



# Bryant University

HONORS THESIS

## Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness

BY David Stahr

ADVISOR • Sukki Yoon

EDITORIAL REVIEWER • Kacy Kim

---

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation  
with honors in the Bryant University Honors Program  
November 2020

## **Table of Contents**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Abstract .....  | 1  |
| Introduction .....                                    | 2  |
| THEORETICAL BACKGROUND & HYPOTHESES .....             | 5  |
| <b>Optimal Distinctiveness Theory</b> .....           | 5  |
| <b>Consumer Product Types</b> .....                   | 7  |
| <b>GLOMO &amp; Assimilation/Contrast Effect</b> ..... | 8  |
| <b>Hypotheses</b> .....                               | 13 |
| STUDY 1 .....   | 14 |
| <b>Method</b> .....                                   | 14 |
| <b>Results</b> .....                                  | 15 |
| <b>Discussion</b> .....                               | 16 |
| STUDY 2 .....   | 17 |
| <b>Method</b> .....                                   | 17 |
| <b>Results</b> .....                                  | 20 |
| <b>Discussion</b> .....                               | 21 |
| GENERAL DISCUSSION .....                              | 21 |
| REFERENCES .....                                      | 25 |
| APPENDIX .....  | 27 |

**ABSTRACT**

The main objective of the research is to study how convenience and shopping products impact how consumers react to rivalry appeals in advertisements. The authors examine the effectiveness of rivalry appeals in advertisements and how they are impacted by the product type considered by consumers. In two studies, a 2 (prime: distinctiveness vs. inclusiveness) x 2 (message: competition vs. collaboration) ANOVA methodology was conducted on survey data. In Study 1, participants primed with distinctiveness (inclusiveness) and considering convenience products experienced an assimilation effect where they preferred competitive (collaborative) rivalry appeals. In Study 2, participants primed with distinctiveness (inclusiveness) and considering shopping products experienced a contrast effect where they preferred collaborative (competitive) rivalry appeals. The theoretical and practical implications of the results are discussed where the research contributes to the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory, global/local processing style model (GLOMO), and consumer product type literature fields. The results of the research show that rivalry appeals in advertisements can be effectively used by marketer as long as they realize that for convenience products consumers will have an assimilation effect reaction and that for shopping products consumers will have a contrast effect reaction.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Do consumers react to advertisements using rivalry appeal messages differently depending on the product type under consideration? In order to get a better understanding of these dynamics, imagine two consumers named Shane and Jacob. Shane is heading over to his local supermarket to buy groceries when he drives past a sports drink advertisement featuring NBA athletes that makes a rivalry appeal for why someone should get the drink. The rivalry appeal in the sports drink advertisement features either competitive or collaborative copies in its message to persuade Shane to get the sports drink. So, when Shane arrives at the supermarket, how will he process the sports drink advertising message and will he be persuaded to buy the sports drink? Will the fact that a sports drink is a convenience product affect his decision? Also, if Shane wants to experience more distinctiveness or inclusiveness in his life, will that affect how he responds to competitive or collaborative rivalry appeals and his final judgment of the advertisement when factoring everything else together? As for Jacob, he is putting in effort searching online for a new car when he sees a BMW advertisement that makes a rivalry appeal to convince Jacob to get a BMW. Similarly, the rivalry appeal in the BMW advertisement features either competitive or collaborative rivalry appeals in its message to persuade Jacob to get a BMW. However, unlike the sports drink, a BMW is a shopping product that requires a lot of purchasing effort since it is more risky to purchase because of its higher price. So, when Jacob makes the final decision to purchase a new car, how will he process the BMW advertisement message and will he be persuaded to buy a BMW? Will the fact that a BMW is a shopping product affect his decision differently? Lastly, if Jacob wants to experience more distinctiveness or inclusiveness in his life, will that affect how he responds

**Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**  
*Honors Thesis for David Stahr*

---

to competitive or collaborative rivalry appeals and his final judgment of the advertisement when factoring everything else together?

To satisfy the distinctiveness or inclusiveness social needs of consumers, advertising messages often use rivalry appeals. Frequent use of rivalry appeals can be observed in sport advertisements. For example, a Gatorade TV commercial featured a competitive rivalry appeal when Justin Watt advises young athletes to go “find a rival, someone committed to taking you down” because that rival will make “you raise your game” (Watt 2019). Then the Gatorade TV commercial ends with the caption “make your rival your fuel” with the tagline “win from within” alongside the Gatorade logo (Watt 2019). On the other hand, the Nike’s “Together” commercial uses a collaborative rivalry appeal, depicting Cavalier fans and players huddling together chanting “Hard work! Together!” in unity to show the collaboration it took to win the 2016 NBA basketball championship (LeBron 2014).

Rivalry appeals are also frequently used in the automotive industry. For instance, BMW invokes a rivalry appeal in The Thrill of Victory campaign with a competitive message (The Thrill of Victory 2013). In the commercial, a narrator says “The thrill of victory.... The only vehicle to win car and driver’s 10 best 22 years in a row” (The Thrill of Victory 2013). The commercial highlights how BMW beats the competition by winning a car award for 22 years in a row. Conversely, in another BMW commercial, BMW invokes a rivalry appeal with a collaborative message by bidding farewell to Dieter Zetsche CEO of Mercedes-Benz for his retirement (The Last Day 2019). The BMW commercial is named “The Last Day” because it depicts Dieter Zetsche CEO of Mercedes-Benz retiring and it ends with BMW wishing him

## **Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**

### ***Honors Thesis for David Stahr***

---

well with the caption “Thank you, Dieter Zetsche, for so many years of inspiring competition” (The Last Day 2019). In addition, another BMW advertisement that uses a rivalry appeal in an advertisement with a collaborative message is a poster that reads “Congratulations Audi for winning South African Car of the year 2006. From the Winner of World Car of the Year 2006” (Lavrinc 2006).

