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## Full Length Article May the force drag your dynamic logo: The brand work-energy effect☆

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#### ABSTRACT

We introduce force in dynamic brand logos as a cue to brand work and subsequent brand energy; constructs we develop and distinguish from brand engagement. We argue the phenomenon observed is due to a brand work-energy effect, whereby the depiction of a drag force (opposite direction to motion) in brand logos enhances consumer judgments of brand work, which results in greater perceived brand energy. Taking a Newtonian physics lens, we argue that the presence of a drag force within a dynamic brand logo positively affects an individual's judgment of the brand's work (effort and trying hard) and brand's energy (momentum, power, and drive) and, subsequently, their brand attitude, purchase intention, and actual behavior. Across four experiments we manipulate brand logo design through the absence of force without motion (static logo), the absence of force with motion (kinematic logo), and the presence of force with motion (i.e., gravitational, spring, air resistance, and tension force; dynamic logo). Results demonstrate that the presence of a drag force in brand logos increases brand attitude and behavior. We demonstrate that brand work and brand energy, rather than brand engagement, sequentially explain attitudinal and behavioral judgments derived from brand logo drag force through a brand work-energy effect and a brand energy halo effect. We also determine that a thrust force of air propulsion results in attenuation of our brand work-energy effect, with high magnitude of a drag force enhancing the effect.

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#### 1. Introduction

Brand logos are important brand elements that have a direct impact on the brand's reputation (Baker & Balmer, 1997), brand loyalty (Müller, Kocher, & Crettaz, 2013), the financial value of a company (Schechter, 1993; Van Riel & Van den Ban, 2001), and overall firm performance (Park, Eisingerich, Pol, & Park, 2013). Brand logos are the most salient visual element of a brand, facilitating brand identification and differentiation (Janiszewski & Meyvis, 2001) and serving as the primary visual representation of a brand's image and meaning (Henderson & Cote, 1998; MacInnis, Shapiro, & Mani, 1999). Companies invest heavily in brand logo design and redesign. For example, *British Petroleum* (BP) spent \$211 million on its redesigned logo in 2000 and *Pepsi* paid \$1 million to Arnell Group in 2008 for its latest logo design (Business Insider, 2013). Little research, however, examines the effectiveness of brand logo design elements. Previous research on brand logo design has examined the role brand logo color (Baxter, Ilicic, &

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Kulczynski, 2017; Labrecque & Milne, 2012), complexity (i.e., multi-meaning; Janiszewski & Meyvis, 2001), shape (Baxter, Ilicic, Kulczynski, & Lowrey, 2015), location and size on packaging (Orth & Malkewitz, 2008), and harmony (balance and symmetry; Henderson, Cote, Leong, & Schmitt, 2003) on brand evaluations, including perceptions of brand personality and preference. This study examines how *active* brand logo design can influence consumer attitudes and behaviors.

Henderson and Cote (1998) highlight the importance of *active* brand logo designs (those that give the impression of motion) for increasing interest. One approach to creating an active brand logo is through the inclusion of an object in motion, for example, *Interflora* (running figure), *Dove* (flying bird), *Qantas* (bouncing kangaroo), *Red Bull* (charging bulls), and *Ralph Lauren* (galloping horse). Research examining the differential effect of static versus active brand logos finds that active brand logos lead to positive attitudinal judgments due to heightened brand logo engagement (Cian, Krishna, & Elder, 2014). Previous research takes a visual arts perspective to examine active brand logo designs to investigate how viewers can engage, or play, with images conveying motion in their minds (Cian et al., 2014). Alternatively, we take a Newtonian principles in physics approach to examining active brand logos.

