affect elicited by the brand and, therefore, to influence their impressions of the extension and the evaluations they subsequently base on these impressions. Suppose, however, that the brand does not elicit affective reactions. Then, participants should not attribute any affect they experience to their feelings toward the brand (because these latter feelings do not exist) and should not consider it a relevant basis for the impression they form of the extension. Thus, contextual affect should have little impact on either this impression or their subsequent evaluations.

Another objective of this experiment has even greater theoretical importance. Our conceptualization assumes that brand-elicited affect influences extension evaluations through its mediating impact on consumers' initial impressions of the extension. This assumption contrasts with Barone, Miniard, and Romeo's (2000) assumption that the influence of affect on extension evaluations occurs at the time of judgment (see also Sujon, Bettman, and Baumgartner 1993). To distinguish between these possibilities, we manipulated the time at which contextual affect was induced; in some conditions, it was induced before we presented the brand, whereas in other conditions, it was induced after we presented the brand. If our assumption is correct, contextual affect should influence participants' initial impressions only when it is induced at the outset, before we expose them to the affect-eliciting brand on which these impressions are based. If participants are exposed to an affect-eliciting brand at the outset, they should already have formed an initial impression of the extension at the time contextual affect is induced. In this case, any affective reactions that participants experience subsequently should have little effect on either this impression or the evaluation that they base on it. Conversely, suppose our assumption is not correct; that is, suppose the affect that participants experience exerts its influence at the time they report their evaluations, independently of the initial impression they have previously formed. Then, because they experience contextual affect at the time of judgment, regardless of whether it is induced before or after participants are exposed to the brand name, it should have an impact in both cases. Thus, by varying the time at which contextual affect is induced, we can distinguish between these alternative possibilities.

Method

Overview and design. We exposed participants to a brand name that was either likely to elicit affect (Pepsi) or not

(Bonaqua). Then, they evaluated a brand extension (sports shoes) that was very dissimilar to the core brand category. Either before or after learning the core brand name, but before learning the nature of the extension, we induced participants to feel either happy or unhappy by asking them to recall a life experience. Finally, they evaluated the brand extension.

Participants were 130 introductory marketing students in an Asian university. They were randomly assigned to each cell of a 2 (induced mood: positive versus negative) \times 2 (affect-eliciting nature of core brand: affect-eliciting versus non-affect-eliciting) \times 2 (mood-brand order: mood-first, brand-second versus brand-first, mood-second) factorial design.

Selection of affect-eliciting and non-affect-eliciting brands. To enhance the generalizability of our findings, we selected affect-eliciting and non-affect-eliciting brands on the basis of different criteria than those of Experiment 1. Specifically, the extent to which affective reactions have become associated with a brand may depend on the purpose for which the brand has typically been used. For example, consumers typically consume soft drinks for pleasure but use bottled water for primarily utilitarian reasons. Therefore, brands of soft drinks are more likely than brands of bottled water to become associated with affect and, thus, to evoke affective reactions. We confirmed this assumption during pretesting. We asked 16 participants to evaluate each of four products (Bonaqua mineral water, Vittel mineral water, Coca-Cola, and Pepsi) in terms of the extent to which the item stimulated them to think about its "ability to perform a useful function." We asked 15 other participants to estimate whether each item stimulated thoughts about "the subjective experience of drinking it." These ratings were reported on scales that ranged from 0 ("not at all") to 10 ("very"). Participants also estimated how much they liked each brand on a scale that ranged from -5 ("dislike very much") to +5 ("like very much"). On the basis of these data, we selected one brand of mineral water (Bonaqua) and one brand of soft drink (Pepsi) that did not differ in likeableness (1.91 versus 1.45; $F < 1$) but differed in terms of the likelihood of stimulating thoughts about both utilitarian considerations ($M_{\text{Pepsi}} = 4.53$ versus $M_{\text{Bonaqua}} = 6.67$) and the subjective experience of drinking them ($M_{\text{Pepsi}} = 6.56$ versus $M_{\text{Bonaqua}} = 5.06$). These latter differences were confirmed by an interaction of brand and measure ($F_{(1, 29)} = 17.88, p < .01$).

Brand extension selection. To provide a strong test of our predictions, we chose an extension product that was very dissimilar to the core category (beverages) in terms of both tangible and intangible features. We asked 30 participants to judge the similarity and relatedness of both bottled water and soft drinks to each of several other types of products (tissue paper, mobile phones, coffee, ice cream, sports shoes). Participants unanimously reported that sport shoes were dissimilar to and highly unrelated to both bottled water and soft drinks ($M = -5.0$, on a scale that ranged from -5 to +5). Therefore, we selected sports shoes as the extension product.