We argue that the effectiveness of rivalry appeals in advertisements varies depending on the product type—that is, convenience products or shopping products. When convenience products are being considered, an *assimilation* effect is likely: consumers primed for distinctiveness (inclusiveness) will favor competitive (collaborative) advertisements. Conversely, when shopping products are being considered, a *contrast* effect is likely: consumers primed for distinctiveness (inclusiveness) to favor collaborative (competitive) advertisements. We build our prediction on the global/local processing style model (GLOMO; Förster, Liberman, and Kuschel 2008), which suggests that consumers use a global processing style when they spend little time and energy purchasing convenience products, whereas consumers use a local processing style when they spend a lot of time and energy purchasing shopping products.

In the next section, we will review the relevant literature that relates to our research in the theoretical background and hypotheses section. First, the literature on Optimal Distinctiveness Theory – as well as related research – will be examined because it explains the importance of the distinctiveness and inclusiveness social needs and why people desire them. Next, the literature on consumer product types will be examined because convenience and shopping

**Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**  
*Honors Thesis for David Stahr*

---

products are the factors that determine an assimilation and contrast effect respectively once integrated with GLOMO. Then logically research on GLOMO will be examined since the model forms the conceptualization as to why convenience and shopping products can lead to an assimilation and contrast effect respectively for consumers as a reaction towards rivalry appeals in advertisements. Finally, we end the theoretical background and hypotheses section by presenting our hypotheses.

For the rest of the paper, we will present two experimental studies and end with a general discussion. Study 1 tests the assimilation effect hypothesis and shows that people considering convenience products as well as primed with distinctiveness (inclusiveness) prefer competitive (collaborative) rivalry appeals in advertisements. Study 2 tests the contrast effect hypothesis and shows that people considering shopping products as well as primed with distinctiveness (inclusiveness) prefer collaborative (competitive) rivalry appeals in advertisements. Lastly, we conclude our paper by discussing the theoretical and practical implications of our results.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND & HYPOTHESES**

### **Optimal Distinctiveness Theory**

According to optimal distinctiveness theory, people have two conflicting social needs that determine how they join and participate in social groups: distinctiveness and inclusiveness (Leonardelli, Pickett, and Brewer 2010). These two needs are conflicting because distinctiveness increases when inclusiveness decreases and vice versa. The conflict between these social needs happens because distinctiveness, or the feeling of being a unique

**Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**  
*Honors Thesis for David Stahr*

---

individual, is not possible when someone pursues inclusiveness as assimilation into a social group requires giving up individuality in order to attain conformity with other group members (Leonardelli, Pickett, and Brewer 2010). Consequently, individuals seek for an optimal balance between distinctiveness and inclusiveness. As a result, people want to be a part of social groups that satisfy both needs with an optimal balance (Leonardelli, Pickett, and Brewer 2010).

Hornsey and Jetten (2004) showed that people can use four different strategies to feel more distinctiveness and inclusiveness (Hornsey and Jetten 2004). The four strategies are role differentiation, identifying with an individualistic group, seeing oneself as loyal but non-conformist, and seeing the self to be more normative than other group members (Hornsey and Jetten 2004). However, we argue that marketers can also use rivalry appeals in advertisements to satisfy the distinctiveness and inclusiveness social needs of consumers. While most research viewed rivalries as a mainly negative phenomenon such as an identity threat (Tyler and Cobbs 2015), Berendt and Uhrich (2016) put rivalries in a positive light by showing that, when managed properly, rivalries can enhance sports fans collective self-esteem, ingroup cohesion, and perceived ingroup distinctiveness (Berendt and Uhrich 2016, pg. 625). Relevant to our research, Berendt and Uhrich (2016) showed that rivalries can enhance ingroup distinctiveness.

Building on Berendt and Uhrich's (2016) findings, we examine the benefits of enhanced ingroup distinctiveness in an advertising context. Specifically, as Berendt and Uhrich (2016) focused mainly on sport social groups, we create an advertisement for a sports drink product

## **Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**

### ***Honors Thesis for David Stahr***

---

that features basketball players. We vary the ad copies with different rivalry appeals—either competitive or collaborative rivalry appeals—and show that rivalries can create distinctiveness for people in a sports advertising context environment.

In addition, by using the real-world brands such as BMW, Apple versus Samsung, and Nike versus Adidas, Berendt, Uhrich, and Thompson (2018) also show that rivalries can create distinctiveness for consumers and brands within the business environment (Berendt, Uhrich, and Thompson 2018). Therefore, we provide evidence to marketers and brand managers that utilizing rivalry appeals will enhance ingroup distinctiveness for consumers in need of the distinctiveness social need. We present two experimental studies to support the idea that rivalry appeals in advertisements can satisfy the distinctiveness and inclusiveness social needs of consumers.

