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Recommended Citation

Bagherzadeh, Ramin; Rawal, Monika; and Saavedra, Jose Luis, "Compromise and Attraction Effects under Interdependent and Independent Self-Construal" (2017). *Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Proceedings 2017*. 52.

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Compromise and Attraction Effects under Interdependent and Independent Self-Construal

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When a new alternative introduces to a choice set, the preferences for the original alternatives will be effected (Mourali, Böckenholt and Laroche 2007). Consumers often feel uncertainty about the true values of options when they want to purchase products (Simonson 1989). Huber, Payne, and Puto (1982) defined the attraction effect as “when adding an alternative that is inferior to another alternative in the choice set increases the share of the relatively superior alternative.” Compromise effect is defined as “when adding an extreme option to the choice set shifts the choice preferences in favor of the compromise option” (Simonson 1989). The size of compromise effect and attraction effect may differ based on self-construal. Independent self-construal has attributes that make them separate from others (Markus and Kitayama 1991). They emphasize on positive information and try to make achievements (Lee, Aaker and Gardner 2000). In contrast, Interdependent self-construal focus being a member of a group (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and attempt to avoid mistakes (Lee, Aaker and Gardner 2000). Therefore, we expect that independent consumers are more sensitive to attraction effect and interdependent consumers are more sensitive to compromise effect and self-regulatory mediates this relationship. Consequently, the current research first shows the relationship between self-construal and context effects. Then, introduces self-regulatory as mediator to explain how distinct self-construal behave through context effects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Independent and interdependent customer may have different concepts when an alternative choice is added in their choice set. Independent self-construal individuals focus on positive information. Moreover, the individuals who attempt to differentiate themselves from others may emphasis on potential gains in situations. Conversely, interdependent self-construal individuals try to focus on avoiding mistakes and fulfilling obligations (Lee, Aaker and Gardner 2000). Therefore, we expect that independent consumers are influenced more by attraction effect and are less sensitive to compromise effect than interdependent consumers. We predict this phenomena as independent consumers are more promotion-focused and less prevention focused than interdependent consumers.

Regulatory focus theory classifies consumer goals into ideals and oughts sorts. Ideals signify people’s hopes and wishes, whereas oughts denotes for people’s responsibilities and duties. The

pursuit of gains denotes promotion-focused and the avoidance of losses demonstrate prevention-focused (Lee, Aaker and Gardner 2000). Lee, Aaker, and Gardner (2000) examined how self-construal may influence regulatory focus. They found that independent self-construals are promotion-focused, whereas interdependent self-construals are prevention-focused. Moreover, in another study, Mourali, Bockenholt and Laroche (2007) showed that prevention-focused consumers were more sensitive to the compromise effect and less sensitive to the attraction effect than promotion-focused consumers. Hence, self-regulatory can mediate the relationship between self-construal and context effect.

Two studies are conducted in this paper to examine whether compromise effect will have greater effect on interdependent consumers as they are more prevention-focused and attraction effect will have greater impact on independent consumers, as they are more promotion-focused.

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