Procedure. Participants performed two ostensibly unrelated tasks. We used one task to induce mood and the other for product evaluations, and we varied the order of performing these tasks. We told participants in the mood-first, brand-second conditions that they would take part in two

unrelated studies. In the first study, we induced participants to experience either positive or negative moods using a procedure similar to that of Schwarz and Clore (1983). Specifically, we told participants that the study concerned the construction of a database on the personal experiences of college students. We then told participants in the positive-mood (negative-mood) conditions to identify a recent event that was important to them and that made them feel happy (unhappy) when they thought about it. In each case, we asked them to imagine the experience in as much detail as possible and to try to reexperience the feelings they had at the time and then to write down a description of these feelings and the events that elicited them. We gave them between 15 and 20 minutes to write their descriptions.

To introduce the second study, we told the participants that a company wished to introduce a new product into the market and wanted to know consumers' possible reactions to it. The instructions continued, "[T]he company plans to announce that it will introduce a new product. However, it does not want to tell customers what the new product is. The company thinks that this might raise consumers' curiosity and increase their attention to the product when it is introduced at a later date. To simulate this situation, I would like to give you the name of the brand before telling you about the product they want to put on the market." With this introduction, the experimenter told participants that the brand was either Pepsi (the affect-eliciting brand) or Bonaqua (the non-affect-eliciting brand). We reinforced this information by showing the brand's logo on an overhead projector for five seconds. Then, to induce a short delay between the brand and the extension information, we reminded the participants of the company's strategy of delaying the announcement of what the extension product was. On this pretense, we asked them to complete a short form about their participation in experiments.

Finally, the experimenter passed out the product evaluation questionnaire. This form indicated that the extension product to be judged was a pair of sports shoes and that "these shoes are made of good material and have soft cushions." This information was the same in all the conditions. Participants evaluated the shoes on a scale that ranged from -5 ("dislike very much") to +5 ("like very much"). They also indicated the similarity and relatedness of the brand extension to the core brand on scales anchored by -5 ("highly dissimilar/highly unrelated") and +5 ("highly similar/highly related"). Finally, they completed measures pertaining to mood manipulation checks.

The procedure we used in the brand-first, mood-second conditions was essentially identical to that in the mood-first, brand-second conditions except for the sequence in which the tasks were administered. At the beginning of the experimental session, the experimenter introduced participants to the new product evaluation task and showed them the brand logo. The experimenter then reminded them of the company's strategy of delaying the announcement of what the new product was and, on this pretense, administered the mood-induction task rather than the experiment-participation questionnaire. After participants performed this task, they received information about the extension product and made judgments.

Results

Manipulation checks. The mood-induction procedure was successful. Participants recalled feeling happier at the time

they described their experience if it was a happy one than if it was an unhappy one (3.91 versus -3.19; $F_{(1, 122)} = 114.79$, $p < .001$). They also reported feeling happier immediately after making their product evaluations in the former condition than in the latter (1.83 versus -.81; $F_{(1, 122)} = 16.92$, $p < .001$). These effects were not contingent on other experimental manipulations ($ps > .50$).

The influence of mood on brand extension evaluations. We predicted that induced mood would have an influence on evaluations of the brand extensions only if (1) it was induced before participants were exposed to the core brand and (2) the core brand elicited affect. Data relevant to these predictions appear in Figure 2 as a function of brand type, induced mood, and the point at which we induced affect (before or after exposure to the core brand). We evaluated predictions through a series of planned comparisons using the error term based on an overall analysis of judgments as a function of these variables. When we induced mood before we presented the Pepsi logo (Figure 2, Panel A), it had a positive impact on evaluations of Pepsi sports shoes ($M_{\text{positive-mood}} = .19$ versus $M_{\text{negative-mood}} = -1.67$; difference = 1.86; $F_{(1, 122)} = 5.96$, $p < .02$). However, when we did not induce mood until after we showed participants the Pepsi logo, it had no influence ($M_{\text{positive-mood}} = -.63$ versus $M_{\text{negative-mood}} = -.69$; difference = .06; $F < 1$). Finally, when the brand was Bonaqua (Figure 2, Panel B), induced mood had no influence regardless of whether we induced it before exposure to the core brand ($M_{\text{positive-mood}} = -1.06$ versus $M_{\text{negative-mood}} = -1.30$; difference = .24) or after exposure to the core brand ($M_{\text{positive-mood}} = -.69$ versus $M_{\text{negative-mood}} = -.40$; difference = -.29; $p > .10$). Although the three-way interaction of mood, order conditions, and brand type was

