

The impact of implicit self-theories, ad appeals, and self/brand congruence on advertisement effectiveness

A quantitative study using Nike

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ABSTRACT

One of the main concerns brands have is how to get the consumer's attention and how to create advertisements that persuade the consumer to buy the brands' products. An evident brand personality has been established to be vital for a brand as it contributes to creating meaningful and long-lasting customer relationships. But once their brand personality is established, how can brands utilize this brand personality to create more persuasive advertisements? This study looks at implicit self-theory, signaling advertisement appeals, self-improvement advertisement appeals, and self/brand congruence to answer this question. The research question of this thesis is thus: To what extent does implicit self-theory, advertisement appeals, and self/brand congruence influence someone's attitude towards the advertised product?

A quantitative study with an experimental design was conducted to answer the research question. The data was collected through an online, self-administered questionnaire. Three variations of the questionnaire were randomly distributed to the respondents, with the manipulation being a Nike advertisement. The first experimental group received an advertisement with signaling appeals, the second group received an advertisement with self-improvement appeals, and the third group was a control group that received a neutral advertisement with no added appeals. The sample consisted of 184 respondents. Two linear multiple regressions were conducted. The results showed that against predictions, no relationship was found between the interaction of implicit self-theory, the advertisement appeals, and attitude towards the advertised product. Furthermore, no evidence was found for the three-way interaction between implicit self-theory, type of advertisement appeal, and self/brand congruence on attitude towards the advertised product. However, self/brand congruence was found to have a significant positive effect on attitude towards the advertised product. This means that respondents with a high self/brand congruence also had a more positive attitude towards the Nike shoe. It was also discovered that self/brand congruence had a bigger impact on attitude in the control group as opposed to the group with a self-improvement advertisement appeal. These findings help scholars and brand managers understand the importance of congruence between a brand's personality and the consumer's personality and the impact it can have.

KEYWORDS: *Implicit self-theory, advertisement appeals, self/brand congruence, brand personality, Nike*

Preface

This master's thesis is the last thing I will hand in as a student. After six years of studying, I am more than ready to move on from studying and start my career. That said, I still look back very fondly on my time as a student. I have grown as a person and learned a great deal. Finishing this thesis was challenging, but I feel I have been well prepared throughout my education.

I want to thank my supervisor Livia van Vliet for her feedback, guidance, and encouragement throughout this process. I can positively think back to this journey mainly because of her great help. I also want to thank my friends and fellow students for always being a soundboard, giving advice, and motivating me. Lastly, I want to thank my boyfriend for always being a listening ear and believing in me when I needed it the most.

Table of Contents

Abstract and Keywords

Preface

1	Introduction	5
2	Literature review	8
2.1	<i>Implicit self-theories.....</i>	<i>8</i>
2.2	<i>Implicit self-theories and advertising appeals.....</i>	<i>11</i>
2.3	<i>Brand personality.....</i>	<i>14</i>
2.4	<i>Self/brand congruence</i>	<i>16</i>
3	Method	20
3.1	<i>Research design and data collection method</i>	<i>20</i>
3.2	<i>Population and sample</i>	<i>21</i>
3.3	<i>Instrument of data collection.....</i>	<i>21</i>
3.4	<i>Procedures for data collection</i>	<i>23</i>
3.5	<i>Procedure for analyzing the data.....</i>	<i>23</i>
3.6	<i>Reliability and validity.....</i>	<i>25</i>
3.7	<i>Sample description.....</i>	<i>26</i>
3.8	<i>Ethical considerations</i>	<i>27</i>
3.8.1	<i>Harm to participants</i>	<i>27</i>
3.8.2	<i>Lack of informed consent.....</i>	<i>28</i>
3.8.3	<i>Invasion of privacy.....</i>	<i>28</i>
3.8.4	<i>Deception</i>	<i>28</i>
4	Results	29
4.1	<i>Implicit self-theories, advertisement appeals, and attitude towards the advertised product</i>	<i>29</i>
4.2	<i>Self/brand congruence.....</i>	<i>31</i>
5	Conclusion	35
5.1	<i>Discussion.....</i>	<i>35</i>
5.2	<i>Limitations and suggestions for future research.....</i>	<i>38</i>
	References	41
	Appendix A: Questionnaire	46
	Appendix B: Results paired samples t-test	51
	Appendix C: Results multiple regression model 1.....	52
	Appendix D: Results multiple regression model 2	53

1 Introduction

Marketing managers and researchers have been looking for the best way to differentiate a brand from its competitors. They found that when brands have a hard time differentiating themselves solely on the specifications of their products or services, they can utilize the perceived human-like characteristics associated with the brand (Sung & Kim, 2010). Researchers often refer to this as a *brand personality* (Aaker & Fournier, 1995). One of the most critical tasks for a company to stand out is to establish a strong and well-defined brand personality (Freling et al., 2011). The brand personality is one of the selling points of a brand as it allows the consumer to connect with the brand emotionally. Furthermore, it allows the consumer to identify with the human characteristics of the brand and then use those characteristics to enhance or express their self-image (Aaker, 1997). A brand personality, therefore, makes it possible for companies to create a brand that goes beyond what they have to offer in their products or services.

Scholars have investigated how to establish a brand personality and why it is such a valuable business feature (Aaker & Fournier, 1995). Scholars have also found that having a brand personality can lead to higher customer satisfaction, greater brand loyalty, and more favorable purchase intentions (Freling et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2001; Su & Tong, 2016). Most importantly, research has established that consumers are more attracted to brand personalities that are congruent to their own personalities or how they aspire to be, which is referred to as self/brand congruence (Kressmann et al., 2006). It is clear that having a brand personality can be favorable for the brand, especially if the brand personality is similar to that of the consumer. However, the question remains, once a brand's personality is established, how can brands then utilize this to create advertisements that achieve a more positive attitude towards the product? So far, the research on this topic is very limited.

This study looks at the implicit self-theory for a possible answer. Implicit self-theory is about a person's beliefs on the malleability of personal traits and has been found to influence how people respond to advertisements (Park & John, 2012). There are two types of implicit self-theories: entity theory and incremental theory. An entity theorist believes their personal qualities are fixed, while an incremental theorist considers their personal qualities to be malleable (Dweck, 2008). This study is interested in whether a person's implicit self-theory influences the way they perceive advertisements. This would imply that when brands have a personality, how they advertise should be influenced by how their consumers look at their own personality. Previous research has shown that people respond differently to

advertisements based on their implicit self-theory (Dimofte et al., 2015; Park & John, 2012). However, the research on this topic is very limited and can use further exploration, also using different types of brands in the investigation than the previous studies have used.

Similar to Park and John (2012), two different advertisement appeals are explored in this study and are used to examine which solicits a more positive attitude towards the advertised product for people with different implicit self-theories. The first appeal is the signaling advertisement appeal. This appeal suggests to consumers how they can use the brand's product to showcase that they possess qualities like the brand. The second is the self-improvement advertisement appeal. This appeal tells the consumer how they can improve themselves to eventually become more like the brand's personality (Park & John, 2012). The appeals are rooted in the message of the advertisement. An example could be a Rolex advertisement. The brand 'Rolex' is often associated with a luxurious lifestyle. The brand could make an advertisement with a message that by wearing a Rolex, one indicates that they are already living a luxurious lifestyle (signaling). Alternatively, the brand could advertise the message that by wearing a Rolex, you can work even harder to eventually obtain a luxurious lifestyle (self-improvement).

This study adds a unique perspective to the previously studied relationship between the implicit self-theories and advertisement appeals by also considering self/brand congruence. As previously stated, one of the reasons brand personalities are influential is because consumers can relate to that personality (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). Furthermore, researchers have found that when someone's personality is congruent with the brand's personality, this can have a positive influence on their brand loyalty (Kressmann et al., 2006; Sop & Kozak, 2019), brand satisfaction (Achouri & Bouslama, 2010), and brand attachment (Malär et al., 2011). Considering these findings, this study also explores self/brand congruence to see if it influences the relationship between a person's implicit self-theory, the advertisement appeals, and people's attitudes towards an advertised product. Following this line of thought, the research question of this study is:

To what extent does implicit self-theory, advertisement appeals, and self/brand congruence influence someone's attitude towards the advertised product?

This study uses an online experiment to present two variations of a written Nike advertisement that uses either signaling or self-improvement appeals. The results will be compared to the control group's results that use an advertisement with no appeal.

The findings of this research can provide marketing and brand managers with insights into how they can use their brand personalities to create advertisements that result in more positive attitudes towards the products. It also demonstrates how important it is for companies to know their customers and gives insights to marketers and advertisers on what to look for in their customers. Advertisers can then make informed decisions on what type of advertisement appeal they should use so that their target group responds more favorably to the product.

Using Nike advertisements adds to the academic literature as no study known to the researcher has been done on implicit self-theories and advertisement appeals using Nike. The study showcases that brand personality is essential for a brand but that it can be used to even greater advantage when connected to the right type of advertisements. Research on how people with different implicit self-theories respond to the two advertisement appeals will help both researchers, as well as marketing managers, gain a deeper understanding of how different types of consumers respond differently to different advertisement appeals. Furthermore, this research adds an additional layer to the academic field of consumer psychology and consumer behavior by looking into a moderator for this relationship. Namely, the congruence between someone's own personality and the brand's personality. With this information, scholars and marketers will better understand the impact of when someone's personality is congruent with a brand's personality and how that person will perceive the advertisements of that brand differently.

To answer the research question, this paper first reviews and discusses the existing literature on implicit self-theories, how they relate to advertisement appeals, brand personality, and self/brand congruence in the 'literature review' chapter. Then, the 'method' chapter describes the experimental design, how the research will be conducted, and expands on all research design choices. This is followed up by the 'results' chapter, where all findings of the data are discussed. Lastly, this research paper ends with the 'conclusion' chapter that describes the implications of the findings and how they relate to the findings of previous studies, as well as the presentation of limitations and suggestions for further research.

2 Literature review

This chapter presents the literature regarding implicit self-theories, advertisement appeals, brand personality, and self/brand congruence. Based on the literature, hypotheses will be formed that will serve as the foundation for answering the research objective, which is to investigate the extent to which implicit self-theory, advertisement appeals, and self/brand congruence influence someone's attitude towards the advertised product.

