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Could Fishbein Attitude Model be Applied to Luxury Brand?

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ABSTRACT

This study suggests two representative consumer's decision-making methods, and we expected that brand preference could be changed depending on different information processing methods. Also we examined the consumer's attitude about the brand concept and main attributes of the product. In addition, we have considered the preference difference about belief of product attributes and customer's thinking style in the decision making process. For this purpose, experimental stimuli of functional and symbolic brand concept were selected by Focus Group Interview (FGI) and pilot test. Also we conducted a survey on university students, graduate students and ordinary people at Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk-do Province in Korea. Additionally, the results regarding the collected preferences were applied to the final empirical analysis. According to the experiment, we found that not only the functional attributes is excellent but also the beliefs about the symbolic attributes are more excellent in luxury brands. Also we confirmed that the preference of the Fishbein attitude model about the belief of the product attributes operated as a normal mechanism. As a result, luxury brands should promote their products with highly symbolic attributes because symbolic attributes have a great influence on the consumer's preference.

Keywords: Heuristic, Fishbein, Brand concept, Thinking style, Preference.

1. INTRODUCTION

Consumers today are exposed to countless advertisements through various media that transcend time and space, regardless of whether such was done intentionally by them or not. There are largely two ways that consumers form an attitude toward the brands that they are presented with and choose which brand to purchase from. *First*, under the assumption that human beings are completely rational beings, consumers engage in a "rational decision-making process," where they evaluate and form an attitude toward a brand, based on a rational information processing and decision-making process, and select their most preferred

brand. **Second**, under the assumption that human beings are semi-rational beings, consumers engage in an “irrational decision-making process”, and select a brand that they would be satisfied with based on their intuition, past experiences, and current circumstances (Lee, Ahn & Ha, 2010). An example of a model representing the former is the Fishbein attitude model, which explains the formation of rational attitudes toward alternative brands, based on a systematic evaluation and beliefs regarding the attributes of the brands. This is a compensation model, where the strength of one attribute compensates the weakness of another attribute, and it could be described as a method of making decisions in reflection of the attitude formed toward all of the attributes (Kim, Hur, Lee, Park & Jang, 2009; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). On the other hand, a model exemplifying the latter decision-making process is the heuristic decision-making approach, based on the consumer’s intuition, learning effect and current circumstances (Payne, James, Eloise & Eric, 1992). Consumers make rational decisions by considering the matters determined using their information processing capabilities (current asset) and the probability that the emergence of the expected result, but at times, they imitate the decisions made by others, or consider alternatives depending on their religious beliefs or subjective ideas (Ahn & Kwak, 2012). According to the general consumer behavior theories, the brand selected through the aforementioned decision-making processes must be identical. However, as mentioned above, consumers are faced with a flood of information from diverse and countless advertisements, and this has increased the chance that the decisions resulting from the two processes will not match.

To examine the factors behind such inconsistencies in brand choices, two cases are presented in this paper: a case in which the brand has high prestige such as a luxury brand, and a case in which there is a considerable difference in the thinking style.

First, in relation to brand concept, brands with a functional concept induce strong beliefs in their functional attribute, making consumers ultimately choose them for their functionality, while brands with a symbolic concept induce strong beliefs in their symbolic attribute, making consumers select them for their symbolism in the end. **Second**, thinking style refers to the attitude of the thinker, who thinks and deliberates inside their heads regarding an event concerning them, and personal attitude and values vary depending on the individual’s cultural tendency. It can be conjectured that the brand selected by a consumer is dependent on his or her thinking style. Thus, in the case of holistic thinkers, who take into consideration all of the factors to make a decision, they are likely to select symbolic brands, whereas analytical thinkers, who make a decision after analyzing all the attributes, will likely select functional brands.

However, in the case of brands with a symbolic concept, the functional attributes will likely be overshadowed by the prominent symbolic attributes no matter how excellent they are; thus, there may be inconsistencies in brand selection among luxury brands. Accordingly, this study was conducted to examine the consistencies in brand selection based on the brand concepts using the heuristic and Fishbein attitude model. It was predicted that the two selection processes would yield different results for luxury brands, and this hypothesis was tested in this study.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS SETUP

Type of Beliefs Regarding Brand Concepts and Attributes

Corporations make large investments into brand development to survive in the fiercely competitive market. This is because brands are aggregates of associations (Keller, 1993) and play a very important role in the

decision-making process of consumers. The diverse strategies employed for such brands are concentrated on the derivation of outcomes that appeal to consumers (Kim & Do, 2011), and thus the brand value is an important element of marketing that has an enormous impact on the decisions made by consumers. Therefore, corporations put in a lot of thought into developing a competitive brand concept, which can largely be divided into a symbolic or prestigious brand concept and a functional brand concept (Ahn & Im, 2008; Keller, 1993; David, 1983).