not reliable ($p > .10$), a planned comparison of the condition in which we predicted an effect of mood (i.e., mood-first, brand-second conditions when the core brand elicited affect) with the three conditions in which we did not predict an effect of mood (conditions in which the core brand did not elicit affect or in which we presented it before we induced mood) supports our conclusion that mood had a greater impact in the former condition (.19 versus -1.67 when mood was positive versus negative, respectively) than in the other three conditions combined (-.79 versus -.80, respectively; $F_{(1, 126)} = 4.35$, $p < .05$).

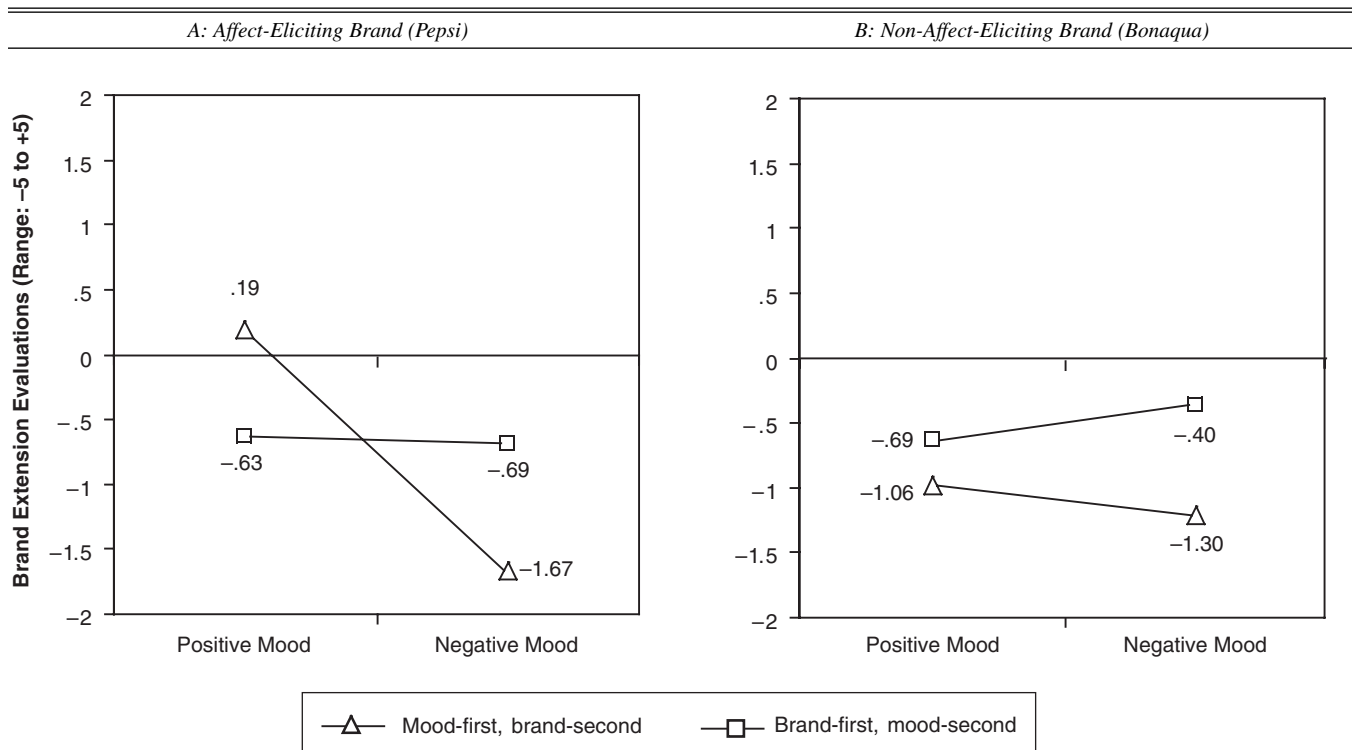
Perceptions of similarity. In contrast to previous research (Barone, Miniard, and Romeo 2000), we found little evidence that positive mood influenced perceptions of core-extension similarity. Judgments of similarity and relatedness were correlated ($r = .53$, $p < .01$), and we averaged them to provide an overall index of participants' similarity perceptions. Induced mood had little influence on these perceptions ($M_{\text{positive-mood}} = -2.32$ versus $M_{\text{negative-mood}} = -1.83$), and this was true in all the experimental conditions.