2.1 Implicit self-theories

The implicit self-theories are about someone's beliefs on the malleability of personal attributes (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Dweck (2008) argues that beliefs (referred to as 'theories') are a core part of someone's personality (Dweck, 2008). Moreover, the scholar asserts that these beliefs influence the way people understand and respond to the world around them. It is, however, essential to note that the implicit self-theories cannot predict exact behavior. Instead, implicit self-theories offer a framework for how that person sees the world, as that person is likely to think and act according to that framework (Dweck et al., 1995). Dweck's (2008) model categorizes these beliefs into two types of implicit self-theories: entity and incremental. People with an entity theory believe that their personal qualities are *fixed* traits that cannot be changed and will stay consistent throughout their lives. On the opposite side are the people with an incremental theory. These people believe that their personal qualities are *malleable* and that they can develop their qualities with effort or education. Implicit self-theory is typically measured on a spectrum. Hence, people can have a powerful entity or incremental theory but can also fall somewhere in between (Levy et al., 1998).

The two implicit self-theories can be applied to different dimensions of personality and are utilized in consumer research. Scholars have investigated implicit self-theories on, for example, personality, health, intelligence, attitudes, self-control, and relationships (Jain & Weiten, 2020). The literature on implicit self-theories agrees that overall, people believe more in one of the implicit self-theories (entity or incremental) over the other (Kwon et al., 2016). However, researchers also found that a person can hold both theories simultaneously (Dweck et al., 1995). For example, some people might think that their intelligence is malleable but also believe that their moral character is fixed. They find that through education, they are getting smarter but, on the other hand, believe that a person is inherently either good or bad and someone who has done wrong is not able to better themselves. The theory can also

change under specific circumstances. Often, one theory is dominant, but the other one stays present in the background and can temporarily become dominant by manipulation (Kwon et al., 2016; Park & John, 2012; Yorkston et al., 2010). For the purpose of this study, implicit self-theory is referred to as the beliefs someone currently holds over personality without being manipulated to change their implicit self-theory.

Research shows that the two contradictory views on personality impact how someone sees the world and how they behave (Dweck, 2008). Entity theorists do not believe they can grow, learn, or develop personal qualities. To enhance their self-image, entity theorists will look for things to signal the positive aspects of their personality to others (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). They tend to pursue things they are already good or naturally gifted at instead of choosing something more challenging to learn. An entity theorist would agree with a statement such as “Everyone is a certain kind of person and there is not much that can be done to really change that” (Levy et al., 1998). Incremental theorists, on the other hand, are quite the opposite. They tend to pursue opportunities that enable them to grow, learn and develop their qualities and skills (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). They will try to enhance their self-image by challenging themselves, for example at work, to accomplish the best possible performance. They believe that they can better themselves with hard work and would agree with statements such as “Anyone can change even his/her most basic qualities” (Levy et al., 1998). This thesis investigates the influence of implicit self-theories, specifically how they relate to advertising and the consumers’ attitude towards an advertised product.

A wide range of studies suggests that implicit self-theories influence how we perceive other people (Dweck et al., 1995; Park & John, 2018) and even how we perceive brands and products (Park & John, 2012; Roy & Naidoo, 2021; Yorkston et al., 2010). Yorkston et al. (2010) found that incremental theorists are more accepting of brands that decide to extend their brand by selling a new product or service in another product category than entity theorists are. Their study shows that someone’s implicit self-theory not only influences how they view their own personality’s malleability but also the malleability of a brand’s personality. As incremental theorists believe that a personality can be malleable, they also believe that a brand’s personality can be malleable and that they, thus, can extend their brand without it being negative. This is very relevant for Nike as the brand has several extended brand personalities. Nike is, for example, on the one hand, known for their athletic apparel but also widely known for their streetwear (Araujo, 2018). Based on the findings by Yorkston et al. (2010) incremental theorists are probably more accepting of Nike and all of Nike’s brand extensions.

However, Yorkston et al. (2010) also conclude that there are limits to how malleable a brand can be, even to incremental theorists. Both theorists are critical of the brand extension when the new product differs too much from the main brand. Mathur et al. (2016) provide an interesting addition to these findings. They find that when brands put in the effort to communicate how and why the new product is a good fit for the brand, incremental theorists are likely to update their brand impression more favorably. Entity theorists, on the other hand, do not do this. They are more focused on the outcome and will only update their impressions on the implications of the brand extension, so whether this new product is actually useful to them. Moreover, the negative implications of the brand extension weigh more heavily for entity theorists than the positive implications (Mathur et al., 2016). In the case of Nike, they would be able to convey incremental theorists by launching a campaign that establishes how the new product is a good fit for the brand. In contrast, entity theorists would focus on the new product Nike is launching and adjust their opinion based on how good the new product is and whether it would be useful for them.

Researchers have linked the implicit self-theories to many more concepts. For instance, the implicit self-theory someone holds was found to have an impact on people's tendencies to stereotype other people (Levy et al., 1998). As entity theorists think personality traits are fixed, they are more likely to think about other people and groups in stereotypes than incremental theorists (Jain & Weiten, 2020). A study by Park and John (2018) regarding the influence of implicit self-theories on brand user-perception interestingly found that entity theorists also judge people based on the brands they use, whereas incremental theorists are somewhat hesitant to do this. They argue that entity theorists assume that people use brands to signal to others who they are as a person, so entity theorists will judge that person based on the brands they use. Entity theorists will, therefore, also be more mindful of their brand selection as they recognize that the brand's personality will signal their own personality to others. Incremental theorists do not immediately judge someone by the brands they use as they do not believe it is possible to know someone's personality based on this one aspect. Nevertheless, the study found that when it is made clear that someone is using a brand for signaling purposes, even incremental theorists are likely to judge that person based on the brand (Park & John, 2018). These findings suggest how important brand personalities are and, especially for entity theorists, how important it is for a brand to communicate to them what a product will tell about the consumer's personality when they wear or use the product.

Lastly, a more recent study by Mandal et al. (2020) showed that entity theorists are more likely to tell people about a product when their motive is to impress others and signal to

them how they are as a person. On the other hand, incremental theorists are more inclined to tell others about a product when they want to learn more about it or provide others with information about the product. Mandal et al. (2020) further demonstrated that when advertisement appeals align with the respective motives, that theorist is even more likely to tell others about the product from that advertisement. Their study, thus, confirms how advertisement appeals can sway consumer behavior. Implicit self-theory, clearly, has a significant impact on people as the literature discloses it influences the way people behave, set goals, perceive other people (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Dweck, 2008; Park & John, 2018) and how consumers perceive brands, respond to advertisement appeals, and what motivates them to consume products or service from a brand (Mandal et al., 2020; Park & John, 2012; Yorkston et al., 2010). In the next section, we will further discuss the different advertisement appeals and their impact on the two different theorists.

2.2 Implicit self-theories and advertising appeals

The literature makes it clear that implicit self-theories have an influence on consumer behavior. The previously mentioned article by Mandal et al. (2020) already suggests that advertisement appeals can play into the implicit self-theories and influence word-of-mouth intentions. John and Park (2016) reviewed studies on implicit self-theories within the area of branding research and identified how they could be applied in practice. They titled brand advertising as one of the most promising fields to connect to the implicit self-theories.

Roy & Naidoo (2021) discovered how advertising strategy could make a difference in consumer decision-making based on the implicit self-theories. In one of their experiments, participants had to choose between two universities. One was advertised based on experience and one based on credence. Results showed that entity theorists were more inclined to choose for the university based on credence, while incremental theorists chose the university that was advertised on experience. This means the entity theorists viewed attributes such as “notable alumni” and “leading-edge programs that connect to the real world” as important. Incremental theorists looked more for attributes such as “benchmarking against international best practices” and “high teaching and learning outcomes” (Roy & Naidoo, 2021). Implicit self-theory, thus, makes a difference in how someone views an advertisement and chooses a service or product.

The findings by Roy and Naidoo (2021) already suggest that entity theorists consider signaling their status as more important. They naturally gravitate towards signaling

advertisement appeals, which are appeals that highlight how that person can use the product or service to *signal* their personal qualities to others and their congruence with the personality of the brand (John & Park, 2016). The preference for signaling appeals for entity theorists is also found by Kwon et al. (2016). They discovered that, for luxury brands, entity theorists respond more favorably to symbolic (versus functional) advertising appeals. Entity theorists will respond to cues that tell them what a product says about them (symbolic). An incremental theorist can be interested in the same product but have been drawn to it because of, for example, the quality of the product (functional). Similar to the study that researched a university, entity theorists want to purchase from a luxury brand because they want to signal to the world that they possess the same ‘luxurious’ qualities connected to the brand (Park & John, 2018). Functional advertisement appeals were more attractive to the incremental theorists who do not believe the brand they wear says anything about them (Park & John, 2018), which is why they are more likely to purchase things based on functionality. These discoveries contribute to answering the research question as they provide insights into how entity and incremental theorists respond to different advertisement appeals.

Evidently, an important aspect of the implicit self-theory is that it indicates how a person will try to enhance or better themselves. Literature suggests that entity theorists, because they believe that their personalities are fixed, will be more sensitive to an advertisement with a signaling appeal. As stated, this is because a signaling advertisement appeal highlights how the consumer can use the product to showcase that their personality is congruent with the brand’s personality (John & Park, 2016). Incremental theorists, on the other hand, would be more responsive to the self-improvement advertisement appeal as it is in line with their belief that they can self-improve, which is what the advertisement highlights the consumer achieve by using the brand’s products (John & Park, 2016). To reiterate, the signaling and self-improvement appeals may elicit different responses from people with different implicit self-theories as the implicit self-theory is a determining factor in someone’s motivation for buying a product or service. Brands can, therefore, adjust their advertisement to gain a better response from consumers with a specific implicit self-theory. Nike, for example, could make an advertisement about how good the consumer will look when wearing a Nike shoe for entity theorists and an advertisement about how the consumer can achieve great things by wearing a Nike shoe for incremental theorists.

