



## A study of the antecedents of slogan liking

Mayukh Dass <sup>a,\*</sup>, Chiranjeep Kohli <sup>b,2</sup>, Piyush Kumar <sup>c,3</sup>, Sunil Thomas <sup>b,4</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Rawls College of Business, Texas Tech University, MS 2101, Lubbock, TX, United States

<sup>b</sup> Mihaylo College of Business and Economics, California State University, P.O. Box 6848, Fullerton, CA 92834-6848, United States

<sup>c</sup> Terry College of Business, University of Georgia, 130 Brooks Hall, Athens, GA, United States



### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 9 January 2014

Received in revised form 6 May 2014

Accepted 9 May 2014

Available online 22 May 2014

#### Keywords:

Slogan

Brand

Advertising

Likeability

Affect

Bilinear model

### ABSTRACT

A slogan is an integral component of a brand's advertising platform that helps shape its identity and define its positioning. While prior literature has focused on the recall of slogans, knowledge regarding why consumers like some slogans more than others is still limited. This paper uses data from a large field study to explore the key factors that determine the likeability of slogans. It uses a bilinear mixed model to assess the relative importance of slogan characteristics, media expenditure, and respondent characteristics as antecedents of slogan likeability. The findings suggest that the liking for a slogan may be unrelated to media expenditure, and driven largely by the clarity of the message, the exposition of the benefits, rhymes, and creativity. Further, in sharp contrast to industry practice and conventional belief, the study finds that jingles or brevity have no systematic effects on the likeability of slogans.

© 2014 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

### 1. Introduction

Slogans are short, memorable phrases that are often used to sign off on advertisements. They characterize a large proportion of brand advertising and are designed to attract consumer attention, crystallize brand positioning, increase advertising memorability, and improve brand affinity (Keller, 1993). Effective slogans also contribute to the market value of firms (Mathur & Mathur, 1995), and sustain them through advertising campaigns, product cycles, and business cycles (Kohli, Leuthesser, & Suri, 2007). Therefore, it is not surprising that firms often spend millions of dollars in slogan development and promotion (Edwards, 2011). Yet, while some, such as DeBeers' 1938 slogan, "A Diamond is Forever," or Allstate Insurance Company's 1956 slogan, "You're in Good Hands with Allstate," endure the test of time, others, such as Dodge's 1954 slogan, "Elegance in Action," or Pepsi's, "Any Weather is Pepsi Weather," do not. Such wide variation in their effectiveness or longevity raises questions about what makes customers like some slogans and not others.

The literature on slogans, though limited, has broadly focused on examining the relationship between slogans and brand equity, delineating slogan characteristics, and exploring the antecedents of slogan recall. For example, Dahlén and Rosengren (2005) find that consumers evaluate brands with strong slogans more favorably, which increases brand equity. Boush (1993) finds that slogans help prime attributes that are included in it, and improve the perceptions of brands that share these attributes. Pryor and Brodie (1998) replicate these findings and provide further evidence that slogans help support brand image. Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann (1983) find that advertising recall can be enhanced by increasing consumers' cognitive involvement via moderately complicated slogans rather than necessarily "keeping it simple." Lamons (1997) suggests that a slogan is often the mechanism for signing off on advertisements and plays a central role in a brand's marketing strategy.

Taken together, the literature suggests that slogans assist in advertising and brand recall, transfer positive affect to the brand, and help promote attributes that can strengthen brand image. However, while prior research has explored the factors that lead to a higher recall of slogans (Kohli, Thomas, & Suri, 2013), and the selective promotion of attributes (Boush, 1993), there is virtually no research on what makes slogans likeable. As a result, while it is known that the liking for a slogan transfers over to the brand, there is inadequate guidance for what makes a slogan likeable to begin with. This paper addresses this issue, and attempts to identify characteristics of slogans that increase their likeability.

The rest of the paper is presented as follows. The next Section reviews the literature on slogans, followed by a description of the data, and the

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: + 806 834 1924; fax: + 806 834 2199.

E-mail addresses: mayukh.dass@ttu.edu (M. Dass), ckohli@fullerton.edu (C. Kohli), pkumar@terry.uga.edu (P. Kumar), sunilthomas@fullerton.edu (S. Thomas).

<sup>1</sup> All authors have contributed equally. The authors are listed in alphabetical order.

<sup>2</sup> Tel.: +1 657 278 3796.

<sup>3</sup> Tel.: +1 706 542 2123; fax: +1 706 542 7177.

<sup>4</sup> Tel.: +1 657 278 3646.

model used to estimate the proposed effects. Thereafter, the key findings are presented from the estimation of the model, and the paper closes with their managerial implications and an outline for future research in the area.

## 2. The likeability of slogans

Brands are valuable corporate assets that are often worth billions of dollars, and constitute a large component of the total value of many firms (Crimmins, 2000). Keller (1993) suggests that there are three integral elements of a brand's identity—name, logo, and slogan. The brand name is the anchor and often one of the foundations of a brand's identity. Several studies suggest that the spelling of brand names affects their recall (Luna, 2013), their naming structure affects the evaluation of extensions (Sood & Keller, 2012), and their alphanumeric characteristics affect customer preferences (Gunasti & Ross, 2010). However, because the name typically comprises of one or a few words, it often faces limitations in terms of being able to fully explain the meaning of a brand. Further, because a brand name is enduring, it cannot be easily adjusted to accommodate changes in the marketplace or in the brand's positioning.