Then, with what purpose do consumers choose these brands, and what needs and wants are they trying to satisfy? If consumers want to externally express their social status and power, then they will choose a symbolic and expensive luxury brand, whereas if their purpose is to purchase a practical product to resolve the issue they are faced with, then they will choose a functional brand. Under these circumstances, consumers focus on the concept and image of the brands and primarily evaluate the brands based on their attributes in order to satisfy their needs and wants. Thus, the intangible brand value created by the efforts of the corporation can, at times, produce results that surpass anyone's imagination, and during the process of comparing the attributes, the level of satisfaction and regret regarding the brand choice and the probability of changing one's mind can vary (Dhar, Nowlis & Sherman, 1999).

Consumers, who choose symbolic brands, concentrate more on the brand concept than their counterparts, as they consider the alternatives (e.g. ostentatious display of their social status and success) more important than the attributes, and generally, a rational brand evaluation is directed toward the level of satisfaction with the diverse benefits that the brands provide. For this purpose, holistic thinkers consider the symbolic aspect more so than the attributes, and may neglect to search for more information. On the other hand, analytical thinkers make choices based on attributes, and pass through a comparison process, during which the optimum information search occurs (Miller, 1993), at a time point when benefits equal cost. This is why the choice between alternatives and attributes becomes an important issue when it comes to consumption. However, it is not appropriate to estimate the level of brand preference solely based on consumer attitude, and instead, the true intention of consumers can be determined through a cognitive judgment of attributes.

In this study, the aim was to measure consumer preference using the Fishbein attitude model, which can be used to check the attributes of a brand and the consumer beliefs about such attributes and to measure the consumer attitude using the main attributes. In this particular attitude model, it is proposed that consumers develop a favorable attitude toward a brand if the primary attributes of the brand are at the level they desire, whereas they develop an unfavorable attitude toward a brand if there are many negative attributes or many attributes that are considered substandard.

In the case of a Rolex (an example of a symbolic brand) used as a stimulus, consumers who show a favorable attitude toward it will regard it as a symbol of their success (brand prestige) and wealth (asset value). On the other hand, consumers with an unfavorable view toward a Rolex watch may feel that it is too heavy and impractical (time-keeping accuracy and diverse features). As such, consumer attitude is determined according to the attributes and the beliefs that the brand in question has the attributes they desire.

Consumers, who choose a symbolic brand due to heuristic, will have developed a general preference irrespective of product attributes, and highly value the symbolic attributes in addition to the functional attributes. Accordingly, their beliefs shown will be similar to the preferences determined in the Fishbein

attitude model. In contrast, consumers, who choose a functional brand, will have developed a general preference, taking into the functional attributes that effectively resolve the important issues they are faced with, and place importance on the functional attributes. For this reason, in order to verify the strength of their beliefs for the different brand concepts and attributes, the following hypotheses were established:

H1(a): In the case of functional brand selection, beliefs about the symbolic attributes will be lower than that of functional attributes.

H1(b): In the case of symbolic brand section, beliefs about the functional attributes will be lower than that of symbolic attributes.

Competitive Type of Beliefs Regarding Brand Concepts and Attributes

The method of thinking through which people think and deliberate inside their minds regarding an event concerning them is referred to as thinking style. Thinking style may vary based on the personal attitude, standards and values arising from the cultural tendency of the person. However, even within the same cultural area, there can be a difference in thinking such as holistic thinking and analytical thinking, and such difference in information processing leads to diverse decisions being made among different choices (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Cohen & Basu, 1987). In relation to thinking style, holistic information processing occurs when an integrated emotion is formed in regard to all stimuli in a perceptual experience, whereas analytical information processing occurs when individual emotions are formed in regard to the stimuli (Baumgartner, 1993).