The findings from Park and John (2012) confirm these notions. They found that entity theorists and incremental theorists assessed the two advertisement appeals differently. They tested the impact of the advertisement appeals by writing two different advertisements that

advertised an eye shadow pallet from the brand 'Victoria's Secret'. One advertising copy featured signaling statements that highlighted how consumers could use the Victoria's Secret eye shadow pallet to signal to others that they possess desirable traits such as make-up skills or a sense of beauty (e.g., "there's no better way to show others that you have a modern up-to-date sense of beauty"). The other advertising copy featured self-improvement statements that indicated how consumers could use the product to learn how to develop more desirable traits (e.g., "there's no better way for you to learn how to have a modern up-to-date sense of beauty."). As predicted, Park and John (2012) found that entity theorists had a more positive attitude towards the advertised product with the signaling advertisement appeal (as opposed to incremental theorists), while incremental theorists responded more favorably to the self-improvement advertisement appeal. They also did a second study using 'Massachusetts Institute of Technology' and found the same influence of the advertisement appeals on the implicit self-theories. However, in their study Park and John (2012) selected respondents that were likely to find the brand's personality traits appealing, making their findings only apply to consumers who already find the brand's personality traits appealing. Furthermore, their study did not use a control group but compared the signaling and self-improvement groups to each other. This is a limitation of the Park and John (2012) study as they only prove a difference for entity and incremental theorists in attitude towards the advertised product but cannot confidently state that the difference is due to the advertisement appeals. Therefore, this thesis will use a control group in addition to the two experimental groups.

Though more advertisement appeals exist, the signaling and self-improvement appeals used in previous studies fit the implicit self-theories so well; thus, they have been selected for this study. Based on the existing research, this thesis proposes that people will respond differently to signaling and self-improvement advertisement appeals based on their implicit self-theories. The signaling and self-improvement advertisement appeals have only been studied in relation to the implicit self-theories (Park & John, 2012). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no direct relation between the implicit self-theories and attitude towards the advertised product has been studied without the advertisement appeals as moderators of that relationship. This study will use the brand Nike to see if the influence of advertisement appeals on the implicit self-theories extends to other brands than those formerly studied. Park and John's (2012) study provides compelling evidence on the relationship between advertising appeals and implicit self-theory. However, because this research focuses on another type of brand, we will first investigate whether there is a relationship between the independent variables of 'implicit self-theory' and 'advertisement appeals', and the dependent

variable 'attitude towards the advertised product'. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated.

H1: Implicit self-theories and advertisement appeals have an impact on attitude towards the advertised product when compared to a control group.

2.3 Brand personality

Creating and managing a brand is a vital part of companies' marketing strategies and is often a crucial asset to the company (John & Park, 2016). For years, brand managers have understood that having a favorable brand personality is the key to building lasting customer relationships (Freling et al., 2011). With many options available to them, consumers do not choose between brands based on the products' utilities only. They also choose brands based on the brand's personality (Maehle et al., 2011). Brand personality is widely defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p.47). The anthropomorphic theory explains this entirely natural phenomenon (Maehle et al., 2011). The theory has been used by scholars to understand why people attach these human-like characteristics to brands and is defined as "the attribution of uniquely human characteristics and features to nonhuman creatures and beings, natural and supernatural phenomena, material states or objects, and even abstract concepts" (Aggarwal & McGill, 2012, p. 308). It is, thus, common for people to think about a brand beyond the things it sells, and more so as a person with human features and feelings attached to it.

A study has shown that personality traits like imaginative, charming, and dignified were highly associated with Nike shoes (Mustamil et al., 2014). The personality dimensions of competence and excitement were, amongst others, associated with the brand Nike as a whole (Alazzawi, 2019). Furthermore, demographic data such as age, gender, and social class can be part of the brand personality (Aaker, 1997). Apple, for example, is thought to be young, whereas Microsoft is thought to be older (Aaker, 1997). According to the literature, greater congruency between the consumers' own attributes and the brand's characteristics might lead to enhanced brand preference (Aaker, 1997). In other words, we like companies that are similar to us, just as we do with other people. Most studies concerning brand personality measure the concept by using Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale that features the personality traits: sophistication, sincerity, excitement, competence, and ruggedness. However, the scale has also been criticized by scholars who claim that the scale measures

characteristics that go beyond personality (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003; MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). This thesis will, considering these critiques, only measure Nike's brand personality traits by as they are perceived by the respondents individually.

Perceptions about a brand's personality are developed every time consumers encounter the brand, whether this is direct or indirect (Ghodeswar, 2008). In a direct way, consumers can form brand personality perceptions based on people associated with the brand, such as the CEO, influencers hired by the brand, employees of the company, or other consumers of the brand (Aaker, 1997). Indirectly, the consumer can form their perceptions of the brand's personality based on attributes such as the brand's name, logo, selling price, and advertisements (Aaker, 1997). Essentially, in the consumers' mind, a brand is the sum of both direct and indirect encounters, meaning all the interactions the consumer has had with the brand, expanding each time they interact with it (Ghodeswar, 2008).

Because people attach these human-like qualities to brands, they can form relationships with them (Maehle et al., 2011). Having a brand personality can give a company a competitive edge over its competitors (John & Park, 2016). Another company can always copy your product or services and sell them at the same price point. However, they cannot copy the brand's personality and how customers feel about the company, which is why brand personality is so important. The brands Apple and Microsoft are good examples of how different brand personalities can be for companies that sell within the same product category. While Apple is associated with personality traits such as young, easy, and creative, Microsoft is generally seen as an older, more complex, and technical brand (Freling et al., 2011).

Usually, successful brands are associated with positive traits. Consumers, then, transfer the positive traits associated with the brand over to the products or services the brand sells (John & Park, 2016). For example, when consumers think favorably about Nike based on their previous experiences with the brand, they are more likely to think favorably about the next shoe they launch, even without having any specific information regarding the new shoe. However, brands should be wary that the same holds true for when the brand is associated with negative personality traits. Dalakas and Levin (2005) discovered that when brands use celebrity endorsers that are not liked by the consumer, the consumer will hold a more negative attitude towards the brand. This is because the personality traits associated with the endorser will be linked to and seen as the brand's personality traits. Nike often uses celebrities to endorse its brand, but the previous study shows this could backfire when consumers dislike the endorser.

Having a favorable brand personality has been linked to numerous benefits, including enhanced brand loyalty, consumer satisfaction (Kim et al., 2001; Su & Tong, 2016), and purchase intentions (Freling et al., 2011). A brand with a distinct personality is more memorable to customers and is something they can identify with (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010). Consumers often buy products from a brand with a favorable brand personality as this allows them to use that personality to signal to themselves and others that they possess similar qualities to that brand (Tuškej & Podnar, 2018). Research has shown that consumers respond particularly well to brands when the brand personality is congruent with their own personality (Park & John, 2010). The importance of congruence between one's own personality with that of the brand is discussed in the next section.

2.4 Self/brand congruence

Thus far, it is evident that brand personality is important to the consumer. This section discusses the importance of congruence between the consumers' and brand's personality and the implications it can have. The self-concept has been defined as the "cognitive and affective understanding of who we are" (Malär et al., 2011, p. 36). The self-concept has been established to be a multidimensional concept encompassing the 'actual self' and the 'ideal self' (Sirgy, 1982). While the actual self is about how someone sees themselves, the ideal self is about how that person would like to be. In other words, the self-concept is how we see ourselves and how we want to be seen.

Consumers like it when their self-concept is similar to the brand's personality, as they can use it to showcase, affirm, or enhance their own personality (Park & John, 2010). This aligns with what the literature refers to as self/brand congruence. For instance, people that are very athletic and live an active lifestyle may own a lot of Nike apparel and shoes. This, as they perceive this as congruent with Nike's brand personality, which signifies athleticism through its marketing strategy and various sponsor deals with well-known athletes (Araujo, 2018). Therefore, by wearing Nike shoes, the consumer can show to others that they are athletic. Another option is that the consumer wears Nike products because they would like to be more athletic. In this case, Nike's brand personality resonates with their ideal self (Arora & Stoner, 2009).

Nike is a brand that does exceptionally well when it comes to self/brand congruence as the brand has such a multi-faceted personality. The brand is known as a sports brand with numerous athlete endorsements (Araujo, 2018), a streetwear brand that gives its consumer a

feeling of status and superiority (Tseng et al., 2020), but also as a luxury brand that does collaborations with other high-end luxury brands such as Louis Vuitton and Dior, selling some very high-end priced clothing and footwear (Yu et al., 2021). By wearing branded products, consumers can communicate their actual or ideal self to the outside world, and the individual is, thus, likely to be drawn to the brand that is congruent with their self-concept, whether they know it or not. With Nike being a brand that, clearly, can be congruent with more than one type of consumer, it is an especially suitable brand to study in the context of self/brand congruence.

Han et al. (2010) demonstrate that people who are in need of status will buy expensive luxury goods to signal to others that they are wealthy. Logically, these people will opt for products that are easily recognizable as luxurious. The participants that were not interested in signaling their status to others chose premium items only they knew were luxurious. Participants who wanted to showcase status but did not have the means to pay a premium price used counterfeit products that looked like they were premium-price and luxurious. Considering the literature on implicit self-theory, the participants who wanted to signal their status to others were likely entity theorists and the participants who were not interested in signaling their status were incremental theorists. For consumers who look to signal their status, the high-end shoes that Nike sells in collaboration with luxury brands such as Louis Vuitton and Dior could be a perfect fit. By wearing the high-end Nike shoes, they can signal to others their congruence to the Nike brand.

People tend to support brands more when their self-concept is congruent with the brand's personality. Abel et al. (2013) did a study on health clubs, which indicated that people with a high congruence between their own self-concept and the brand's personality of the subjects' health club showed more support for it than people with incongruence between their self-concept and the club's brand personality. Other studies also indicate that self/brand congruence leads consumers to prefer that brand (Chernev et al., 2011; Li et al., 2021) and have higher brand loyalty toward it (Kim et al., 2001; Kressmann et al., 2006; Sop & Kozak, 2019). According to Achouri and Bouslama (2010), there is a direct link between brand personality congruence with self-concept and customer satisfaction. Brand personality congruence with the self-concept has also indirectly been linked to brand loyalty (Achouri & Bouslama, 2010; Sung et al., 2005). Thus, when high self/brand congruence occurs, studies find that these brands are preferred over other brands, consumers are more loyal to the brand, and brand satisfaction increases.