Discussion

Experiment 2 confirmed our assumptions about the way that brand-elicited affect influences brand extension evaluations. Specifically, when a core brand name elicits affective reactions, participants base their initial impressions of the extension on their perceptions of these reactions. These perceptions are influenced in part by the feelings people experience for unrelated reasons. The affect-based impressions they form then influence their subsequent extension evaluations regardless of the level of core-extension similarity. However, when the core brand does not typically elicit

Figure 2

BRAND EXTENSION EVALUATIONS AS A FUNCTION OF BRAND TYPE, INDUCED MOOD, AND ORDER CONDITION: EXPERIMENT 2



affect spontaneously, participants do not consider the affect they experience a relevant basis for their impressions, and thus the affect they experience for other reasons has little effect.

We also confirmed our assumption that brand-elicited affect had its impact on participants' brand-based initial impressions instead of exerting its influence at the time of judgment. If the latter influence had occurred, mood manipulation would have affected judgments regardless of whether we administered it before or after participants formed brand-based initial impressions of the extension. Thus, the failure of mood to affect judgments when we induced it after exposure to the core brand name eliminates this alternative interpretation.

EXPERIMENT 3

The results of Experiment 2 might appear inconsistent with Barone, Miniard, and Romeo's (2000) findings that affect has little effect on evaluations of extensions that are very dissimilar to the core brand. However, as we noted previously, participants in Barone, Miniard, and Romeo's studies were asked explicitly to judge the similarity of the extension to the core brand before they evaluated the extension. This procedure could predispose participants to base their judgments of the extension on this criterion rather than on the affect elicited by the core brand per se. Experiment 3 investigates this possibility by varying the similarity of the extension to the core brand category. Furthermore, some participants explicitly estimated core-extension similarity before evaluating it, whereas others did not. We expected to confirm Barone, Miniard, and Romeo's findings only in our former case. That is, affect should have an impact on evaluations of moderately similar extensions (whose apparent similarity to the core brand category is influenced by the affect the participants are experiencing) but not on evaluations of very dissimilar extensions. However, when participants do not estimate core-extension similarity before making their evaluations, they should base their judgments on criteria similar to those in Experiments 1 and 2. That is, the affect participants experience should influence their extension evaluations regardless of the core-extension similarity.

Method

Participants were 248 students in an Asian university who participated for course credit. We randomly assigned them to cells of a 2 (induced mood: positive versus negative) \times 2 (similarity of brand extension: moderately similar versus dissimilar to the core) \times 2 (evaluation sequence: evaluation first versus similarity first) \times 2 (core brand replication) factorial design.

Selection of stimulus materials. To ensure that differences in the core-extension similarity were not confounded with specific characteristics of the brands and extensions, we considered two dissimilar product categories: electronic products and sportswear. The core brands we selected to exemplify these categories, Panasonic and Adidas, respectively, had high prestige in the population from which we drew participants and, thus, were likely to elicit positive affect spontaneously.⁴ We then selected two extension prod-

ucts: a computer mouse, which was moderately similar to Panasonic but dissimilar to Adidas, and a leather wallet, which was moderately similar to Adidas but dissimilar to Panasonic. To confirm these assumptions, we conducted a pretest and asked participants to estimate both the similarity and the relatedness of each extension to each of the two core brands. We averaged these ratings, which we measured on scales that ranged from 0 ("not at all") to 10 ("very"), to provide a single index for each core-extension pair. Participants rated the leather wallet as a moderately similar extension of Adidas ($M = 5.61$) but a dissimilar extension of Panasonic ($M = 1.46$). Conversely, they rated the computer mouse as a moderately similar extension of Panasonic ($M = 5.46$) but a dissimilar extension of Adidas ($M = 1.89$). These differences were confirmed by an interaction between brand and extension type (both were within-subjects factors; $F_{(1, 13)} = 206.86, p < .001$). In preparing materials for the main experiment, we paired each core brand with each extension the same proportion of times. Therefore, pooled over the two core brand replications, each extension was categorized as moderately similar and as dissimilar with equal frequency.

Procedure. The procedure was similar to that in the mood-first, brand-second conditions of Experiment 2. However, after we exposed participants to the extension information, those in the evaluation-first conditions evaluated the extension and then estimated its similarity to the core. Participants in the similarity-first conditions made the two judgments in the reverse order. They reported their ratings on scales identical to those in the Experiment 1.