Under the same concept, Nisbett proposed that holistic thinking involves looking at the entire picture, rather than the small parts of the picture, and perceiving the objects in connection with the overall context, and that analytical thinking involves focusing on the objects and ignoring the surrounding context. Based on this, the variables impacting brand choices were divided into the two information processing types: holistic thinking and analytical thinking (Nisbett, 2003; Nisbett, Peng, Choi & Norenzayan, 2001). Depending on the thinking style, the cognitive process and the causal inference process vary (Nisbett, Peng, Choi & Norenzayan, 2001). In the case of holistic thinkers, they develop a preference for a symbolic brand, based on the overall image of its attributes, and the level of preference determined by the Fishbein attitude model is lower than that of the analytical thinkers, who place importance on attributes and make self-centered decisions. Thus, they will make choices based on heuristic.

In the case of functional brands, it is highly likely that they will be chosen based on heuristic due to the attributes that are emphasized. However, because preference for a functional brand is developed based on the attributes, the level of preference among holistic thinkers and analytical thinkers determined based on the Fishbein attitude model will be similar. Analytical thinkers have the ability to analyze their habits in brand choices and the brand attributes, based on which they process information about a brand when they have an important buying motive. On the other hand, holistic thinkers do not perceive the diverse attributes, or have lower ability to analyze the attributes, or make an overall decision that will allow them to display their status. Holistic thinkers make abstract categorizations of brands, instead of categorizing them based on specific attributes; thus, their method of choosing brands will vary depending on their thinking style. An alternative-based evaluation strategy in holistic thinking is to consider alternatives in an integrated form.

In contrast, the attribute-based evaluation strategy in analytical thinking is to compare the alternatives for each attribute with one another. Thus, brand selection based on heuristic has close ties with the thinking style of a consumer in relation to the impact on the type of brand attribute beliefs.

Ultimately, in relation to brand concept, the beliefs about the functional attributes will be stronger for analytical thinkers, and the beliefs about the symbolic attributes will be stronger for holistic thinkers. Based on the inferences made above, it was predicted that the level of preference determined by heuristic and the Fishbein attitude model will vary depending on the thinking, as the thinking style has an impact on the brand attribute beliefs, and the following hypotheses were set forth:

H2(a): In the case of functional brands, the functional attribute beliefs will be weaker for holistic thinkers than analytical thinkers.

H2(b): In the case of symbolic brands, the functional attribute beliefs will be weaker for holistic thinkers than analytical thinkers.

H2(c): In the case of functional brands, the symbolic attribute beliefs will be weaker for analytical thinkers than holistic thinkers.

H2(d): In the case of symbolic brands, the symbolic attribute beliefs will be weaker for analytical thinkers than holistic thinkers.

Brand Selection Based on the Fishbein Attitude Model

In the Fishbein attitude model, which explains that consumer preference is determined based on brand attributes and beliefs about the brand, it is suggested that the beliefs about the functional and symbolic attributes of a brand have an impact on brand selection (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Such beliefs about the attributes serve as the basis for brand selection, and for this reason, the same brand will be chosen by a consumer based on their beliefs about the attributes. Thus, when brand selection is made according to the Fishbein attitude model, strong beliefs about the functional attributes have a more significant impact on the selection of a functional brand, and strong beliefs about the symbolic attributes will have a more significant impact on the selection of a symbolic brand. In other words, the mechanism behind the Fishbein attitude model, proposed in a previous study, is that a brand is chosen based on an evaluation of one's beliefs about the attributes of the brand, and it is highly likely that consumers will choose a brand with a concept that is in line with the attributes they find important. Based on this assumption, the following hypotheses were established:

H3(a): Beliefs about functional attributes will have a negative impact on the selection of a functional brand.

H3(b): Beliefs about symbolic attributes will have a positive impact on the selection of a symbolic brand.

Based on the above hypotheses, the level of preference determined based on heuristics according to the brand concept has an impact on the level of preference determined by the Fishbein attitude model, which means that brand choice may be influenced by a mediating effect according to the type of brand attribute beliefs. On the other hand, in the case of functional brands, there will be strong beliefs about its functional attributes, and this will have a significant connection to the selection of a functional brand,

whereas in the case of symbolic brands, there will be strong beliefs about its symbolic attributes, and this will have significant ties to the selection of a symbolic brand. Accordingly, it was predicted that a brand will be selected according to the Fishbein attitude model based on the mediating role of the strength of the beliefs in relation to the attribute type, and thus the following hypotheses were set forth:

H4(a): In case of functional brand selection, there will be a significant correlation between the beliefs about the functional attributes and the selection of a functional brand, rather than a symbolic brand.