Self/brand congruence also leads consumers to be more attached to a brand. Donvito et al. (2020) conducted a study investigating the influence of self/brand congruence on brand attachment in relation to luxury brands. The recent study confirmed that self/brand congruence positively affects brand attachment. The same results were found in a study done on a variety of brands (Malär et al., 2011), which indicates that this relationship does not just exist for luxury brands but for other brands as well and, thus, possibly Nike. Wijnands and Gill (2020) connected self/brand congruence to even more positive outcomes such as purchase intentions, brand trust, and willingness of the consumer to pay a higher price. Li et al. (2021) furthermore observed that self-motivation is a mediating factor for the relationship between self/brand congruence and brand preference, meaning that when there is self/brand congruence, people will like a brand even more when they are motivated to showcase their best possible self to others.

These studies suggest positive outcomes for brands when self/brand congruence occurs between the consumer and the brand. However, these studies all measure self/brand congruence based on their participants' self-reported self/brand congruence. Wijnands and Gill (2020) critique this measure of self/brand congruence and propose a different form of measuring self/brand congruence. They instead measure the intuitive assessment consumers make about a brand and propose that the relationship between a consumer and a brand is established through intuitive and affective understandings and not through deliberate cognitive processes. Though this thesis recognizes the valid critiques of Wijnands and Gill (2020), the self-reported method to measure self/brand congruence is still the most widely used method to report self/brand congruence. Therefore, this research will still utilize this method to measure self/brand congruence.

As established, self/brand congruence can give consumers a preference for a particular brand. In this study, we investigate whether self/brand congruence has such an influence that it is a moderator for the relationship between implicit self-theory, advertisement appeals, and attitude towards the advertised product, which is the dependent variable. Considering the literature on implicit self-theory, it is likely that entity theorists will be more affected by self/brand congruence as they use their congruence with the brand to signal their personality to others (John & Park, 2016). In Park and John's (2010) study, participants that were entity theorists felt more feminine and good-looking after using a Victoria's Secret shopping bag. They, furthermore, felt more intelligent and hardworking after using an MIT pen. The results imply that entity theorists very much view their personality as similar to the personality of the brand they consumed or used. Incremental theorists, on the other hand, do not believe that one

can make a judgment on their personality based on one single point of information. In this study, we expect that for them, self/brand congruence does not increase their attitude towards the advertised product.

No study known to the researcher has investigated the possibility of self/brand congruence being a moderator between the influence of implicit self-theories and advertisement appeals effectiveness. We, therefore, first investigate whether there is a 3-way interaction between self/brand congruence, type of advertisement appeal, and implicit self-theory on attitude towards the advertised product at all. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H2: There is a 3-way interaction between self/brand congruence, type of advertisement appeal, and implicit self-theory on attitude towards the advertised product, when compared to a control group.

3 Method

The method chapter of this study reports the research design, data collection method, sample, instrument, procedures of data collection, procedures of data analysis, reliability and validity, a description of the sample, and concludes with ethical considerations.

3.1 Research design and data collection method

To answer the research question ‘to what extent does implicit self-theory, advertisement appeals, and self/brand congruence influence someone’s attitude towards the advertised product’, this study used an experimental design with a quantitative data collection method. Three variations of an online questionnaire were sent out to collect the data. Because this study draws on relevant theoretical ideas and existing knowledge on the research topic to formulate hypotheses, this study is of a deductive nature (Babbie, 2021). A quantitative approach was adopted as opposed to a qualitative method as this research is interested in the statistical relationship within the gathered data rather than in-depth insights into the investigated concepts (Babbie, 2021). Using a questionnaire to collect the data enables the study to reach a large number of respondents, which makes it possible to make predictions. Furthermore, the study utilized a between-subject experimental design, which means that respondents were randomly assigned and subjected to only one experimental condition. The experimental component of the study allows us to test responses to different stimuli and compare responses of the different experimental groups (Neuman, 2014). The characteristics of this approach fit the aim of this study, which is to investigate the extent to which implicit self-theories, advertisement appeals, and self/brand congruence influences someone’s attitude towards an advertised product.

The study uses a cross-sectional and experimental design. Bryman (2016) defined a cross-sectional design as a design that:

entails the collection of data on a sample of cases and at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables, which are then examined to detect patterns of association. (p.53)

The data was collected through an online, self-administered questionnaire. Three variations of the questionnaire were randomly distributed to the respondents. This was done

with the ‘randomization’ option in Qualtrics to ensure an equal distribution of the three variations.

3.2 Population and sample

To calculate the required sample size for this study, the population needs to be determined first. The study is interested in how people respond to two different advertisement appeals in the Netherlands. The decision was made to only include people who have a self-reported good enough level of English to understand the text and are above the age of 18 in the study for consent reasons, and because it is imperative that the respondents have some self-knowledge and can understand the text presented in the questionnaire.

The population consists of people living in the Netherlands that are 18 years or older. According to the latest numbers from the Dutch Central Bureau for Statistics, 14.2 million people are living in the Netherlands of 18 years and older (CBS, n.d.). 184 responses were used in the analysis of this study, which means that the results are reliable to within +/-8% at a 95% confidence level (SurveyMonkey, n.d.).

A non-probability sampling method was conducted as the sample was not randomly selected. Specifically, this research used a purposive sampling procedure as some criteria were to recruit participants (Bryman, 2016). Namely, it was required that the respondent was familiar with the Nike brand, over the age of 18, and had a self-reported sufficient level of English. Individuals who meet these criteria represent the research units. The questionnaire was distributed through various fitness and sports fans groups on Facebook, via a local gym, social media platform Reddit, and Survey Circle and Survey Swap, which are websites where one can get respondents by filling out other questionnaires. The choice was made to distribute the questionnaire via these different platforms to gather a variety of respondents with different demographic profiles.

3.3 Instrument of data collection

An online, self-administered questionnaire was made in Qualtrics to collect the data. In Appendix A, screenshots of the questionnaire are displayed.

The questionnaire started with a text that introduced the topic, the reason for the study, the amount of time it would take to complete the questionnaire, information on consent, and the statement that people should only fill out the questionnaire if they have a sufficient level of English. Next, a validation question was presented, confirming whether the participant was

familiar with Nike. If not, the participants were sent to the end of the survey, thanked for their time, and excluded from the sample.

After checking if the respondent met the sampling criteria, they were asked about their implicit-self theory to find out if they were more of an incremental theorist or entity theorist. Respondents were asked to fill out a 7-point Likert scale with a set of eight items linking to entity theory or incremental theory. The items used were from the pre-existing and validated Implicit Persons Theory Measure scale by Levy et al. (1998). In their study, the scale was found to be highly reliable with a Cronbach's α of .93.

Next, the respondents were asked to read a written advertisement from Nike. The first experimental condition got an advertisement with a signaling advertisement appeal, the second experimental condition got an advertisement with a self-improvement advertisement appeal, and the control group a neutral and descriptive advertisement with no additional appeal. All advertisements were an adaptation of an existing Nike advertisement. The advertisements were adjusted to fit the designated appeal by incorporating five sets of statements that represented the signaling or self-improvement appeal except for the one in the control group. These sentences were adapted from the sentences used by Park and John (2010). Before being used the appeal statements were validated as described in section 3.5 'procedure for analyzing the data'.

After reading the advertisement, the respondent was asked to evaluate it. This was done using the items from the 'attitude towards the advertised product' scale by Batra and Ray (1986). The scale consisted of six items which were all asked on a 7-point bipolar scale for all three experimental groups. In addition, respondents were asked about their self/brand congruence. The method developed by Sirgy et al. (1997) was used to measure this concept. The respondent was asked to list three personality traits they associate Nike with and then rate their self/brand congruence. This method to measure self/brand congruence eliminates the need to pre-test the perceived personality traits of the brand and any confusion on predetermined personality traits that would typically have been used if the respondent does not agree with these personality traits (Sirgy et al., 1997). To measure the self/brand congruence, five items from the 'product/personality congruence' and 'self/image congruence' scales by Sirgy et al. (1997) and Govers and Schoormans (2005) were used and slightly adapted to fit the study.

Lastly, demographic questions such as age and gender were asked. After filling out the questionnaire, the respondent was debriefed, thanked for their time, and notified that their response had been saved.

3.4 Procedures for data collection

The questionnaire was distributed on various Facebook groups aimed at fitness and sports fans. A direct link to the questionnaire was incorporated in a post on the Facebook pages with a copy asking people if they wanted to participate in the study. The post did not include any incentive for filling out the questionnaire. The questionnaire was also distributed via SurveySwap and Survey Circle. These websites allow researchers to get respondents to their questionnaires by filling out questionnaires from other researchers. The questionnaire was also posted on the social media platform Reddit in three groups that were specifically made for individuals who wanted to get respondents for their questionnaire. Finally, a QR code was also distributed in a local gym. At the end of various group classes, the gym members were asked if they wanted to participate in the study. If so, they could scan the QR code linked to the online questionnaire. The online questionnaire was available for 29 days, ranging from the 29th of March 2020 to the 26th of April 2022.

A pre-test was done with 8 participants. Some issues with the readability of the questionnaire were pointed out. For example, some questions were not displayed very well when using a mobile phone, and the respondent would need to browse the screen to be able to read the full questions. These issues were resolved, and adjustments were made according to the pre-test to create the final version of the questionnaire. Besides these initial comments, the participants perceived the questionnaire as logical and clear.

3.5 Procedure for analyzing the data

Once the data was collected, it was imported into IBM SPSS Statistics, version 26. The data set was first cleaned, so only fully completed responses that fit the criteria were included in the sample. Normal distribution was checked for the continuous variables. New variables using dummy coding were created so that the ‘advertisement appeal’ variable could be used in the regression analysis. Next, responses for the eight statements on implicit self-theory were combined to create one continuous variable (high score=incremental theorist, low score=entity theorist). The answers to the six questions on ‘attitude towards the advertised product’ were also averaged to create one overall score (high score= positive attitude, low score=negative attitude). Lastly, an overall score for the ‘self/brand congruence’ construct was made by averaging the responses on the five items (high score= high self/brand congruence, low score= low self/brand congruence).

The independent variables in this study are the implicit self-theory construct, the self/brand congruence, and the advertisement appeals. The implicit self-theory is measured as a continuous variable as well as the self/brand congruence variable. The dependent variable is the attitude towards the advertised product.