### **Consumer Product Types**

Rivalry appeals in advertisements may result in an assimilation or contrast effect reaction, depending on consumer product types. Copeland (1923) showed that there are three consumer product types: convenience products, shopping products, and specialty products (Copeland 1923). Then Murphy and Enis (1986) added preference products as a fourth consumer product type and further updated Copeland's classification scheme by defining products in terms of effort and risk dimensions (Murphy and Enis 1986). However, for the purposes of our study, we will be only using convenience and shopping products. The important aspects of convenience products are that consumers perceive little risk and use little purchasing effort when buying them (Murphy and Enis 1986). For instance, since a sports drink convenience

**Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**  
*Honors Thesis for David Stahr*

---

product will cost only about \$8, a consumer will not see the purchase as all that risky because of the spork drink's low price and so they will not spend much purchasing effort on the product (Murphy and Enis 1986). This small amount of purchasing effort that consumers use for convenience products means that a global processing method will be used by them that results in an assimilation effect. Whereas the important aspect of shopping products is that consumers spend a lot of purchasing effort when buying them because they think shopping products are more risky as a result of their higher price (Murphy and Enis 1986). To illustrate, a typical car can cost roughly \$30,000 that is more of a risky purchase since the price is higher and a mistake car purchase will set someone back by a lot of money (Murphy and Enis 1986). This large amount of purchasing effort that consumer use for shopping products means that a local processing method will be used by them that results in a contrast effect. So, the sports drink advertisement that we used in our research is a convenience product that results in little purchasing effort for consumers that causes them to use a global processing method thereby creating an assimilation effect reaction towards rivalry appeals in advertisements.

Additionally, the car advertisement that we used in our research is a shopping product that involves a lot of purchasing effort for consumers that causes them to use a local processing method thereby creating a contrast effect reaction towards rivalry appeals in advertisements.

**GLOMO & Assimilation/Contrast Effect**

Förster, Liberman, and Stefanie (2008) showed that GLOMO (global/local processing model) can account for why people experience an assimilation and a contrast effect (Förster, Liberman, and Stefanie 2008). GLOMO states that people experience an assimilation or a contrast effect based on if they process information globally or locally respectively (Förster,

## **Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**

### ***Honors Thesis for David Stahr***

---

Liberman, and Stefanie 2008). Global processing means that someone tends to first see the gestalt or general aspects of structures (Förster, Liberman, and Stefanie 2008). Whereas local processing means that someone tends to first see the piecemeal or detailed aspects of structures (Förster, Liberman, and Stefanie 2008). Or to put it another way, does someone first see the forest or the trees as the old proverb says with the forest representing global processing and trees representing local processing. Then Förster and Dannenbarg (2010) showed how the newer GLOMOsys (global/local processing model, a systems account) further explained how perceptual processing relates to conceptual processing that influences if an assimilation or a contrast effect will be experienced by a person (Förster and Dannenbarg 2010). This effect of perceptual processing on conceptual processing meant that factors such as similarity (dissimilarity) generation and exclusive (inclusive) categorization will influence whether an assimilation (contrast) effect reaction in social judgments will be experienced by a person. (Förster and Dannenbarg 2010).

The reason why processing styles affects social judgments such as advertisement evaluation decisions is because what information people focus on influences their perceptions on social judgments. So, when global or local processing is used, a person can trigger further processes that are “highly relevant for the development of assimilation or contrast effect, such as inclusion or exclusion and similarity search” (Förster, Liberman, and Stefanie 2008). This makes sense as someone who spends little purchasing effort to buy a convenience product will process information globally because they do not want to pay attention to details. Consequently, since a global information processing method is chosen when consumers consider convenience products, the consumers will focus on information in a board manner

**Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**  
*Honors Thesis for David Stahr*

---

thereby invoking inclusion on a target social judgment – or a rivalry appeal advertisement.

This inclusion on a target social judgment means that someone will assimilate classification categories together creating an assimilation effect. As a result, if global processing is used in the evaluation of rivalry appeals, a person will focus on information broadly that causes them to include categories together such as their feelings of distinctiveness (inclusiveness) to the competitive (collaborative) rivalry appeal advertisements thereby creating an assimilation effect. Consequently, perceptual processing influences conceptual processing on social judgments such global processing causing a person to have an assimilation effect reaction towards rivalry appeals in advertisements (Förster and Dannenbarg 2010).

Conversely, someone who spends a lot of purchasing effort to buy a shopping product will process information locally since they will want to pay attention to the details. So, since a local information processing method is chosen when consumers consider shopping products, the consumers will focus on information in a narrow manner thereby invoking exclusion on a target social judgment – or a rivalry appeal advertisement. This exclusion on a target social judgment means that someone will contrast classification categories against on another creating a contrast effect. As a result, if local processing is used in the evaluation of rivalry appeals, a person will focus on information narrowly that causes them to exclude categories against on another such as their feelings of distinctiveness (inclusiveness) to the collaborative (competitive) rivalry appeal advertisements thereby creating a contrast effect. So, perceptual processing influences conceptual processing on social judgments such local processing causing a person to have a contrast effect reaction towards rivalry appeals in advertisements (Förster and Dannenbarg 2010). Therefore, in short, GLOMO makes the connection that