H4(b): In case of symbolic brand selection, there will be a significant correlation between the beliefs about the symbolic attributes and the selection of a symbolic brand, rather than a functional brand.

3. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Sample Design and Data Collection

In this study, a survey was conducted with male and female adults living in Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk-do Province in Korea, who are relatively more likely to purchase the stimuli that were chosen for this study. In order to eliminate any exogeneous variables arising from order effects, the questionnaire was created into four types by changing the order of the questions. The questionnaire forms with omissions (11 forms) or insincere responses (17 forms) were removed, and a total of 245 copies of the questionnaire were used in the final analysis using SPSS (PASW Statistics 18). Prior to the survey, information on the decision-making methods used in brand selection was not provided to any of the survey participants in order to ensure fairness of the survey. In addition, the variables used in this experiment were designed in a “2 brand concepts (functional vs. symbolic) × 2 thinking styles (analytical vs. holistic) × 2 decision making methods (preference based on heuristic vs. preference based on Fishbein attitude model)” form.

The brand concept was examined by checking whether it appears symbolic or functional, and individual personalities of the participants were examined to determine whether they engage in a holistic style of thinking or an analytical style of thinking to reflect the results in the statistical data. As for brand choices, four stimuli, with only the brand logos presented, were shown to the participants, who were asked to choose only one of the four stimuli they preferred, in order to check the heuristic preference. Then, they were asked to indicate the level of importance of the major attributes of the watch brand they chose, and the results were applied as the level of preference determined by the Fishbein attitude model.

Stimuli Development and Manipulation Check

As for the stimuli for this experiment, two types (watch and automobile) of brands that were actually used by the participants were chosen through a focus group interview (FGI). Afterwards, during the two pilot tests, a “car exhaust emissions scandal” occurred, and considering that this could have a serious impact on the perception of the brand concept, the car brands were eliminated from the experiment, and only the watch brands were used as the stimuli for this experiment. As for the watch brands that were ultimately used as the stimuli in the experiment, watch brands that could clearly be distinguished into a functional brand concept (Swatch and Casio) and a symbolic brand concept (Rolex and Omega) were chosen.

In relation to the types of attributes taken into consideration, multiple attributes were derived through the FGI, and the attributes were chosen based on the level of importance placed on them by consumers

when purchasing these brands. “Time-keep accuracy” and “diverse features” were used as functional attributes, while “brand prestige” and “asset value” were used as symbolic attributes. Only the text and logo used by each brand in its advertisements were presented to the survey participants, while the models or spokes people and the background that could influence their decisions were not shown. The stimuli that were presented to the respondents are shown in Table 13.1.

Table 13.1
Stimuli

<i>Functional brands</i>		<i>Symbolic brands</i>	
CASIO	swatch	 ROLEX	 OMEGA

For the stimuli used in the actual analysis, an operational verification was performed to check whether the level of familiarity was the same for all of the stimuli, and whether the functional products and symbolic products were recognized properly. As shown in Table 13.2, the level of familiarity was similar across the four stimuli ($M_{\text{casio}} = 3.99$, $M_{\text{swatchi}} = 3.93$, $M_{\text{rolex}} = 4.16$, $M_{\text{omega}} = 3.98$, $p > .05$), with the mean value being statistically insignificant.

In the case of the brand concept, the difference was found to be statistically significant ($M_{\text{casio}} = 3.11$, $M_{\text{swatchi}} = 3.54$, $M_{\text{rolex}} = 4.65$, $M_{\text{omega}} = 4.38$, $p < .05$), as shown in Table 13.3. In other words, it was apparent that Casio and Swatch were perceived as products that are purchased with a functional buying motive, and Rolex and Omega as products that are purchased with a symbolic buying motive.