The five sets of advertisement appeal statements were validated before the start of the survey by showing separate respondents ($N = 16$) the statements and asking to what type of person (entity or incremental theorist) they think the statements would be most appealing. The answers were given on a scale of 0 (someone who wants to wear Nike to *improve* themselves to become more stylish) to 100 (Someone who wants to wear Nike to *signal* to everyone that they are stylish) utilizing a slider tool. Then, the ratings were compared within each pair of statements using a t-test. This validated that the signaling statements were rated to be more appealing to people who wanted to signal their qualities by using the advertised product and the self-improvement statements were more appealing to people who wanted to improve their personal qualities by using the product (for all paired t -tests, $p < .050$, mean of signaling items $M = 66.59$ vs mean of self-improvement items $M = 32.65$). All results of the paired t -test are displayed in Appendix B.

Multiple regression was used to test the hypotheses. Multiple regression analysis is a suitable technique to analyze the hypotheses as it allows the analysis of the relationship between one continuous dependent variable and multiple independent variables (Pallant, 2011). Multiple regression is also a suitable for testing interaction effects. Interaction effects appear when the influence of one variable is contingent on the value of another variable (Howitt & Cramer, 2014), which is precisely what this study is investigating.

For H1, a multiple regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between the implicit self-theories, the advertisement appeals, their interaction, and attitude towards the advertised products. For H2, another multiple regression analysis was done with implicit self-theory, self/brand congruence, both advertisement appeals, attitude towards the advertised product and all the interactions. The multiple regression with all the variables and their interactions indicates whether there is a three-way interaction between self/brand congruence, type of advertisement appeal, and implicit self-theory on attitude towards the advertised product, which is what the second hypothesis of the study describes.

3.6 Reliability and validity

Several steps have been taken to increase the reliability and validity of this research. According to Bryman (2016), “reliability is fundamentally concerned with issues of consistency of the measures” (p. 156), while “validity has to do with whether a measure of a concept really measures that concept” (p.158). To increase the study’s internal validity, the respondents were randomly assigned to the three experimental conditions using the randomization option in Qualtrics. This decreases bias between groups as each participant has an equal chance of being assigned to one of the experimental conditions. Thus, no individual characteristics of respondents could have influenced their placement in one of the conditions (Neuman, 2014). However, the non-random sampling method used could pose a threat to the external validity of this study (Neuman, 2014). To minimize this, a large sample was collected, and the questionnaire was distributed through a variety of channels, both on and offline, with the goal of gathering a diverse sample that still met the sampling criteria. Face validity was also considered. Face validity checks that “the measure apparently reflects the content of the concept in question” (Bryman, 2016, p.159) and was ensured by doing a pilot test of the questionnaire. Feedback from other researchers and members of the population ensured that the questionnaire was operationalized in an understandable manner.

Only well-used and tested scales from previous studies were utilized to increase reliability. Furthermore, Cronbach’s α was calculated to measure the internal consistency of the scales ‘implicit self-theory’, ‘self/brand congruence’, and ‘attitude towards the advertised product’. This measure reveals how closely related the items of the scale are and, thus, whether the items all measure the same construct. The Cronbach’s α is presented in Table 3.1 for all constructs. A Cronbach’s α that exceeds .80 is considered an acceptable level of internal reliability (Bryman, 2016). As seen in Table 3.1, all constructs have a Cronbach’s α higher than 0.80. Thus, the items in each construct measure the intended construct and not any other construct.

Table 3.1*Overview of Cronbach's alpha for scales*

Construct	Number of items	α
Implicit self-theory	8	0.85
Self/brand congruence	5	0.85
Attitude towards advertised product	6	0.87

3.7 Sample description

A total of 274 responses were recorded. Responses that were not complete were excluded from the sample. Furthermore, the respondents that answered 'no' to the question "Are you familiar with the brand 'Nike'?" were also excluded from the analysis. After data cleaning, $N = 184$ were included in further analysis. In the final sample, the percentage of women is 66.3%, and the male share is 29.3%. The remaining 4.4% indicated their gender as non/binary, third gender, or preferred not to disclose their gender. The participants' average age was 28.29 ($SD = 10.23$). The sample consists of three experimental conditions. Participants were randomly assigned to a group using the randomization option in Qualtrics. In the sample, there were 66 responses for the group with a signaling appeal, 58 responses for the group with a self-improvement appeal, and 60 responses for the control group with a neutral advertisement with no advertisement appeal. The mean scores and standard deviations of the variables 'implicit self-theory', 'self/brand congruence', and 'attitude towards the advertised product' for each experimental condition are presented below in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2*Means and standard deviations of all continuous variables for each experimental group*

Variable	Signaling appeal		Self-improvement appeal		Control group	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Implicit self-theory	4.46	1.12	4.16	.96	4.35	.88
Self/brand congruence	3.18	.90	3.24	.93	3.22	.91
Attitude towards advertised product	4.68	1.20	4.82	.79	4.54	1.24

3.8 Ethical considerations

Diener and Crandall (1978) recognized four primary areas for ethical difficulties, which will be considered in this study. These areas include harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy, and the involvement of deception.

3.8.1 Harm to participants

A study can cause harm to its subjects in a variety of ways (Bryman, 2016). Physical harm is possible, but mental harm is also possible. No one was physically harmed throughout the data gathering process for this study as there was no physical contact. Mental harm, however, may occur when utilizing an online questionnaire. In this study, the respondents answer questions about their implicit self-theory. A point was made not to formulate any statements that could harm the participant's self-esteem. The statements were also formulated in a general manner so that the participant did not feel the questions were about their own personality and capabilities. The self/brand congruence statements were about the individual's relation to the brand but were carefully selected not to have any negative connotation. It was reiterated that there was no indication of a right or wrong answer. All statements were presented in random order, and no text presented to the participants included any form of opinion as to if there was a 'good' or 'bad' answer so the participants would not feel judged.

Harm to participants also includes maintaining the confidentiality of the participants (Bryman, 2016). The questionnaire of this study does not ask the participants for any personal

questions that reveal their identity. It is, therefore, that the participants that fill out the questionnaire remain entirely anonymous. Furthermore, the tone of the report was considered. Reports on the survey results are presented in an observant manner, not stating any personal opinion about the results. Thus, it is believed that this study brings no harm to the participants involved.

3.8.2 Lack of informed consent

Secondly, to assure that there was no lack of informed consent, the questionnaire included an introduction text where the respondents were notified that by filling out the survey, an agreement was made to use the results for a master's thesis. Additionally, filling in the questionnaire was completely voluntary, and respondents were told that they could stop filling in the questionnaire at any time. It was the respondent's own choice to fill in the questionnaire. Lastly, the respondents were debriefed on what the experiment was about after they filled out the questionnaire. The researcher's identity was also stated in the closing text, together with an email address that the respondent could contact in case of any questions regarding the research.

3.8.3 Invasion of privacy

The study's questionnaire included some personal, demographic questions. Namely, two questions asking the participants' age and gender. However, this information could not identify the participants as individuals. As a result, none of the participants' privacy was violated in this study (Bryman, 2016).

3.8.4 Deception

“Deception occurs when researchers represent their work as something other than what it is” (Bryman, 2016, p. 133). The respondents in this study were not deceived, as the goal of this study was made clear at the end of the questionnaire. The precise goal of the study could not be disclosed in the introduction because the study was an experiment.

4 Results

This chapter discusses the results found in the collected data. It, furthermore, describes the results of the multiple regression analysis done to answer the two hypotheses of this study.

4.1 Implicit self-theories, advertisement appeals, and attitude towards the advertised product

The first objective of this study was to test if there is any relationship between implicit self-theory, advertisement appeals, and attitude towards the advertised product. To test this hypothesis, first, a Pearson correlation was tested between implicit self-theory and attitude towards the advertisement. The results show no statistically significant correlation between implicit self-theory, which is a continuous variable (low score = entity theorist, high score = incremental theorist), and attitude towards the advertised product $r = 0.11$, $N = 184$, $p = .124$. In other words, participants' feelings about the advertisement were not directly impacted by the implicit self-theory they hold. The Pearson correlation was also tested within each experimental condition. Here, likewise, no significant relationship between implicit self-theory and attitude towards the advertised product was found in the signaling ($r = 0.16$, $N = 66$, $p = .205$), self-improvement ($r = 0.10$, $N = 58$, $p = .451$), and control group ($r = 0.01$, $N = 60$, $p = .452$).

While no direct relationship was found between these two variables, a multiple regression was still conducted as the primary purpose of this study was to see the differences between the experimental groups. Thus, a multiple regression analysis was used to test whether there is a relationship between the implicit self-theory and attitude towards the advertised product and whether it is different when respondents were shown different advertisement appeals. The appeals were put into the regression using dummy coding. The dummy coding applied to whether or not a respondent was in the signaling or self-improvement group and is, thus, compared to the control group.

First, a linear multiple regression with attitude towards the advertised product as criterium and implicit self-theory (continuous variable), signaling appeal, and self-improvement appeal as predictors. The implicit self-theory scores were centered before being used in the analysis to reduce problems with multicollinearity. The model was found not to be significant, $F(3, 180) = 1.58$, $p = .195$, $R^2 = .03$. No significant effect was found for the implicit self-theory ($\beta = .12$, $p = .097$), signaling appeal ($\beta = .06$, $p = .518$), and self-

improvement appeal ($\beta = .13, p = .128$). This means here was no significant difference in attitude towards the product between the signaling group and the control group, as well as the self-improvement group and the control group.

Next, the interactions between implicit self-theory and the advertisement appeals were tested. A multiple linear regression with attitude towards the advertised product as criterium and implicit self-theory, signaling appeal, self-improvement appeal, and their interactions as predictors was conducted. This model was also found not to be significant $F(5, 178) = .98, p = .431, R^2 = .03$. Against predictions, the interaction between implicit self-theory and both the advertisement appeals was not a significant predictor of attitude towards the advertised product. This means that the advertisement appeal was not a moderator between implicit self-theory and attitude towards the product when compared to the control group. See Appendix C for all the results of the predictors in the multiple regression.

The data is visualized in Figure 4.1. In the figure, implicit self-theory is split into two categories based on their standard deviations around the mean, thus classifying the participants into two groups. Participants scoring one standard deviation below the mean were categorized as entity theorists, and participants scoring one standard deviation above the means as incremental theorists. Despite there being no significant predictors in the tested model, Figure 4.1 shows that in all three groups, the incremental theorists have a more positive attitude towards the product, which is against predictions. Furthermore, it shows that there is little difference in attitude overall and within each experimental group.