A logo is the second component of a brand's identity and, because of its universal graphics language, can often transcend geographical boundaries and language barriers. Extant research on logos has focused on the relationships among logo design, information processing, and brand preference (e.g., Janiszewski & Meyvis, 2001). Park, Eisingerich, Pol, and Park (2013) suggest that logos also influence brand commitment and firm performance. However, much like the brand's name, its logo is also enduring, open to subjective interpretation, and not easily adjustable.

As a result, slogans tend to shoulder much of the burden of articulating a brand's long-term positioning or the medium-term changes to it. Therefore, it is not surprising that most brands today use slogans in their communication with their multiple stakeholders, including customers, employees, and even investors (e.g., Mathur & Mathur, 1995). In this endeavor, brand managers tend to focus on making slogans memorable, likeable, and meaningful (Cui, Hu, & Griffith, 2014). However, because slogan recall in itself may not be enough to drive brand attitudes (Kohli et al., 2013), it is also important to understand the drivers of consumers' affective responses to slogans. The hierarchy of effects model would suggest that a positive affective response to a slogan will likely lead to higher preference, conviction, and purchase likelihood for the brand (Smith, Chen, & Yang, 2008). A similar link between message likeability and brand preference has also been documented in the advertising and brand communication literature (e.g. Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999). However, a review of the academic literature and the trade press, as well as discussions with practicing brand managers and advertising professionals, suggests that the current understanding of what really makes slogans likeable is rather superficial. Consequently, the current practice for developing slogans is largely based on unverified beliefs or heuristics, such as "slogans should be short, catchy, and have a jingle." However, it is unclear whether such simplistic and universal prescriptions make slogans more likeable.

### 2.1. Factors affecting the likeability of slogans

A slogan is a message from a brand to a current or a potential customer and is contained within a larger piece of advertising. From a communications perspective, the response to a message sent from a source is a function of the content, the medium, and the receiver's personal characteristics (Stern, 1994). Therefore, broadly speaking, the likeability of a slogan is expected to be a function of its own characteristics and those of its recipients. Further, because the frequency with which messages are repeated tends to have an impact on the generated affect (Keiser, 1975), the media expenditure supporting a brand's advertising is expected to positively affect the likeability of slogans.

### 2.1.1. Slogan characteristics

**2.1.1.1. Message clarity.** The purpose of a slogan is to deliver a clear and focused message to consumers to help articulate the benefits provided by the brand and generate positive affinity for it. Prior research (Eighmey & McCord, 1998) suggests that several factors, combined under the umbrella of clarity of purpose, lead to a better interpretation of the information received. Communications research also finds a positive relationship between message clarity and liking for the message sponsor (e.g., Sidelinger & McCroskey, 1997). Therefore, the clarity of the message is expected to have a positive effect on the liking for a slogan as well.

**2.1.1.2. Inclusion of benefit.** Slogans can be effective vehicles for brand positioning. Many iconic slogans such as Chevy Blazer's "Like a Rock" and Morton Salt's "When it rains, it pours" have helped shape the perceptions of the respective brands in the minds of the consumers. In this regard, benefit-based positioning has some advantages over other positioning methods. It tends to draw a more favorable response from consumers than feature-based positioning (Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010), and also generates a stronger positive affect (e.g., Mahajan and Wind, 2002). Therefore, slogans which include a benefit is expected to be more liked than those that do not.

**2.1.1.3. Creativity.** One of the key criteria that determines advertising creativity is divergence or the extent to which an advertisement is novel or different (Smith et al., 2008). Creative advertisements generate favorable emotional responses and tend to be likeable (Ang & Low, 2000; Goldenberg, Mazursky, & Solomon, 1999). Slogans are also linked with creativity (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999) because the originality of messages is known to play a significant role in increasing recognition (Pick, Sweeney, & Clay, 1991), motivating information processing (Smith, Mackenzie, Yang, Buchholz, & Darley, 2007), and improving preference (Pieters, Warlop, & Wedel, 2002). Therefore, this study hypothesizes that creativity will have a positive effect on slogan liking.

**2.1.1.4. Brand and product appropriateness.** The role of fit or appropriateness has been studied extensively in the marketing literature. For example, brand extensions are viewed more favorably if the brand is a good fit with the extension category (Keller, 1990). Within the brand communications literature, incongruence between the message and the brand is known to increase consumers' cognitive load, force them to generate counter-arguments against the message, and view the brand less positively (Slater & Rouner, 2002). Therefore, a slogan that is viewed as appropriate for its brand is expected to be better liked than one that is not. For similar reasons, a slogan that is viewed as appropriate for its product category will also be better liked than one that is not.

**2.1.1.5. Rhymes and music.** Slogans are characterized not only by the message they carry but also by the modality of the delivery. Some of the most widely-used execution devices that influence modality include rhymes (Szpunar, Schellenberg, & Pliner, 2004) and music or jingles (Stewart, 1998; Yalch, 1991). The widespread use of rhymes in slogans is not surprising because artful and decorative language tends to increase elaboration and liking (Toncar & Munch, 2001). More broadly, stylistic elements such as rhyme, antithesis, metaphor, and pun have been shown to generate positive attitudes toward an advertisement (McQuarrie & Mick, 1999).

The music used in advertising serves as a mnemonic, which makes audiences more receptive to the brand message by creating a more favorable state of mind (Hecker, 1984). Music also enhances a global feeling of liking (MacInnis & Park, 1991), especially if it fits well with the message. Interestingly, in addition to increasing consumers' affective response, music also increases the effectiveness of advertising through a cognitive route, by enhancing the information processing of the brand message (MacInnis & Park, 1991). As a result, music indirectly helps

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1016902>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1016902>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)