Table 13.2
Familiarity

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Stimuli</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1.	Casio	3.99	1.12	1.82	.142
2.	Swatch	3.93	1.01		
3.	Rolex	4.16	1.25		
4.	Omega	3.98	1.10		

S.D = Standard Deviation
 $n = 245$

Table 13.3
Brand Concept

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Stimuli</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1.	Casio	3.11	.73	300.3	.000
2.	Swatch	3.54	.60		
3.	Rolex	4.65	.70		
4.	Omega	4.38	.54		

S.D = Standard Deviation
 $n = 245$

Measurements of Variables

The brand concepts were modified into five functional items and five symbolic items to suit the purpose of this study, based on the study conducted by Kim, (2012). A factor analysis was performed to verify the functional and symbolic concepts from the accumulated data measures using a 7-point Likert scale, and Cronbach’s alpha was used to ensure data reliability. For each brand, the concept with a significantly higher than mean values was applied as the concept of the brand. As for the thinking styles used as a mediating variable in this study, the ten items restructured by Tsedendorj, Kim & Oh (2014), based on the holistic thinking tendency developed by Choi, Dalal, Kim-Prieto & Park (2003), were applied. In the case of the data measured using a 7-point Likert scale, three items with a negative impact on data reliability determined using Cronbach’s alpha were eliminated, and seven items were reflected in the final statistical analysis. In order to clearly distinguish analytical thinking and holistic thinking, the data after eliminating the median of the data (30% of the total) were reflected in the statistical analysis. The set of data below the median (35% of the total) ($M < 4.80$) and the set of data above the median (35% of the total) ($M > 5.60$) were classified as analytical thinkers and holistic thinkers, respectively, to generalize the statistical data. For attribute beliefs, functional attributes (time-keeping accuracy and diverse features) and symbolic attributes (brand prestige and asset value) were chosen, and the mean value of the data measured using a 7-point Likert scale were applied as the parameters. The level of preference determined by heuristic and the Fishbein attitude model were compared, and determined as the ultimate standard for brand selection. In other words, it was determined whether the brand among the four stimuli chosen by heuristic was consistent with the brand preference determined by the Fishbein attitude model based on the “strength of beliefs \times evaluation of the attributes”. The consistency in preference was distinguished into four times (consistency and inconsistency in the preference for a functional brand, and consistency and inconsistency in the preference for a symbolic brand). Table 13.4 shows cases in which the preference for a functional brand was consistent.

Table 13.4
Example for Match Preference in case of Functional Brand

Heuristic Preference Brand	Attributions		bi	Fishbein Preference					
				(Functional Brand)			(Symbolic Brand)		
				ei	bi*ei	sum	ei	bi*ei	sum
Functional	Functional	(TA)	3	4	12	16	3	9	15
		(DF)	2	2	4	3	6		
	Symbolic	(BP)	3	3	9	11	2	6	8
		(AV)	2	1	2	1	2		
Total			10	–	27	27	–	23	23

bi = Strength of Belief; ei = Evaluation; bi*ei = Attitude
 TA = Time-keep Accuracy; DF = Diverse Features; BP = Brand Prestige; AV = Asset Value

Validity Analysis and Reliability Test

Prior to the testing of the hypotheses, a factor analysis was conducted to check the validity of whether the applied data accurately measure the concepts in this study. Variables that measure the same concept, i.e. variables that are highly correlated with one another, were examined to check whether they can be grouped together based on the same factor, and a principle component analysis was performed to extract

the component factors. For the purpose of simplifying factor loading, the varimax method was selected. After refining the scale as such, the five items of brand concept of Component 1 and 2 each were all applied. In the case of Component 3 of thinking style, seven out of ten items checked using the same factors were reflected in the statistics. The Eigen value was found to be 4.39, and the factor loading for each component was determined to be over .5, which indicated that all of the items used in the questionnaire were very important variables. The detailed results are shown in Table 13.5.

Also, in order to ensure internal consistency among the questionnaire items, Cronbach's alpha (over .6 indicated reliable data) was used to perform a reliability test as shown in Table 13.6. In other words, the test was performed to verify whether repeated measurements would yield the same measurement value for the same concept, and the items distinguished by the same factor in the factor analysis were measured. There were five items in relation to the functional brand concept, with the Cronbach's alpha measured at .842, and there were five items in relation to the symbolic brand concept, with the Cronbach's alpha measured to be .965, indicating sufficient reliability. The results for each item are presented below.