Considering all the results stated above, no significant relationship between implicit self-theory, advertisement appeals, and attitude towards the advertised product was found. Thus, H1 is rejected.

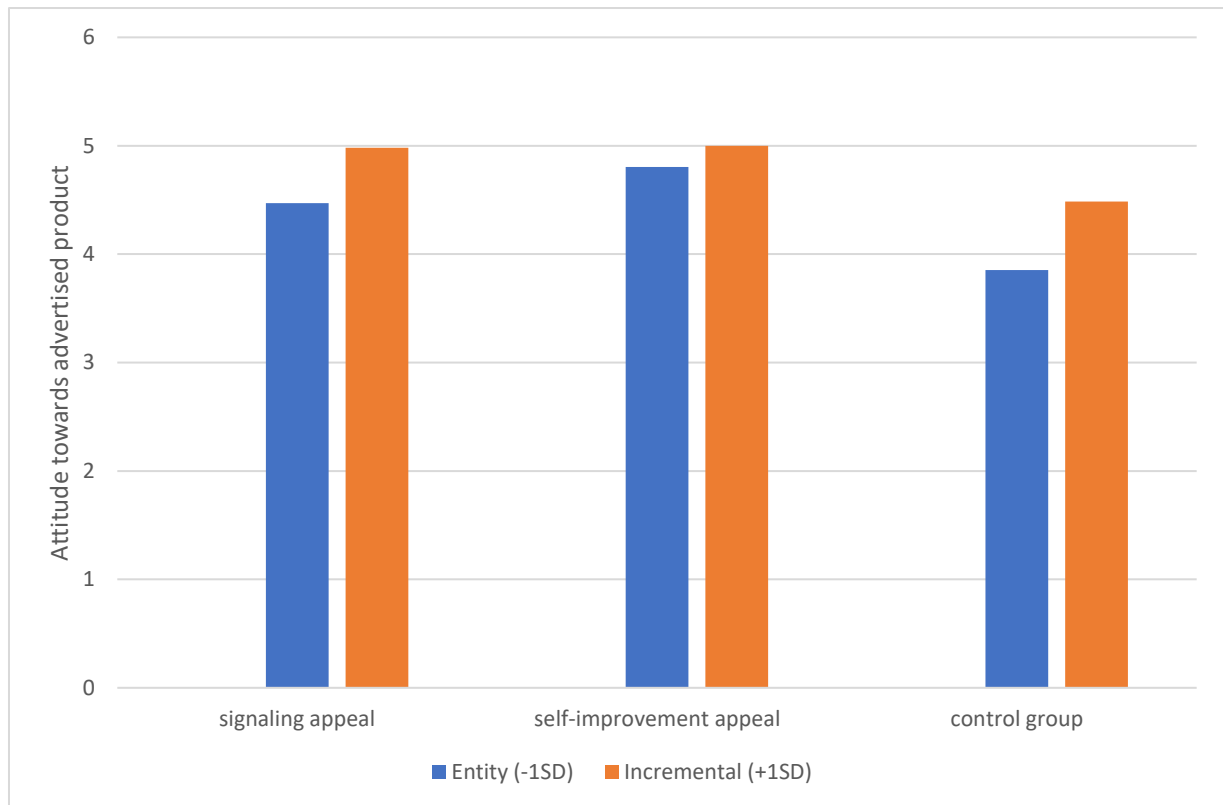


Figure 4.1. Mean of the attitude toward the advertised product grouped by of advertisement appeal (signaling appeal vs self-improvement appeal vs control group) and implicit self-theory (entity vs incremental theory).

4.2 Self/brand congruence

The second objective of this study was to test whether there is a three-way interaction between self/brand congruence, type of advertisement appeal, and implicit self-theory on attitude towards the advertised product.

First, a Pearson's correlation was conducted between self-brand congruence and attitude towards the advertised product. This was done for the entire sample but also for each experimental condition separately. When analyzing the entire sample, we find a significant moderate positive relationship between self/brand congruence and attitude towards the advertised product, $r = 0.37$, $N = 184$, $p < .001$. Thus, it can be inferred that a higher self/brand congruence leads to a more positive attitude towards the product. When looking at the experimental groups separately, we also find a significant positive moderate relationship between self/brand congruence and attitude in the signaling appeal group ($r = 0.41$, $N = 66$, $p < .001$) and the control group ($r = 0.46$, $N = 60$, $p < .001$). No significant relationship between self/brand congruence and attitude is found within the self-improvement appeal group ($r = 0.19$, $N = 58$, $p = .149$). This could mean the self-improvement appeal group features more

respondents of a certain implicit self-theory. When looking at the mean of the implicit self-theory score, we see that within the self-improvement appeal group, the overall implicit self-theory score is slightly lower ($M = 4.16$, $SD = .96$), which indicates that the respondents skewed more towards entity theorists when compared to the signaling appeal group ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.12$) and the control group ($M = 4.35$, $SD = .88$). Although there is a skew in the data towards one type of self-theory over the other, it is not possible to determine the reasoning for the lack of relationship between self/brand congruence and attitude towards the product in the experimental group shown the self-improvement advertisement appeal.

Next, a multiple regression was conducted. Again, dummy coding was used to put the advertisement appeals in the regression. The self/brand congruence and implicit self-theory variables were centered before being used in the analysis to reduce problems with multicollinearity. The linear regression was first conducted without the interactions.

A linear multiple regression was conducted with attitude towards the advertised product as a criterium. The predictors were implicit self-theory, signaling appeal, self-improvement appeal, and self/brand congruence. The model was found to be significant $F(4, 179) = 8.49$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .16$. Only self/brand congruence was found to be a significant predictor of attitude towards the advertised product ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$). It is a positive and moderate relationship which means that when self/brand congruence is higher, the attitude towards the advertised product becomes more positive. The other variables implicit self-theory ($\beta = .12$, $p = .076$), signaling appeal ($\beta = .06$, $p = .422$) and self-improvement appeal ($\beta = .13$, $p = .110$) were not found to be significant predictors.

Next, a multiple regression was conducted, including all the interactions. Attitude towards the advertised product was regressed onto implicit self-theory, signaling appeal, self-improvement appeal, self/brand congruence, and all their interactions. The model was found to be significant $F(11, 172) = 4.15$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .21$. In the model self/brand congruence was found to have a significant positive moderate relationship ($\beta = .49$, $p < .001$) and the interaction between self-improvement appeal and self/brand congruence a significant negative weak relationship ($\beta = -.20$, $p = .037$). The first relationship, again, indicates that a higher self/brand congruence leads to a more positive attitude towards the product. The second relationship signifies that self/brand congruence has less of an influence on attitude in the self-improvement appeal group than it has in the control group. The results of all the variables in the regression analysis are presented in Appendix D.

In Figure 4.2, the mean score of self/brand congruence for each experimental group is visualized. In the figure, implicit self-theory scores are split up into two categories again

based on their standard deviations around the mean, classifying respondents as either entity or incremental theorists. The figure shows entity theorists to have a higher average self/brand congruence score in the self-improvement and control groups but not in the signaling appeal group. Overall, the mean score for self/brand congruence varies very little within and between experimental groups. Because the three-way interaction between implicit self-theory, advertisement appeal, and self/brand congruence was not found to be a significant predictor of attitude towards the advertised product for both advertisement appeals, H2 is rejected.

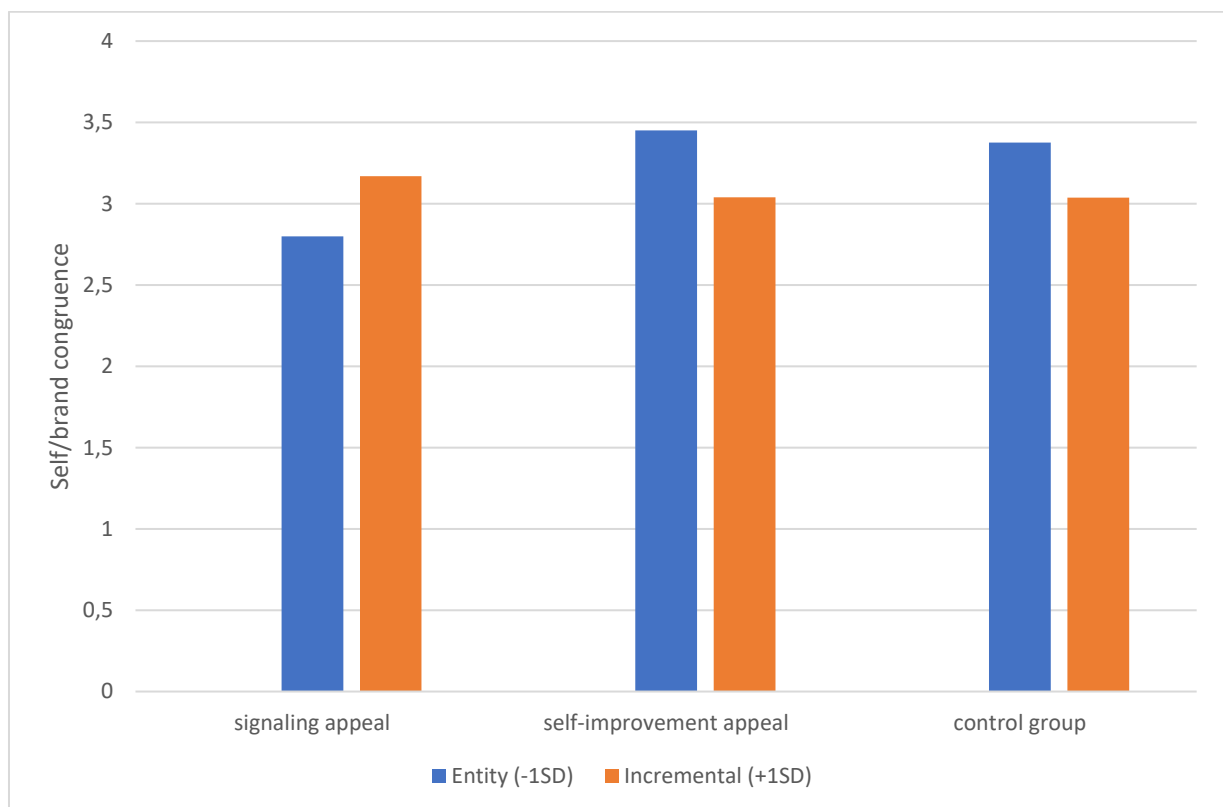


Figure 4.2. Mean of self/brand congruence grouped by advertisement appeal (signaling appeal vs. self-improvement appeal vs. control group) and implicit self-theory (entity vs. incremental theory).

