A Foundational Investigation of the Theory of Brand Comfort

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A Foundational Investigation of the Theory of Brand Comfort

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**ABSTRACT**

Two nationwide Internet studies investigated the novel concepts of comfort foods and comfort brands. After examining qualitative and quantitative measures, results showed that consumers were desirous of an important and expansive notion of brand comfort, defined here as: (1) the alleviation of physical and emotional stresses through brand consumption; combined with (2) the emergence of positive emotions of warmth, happiness, and love derived from brand associations often initiated by nostalgic memories of a romanticized past. Brand comfort stems from issues of physical comfort (i.e., how a certain brand fits, feels, smells, and tastes), combined with both cognitive components (driven by rational trust judgments of quality and reliability) and emotional components (driven by perceptions of affective trust, authenticity, nostalgia, and brand love). Recognizing that brand comfort is a concept that extends far beyond food choices, this research may lead to a wealth of new investigations in consumer psychology and marketing.

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