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BRAND ATTITUDE AND IMAGE CONGRUENCE AMONGST TEENAGERS

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ABSTRACT

Congruity theory holds that the level of congruence between the self-image of a consumer and their perception of the image of a brand will influence their intention to choose that brand, or their attitude towards the brand. Previous studies, undertaken amongst college students, executives and housewives have concluded that there is evidence to support congruity theory. Furthermore, it has been found that consumers can seek to present different images in different situations i.e. situational self image. It has been argued that the situational ideal self-image is a better predictor of brand attitude than the actual and ideal self images.

Teenagers have not previously been the focus of such studies. This research studied two distinct groups of teenagers, indigenous Britons living in Bedfordshire and ethnic minority Asians living in inner London. Image congruence was assessed using the Kickers and Nike brands of sportswear shoes and respondents were presented with two contrasting social situations: with friends and with conservative relatives.

The respondents in this study made distinct brand choices for different situations. However the two groups of teenagers chose different brands for each situation. Nevertheless for both groups there was a lack of correlation between image congruence and brand attitude or intention to choose. This suggests that their choice of brand did not appear to have a foundation in their holding strong attitudes towards either brand nor did it seem that they were using the image associated with either brand to reflect a self-image. In the light of findings from existing research, this could suggest that image congruence comes with greater experience of being a consumer.

INTRODUCTION

Brands are said to be endowed with social and psychological characteristics (de Chernatony and de Mello 1995). Consumers have evaluations of themselves which contribute to their self-image (Grubb & Hupp 1968). Therefore when a consumer chooses amongst brands within a particular product category, they may respond to a brands' personality (Aaker 1997). They may prefer brands which they consider to have images similar to their own self image. For marketers the usefulness of the self concept lies in their being able to improve consumers' perceptions of a brand by imbuing it with a personality that is closer to the self-image of their target customers.

The degree of harmony between a personís self concept and the image of the brand which he or she consumes is referred as image congruence (Onkvisit and Shaw 1987). The notion of consumers purchasing a particular brand because that brand's image is congruent with their own self-image is known as the image congruence hypothesis.

An important issue that has attracted the attention of researchers in this field has been the type of self - concept which best predicts brand preference (Ross 1971). Furthermore, researchers have sought to acknowledge the mediating role of the conspicuousness of products on image congruence, by comparing products which vary in terms of conspicuousness (Ross 1971).

In the light of existing research, this paper seeks to contribute in two ways. Firstly, the focus of our attention are young people, who have not previously been studied in terms of self-concept, secondly this research also assesses whether the situational ideal self-image is a better predictor of product preference than actual or ideal self-image. Of course the findings for the latter will be in the context of the teenagers who are being studied here.

This paper starts by reviewing the discussion surrounding the different types of self-image that can be measured and their effectiveness in predicting product preference. The review then deals with the different groups of respondents amongst whom image congruence studies have been undertaken, this discussion helps to explain why we consider a focus on teenagers to be an important one. In the next section we evaluate the different methods that can be used to measure self-concept. The discussion of methodology also deals with the choice of sample, the products used and the methods used to gather the data. The paper ends

with a presentation of the results and an evaluation of these findings in relation to existing research.

THE SELF CONCEPT AND ITS MULTI-DIMENSIONAL NATURE

It has been noted by de Chernatony & de Mello (1995) that self-concept theory has a multi-dimensional nature. According to Rosenberg (1979):

- The actual-self, refers to how a person actually perceives him or herself
- The ideal-self, refers to how a person would like to perceive him or herself.
- The ideal social-self, refers to how a person would like others to perceive him or herself.
- The situational-self, how people would like to act in different situations, for example a businessman would act seriously at work but in his free time he might be more carefree.

These distinctions are important insofar as researchers have sought to identify which of the above are the best predictors for product evaluations.

Many of the earlier studies support the consistency between product image and self-image (Birdwell 1964; Dolich 1969; Grubb 1965; Grubb and Stern, 1971; Kernan and Somers, 1967).