Results

Manipulation checks. The mood-induction procedure was successful. Participants recalled feeling happier at the time they described their life experience if the experience was a happy one than if it was an unhappy one (5.18 versus -2.70; $F_{(1, 240)} = 331.42, p < .001$). They also reported feeling slightly happier immediately after making their product evaluations in the former condition than in the latter (.29 versus -.64; $F_{(1, 240)} = 3.79, p = .05$). These effects were not contingent on other experimental manipulations ($ps > .10$).

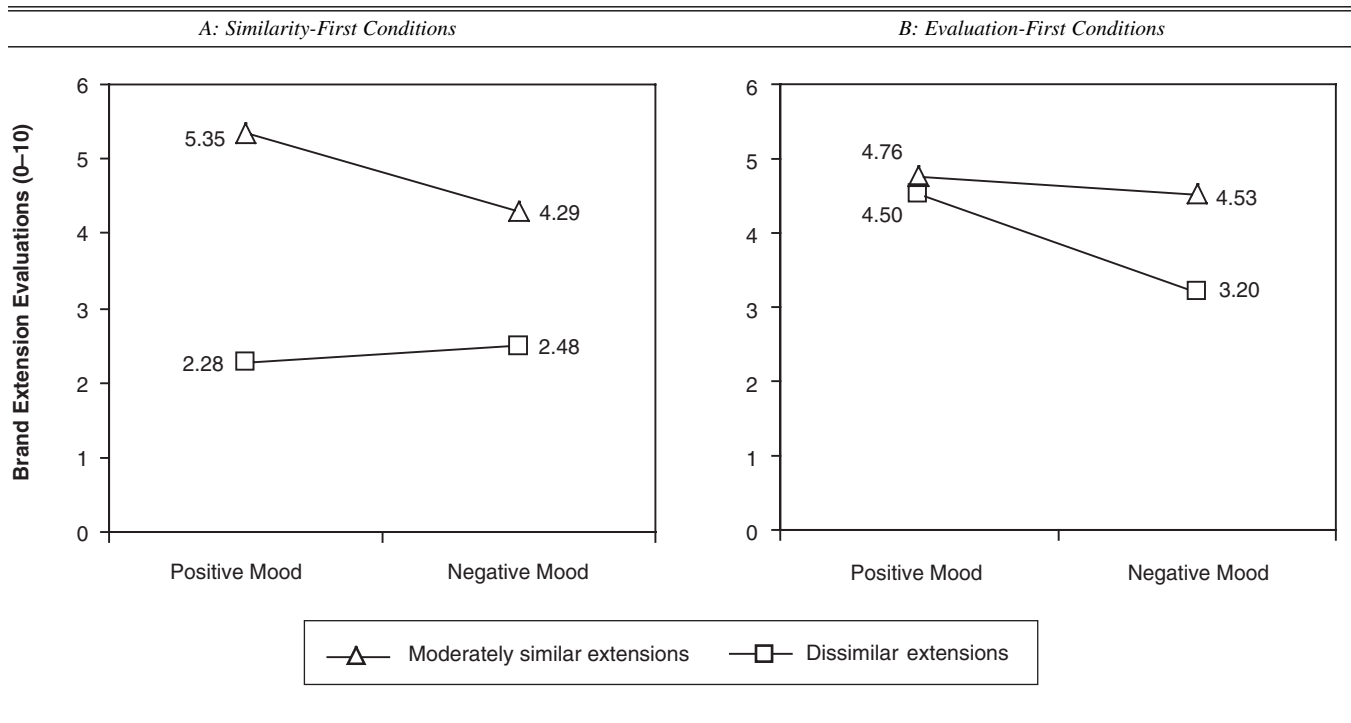
Brand extension evaluations. Preliminary analyses of the data showed that participants' responses did not differ across the two extension replications. Therefore, we pooled data over replications in subsequent analyses. In general, participants evaluated the extensions more favorably when they were moderately similar to the core brand category ($M = 4.73$) than when they were dissimilar ($M = 3.12$; $F_{(1, 240)} = 41.07, p < .01$). However, the effects of similarity on extension evaluations were appreciably greater when core-extension similarity was estimated before reporting these evaluations (4.82 versus 2.38) than when it was not (4.65 versus 3.85; $F_{(1, 240)} = 10.62, p < .01$). This suggests that when the extension's similarity to the core was not explicitly called to participants' attention, it had relatively little impact on extension evaluations.