Table 13.5
Validity of Latent Constructs

<i>Variables</i>	<i>No. of Items</i>	<i>Factors</i>		
		<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>
Brand Concept (functional vs. symbolic)	1.	.953		
	2.	.948		
	3.	.956		
	4.	.959		
	5.	.865		
	6.		.776	
	7.		.621	
	8.		.793	
	9.		.836	
	10.		.832	
Thinking Style	1.			.816
	2.			.806
	3.			.859
	4.			.790
	5.			.743
	6.			.547
	7.			.673
Eigen-Value		4.39	3.01	3.98
Variance Explanation (%)		87.81	60.17	56.89

Table 13.6
Reliability of Latent Constructs

<i>Variables</i>		<i>No. of Items</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
Brand Concept	Functional	5	.842
	Symbolic	5	.965
Thinking Style		7	.868

4. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Results of Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 (H1) examined the relationship of the types of attribute beliefs held according to the brand concept selected based on heuristics. The functional brand concept and symbolic brand concept were applied as independent variables, while the beliefs about functional attributes and symbolic attributes were applied as dependent variables in a *t*-test. The detailed results are shown in Table 13.7.

The results of the analysis showed that there were no statistically significant differences in attribute beliefs in the selection of a functional brand concept ($M_{\text{functional}} = 2.58, M_{\text{symbolic}} = 2.40, t = .80, p > .05$), and H1(a) was rejected. In contrast, there were statistically significant differences in attribute beliefs in the selection of a symbolic brand concept ($M_{\text{functional}} = 1.81, M_{\text{symbolic}} = 3.22, t = -9.55, p < .05$), and this supported H1(b).

Table 13.7
Belief of Attribution by Heuristic Preference

Heuristic Preference	Belief of Attribution	Mean	n	S.D	t	p
Symbolic	Functional	1.81	129	.84	-9.55	.00
	Symbolic	3.22	129	.85		
Functional	Functional	2.58	77	.97	.80	.43
	Symbolic	2.40	77	.97		

S.D = Standard Deviation
n = 245

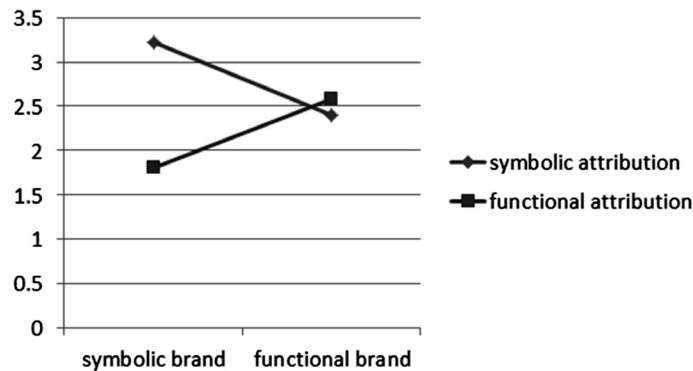


Figure 13.1: Belief of Attribution by Heuristic Preference

Results of Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 (H2) was set forth to check the moderating effect of thinking style between brand concepts and attribute beliefs. The detailed results are shown in Table 13.8 and Table 13.9. The analysis results showed that functional attribute beliefs, there were no statistically significant differences in the moderating effect of thinking style ($M_{\text{functional_analytical}} = 2.45, M_{\text{functional_holistic}} = 2.57, p > .05$) in relation to functional brands, and thus H2(a) was rejected. In the case of functional attribute beliefs, there were statistically significant

differences in the moderating effect of thinking style ($M_{\text{symbolic_analytical}} = 1.92$, $M_{\text{symbolic_holistic}} = 1.57$, $p < .05$), which supported H2(b).

As for symbolic attribute beliefs, there were no statistically significant differences in the moderating effect of thinking style ($M_{\text{functional_analytical}} = 2.50$, $M_{\text{functional_holistic}} = 2.43$, $p > .05$), and H2(c) was rejected. Also, in relation to symbolic attribute beliefs, there were statistically significant differences in the moderating effect of thinking style ($M_{\text{symbolic_analytical}} = 3.10$, $M_{\text{symbolic_holistic}} = 3.46$, $p < .05$), which supported H2(d).

Table 13.8
Moderating Effect of Thinking Style in case of Functional Attribution Belief

Heuristic Preference	Thinking style	Functional attribution belief (Mean)	n	S.D	F	p
Symbolic	Analytic	1.92	44	.86	4.57	.04
	Holistic	1.57	55	.75		
Functional	Analytic	2.45	28	.95	.22	.64
	Holistic	2.57	22	.86		