The dimensions of self that have received the most theoretical consideration and empirical support are ëactual selfí and ëideal selfí. Graeff (1997) and Sirgy (1982, 1985) consider these are the best predictors for product evaluations. However, in contrast to Sirgy, Schenk and Holman (1980) and Graeff (1997) have measured image congruence using the situational ideal self-image. This is because image congruence is argued to be a dynamic self-concept, it changes according to the situation a subject is in and therefore it should not be measured as a static cognitive state (Graeff 1997).

Another variable which has been considered to mediate the relationship between self-image and product preference is the conspicuousness of consumption. Dolich (1969), Ross (1971) and Sirgy (1979) had expected that the ideal and/or ideal-social self-concepts would be more closely related to product preference with respect to highly conspicuous products, than the actual and or social self-concepts. Furthermore for inconspicuous products it had been expected that the actual and/or social self-concept would be more closely related to product preference than to the ideal and/or ideal social self-concepts. However their results have not supported these expectations. Given the results from previous studies we investigate:

H_1 The situational ideal self-image is a better predictor of brand attitudes when compared to actual and ideal self-image.

IMAGE CONGRUENCE & YOUNG PEOPLE

Existing studies have focused principally on convenience samples (college students). However, Munson (1974) studied both conspicuousness and the social class of consumers. His results showed that preference for conspicuous products was related to ideal self-concept for upper class respondents, whereas preference for lower class respondents was not related to either actual or ideal self-concepts for either conspicuous or inconspicuous products.

Previous studies have selected their samples either from students (e.g. Ross 1971) or general product users (e.g. de Chernatony & de Mello 1995). Specific groups of respondents, such as housewives or businesspeople are less common. In order to extend the range of research into the self-concept this study used a much younger group of respondents than has thus far been the case.

In addition to the moderator variables discussed above it has been suggested that there are more factors which can influence the image congruence, for example, product sex-typing, product personalisation, attitude vs. behaviour, product ownership, self confidence, sex and personality type, (Sirgy 1982).

Less attention has been paid to investigating the image congruence hypothesis amongst teenagers. In this regard this study will test the following hypothesis:

H_2. Teenagers' will choose those brands whose image is congruent with their own self-image.

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHOD

Two major tools have been used in previous research to measure self concept, the product anchored Q-method and the semantic differential scale. The role of these tools is discussed below.

THE PRODUCT-ANCHORED Q-METHOD

Although this method has received criticism (French and Glaschner, 1971; Sirgy, 1982) for several shortcomings, it has still been used by researchers such as Landon (1974) and Belch (1977). The method consists of asking respondents to describe themselves in terms of products. For example, frozen orange juice, shoes, catsup and potatoes (Green et al. 1973).

There are three major criticisms of this method. Firstly, some respondents may find it difficult to describe themselves in terms of products (French and Glaschner 1971). Second, many products used do not seem to have strong personality stereotypic associations (Sirgy 1982). Third, the method fails to differentiate between product images and self images, this would prevent attempts to model the self-concept/product-image congruity process. Therefore this method should be avoided in the image congruence studies (Sirgy 1982).

SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL SCALE

Following the suggestions of previous research, this study has used the semantic differential scale to measure brand and self images. The method requires bipolar adjectives which respondents will use to describe images. For instance, if the two bipolar adjectives are masculine and feminine, a score of '1' would suggest a very strong image of masculinity. However a score of '7' would mean that the respondent refers to a very strong feminine image. The choice of adjectives is therefore very important and attention needs to be paid as to how these are selected.

IMAGE ADJECTIVE SELECTION

In order to select the individual image adjectives to rate the images, researchers have used general adjectives extracted from personality inventories, for instance Bellenger et. al. (1976) and Maheshwari (1974). Other researchers have chosen to select the adjectives from attributes most related to the products tested e.g. Birdwell (1968) and Schewe and Dillon (1978). More recent studies have generally used, as suggested by Sirgy (1982), only those adjectives which are most related to the products being tested. In order to do so, pre-tests were included. These pre-tests would test the relevance of adjectives (e.g. 50 in the case of Graeff 1996 and 1997) and only those which were consistently rated at least moderately relevant would be included in the main study.