Of greater relevance to the issues of concern in this study is the three-way interaction of mood, evaluation sequence, and similarity ($F_{(1, 240)} = 5.41, p < .05$). Data relevant to this interaction (see Figure 3) are consistent with our expecta-

⁴We asked 20 pretest participants to evaluate and indicate their subjective feelings toward eight different brand names, two of which were Panasonic and Adidas. The questionnaire we administered was similar to that in

Experiment 1. The data showed that participants had moderately positive feelings toward both Panasonic ($M = 2.87$) and Adidas ($M = 3.02$).

Figure 3
BRAND EXTENSION EVALUATIONS AS A FUNCTION OF INDUCED MOOD, EXTENSION SIMILARITY, AND JUDGMENT ORDER:
EXPERIMENT 3



tions. When participants estimated core–extension similarity before reporting their extension evaluations (Figure 3, Panel A), induced mood had a positive impact on evaluations of moderately similar extensions ($M_{\text{positive-mood}} = 5.35$ versus $M_{\text{negative-mood}} = 4.29$; $F_{(1, 240)} = 4.54$, $p < .05$) but had little influence on evaluations of dissimilar extensions (2.28 versus 2.48; $F < 1$). However, when participants evaluated brand extensions before they judged core–extension similarity (Figure 3, Panel B), they made more favorable evaluations when the induced mood was positive ($M = 4.63$) than when it was negative ($M = 3.87$; $F_{(1, 240)} = 4.61$, $p < .05$).⁵

Similarity estimates. We averaged participants' perceptions of core–extension similarity and core–extension fit and analyzed them as a function of experimental manipulations. Data relevant to this analysis appear in Figure 4. When we asked participants to make similarity judgments before reporting extension evaluations, they rated the moderately similar extension as more similar to the core when

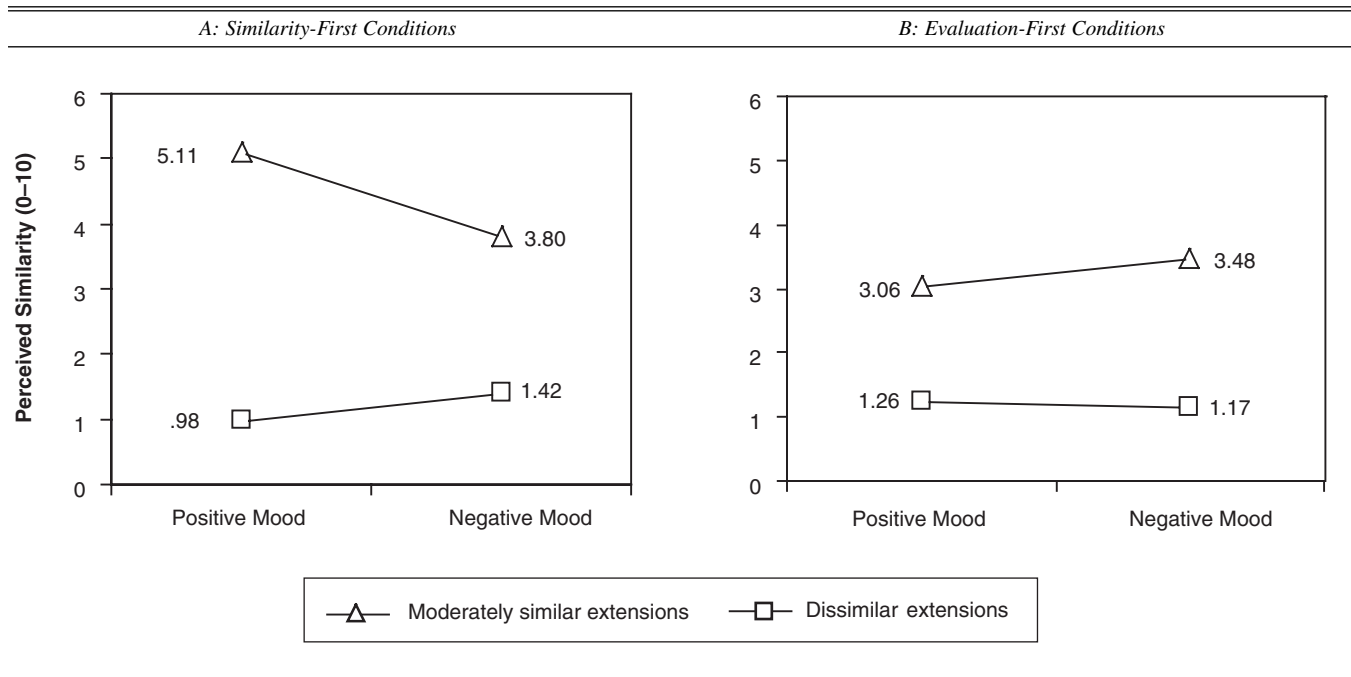
they were induced to experience a positive mood ($M = 5.11$) than when they were not ($M = 3.80$; $F_{(1, 240)} = 7.67$, $p < .01$), whereas their ratings of the dissimilar extension were not reliably affected by induced mood (.98 versus 1.42; $F < 1$). These data are consistent with Barone, Miniard, and Romeo's (2000) assumption about the influence of affect on perceptions of core–extension similarity. However, when participants estimated core–extension similarity after evaluating the extensions, induced mood had little influence on these similarity estimates regardless of whether the extensions were moderately similar (3.06 versus 3.48) or dissimilar (1.26 versus 1.17; $F < 1$ in both cases). This pattern of results is confirmed by a three-way interaction of mood, evaluation sequence, and similarity ($F_{(1, 240)} = 5.60$, $p < .02$).