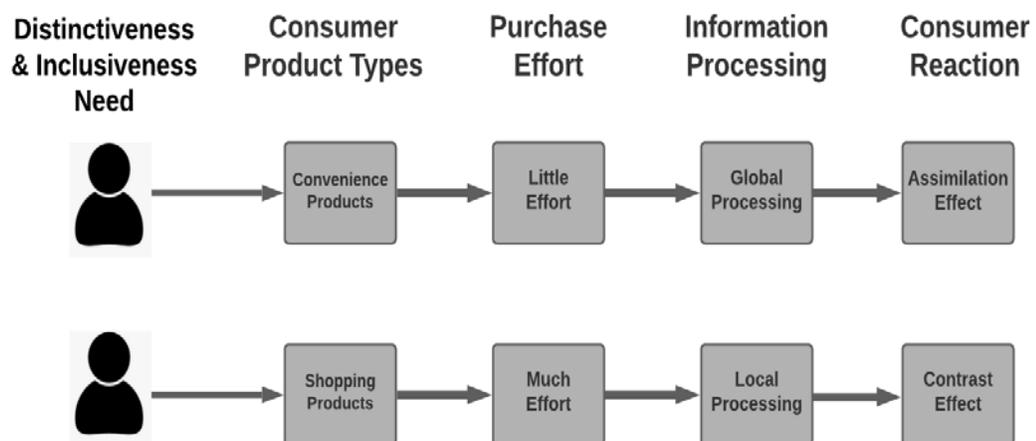
## **Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**

*Honors Thesis for David Stahr*

---

global and local processing will result in an assimilation and contrast effect respectively (Förster, Liberman, and Stefanie 2008). Consequently, when GLOMO is paired with the rest of the theoretical components, we get our conceptualization model that we predict for our two studies (Figure 1):

*Figure 1- Conceptualization Model*



The first part is that a consumer who is desiring either distinctiveness or inclusiveness considers a convenience or a shopping product. The reason why the consumer product type is important is because it determines how much purchasing effort people use when they buy products. Then after that, the purchase effort used by people results in the information processing method they use that causes them to react to rivalry appeals in advertisements with either an assimilation effect or a contrast effect. This reaction makes competitive and collaborative rivalry appeals in advertisements persuasive to consumers because the distinctiveness and inclusiveness social needs of consumers is satisfied by the advertisements.

**Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**  
*Honors Thesis for David Stahr*

---

To illustrate, for convenience products, consumers use little purchasing effort when buying convenience products. Therefore, global processing will be used by consumers because it involves a general focus on information since again consumers spend little purchasing effort on convenience products. As a result, consumers have an assimilation effect reaction towards rivalry appeals in advertisements because how information is processed by consumers affects their perceptions that in turn helps consumers to form social judgments such as their evaluations on rivalry appeal advertisements. This perception formation leads to an assimilation effect since global processing widens the conceptual scope of consumers that fosters an inclusion view that the prime and the target belong to the same category. So, when consumers consider convenience products and are primed with distinctiveness, they will find competitive rivalry appeal advertisements to be more persuasive. Whereas, when consumers consider convenience products, and are primed with inclusiveness, they will find collaborative rivalry appeal advertisements to be more persuasive.

Furthermore, for shopping products, consumers use a lot of purchasing effort when buying shopping products. Therefore, local processing will be used by consumers because it involves a detailed focus on information since once more consumers spend a lot of purchasing effort on shopping products. As a result, consumers have a contrast effect reaction towards rivalry appeals in advertisements because how information is processed by consumers affects their perceptions that in turn helps consumers form social judgments such as their evaluations on rivalry appeals in advertisements. This perception formation leads to a contrast effect since local processing narrows the conceptual scope of consumers that fosters an exclusion view that the prime and the target belong to separate categories. So, when consumers consider

## **Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**

### ***Honors Thesis for David Stahr***

---

shopping products and are primed with distinctiveness, they will find collaborative rivalry appeal advertisements to be more persuasive. Whereas, when consumers consider shopping products, and are primed with inclusiveness, they will find competitive rivalry appeal advertisements to be more persuasive. In conclusion, rivalry appeals in advertisements can be an effective tool for marketers depending upon the consumer product type they will promote that determines how distinctiveness or inclusiveness social needs of consumers will be satisfied.

### **Hypotheses**

Based on the scientific literature, we predict two hypotheses that depends upon the consumer product types people consider that determines if they experience an assimilation or a contrast effect reaction towards rivalry appeals in advertisements.

For the assimilation effect, we predict the following hypothesis:

**H1:** Competitive (collaborative) rivalry appeal advertisements will be more effective on consumers who are primed with distinctiveness (inclusiveness) and are considering convenience products.

For the contrast effect, we predict the following hypothesis:

**H2:** Competitive (collaborative) rivalry appeal advertisements will be more effective on consumers who are primed for inclusiveness (distinctiveness) and are considering shopping products.

## **STUDY 1**

Study 1 was designed to test H1, the assimilation effect. We predicted that participants primed for distinctiveness will find competitive advertisements to be persuasive whereas participants primed for inclusiveness will find collaborative advertisements to be persuasive with them showing higher purchasing intentions for both situations.

### **Method**

**Emotion Priming.** To activate the feelings of distinctiveness and inclusiveness, we used a memory-based essay priming method that asked participants to write about past experiences in which they felt distinctiveness and inclusiveness. The memory-based method induced feelings of distinctiveness (inclusiveness) for consumers that when paired with them considering a convenience product created an assimilation effect on participants that resulted in someone preferring competitive (collaborative) rivalry appeals in advertisements.