This study has used the triadic sorting process, which is an element of repertory grid analysis to select bipolar adjectives (constructs) for the semantic differential scales. Triadic sorting allows the researcher to select constructs (image dimensions or bipolar adjectives) without any observer bias. Kellyís Repertory Grid has been widely used in other areas of consumer research as a means of qualitatively eliciting consumer perceptions. Repertory Grid is a valuable technique ìwherever image is felt to be an important factor in consumer choice behaviourî (Buttle, 1985:79). This process also allowed us to find attributes that are specific to

shoewear products rather than use generic attributes, this approach is also recommended by Sirgy (1982), when the semantic differential scale is being used.

The triadic sort involved using groups of three elements, in this instance brands of shoewear. Respondents were asked to decide in which way two of the brands were alike and thereby different from the third. Every time a respondent did this, two contrasting poles were generated and these are referred to as their bipolar constructs.

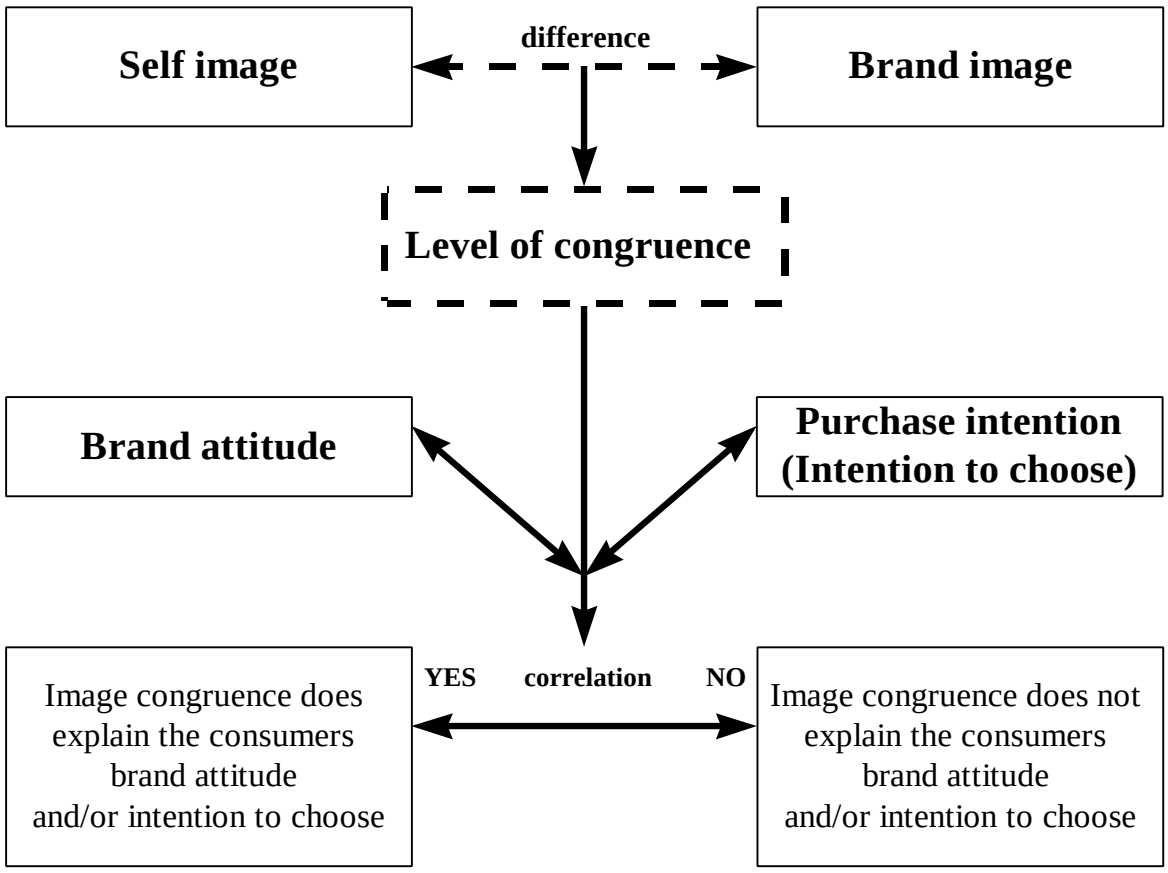
Fourteen interviews were undertaken, using triadic sorting and overall 22 adjectives were produced. Before the design of the initial questionnaire, all the adjectives which were offered by respondents, were pre-tested using a questionnaire, in order to select the most relevant bipolar adjectives.