Supplementary Data

Our conclusions from Experiment 3 are limited by the failure to consider conditions in which brand extensions are very similar to the core and, therefore, easily recognized as belonging to the core category. According to Barone, Miniard, and Romeo (2000), affect is also unlikely to influence perceptions of similarity in this case, and thus it should not appreciably influence evaluations of extensions that are based on this criterion. We collected supplementary data to evaluate this possibility. The procedure was similar to that in Experiment 3 except that the extensions we presented were in the same product domain as the core (computer speakers in the case of Panasonic, and protective knee pads in the case of Adidas). We randomly assigned 80 participants to eight cells of a 2 (induced mood: positive versus negative) \times 2 (evaluation sequence: evaluation first, similar-

⁵This effect was greater when the extension was dissimilar to the core ($M_{\text{positive-mood}} = 4.50$ versus $M_{\text{negative-mood}} = 3.20$; difference = 1.30) than when it was moderately similar to the core ($M_{\text{positive-mood}} = 4.76$ versus $M_{\text{negative-mood}} = 4.53$; difference = .23). Although this difference (1.07) was not statistically significant ($p > .10$), we collected additional data to verify whether this is a real effect or just a random aberration in the data. The follow-up study was a replication of the evaluation-first conditions, with a 2 (induced mood) \times 2 (core–extension similarity) factorial design. The findings were consistent with our predictions. Participants made more favorable evaluations when the induced mood was positive ($M = 5.34$) than when it was negative ($M = 4.13$), regardless of whether the extensions were moderately similar to the core brand (5.54 versus 4.25) or dissimilar to the core brand (5.13 versus 4.00). The main effect of induced mood was statistically significant ($F_{(1, 52)} = 4.26$, $p < .05$), whereas the interaction between mood and similarity was not ($F < 1$).

Figure 4
PERCEIVED CORE-EXTENSION SIMILARITY AS A FUNCTION OF INDUCED MOOD, EXTENSION SIMILARITY, AND JUDGMENT ORDER: EXPERIMENT 3



ity second versus similarity first, evaluation second) \times 2 (extension replicates: Adidas knee protective pads versus Panasonic computer speakers) design.

We found that induced mood and evaluation sequence did not influence participants' estimations of core-extension similarity; participants perceived the extensions as similar to the core brand regardless of whether they were happy or unhappy (9.35 versus 9.38, respectively) and regardless of whether similarity was estimated before they evaluated extensions or afterward (9.37 versus 9.54, respectively; $F < 1$ in both cases). In contrast, analysis of extension evaluations yielded an interaction of mood and evaluation sequence ($F_{(1, 76)} = 5.13, p < .05$). Specifically, when participants estimated core-extension similarity first, their evaluations did not depend on whether the induced mood was positive ($M = 8.01$) or negative ($M = 7.79$), as Barone, Miniard, and Romeo's (2000) findings also suggest. However, when participants evaluated brand extensions before estimating core-extension similarity, their evaluations were more favorable when they were induced to feel happy ($M = 7.43$) than when they were induced to feel unhappy ($M = 5.81$); this is consistent with our proposed conceptualization.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Prior research on brand extension evaluations assumes that these evaluations are largely mediated by perceptions of the extension's fit with the core brand category (Aaker and Keller 1990; Bottomley and Holden 2001). Moreover, prior research assumes that any possible impact of people's affective reactions on extension evaluations is mediated by the impact of these reactions on perceptions of this fit (Barone, Miniard, and Romeo 2000). In contrast, our results

show that when people have an opportunity to form an initial impression of an extension based on the core brand, this impression can influence their subsequent evaluations independently of the extension's similarity to the core. Moreover, the affect that people experience and attribute to the brand exerts its influence through its impact on this impression. Therefore, it influences extension evaluations even when the extension and the core are very dissimilar.