To summarize, this study discovered a significant correlation between self/brand congruence and attitude towards the advertised product, meaning that a higher self/brand congruence led to a more positive attitude towards the advertised product. Furthermore, a significant relationship was found for the interaction between self/brand congruence and the self-improvement appeal and attitude towards the advertised product. This means that self/brand congruence had a bigger impact on attitude in the control group as opposed to the group with a self-improvement advertisement appeal. Based on the reviewed literature, the first hypothesis of this research stated that ‘implicit self-theories and advertisement appeals have an impact on attitude towards the advertised product when compared to a control group.’

After conducting a linear multiple regression analysis, no evidence was found to support this hypothesis. The second hypothesis concerned the three-way interaction between self/brand congruence, type of advertisement appeal, and implicit self-theory on attitude towards the advertised product. Despite the few significant relationships found within the regression model stated above, no evidence was found to support the specific three-way interaction, and so the second hypothesis was also rejected.

5 Conclusion

This chapter presents the conclusions, including the discussion of the findings, the limitations of the study, and the recommendations for future research.

5.1 Discussion

The objective of this study was to test to what extent implicit self-theory, advertisement appeals, and self/brand congruence influence someone's attitude towards an advertised product. The relationship between implicit self-theory, advertisement appeal, and attitude towards the advertised product discovered by Park and John (2012) was used as the foundation of this study but tested on a different brand: Nike. Furthermore, the concept 'self/brand congruence' was added to see if a three-way interaction existed between self/brand congruence, type of advertisement appeal, and implicit self-theory on attitude. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this was the first study to test for self/brand congruence to be a moderator for this specific relationship. Even though the hypotheses of this study were derived from existing literature, the results differed from any of the hypothesized outcomes. Nevertheless, the tests did provide some interesting and valuable insights.

It has already been established that having a brand personality can strengthen the relationship between the brand and the consumer and even increase the chance the consumer will make a purchase with that brand (Freling et al., 2011; Su & Tong, 2016). We, furthermore, know that what people think about their own personality can be extended to what people think about a brand's personality (Yorkston et al., 2010). Thus, it is a valuable insight to know how a brand can utilize their consumers' views on personality malleability to make advertisements that get a better response. The first hypothesis was 'implicit self-theories and advertisement appeals have an impact on attitude towards the advertised product when compared to a control group'. Multiple linear regression was conducted to test this hypothesis, though no significant relationship between implicit self-theory, advertisement appeals, their interactions, and attitude towards the advertised product was found. This was against predictions based on the contradicting results by Park and John (2012), who found a significant relationship between the interaction of implicit self-theory and advertisement appeal and attitude towards the advertised product. In their study, entity theorists had a better response to the signaling appeal, while incremental theorists responded better to the self-improvement appeal. However, it must be noted that these were only weak correlations which could be why they did not hold up when being tested in relation to Nike.

When looking at the visualization of the findings in figure 4.1 in section 4.1, it is visible that in all three experimental conditions, incremental theorists had a more positive attitude towards the advertised product, although there was not a big enough difference for the correlation to be significant. This is interesting as it, again, contradicts the findings by Park and John (2012). Somehow, the advertisement appeal did not impact how respondents assessed the product. This could be explained by the findings of Kwon et al. (2016). In their study, entity theorists responded more favorably to symbolic value appeals, while incremental theorists responded more favorably to functional value appeals. The advertisements used in this study were more functional as the bases of the advertisement was a description of the features of the Nike shoe. The added five appeal statements brought more of a symbolic value appeal. Perhaps, because the advertisements used had such a high functional appeal, the signaling and self-improvement appeal statements did not have a prominent enough impact and incremental theorists, therefore, responded better to the product in all experimental conditions.

Another possible explanation for the lack of correlation between the implicit self-theories, advertisement appeals, and attitude towards a Nike shoe found in the literature is by Roy and Naidoo (2021). They found that incremental theorists preferred products that were advertised in terms of experience (e.g., how it feels when you wear the product), and entity theorists preferred products advertised in terms of credence (e.g., if the product is manufactured ethically). Specifically, the appeal statements in the advertisement used in this study regarded the experience of the Nike shoe. Thus, it could be insinuated that incremental theorists responded better to the advertisements not based on the signaling and self-improvement appeals but instead based on the way the advertisement highlighted the experience that came with wearing the Nike shoe.

A last possible cause for the lack of correlation between the variables and a limitation of this thesis could be the form of the advertisement that was utilized in this research. We used a written advertisement to assess the influence of the advertisement appeals, which is also how Park and John (2012) operationalized it in their study. Yet, this study is done around ten years later, which is no minor detail. The digital space, and with that, advertisements, have rapidly evolved over this time. Especially younger consumers are more used to advertisements being pictures or short videos on their Instagram or YouTube. Rarely do people read a full-length written advertisement in their day-to-day lives. As a suggestion for future research, it might be more fruitful to test the advertisement appeals in an advertisement format that is more familiar to the consumer. For instance, in a video or Instagram post. With

this modernized approach to the study, the influence of the advertisement appeals on attitude towards the advertised product will possibly be different.

The second hypothesis of this study was ‘there is a three-way interaction between self/brand congruence, type of advertisement appeal, and implicit self-theory on attitude towards the advertised product when compared to a control group’. Using linear multiple regression, no evidence was found for this three-way interaction. Nevertheless, a significant moderate correlation was found between self/brand congruence and attitude towards the advertised product. This is a logical finding when considering the notion that people identify with brand personalities and use them to communicate and complement their own identity to the outside world (Aaker, 1997). Previous studies have also linked the congruence of someone’s own personality with the brand’s personality to various positive outcomes such as customer support (Abel et al., 2013), brand preference (Chernev et al., 2011), brand loyalty (Kim et al., 2001), and customer satisfaction (Achouri & Bouslama, 2010). Thus, the positive influence of self/brand congruence on attitude towards the advertised product is an affirmative addition to the literature on self/brand congruence. Additionally, Nike is a brand with a pervasive brand personality. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the brand has been linked to varying personality dimensions resulting from the brand selling a range of products going from athletic apparel to streetwear, with their products falling in subsequently the lower price range and a very high price range (Araujo, 2018). This makes Nike a brand that can easily establish self/brand congruence, which, again, is in line with the findings of this study.

The other significant correlation found in this study was between the two-way interaction of self/brand congruence and the self-improvement appeal and attitude towards the advertised product. This implies that self/brand congruence has a bigger influence on the attitude towards the product in the control group vs the group with the self-improvement appeal. Specifically in the control group, respondents who had a high congruence also had a more positive attitude towards the Nike shoe, while in the self-improvement group, a higher self/brand congruence did not so much influence the attitude towards the Nike shoe. Despite this being a weak correlation, this is an interesting finding as it contradicts findings from previous research. The mean scores on the implicit self-theory scale indicate that there were more entity theorists in the self-improvement group compared to the other experimental groups. Reviewing the literature, one could expect that this would make the influence of self/brand congruence bigger and not smaller (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). When investigating the data, no logical explanation in corroboration with the literature can be found, and because of the weak nature of the correlation, further research is necessary to confirm this finding.

The mean self/brand congruence scores between groups reveal that entity theorists score higher on self/brand congruence in the self-improvement and control group. This is another exciting finding explained by the literature as it explains how entity theorists use brands to signal their personality to others (John & Park, 2016). On the other hand, incremental theorists do not believe a brand will define their personality as much, which could be why they scored lower on self/brand congruence than entity theorists. This means that brands need to be careful not to rely too heavily on self/brand congruence when the majority of their consumers hold the incremental point of view. Still, the significant correlation between self/brand congruence and attitude towards the advertised product emphasizes the importance of brands establishing a well-defined personality so that consumers can connect with the brand. Scholars have already established that having a brand personality is something positive for a brand (Freling et al., 2011). Future studies could add to this finding by looking into which type of advertisement appeals exactly establish this self/brand connection. This helps brand and marketing managers gain a deeper understanding of consumers and guides them while setting up marketing campaigns and messages.

5.2 Limitations and suggestions for future research

This section discusses some limitations of this study and suggestions for further research. Not being able to consider them exhaustively, the most prominent ones are presented.

The lack of significant correlations discovered in this study could mean that the evidence found in the literature to support the hypothesis that there is a relationship between implicit self-theories, advertisement appeals, and attitude towards the advertised product features inaccuracies or that it does not extend to all types of brands or consumers. The research by Park and John (2012) only found weak correlations between implicit self-theories, advertisement appeals, and attitude towards the advertised product. The minimal relationship found might explain the lack of correlation in this study as it was done on a different sample and regarding a different brand. The study by Park and John (2012) was also executed ten years prior to the completion of this thesis. As previously mentioned, the change in the digital landscape and how advertisements are published during these ten years might have changed how people respond to advertisements and, thus, justify the lack of correlation between implicit self-theories, advertisement appeals, and attitude towards the product in this research.

The justification and limitation of this study could also lie within the experimental design. As discussed, a written advertisement was used to test the influence of the signaling and self-improvement advertisement appeals. Using a different and more common advertisement format, such as a short video, could influence the results and may be more effective in testing the influence of the advertisement appeals. Having an advertisement that is easier to consume also minimizes the risk of respondents not properly noticing the appeals. It could also be the case that respondents did not read the advertisement carefully enough and did not sufficiently notice certain appeal statements.

Another limitation of this study could be that the advertisements shown were regarding only one brand. Nike is a very well-known and defined brand, making it a good brand for this study, but this could have also influenced the results. Because Nike is such a high-profile brand, respondents could have been biased to such a degree that their attitude towards the advertised product was not skewed by the advertisement shown to them but more so by their preconceived opinion of the brand and its products. Results did confirm that self/brand congruence influenced respondents' attitude toward the product, so it would not be surprising to see that previously formed opinions on the brand also impacted respondents' attitudes. Future studies could try to account for this by asking respondents how they feel about the brand prior to being shown an advertisement as a control variable. Furthermore, doing these tests using different types of brands or even different product types within brands could also demonstrate if the advertisement appeals have the same impact across brand types and products. Another possibility is to use a fake brand in the experimental design. This eliminates the influence of any biases the respondent has for the brand and will, thus, demonstrate the true influence of the advertisement appeals.