CONGRUITY MODEL

There are a number of mathematical models of self-image/product-image congruity (Sirgy 1982). Following Graeff (1996 & 1997) this study used the Euclidean-distance models.

Figure 1 explains the two main steps of the calculations involved in image congruence. The mean difference between self-image (actual, ideal or situational ideal self-image) and the brand image is calculated to identify the level of congruence for that type of self-image. Secondly, if there is a correlation between the level of congruence and 'intention to choose' or 'brand attitude', this will be evidence of image congruence influencing the consumer's 'intention to choose' and or their 'brand attitude'.

Figure 1 Image Congruence



SAMPLE

Two different sample populations were used in the study. One group of pupils was from an ethnic minority drawn from an East London secondary school (n= 48). The other group was composed of indigenous English pupils drawn from a Bedfordshire secondary school (n= 61). Only year 10 pupils (aged 15-16) were included in the study. Respondents for the repertory grid interviews, control questionnaire and pre-test questionnaire were from the same age group as the main groups.

An additional 25 pupils were used for a control questionnaire, in order to see if actual and ideal self images show differences and also to compare the two brands. No specific consumption situation was given.

PRODUCTS

In terms of products, research has been concentrated on branded products, usually well known brands, for example Budweiser, Heineken, Readerís Digest and Reebok (Graeff, 1996).

However there are studies where the brands were unknown or even fictional e.g. Hong and Zinkhan (1995).

This study used well known sportswear brands. For the triadic sorting interviews the brands were: Nike, Kickers, Adidas, Ellesse, Cat, Hi-Tec, Kangol, Converse, Puma, Fila and Reebok. However the main questionnaire focused on two brands: Nike and Kickers. Kickers and Nike were chosen as the target brands because

1. Both brands are well advertised and therefore well known to teenagers.
2. Personal interviews revealed that shoes are a ëmust haveí when projecting image.
3. Both brands, rely heavily on image appeals in their advertising (according to Graeff 1997, this is one of the criteria to include a brand in an image congruence study).

EXPERIMENT

The 22 constructs obtained from the Repertory Grid interviews were pre-tested in terms of their relevance to the Nike and Kickers brands. Thirty-three pupils from a secondary school were asked to fill in the pre-test questionnaire. Respondents were asked if each construct was relevant to a typical consumer of Nike or Kickers. Responses were measured on a scale which varied from ënot relevant at allí to ëvery much relevantí. Only those adjectives, which scored at least moderately were included in the main questionnaire (see Table 1 for the 12 adjectives).

Table 1 Adjectives used to describe brand and self-images

rough~delicate	feminine~masculine	not self-confident~self-confident	shy~out going
passive~active	unconventional~conventional	unsophisticated~sophisticated	informal~formal
rural~urban	old fashioned~fashionable	brand conscious~not brand conscious	mature~youthful

Having found the most relevant adjectives for the two brands, a questionnaire was designed to compare the congruencies between perceived brand images and the individuals' self images (actual self-image, ideal self-image and situational ideal self-image).

The experiments were carried out during normal school hours. Respondents were first asked to think about the two brands for a moment. They were then asked to indicate their pre-experimental awareness of the brands. This was done using questions such as ëhow familiar are you with the brand?í And ëhow much experience have you had with this brand?í In order to assess their pre-experimental attitudes towards the brands they were also asked if their attitude towards each brand was 'unfavourable' or 'favourable'.

After having completed this section for both Nike and Kickers, subjects were given one of the two situations (either 'visiting conservative grandparents' or 'meeting with friends') and they were asked to imagine themselves in that particular situation. Subjects who had participated in the triadic sorting interviews, had confirmed that these two situations represented two different images, and therefore two different intentions. These subjects also confirmed that the situations were realistic. With a particular situation in mind, subjects would first indicate which brand they would most likely have chosen to wear in each situation (the bipolar adjectives were ëextremely likely ~ extremely unlikelyí). Furthermore they would indicate their attitudes towards a brand for a particular situation, this was also done on a 7 point semantic differential scale (favourable ~ unfavourable).