S.D = Standard Deviation

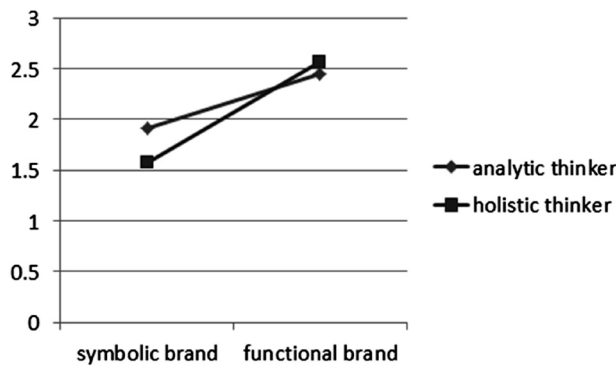


Figure 13.2: Moderating Effect of Thinking Style in case of Functional Attribution Belief

Table 13.9
Moderating Effect of Thinking Style in case of Symbolic Attribution Belief

Heuristic Preference	Thinking style	Functional attribution belief (Mean)	n	S.D	F	p
Symbolic	Analytic	3.10	44	.86	4.40	.04
	Holistic	3.46	51	.75		
Functional	Analytic	2.50	28	.95	.07	.79
	Holistic	2.43	22	.86		

S.D = Standard Deviation

Results of Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 (H3) was established to determine the impact of the type of attribute beliefs on the preference determined by the Fishbein attitude model. Beliefs about functional attributes and symbolic attributes were applied as independent variables, and the brand selection based on the Fishbein attitude model was

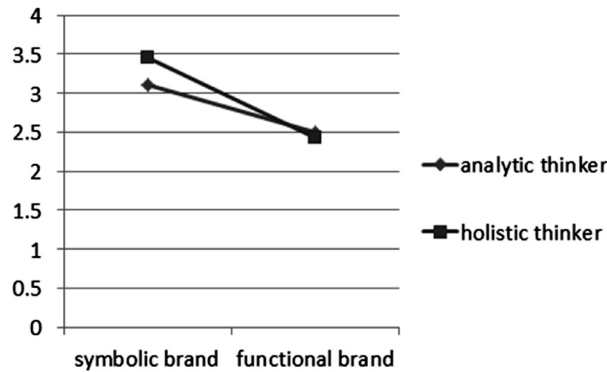


Figure 13.3: Moderating Effect of Thinking Style in case of Symbolic Attribution Belief

applied as the dependent variable in a regression analysis. The detailed results are shown in Table 13.10. The results of the analysis showed that the beliefs about functional attributes had a negative (–) impact on the selection of a functional brand ($B_{\text{functional}} = -1.11$), which supported H3(a), while the beliefs about the symbolic attributes were shown to have a positive (+) impact on the selection of a symbolic brand ($B_{\text{symbolic}} = 1.20$), which supported H3(b).

Table 13.10
Fishbein Preference by Type of Attribution Belief

Type of Attribution Belief	β	S.E	Walls	Degree of Freedom	p	Exp (β)
Symbolic	1.20	.23	26.11	1	.00	3.31
Functional	-1.11	.23	23.55	1	.00	.33

S.E = Standard Error

Results of Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 (H4) was established to verify the mediating effect of attribute beliefs in relation to the preference determined based on heuristic and the Fishbein attitude model. As shown in the analysis results in Table 13.11, it was found that there were differences in the distribution ($p < .05$) between functional brands and symbolic brands. However, in the case of functional brands, the level of preference determined using the Fishbein attitude model was 72.6%, and had a significant relation to symbolic brands. Thus, H4(a) was rejected. On the other hand, in the case of symbolic brands, the level of preference was 96.0%, and it was highly correlated to symbolic brand selection. This finding supported H4(b).

Table 13.11
Mediating Effect by Attribution Belief

Heuristic Preference		Fishbein preference		χ^2	p
		(Functional)	(Symbolic)		
Symbolic	Frequency (%)	4.0	96.0	23.097	.00
	Expected frequency	5	121		
Functional	Frequency (%)	27.4	72.6		
	Expected frequency	20	53		

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Choosing a brand based on heuristic, centering on the primary attributes of the brands, before forming an attitude toward the brands, may be easy, but it may lead to undesirable results (East, 1997). However, in the case of the Fishbein attitude model, which is an example of a rational decision-making method, a brand is chosen based on the beliefs about the attributes and evaluation thereof, and this can lead to positive results. A summary of the results of comparing the preferences determined based on these two decision-making methods can be summarized as follows:

First, in the case of the functional brands, the beliefs about the symbolic attributes were weaker than the beliefs about the functional attributes, due to high brand awareness, but such difference was not statistically significant and thus H1(a) was rejected. In contrast, for symbolic brands, the beliefs about the functional attributes were weaker than the beliefs about the symbolic attributes at a significant level, and this supported H1 (b). **Second**, in the case of beliefs about the functional attributes, they were weaker among analytical thinkers than holistic thinkers for function brands, which resulted in the rejection of H2(a). On the other hand, the beliefs about the functional attributes were weaker among holistic thinkers than analytical thinkers for symbolic brands, and this supported H2(b). In addition, the beliefs about the symbolic attributes were weaker among holistic thinkers than analytical thinkers for functional thinkers, and H2(c) was rejected. In contrast, the beliefs about the symbolic attributes were weaker for analytical thinkers than holistic thinkers for symbolic brands, and this supported H2(d). **Third**, when beliefs about the functional attributes are strong, the preference level determined based on the Fishbein attitude model was shown to have a negative (–) effect on functional brand selection than symbolic brand selection, which supported H3(a). Also, when beliefs about the symbolic attributes are strong, the preference level determined based on the Fishbein attitude model was shown to have a positive (+) effect on symbolic brand selection than functional brand selection, which supported H3(b). Thus, the direction of impact is the same according to the type of attribute beliefs that consumers have, and this showed that the mechanism behind the Fishbein attitude model, formulated based on attributes, was working properly. **Fourth**, in the case of functional brands, due to the stronger beliefs about the symbolic attributes than functional attributes, symbolic brands were ultimately preferred. Thus, H4(a) was rejected. In the case of symbolic brands, the beliefs about the symbolic attributes were stronger, and ultimately, the symbolic brands were preferred. This supported H4(b).

The results related to H1(a) and H4(a), the hypotheses concerning attribute beliefs that were rejected, were analyzed. It was predicted that the same attribute beliefs would be held according to the brand concept, and that the brand with the same concept would ultimately have a higher level of preference based on the Fishbein attitude model. However, in the case of selecting the functional brands based on heuristics, the functional brands were well-known to the survey participants, and they had stronger beliefs about their symbolic attributes than their functional attributes. This was the reason the brand choice made based on the Fishbein attitude model had a significant correlation to symbolic brands. Also, an analysis was performed on H2(a) and H2(c), the hypotheses concerning thinking styles that were rejected. Analytical thinkers were predicted to have stronger beliefs about the functional attributes regardless of the brand concept, whereas holistic thinkers were expected to have stronger beliefs about the symbolic attributes. However, due to the stronger beliefs about the symbolic attributes than the functional attributes, even the beliefs about the symbolic attributes of functional brands were stronger among holistic thinkers.

According to the above results, there are theoretic implications in relation to the fact that the use of well-known brands as stimuli resulted in their representative symbolic attributes, even in the case of functional brands, to impact the final decisions made. **First**, in the case of well-known functional brands, people have strong beliefs about their symbolic attributes, and it may appear that the mechanism behind the Fishbein attitude model is not working properly. Thus, there is a need to carefully analyze the results of the level of consumer preference. Functional brands with high brand awareness and top-quality products should accentuate the symbolic attributes of their brands and products in their marketing activities. **Second**, luxury brands with a symbolic concept actually have excellent functional attributes as well, and there may be some consumers who prefer them for practical purposes. However, in most cases, consumers will choose such symbolic brands based on heuristics, with stronger beliefs about the symbolic attributes rather than the functional attributes.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE AGENDA

In the case of renowned brands with a functional concept, it was shown that analytical thinkers actually had stronger beliefs about their symbolic attributes rather than their functional attributes, which was the complete opposite of what was expected. However, because the symbolic attribute beliefs were stronger than the functional attribute beliefs for functional brands due to high brand awareness, it was found that symbolic brands were selected based on the preference determined by the Fishbein attitude model, which was a meaningful result. Brands (Swatch, Casio & Omega) presented alongside Rolex, a global brand offering expensive luxury watches have relatively lower prestige, and despite the implications mentioned above, there were limitations in this study that there were slightly insufficient questionnaire responses, where the three lower-prestige brands were selected. The survey conducted in this study using only a single type of stimuli produced meaningful results. An interesting study that could be conducted in the future would be to perform the same study with Western and Eastern subjects, characterized by an analytical thinking style, as a means to make a comparison from a cultural perspective.

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