According to principles in physics, we argue that Cian et al.'s (2014) study (that examines motion only in active brand logos) employs a kinematic approach to active brand logo design (e.g., as seen in the *Ralph Lauren* galloping horse logo). Alternatively, we employ a dynamics in classical mechanics lens to examine active brand logo effects through the *causes* of motion (i.e., force). For example, the *Coach* logo depicts two moving horses attached to a cart with rope, that is, a tension force is applied to the horses in motion in the logo. Scientific research has demonstrated that when a force is applied in the opposite direction to an object in motion (drag force) the object is exerting greater *work* (e.g., Zatsiorsky, 2002). Based on the effort justification hypothesis, which demonstrates that observed effort expended results in increased liking (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007) and behavioral intentions (Olivola & Shafir, 2013), we propose that a *dynamic* brand logo (i.e., motion along with an applied drag force) results in more positive consumer brand-based attitudes and behaviors than a *kinematic* brand logo (i.e., motion without a force applied) or a *static* brand logo (i.e., no motion or force). We extend the work of Cian et al. (2014), which has only examined the effectiveness of kinematic (versus static) brand logos. We suggest that the findings of this research have important implications for brand managers in the design or updating of their logos in order to enhance their effectiveness.

The work-energy theorem in physics posits that work (resulting from a force applied to an object in motion) changes the kinetic energy of the object (Newton, 1729; Young & Freedman, 2008). More specifically, when a drag force is applied to an object, the object must undertake work to stay in motion. To accomplish the required work, the object must use energy. We argue and demonstrate that work-energy theory can be used to explain a consumer's differential response to active brand logos. We introduce both brand work and brand energy as constructs that reflect consumer perceptions of the perceived effort and hard work of the brand, and the strength of the brand in terms of its power, momentum, and drive, respectively. We also provide evidence of a brand work-energy effect, whereby the presence (absence) of a drag force in brand logos results in increased (decreased) perceptions of brand work and subsequent brand energy. In addition, a brand energy halo effect is proposed, which suggests that perceived brand energy results in more positive evaluations of the brand in terms of brand attitudes, purchase intentions, and actual behavior.

Study 1 demonstrates that the depiction of a drag force in dynamic brand logos results in more positive brand attitude and purchase intention when compared to the absence of a drag force in brand logos (kinematic logo or static logo). Further, we demonstrate that the indirect effect of dynamic brand logos on brand attitude and purchase intention is explained through our developed brand work and brand energy constructs (i.e., the brand work-energy effect and brand energy halo effect). In Study 2, we provide evidence that the magnitude of a force influences the presence of the brand work-energy effect and brand energy halo effect, whereby a higher magnitude force enhances perceptions of brand work, brand energy, and subsequent attitudinal and behavioral judgments. We also empirically reveal the bounds of our brand work-energy effect in Study 3. Specifically, the results provide evidence to suggest that the effectiveness of brand logo force on perceptions of brand work and subsequent brand energy is attenuated when a thrust force is applied in the direction of the logo object in motion, consequently diluting brand attitudes and purchase intentions. In Study 4, we illustrate the effectiveness of dynamic drag force logos on actual consumer behavior (i.e., sampling the brand's product).

#### 2. Active dynamic brand logos

Active brand logo designs are those that "give the impression of motion" (Henderson & Cote, 1998, p. 17). Research finds evidence to suggest that the human brain has the ability to create representations of movement in static visual images, including brand logos (Cian et al., 2014; Paivio & Clark, 1991; Thomas & Mulligan, 1995). To date, only one study has examined active brand logos and their effect on brand engagement and attitude (Cian et al., 2014). Cian et al. (2014) study focuses only on the use of motion in brand logos, which they term dynamic. However, we argue that their study examines brand logos from a kinematic perspective, that is, the study of motion without regard for the cause (Beggs, 1983). We, on the other hand, take the physics perspective of dynamics, which is the study of forces that produce motion, and the subsequent work exerted by an object in motion due to a force applied (Beggs, 1983).

When force is applied to an object in motion, the object is doing work (Zatsiorsky, 2002). In physics, work is calculated by multiplying the force by the amount of movement of an object (i.e., W = F \* d). If a force is applied in the opposite direction to an object in motion (i.e., drag force), the object must undertake greater work, whereas if a force is applied in the same direction as an object in motion (i.e., thrust force), the object requires less work in order to stay in motion. In other words, moving against a force requires an object to expend greater work to stay in motion (Zatsiorsky, 2002). For example, when walking uphill the

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