At this stage respondents indicated their perceived image of both brands as well as their own actual and ideal self-image on the 12 image dimensions (see Table 1 for image dimensions). Subjects then described the image that they thought would be appropriate for someone to project in that situation, again subjects used the same image dimensions to describe the situational ideal self-image.

The measures of brand and self images were taken after evaluating the brands. ìMeasuring brand and self-image before evaluating the brand could artificially increase the effect (salience) of image as an evaluative criteriaî (Graeff 1997: 53). Furthermore, the measure of brand image was taken before the self images. This was necessary to avoid subjects intentionally rating the image of the brands as consistent with their own self-images. For instance, if respondents evaluated one brand favourably and themselves as mature, they could rate the brand mature as well, in order to justify the favourable evaluation (Graeff, 1997). The questionnaire ended with questions asking for the subject's gender, age, and ethnic background.

Consumption Situation

At both schools respondents were allocated randomly to one of the consumption situations. There were two situations, visiting grandparents and meeting friends. Details of the scenarios are given in appendix one.

Brand and Self-Images

To measure brand and self images, respondents were asked the questions about:

1. perceived brand image

2. actual self-image
3. ideal self-image
4. situational self-image

Statements regarding each type of self-image were followed by 12 bipolar image dimensions (see Table 1).

RESULTS

POTENTIAL CONFOUNDS

There were no significant differences between situations (and across the two samples) in terms of pre-experimental familiarity with the brands, pre-experimental attitudes, age and sex. The only exception was the 'friends' situation for the minority ethnic sample, where there were twice as many males as females, although, subjects had been randomly assigned to situations.

Pre experimental familiarity

Samples					
	Non-Ethnic Minority		Ethnic Minority		
Brand	Grandparents	Friends	Grandparents	Friends	Notes
Nike	6.5	6.2	5.9	6.9	n.s.
Kickers	6.2	5.9	5.8	6.2	n.s.

Pre-Experimental Attitudes

	Non-Ethnic Minority		Ethnic Minority		
Brand	Grandparents	Friends	Grandparents	Friends	Notes
Nike	5.1	5.7	5.6	6.0	n.s.
Kickers	4.9	4.7	4.6	4.8	n.s.

Age

	Non-Ethnic Minority		Ethnic Minority		
	Grandparents	Friends	Grandparents	Friends	Notes
Age	14.9	15	15	14.9	n.s.

Gender

	Non-Ethnic Minority		Ethnic Minority	
SEX	Grandparents	Friends	Grandparents	Friends
Female	16	17	13	7
Male	16	12	14	14
Notes	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	significantly different

CONSUMPTION SITUATION AND BRAND EVALUATION

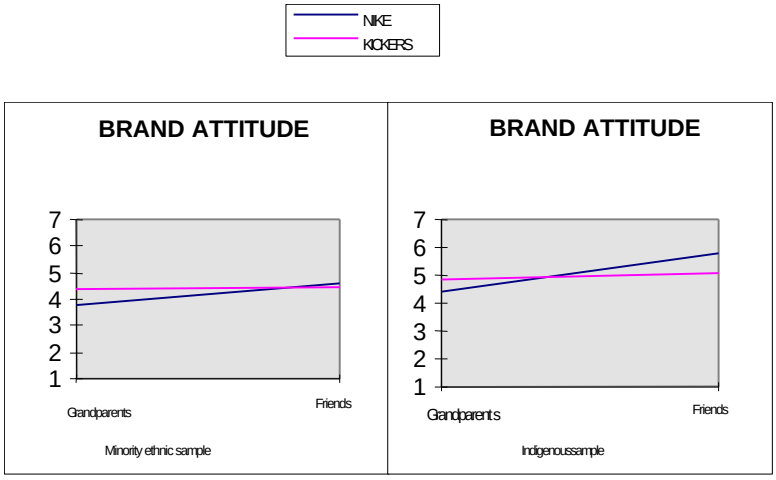
Of the indigenous sample the majority of respondents chose Nike (75.8%) for the friends situation and the majority of respondents chose Kickers (71.8%) for the grandparents situation ($X_1^2 = 13.9$; $p < .01$). The minority ethnic sample showed different results, the majority of them

chose Kickers (71.4%) for the friends situation and Nike (62.9%) for the grandparents situation (X_1^2 = 0.49; n.s.). These differences were significant for the indigenous sample but were not for the minority ethnic sample.