*Study Design and Participants.* This study utilized a 2 (prime: distinctiveness vs. inclusiveness) x 2 (message: competition vs. collaboration) between-subjects factorial design. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. A total of 122 students participated in this experiment in exchange for course credit (52% male; 18 to 35 years old [ $M = 20.28$ ,  $SD = 1.63$ ]). The participants conducted the experiment on the computer-based software Qualtrics.

*Procedure and Stimulus ads.* First, participants randomly experienced either a distinctiveness or inclusiveness priming method. The priming method was a memory-based essay that asked

## **Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**

### ***Honors Thesis for David Stahr***

---

participants to write a short paragraph about two past experiences in which they felt inclusion or distinction towards a group in as much detail as possible. For the priming procedure, participants were first told to recall two times when they personally felt distinct or similar in a group depending on if they got the distinctiveness or inclusiveness prime respectively. Then participants read directions that told them write about their two recollections as a short paragraph for one minute. After the priming, participants viewed target advertisements that used the rivalry appeals of competition or collaboration that all had the same fictitious brand called Nutrition Water as a convenience product shown in the advertisements. The basketball advertisement using competition rivalry appeal read: “Compete to Succeed.” The basketball advertisement using collaboration rivalry appeal read: “Collaborate to Succeed.” Both advertisements can be seen in the Appendix section. Next participants were asked to rate certain aspects of the brand or advertisement as described below.

*Measures.* For a dependent measure, participants indicated the likelihood that they would purchase the Nutrition Water brand on a three-item, seven-point scale anchored by *Very Unlikely/Very Likely*, *Impossible/Possible*, and *Improbable/Probable*, averaged to form an index for purchase intention to buy Nutrition Water, where a higher score indicates more positive intention ( $\alpha = .91$ ). Also, participants answered demographic questions (age, gender, and ethnicity).

## **Results**

A 2 (prime: distinctiveness vs. inclusiveness) x 2 (message: competition vs. collaboration) ANOVA revealed no main effects of prime ( $F(1, 118) = 1.93, p = .16$ ) and message ( $F(1,$

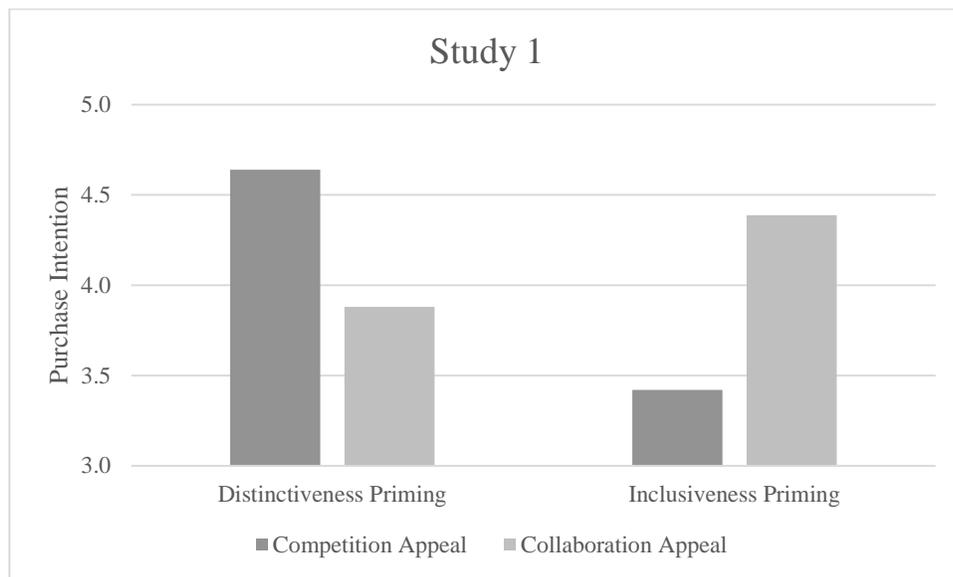
## Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness

### Honors Thesis for David Stahr

---

118) = .15,  $p = .69$ ). However, as predicted by the assimilation effect hypothesis, a significant interaction effect emerged for purchase intentions ( $F(1, 118) = 22.53, p < .001$ ). As Figure 2 shows, simple effect analysis results showed that when participants were primed with distinctiveness, the competition ad copy (M competition = 4.64) rather than the collaboration ad copy (M collaboration = 3.88) led to higher purchase intentions ( $t(56) = 2.18, p < .05$ ). In contrast, when participants were primed with inclusiveness, the collaboration ad copy (M collaboration = 4.38) rather than the competition ad copy (M competition = 3.42) led to higher purchase intentions ( $t(62) = -2.55, p < .05$ ). Therefore, our assimilation hypothesis was supported by the results.

Figure 2 - Assimilation Effect



## Discussion

The results of Study 1 supported the assimilation effect hypothesis. Specifically, people primed for distinctiveness found competitive rivalry appeals to be more persuasive and so people showed more purchasing intention for the fictitious Nutrition Water brand shown to

## **Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**

### ***Honors Thesis for David Stahr***

---

them. For example, under the distinctiveness priming and competition appeal condition, people indicated that they would purchase Nutrition Water with a 4.640 versus the 3.880 indicated by people in the distinctiveness and collaboration appeal condition. Conversely, people primed for inclusiveness found collaborative rivalry appeals to be more persuasive and so people showed more purchasing intention for the fictitious Nutrition Water brand shown to them. To illustrate, under the inclusiveness priming and collaboration appeal condition, people indicated that they would purchase Nutrition Water with a 4.387 versus the 3.420 indicated by people in the inclusiveness priming and competition appeal condition. As a result, when consumers consider convenience products with rivalry appeal advertisements, consumers react to the advertisements with an assimilation effect.