The significant correlation this study did find was regarding self/brand congruence. However, the correlations found were weak and moderate correlations which, therefore, indicates that further research might be necessary to explore the influence of self/brand congruence on attitude towards the advertised product. It, furthermore, could mean that other variables moderate the relationship between self/brand congruence and attitude towards the advertised product that have not been considered, such as age, gender, and type of product. Despite the fact that no evidence was found for the three-way interaction between implicit self-theory, advertisement appeals, and self/brand congruence, this study can still inspire other researchers to discover different moderating variables for this relationship. Researchers, furthermore, could take a different angle and investigate how brand preferences differ between people with different implicit self-theories. Then, the results might provide further

insight into how brands can use their consumers' implicit self-theory to create better and more effective advertisements. Additionally, researchers could look at the influence of implicit self-theory in different demographics. This study did not obtain a sample with enough demographic differences to test the influence of age and gender, but this could very well be a prominent factor in how people are influenced by implicit self-theory and advertisement appeals.

In conclusion, though none of the hypotheses were accepted, this study still provides interesting findings for scholars and brand executives. The research question of this thesis was 'to what extent does implicit self-theory, advertisement appeals, and self/brand congruence influence someone's attitude towards the advertised product? This study discovered a positive relationship between self/brand congruence and attitude towards the advertised product. The findings also indicated that self/brand congruence had a greater impact on participants who read the advertisement with the self-improvement appeal as opposed to the control group. These findings reestablish the importance of creating a well-defined brand personality that consumers can relate to and connect with, as it is clear that the connection between a brand's personality and a consumer's personality generates positive emotions towards that brand and its products or services. It is, thus, established that self/brand congruence does impact attitude towards the advertised product, however, this research found no evidence of the impact of the implicit self-theory and advertisement appeals on attitude towards the advertised product.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

Welcome!

For my Master thesis I am researching communication efforts in advertisements and you could contribute to this study by filling out this short questionnaire. It would be sincerely appreciated if you could spend a few minutes partaking in this study, it will take you no longer than 5 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers, I am merely interested in your opinions. Your response will be kept anonymous and confidential and your name will not be associated with any data. The results of this research will be reported in a Master thesis. At the end of this study, you will have the opportunity to provide feedback or any other comments, and a contact email will also be available.

In case you have come across this survey via SurveySwap, this survey contains a completion code for SurveySwap.io.

I sincerely thank you for your participation.

Clicking on the 'next' button indicates that:

- You have read and agree with the above information**
- You voluntarily agree to participate**
- You have a good level of English**
- You are at least 18 years old**

If you agree to participate, please be aware that you can still withdraw from the survey at any time by simply closing the tab. In this case, your information will be discarded and your answers will not be used as part of the research. If you wish to not participate in this study, you can close this tab now.



Are you familiar with the brand 'Nike'?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes



***Note: When 'yes' was selected, the respondent was directed to the questions below. When 'no' was selected, the respondent was redirected to the end of the survey.**

Please rate how you feel about the following statements. There are no right or wrong answers.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The kind of person someone is, is something basic about them, and it can't be changed very much.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People can substantially change the kind of person who they are.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People can change even their most basic qualities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People can do things differently, but the important parts of who they are can't really be changed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
No matter what kind of person someone is, they can always change very much.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As much as I hate to admit it, you can't teach an old dog new tricks. People can't really change their deepest attributes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Everyone, no matter who they are, can significantly change their basic characteristics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Everyone is a certain kind of person, and there is not much that they can do to really change that.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



*Note: after these questions the respondents was randomly shown one of the three advertisements below.

Please carefully read the following advertisement from 'Nike'.

Jordan Brand celebrates the power and impact of the Air Jordan I franchise with new interpretations and collaborations in the Fearless Ones collection. Each pair serves to extend the defining spirit of the pioneering silhouette. The Fearless Ones collection is led by the AJ1 High FlyEase, which exemplifies the symbolic power of the AJ1.

Taking insights and inspiration from adaptive athletes, the AJ1 High FlyEase adds the new benefit of easy entry while staying true to the silhouette's iconic look, colors, and materials. It features a zipper and strap FlyEase System for easy, one-handed heel entry and exit, and an adjustable eyestay hook and loop for top entry.



*Note: the advertisement above was shown to the control group.

Please carefully read the following advertisement from 'Nike'.

Jordan Brand celebrates the power and impact of the Air Jordan I franchise with new interpretations and collaborations in the Fearless Ones collection, for everyone that is not afraid to show the world who they are. Each pair serves to extend the defining spirit of the pioneering silhouette, and is bound to be a favorite for everyone wanting to show off their best side. The Fearless Ones collection is led by the AJ1 High FlyEase, which exemplifies the symbolic power of the AJ1 as a conduit for stories that share what it means to be fearless.

Taking insights and inspiration from adaptive athletes, this shoe let's you show off your personality like never before. The AJ1 High FlyEase adds the new benefit of easy entry while staying true to the silhouette's iconic look, colors and materials. It features a zipper and strap FlyEase System for easy, one-handed heel entry and exit, and an adjustable eyestay hook and loop for top entry, all contributing to an effortless, yet stylish look.



*Note: the advertisement above was shown to experimental group with the signaling appeal.

Please carefully read the following advertisement from 'Nike'.

Jordan Brand celebrates the power and impact of the Air Jordan I franchise with new interpretations and collaborations in the Fearless Ones collection, for everyone that is not afraid to learn how to become their best self. Each pair serves to extend the defining spirit of the pioneering silhouette, and is bound to be a favorite for everyone still looking for their own style. The Fearless Ones collection is led by the AJI High FlyEase, which exemplifies the symbolic power of the AJI as a conduit for stories that share how people grew and learned to be fearless.

Taking insights and inspiration from adaptive athletes, this shoe will teach you how it feels to be your best self! The AJI High FlyEase adds the new benefit of easy entry while staying true to the silhouette's iconic look, colors and materials. It features a zipper and strap FlyEase System for easy, one-handed heel entry and exit, and an adjustable eyestay hook and loop for top entry, all helping you to create this effortless, yet stylish look.



*Note: the advertisement above was shown to experimental group with the self-improvement appeal.

Based on the advertisement. How do you feel about this product?

Well designed	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Poorly designed
Useful	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Useless
Appealing	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Unappealing
Poorly made	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Well made
Desirable	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Undesirable
The best in shoes	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	The worst in shoes



Take a moment to think of the personality of the brand 'Nike'. If this brand was a person, how would you describe its personality? Please write down three words that you would use to describe the personality of this brand.

Taking this description into consideration, evaluate the following statements.

I identify with the description of this brand.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

This brand is consistent with the way I am.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

My own personality and the one just described are very similar.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Wearing Nike shoes in casual situations, is consistent with how I see myself.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

People similar to me wear Nike shoes in casual situations.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree



Lastly, we have some demographic questions for you.

What year were you born?

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary / third gender
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you have any other feedback or comments for the researcher regarding this questionnaire? If so, please fill in your feedback or comments in the box below. For any questions you can contact the researcher, Kim, via 582443km@eur.nl



Thank you for participating in this study! Your response has been recorded. Below I will explain the exact purpose of this study.

With this study I try to see how people with different beliefs on the malleability of personality and connection to Nike respond to different types of advertisements. This study used an experimental design which means that participants were selected to be one of three experimental groups. You either read an advertisement that highlighted how you can use the Nike shoe to show the world who you are, learn to show the world who you are, or you read an advertisement that only featured functional aspects of the product.

We expect that someone's views on the malleability of personality will influence how well they respond to the advertisement. Furthermore, we expect that how strongly you relate to the brand Nike also influences how you respond to the Nike advertisement.

Thank you again for participating. If you have any questions regarding this study, you can contact the researcher, Kim Mulleneers, via 582443km@eur.nl.



Appendix B: Results paired samples *t*-test

Overview of paired samples t-test implicit self-theory statements

Pairs	Statements	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Paired <i>t</i> -test		
				<i>t</i> -value	<i>df</i>	Sig (two-tailed)
1	for everyone that is not afraid to show the world who they are	64.63	33.22	5.05	15	.000
	for everyone that is not afraid to learn how to become their best self	18.00	23.28			
2	is bound to be a favorite for everyone wanting to show off their best side	76.94	21.48	3.06	15	.008
	is bound to be a favorite for everyone still looking for their own style	45.00	33.10			
3	for stories that share what it means to be fearless	45.44	33.05	2.26	15	.039
	for stories that share how people grew and learned to be fearless	24.56	28.31			
4	this shoe lets you show off your personality like never before	73.31	27.21	4.72	15	.000
	this shoe will teach you how it feels to be your best self	32.44	31.74			
5	all contributing to an effortless, yet stylish look	72.63	28.01	2.83	15	.013
	all helping you to create this effortless, yet stylish look	43.25	37.82			

Appendix C: Results multiple regression model 1

Overview multiple regression

Predictors	β	p
Implicit self-theory	.13	.393
Signaling appeal	.05	.535
Self-improvement appeal	.13	.144
Implicit self-theory*Signaling appeal	.02	.882
Implicit self-theory*Self-improvement appeal	-.03	.798

Dependent variable: attitude towards advertised product

Appendix D: Results multiple regression model 2

Overview multiple regression

Predictors	β	p
Implicit self-theory	.22	.103
Signaling appeal	.05	.552
Self-improvement appeal	.12	.142
Self/brand congruence	.49	< .001*
Implicit self-theory*Signaling appeal	-.07	.576
Implicit self-theory*Self-improvement appeal	-.08	.440
Congruence* Signaling appeal	-.04	.714
Congruence* Self-improvement appeal	-.20	.037*
Congruence*implicit self-theory	.26	.060
Congruence*implicit self-theory* Signaling appeal	-.10	.379
Congruence*implicit self-theory* Self-improvement appeal	-.13	.186

Dependent variable: attitude towards advertised product