These conclusions do not conflict with Barone, Miniard, and Romeo's (2000) findings. That is, participants appear to base their judgments of brand extensions on their perceptions of core-extension similarity when they are explicitly asked to consider this criterion before making their judgments. In these conditions, the impact of affect on extension evaluations is mediated by its impact on similarity perceptions, as Barone, Miniard, and Romeo's results suggest. However, when participants are not prompted to consider core-extension similarity as a basis for their evaluations, they are likely to base these evaluations on the affect-based impression they formed at the time they were first exposed to the core brand name. In these conditions, brand-elicited affect has an influence on extensions regardless of the extensions' similarity to the core brand.

Several other aspects of our findings are noteworthy. First, the mood-induced affect that participants experienced influenced their extension evaluations only when the core brand elicited affect. Yeung and Wyer (2004) observe a similar contingency in the influence of contextual affect in a study of picture-based initial impressions. They find that a picture of a product stimulates the formation of an initial impression of the product, and this impression influences evaluations independently of the attribute information participants receive subsequently. However, the extraneous

affect that participants experience at the time has an impact on this impression only if the picture elicits affect. Thus, previous studies and our current studies converge on the conclusion that if consumers have an opportunity to form an initial impression of a product, the affect they experience can influence their product evaluations through its mediating impact on this impression instead of exerting its influence at the time of judgment. However, this influence is evident only when the product information that leads to the initial impression elicits affect, and thus consumers perceive their affective reactions as a relevant basis for initial impression.

Barone (2005) identifies a possible qualification for the generalizability of our conclusions. He finds that if participants have little involvement in the experiment, they use the affective reactions they experience as a heuristic basis for their extension evaluations at the time of judgment without considering other criteria, and core–extension similarity comes into play only when participants are explicitly induced to consider it before making their judgments. To this extent, the results we report in the current research may not generalize to conditions in which participants are less intrinsically interested in the judgment task at hand.

Although the mediating influence of affect on core–extension fit occurs only when participants are required to estimate this fit before making evaluations, this does not imply that Barone, Miniard, and Romeo's (2000) contingency is an experimental artifact. There are many situations outside the laboratory in which consumers spontaneously consider the fit of an extension to the core brand before arriving at an evaluation or purchase decision. In these circumstances, the affect that the core brand elicits and the extraneous affect people experience could exert an influence such as that which Barone, Miniard, and Romeo observe. Nevertheless, it seems likely that these situations are more the exception than the rule. In general, shoppers are likely to be attracted to a product with a familiar brand name and form an impression-based expectation for what the product is like based on this name before considering the product's specific attributes and their relation to the product category with which the brand is associated. If the brand is one for which affect has previously been conditioned, this affect may influence these impressions and, thus, may influence evaluations of the product independently of its similarity to the core. Furthermore, as Barone's (2005) results indicate, core–extension similarity may have little impact in this condition unless consumers consider their product evaluation of some importance. In the latter case, participants' evaluations of an extension increase with the extension's similarity to a favorable core brand independent of other considerations, as Experiment 3 indicates. However, brand-elicited affect may have an impact on extension evaluations beyond this general effect.

An additional consideration is worth noting in this context. Yeung and Wyer (2004) find that when people do not have the opportunity to form an initial impression of a product before they receive information about its attributes, the affect they experience has its impact at the time they report judgments. In this case, the influence of affect depends on the criteria that people consider relevant at that time (see Adaval 2001; Pham 1998). In our research (see also Barone,

Miniard, and Romeo 2000), participants learned about the core brand before they received information about the nature of the extension and its attributes and, thus, were particularly likely to form an initial expectation of what the extension would be like based on this information alone. Although these conditions arise in many shopping situations, there are undoubtedly situations in which people encounter an extension's brand name at the same time they receive other information about it. In this case, the brand might be treated as a product attribute and evaluated in much the same way as other attributes without being accorded special status (for evidence that other categorical criteria, such as country of origin, have different effects when they are encountered in the context of attribute information than when they are learned beforehand, see Hong and Wyer 1990.) In such conditions, the interplay between affect and core–extension fit on extension evaluations could differ from that which we identified in our studies. This possibility remains to be investigated in further research.

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