## **STUDY 2**

In Study 2, we aimed to test H2 the contrast effect hypothesis. Unlike Study 1, we expected that participants primed for distinctiveness should prefer collaborative advertisements and a person primed for inclusiveness should prefer competitive advertisements.

### **Method**

*Emotion Priming.* To activate the feelings of distinctiveness and inclusiveness, we used a false feedback priming method that told participants their personality type after a personality test. He, Liu, and Zhou (2010) showed that a false feedback priming method can induce feelings of distinctiveness and inclusiveness (He, Liu, and Zhou 2010). The people in the distinctiveness condition were told that their personality type was very distinctive representing only 1% of the population (He, Liu, and Zhou 2010). The people in the

## **Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**

### ***Honors Thesis for David Stahr***

---

inclusiveness condition were told that their personality type was very similar representing 80% of the population (He, Liu, and Zhou 2010). Then, to conclude the priming, participants were told to list evidence that supported the false personality type they were given to reinforce the prime (He, Liu, and Zhou 2010). The false feedback priming method induced feelings of distinctiveness (inclusiveness) for consumers that when paired with them considering a shopping product created a contrast effect on participants that resulted in someone preferring collaborative (competitive) rivalry appeals in advertisements.

*Study Design and Participants.* This study utilized a 2 (prime: distinctiveness vs. inclusiveness) x 2 (message: competition vs. collaboration) between-subjects factorial design. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. A total of 117 Amazon MTurk workers participated in this experiment in exchange for a 70-cent payment for completing the survey (64% male; 20 to 63 years old [ $M = 34.93$ ,  $SD = 10.11$ ]). The participants conducted the experiment on the computer-based software Qualtrics.

*Procedure and Stimulus ads.* First, participants randomly experienced either a distinctiveness or inclusiveness priming method. The priming method was false feedback given to participants after completing a personality test. Once accepting the consent, the participants were told that they will take the Fairweather-Johnson Personality Test, or FJPT, that is a fictitious personality test that gives false feedback to prime participants to feel either distinctiveness or inclusiveness. After reading the instructions for the FJPT, participants were told to rate on a scale if they agree or disagree that the below statement described them. The participants rated their personal qualities on a 20-item, seven-point scale anchored by *I*

## **Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**

### ***Honors Thesis for David Stahr***

---

*Agree/7 Disagree*. Then, on the completion of the FJPT, participants were presented an hourglass animation with the caption “Calculating...” to make them believe that the fake results provided were in fact real. The fake results given to participants told them that they were either an X-Type Personality that represented 1% of the population for the distinctiveness condition or a Z-Type Personality that represented 80% of the population for the inclusiveness condition. Finally, participants were told to list five pieces of evidence that they provided to support the fake personality type they were given to reinforce the prime. Similar to Study 1, after the priming, participants viewed target advertisements that used the rivalry appeals of competition or collaboration for a real-world Tesla car brand. The Tesla advertisement using competition rivalry appeal read: “Our Innovation Comes from Our Competitive Community & Is What Drives Us.” The Tesla advertisement using collaboration rivalry appeal read: “Our Innovation Comes from Our Collaborative Community & Is What Drives Us.” Both advertisements can be seen in the Appendix section. Next participants were asked to rate certain aspects of the brand or advertisement they saw on a seven-point scale.

*Measures*. For a dependent measure, participants indicated the likelihood that they would purchase the Tesla on a three-item, seven-point scale anchored by *Very Unlikely/Very Likely*, *Impossible/Possible*, and *Improbable/Probable*, averaged to form an index for purchase intention to buy a Tesla car, where a higher score indicates more positive intention ( $\alpha = .80$ ). Also, participants answered demographic questions (age, gender, and ethnicity).

## Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness

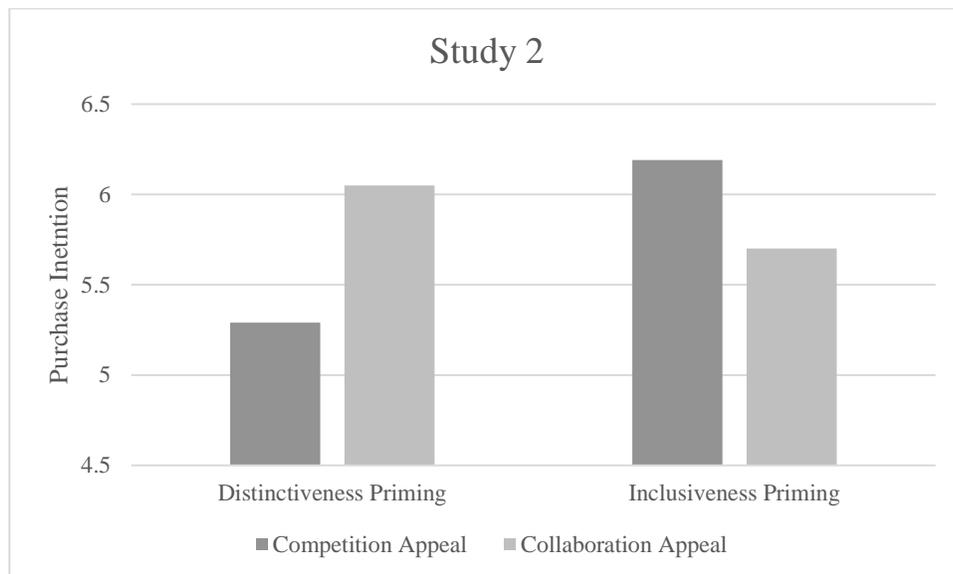
*Honors Thesis for David Stahr*

---

### Results

A 2 (prime: distinctiveness vs. inclusiveness) x 2 (message: competition vs. collaboration) ANOVA revealed no main effects of prime ( $F(1, 113) = 2.27, p = .13$ ) and message ( $F(1, 113) = .57, p = .44$ ). However, as predicted by the contrast effect hypothesis, a significant interaction effect emerged for purchase intentions ( $F(1, 113) = 11.52, p < .001$ ). As Figure 3 shows, simple effect analysis results showed that when participants were primed with distinctiveness, the collaboration ad copy (M collaboration = 6.05) rather than the competition ad copy (M competition = 5.29) led to higher purchase intentions ( $t(48) = -2.51, p < .05$ ). In contrast, when participants were primed with inclusiveness, the competition ad copy (M competition = 6.70) rather than the collaboration ad copy (M collaboration = 6.19) led to higher purchase intentions ( $t(65) = 2.17, p < .05$ ). Therefore, our contrast hypothesis was supported by the results.

*Figure 3 - Contrast Effect*



### **Discussion**

The results of Study 2 supported the contrast effect hypothesis. Specifically, people primed for distinctiveness found collaborative rivalry appeals to be more persuasive and so people showed more purchasing intention for the Tesla car shown to them. For example, under the distinctiveness priming and collaboration appeal condition, people indicated that they would purchase the Tesla with a 6.05 versus the 5.29 indicated by people in the distinctiveness and competition appeal condition. Conversely, people primed for inclusiveness found competitive rivalry appeals to be more persuasive and so people showed more purchasing intention for the Tesla car shown to them. To illustrate, under the inclusiveness priming and competition appeal condition, people indicated that they would purchase a Tesla car with a 6.18 versus the 5.7 indicated by people in the inclusiveness priming and collaboration rivalry appeal condition. Consequently, when consumers consider shopping products with rivalry appeal advertisements, consumers react to the advertisements with a contrast effect.

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

In this research, we found evidence that consumers find rivalry appeals in advertisements to be persuasive for convenience and shopping products being considered by consumers with them showing higher purchasing intention for the products shown in the advertisements. The findings supported that consumers would react to convenience products with an assimilation effect and a contrast effect for shopping products. In Study 1, we found that distinctiveness (inclusiveness) primed participants preferred competitive (collaborative) rivalry appeals in advertisements with them finding it more persuasive when they considered a Nutrition Water

**Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**  
*Honors Thesis for David Stahr*

---

convenience product resulting in an assimilation effect. In Study 2, we found that distinctiveness (inclusiveness) primed participants preferred collaborative (competitive) rivalry appeals in advertisements with them finding it more persuasive when they considered a Tesla car shopping product resulting in a contrast effect.

Our findings have several implications for researchers and practitioners. First, from a theoretical standpoint, our research integrates theoretical perspectives from the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory, consumer product type literature, and GLOMO literature. Now researchers and marketers are better positioned to utilize rivalry appeals in advertisements for convenience and shopping products. This use of rivalry appeals in advertisements allows marketers to be able to satisfy the distinctiveness and inclusiveness social needs of consumers with the added benefit of creating higher purchasing intentions.

Second, the current research contributes to the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory literature. Previous literature had established that rivalries can create distinctiveness for consumers (Berendt, Uhrich and Thompson 2018). However, the other half of Optimal Distinctiveness Theory has been overlooked in terms that rivalries might be able to create feelings of inclusiveness for consumers. Therefore, the current research compliments early studies showing that rivalries create distinctiveness for people (Berendt and Uhrich 2016). Moreover, the current research also applies the social needs of Optimal Distinctiveness Theory in a marketing perspective creating future research opportunities for the two fields.

**Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**  
*Honors Thesis for David Stahr*

---

Third, the current research further shows how important consumer product types are in influencing consumer behavior. Traditionally, consumer product type considerations impacted the distribution method as well as promotion strategy used by marketers to sell their products (Copeland 1923). However, our research means that marketers also need to consider how consumer product types impact the message reaction consumers have towards a marketer's advertisement. The findings suggest that convenience and shopping products cause an assimilation and contrast effect reaction respectively towards an advertisement's rivalry appeal message. This means that for convenience products marketers should expect consumers desiring distinctiveness (inclusiveness) to prefer competitive (collaborative) rivalry appeals in advertisements and find them to be more persuasive. Whereas, for shopping products, marketers should expect consumers desiring distinctiveness (inclusiveness) to prefer collaborative (competitive) rivalry appeal in advertisements and find them to be more persuasive.

Fourth, the current research supports GLOMO and the connection it makes between global (local) processing to (assimilation) contrast effect (Förste, Liberman, and Kuschel 2008). The way consumers process information because of the product type being considered impacts their evaluations of social judgments such as an assimilation or contrast effect reaction to rivalry appeals in advertisements. Therefore, the findings of GLOMO are more generalized and can be applied in the marketing field. Consequently, researchers and practitioners from both the GLOMO as well as the marketing field can apply concepts to each other's fields.

**Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**  
*Honors Thesis for David Stahr*

---

From a practical standpoint, marketers may benefit from using rivalry appeals in advertisements to persuade consumers. In real-world settings, marketers can incorporate a competitor in an advertisement with a rivalry appeal that will lead to a higher purchasing intention reaction for a consumer. In addition, consumers themselves can benefit from the rivalry appeals used in advertisements by having their distinctiveness and inclusiveness social needs satisfied from the advertisements. In conclusion, rivalry appeals in advertisements can be effectively used by marketer as long as they realize that for convenience products consumers will have an assimilation effect reaction and that for shopping products consumers will have a contrast effect reaction.

## **REFERENCES**

- Berendt, Johannes, Sebastian Uhrich, and Scott A. Thompson (2018), “Marketing, get ready to rumble—How rivalry promotes distinctiveness for brands and consumers,” *Journal of Business Research*, 88, 161-172.
- Berendt, Johannes, and Sebastian Uhrich (2016), “Enemies with benefits: the dual role of rivalry in shaping sports fans’ identity,” *European Sport Management Quarterly* 16 (5), 613-34.
- Copeland, Melvin T. (1923), “Relation of Consumers’ Buying Habits to Marketing Methods,” *Harvard Business Review*, 1 (3), 282-89.
- Förster, Jens and Laura Dannenberg (2010), “GLOMOsys: A Systems Account of Global Versus Local Processing,” *Psychological Inquiry*, 21 (3), 175-97.
- Förster, Jens, Niria Liberman, and Stefanie Kuschel (2008), “The Effect of Global Versus Local Processing Styles on Assimilation Versus Contrast in Social Judgment,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94 (4), 579-99.
- He, Lingnan, Yanping Liu, and Xinyue Zhou (2010) “The pursuit of optimal distinctiveness and consumer preferences,” *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 51 (5), 411-17.
- Hornsey, Matthew J., Jolanda Jetten (2004), “The Individual Within the Group: Balancing the Need to Belong with the Need to Be Different,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 8 (3), 248-64.
- Lavrinc, Damon, (2006), “Ad Fight!: BMW, Audi and Subaru in ad grudge match,” *Auto Blog*, <https://www.autoblog.com/2006/08/08/ad-fight-audi-bmw-and-subaru-take-each-other-on/>.

**Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**  
*Honors Thesis for David Stahr*

---

LeBron, James (2014), "Together," *iSpot.tv*, <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7u4u/nike-together-featuring-lebron-james>.

Leonardelli, Geoffrey J., Cynthia L. Pickett, and Marilyn B. Brewer (2010), "Chapter 2 - Optimal Distinctiveness Theory: A Framework for Social Identity, Social Cognition, and Intergroup Relations," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 43, 63-113.

Murphy, Patrick E., and Ben M. Enis (1986), "Classifying Products Strategically," *Journal of Marketing*, 50 (3), 24-42.

"The Last Day," (2019) *Facebook*, <https://www.facebook.com/BMW/videos/the-last-day/299099374335533/>.

"The Thrill of Victory," (2013) *iSpot.tv*, <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7wiq/bmw-3-series-the-thrill-of-victory>.

Tyler, David B., and Joe B. Cobbs (2015), "Rival conceptions of rivalry: why some competitions mean more than others," *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 14 (2), 227-48.

Watt, Justin J. (2019), "Make Your Rival Your Fuel," *iSpot.tv*, <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/oGOf/gatorade-make-your-rival-your-fuel-featuring-jj-watt>.

**Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**  
*Honors Thesis for David Stahr*

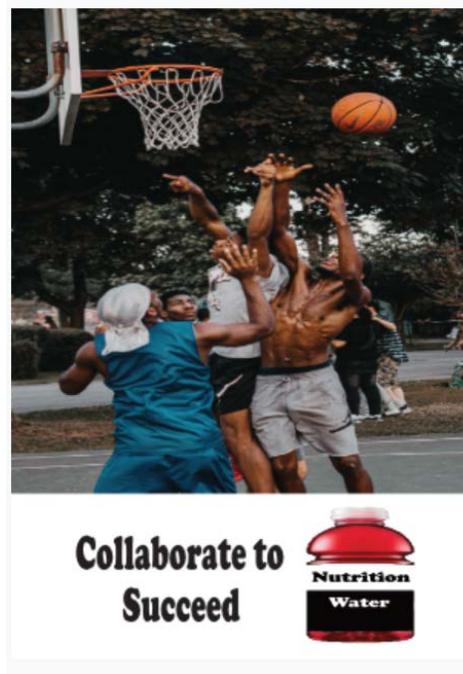
---

**APPENDIX**

*Figure 4 - The stimulus ad with a competitive rivalry appeal (Study 1)*



*Figure 5 - The stimulus ad with a collaborative rivalry appeal (Study 1)*



**Rivalry Appeals in Advertising: Distinctiveness Versus Inclusiveness**  
*Honors Thesis for David Stahr*

---

*Figure 6 - The stimulus ad with a competitive rivalry appeal (Study 2)*



*Figure 7 - The stimulus ad with a collaborative rivalry appeal (Study 2)*