The questionnaire also requested subjects, to indicate their brand evaluations ('brand attitude' and 'intention to chose') after considering the situation. The minority ethnic sample, demonstrated a significantly different situation-specific brand attitude across the two situations for Nike ($F_{1,46}$ = 9.56; p< 0.01). The same accounts for the indigenous sample ($F_{1,59}$ = 7.23; p< 0.01). However for Kickers, in both samples, subjects did not show any significant difference in terms of attitude across the two situations (minority sample, $F_{1,46}$ = 0.22; n.s. and indigenous sample, $F_{1,59}$ = 0.70; n.s.).

Subjectsí mean situational-specific brand attitudes are graphed in Figure 2. Although respondents pre-experimental attitudes towards Nike and Kickers did not differ, the situational-specific brand attitudes were expected to differ. This was because the different situations would require subjects to respond in respect to the given conditions. The fact that pre-experimental brand attitude did not differ for the brands and that experimental attitude did, shows that the situation had influenced the subjects.

Figure 2 Situation Specific Brand Attitude



In terms of intention to choose, it was expected that subjects would have chosen different brands for different situations. However, not all results were significant. Subjects' intentions to choose Nike for the 'friends' situation was significantly higher (mean = 5.2) for the indigenous

sample ($F_{1,59}$ = 5.81; p = 0.02). Although the tendency was in the same direction for the minority ethnic sample, it was not significant ($F_{1,46}$ = 1.88; n.s.).

For Kickers the results were not as expected. No difference, across situations, was observed in the indigenous sample ($F_{1,59}$ = 0.02; n.s.). However, respondents in the minority ethnic sample, had a significantly higher intention to choose Kickers for the friends situation (mean = 5.0, $F_{1,46}$ = 5.30; p = 0.03). Figure 3 illustrates the mean scores in graphs.

Figure 3 Situation Specific Intention to Chose

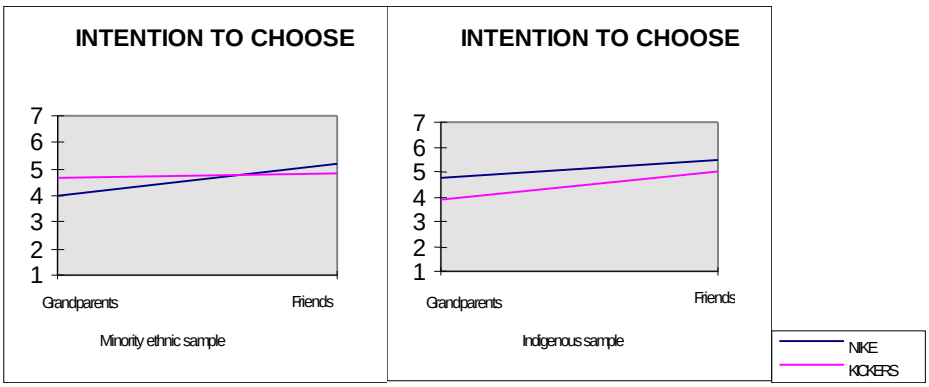


IMAGE CONGRUENCE AND CONSUMPTION SITUATION

Actual, ideal and situational ideal congruence were calculated with a Euclidean distance model. Actual congruence is the difference score for each subjectís brand image and actual self-image; ideal congruence is the difference score for each subjectís brand image and ideal self-image (Sirgy, 1982). Furthermore, the situational-ideal congruence is the difference score for each subjectís brand image and situational-ideal self-image (Graeff 1997). A small (large) difference score indicates a high (low) degree of similarity between brand and self image (Graeff 1997:55).

$$D = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (P_i - S_i)^2}$$

where

D = overall difference score reflecting degree of congruence between brand and self-image.

i = a particular personality image dimension (bipolar adjective).

P_i = perception of the product on image dimension i.

S_i = perception of self on image dimension i.

(Taken from Graeff, 1997)

Variances of image congruencies were calculated with a multiple analysis of variances, grouped by situation and brand. With the exception of the indigenous sampleís actual ($F_{1,118}$ = 6.2;p<0.05) and situational ($F_{1,118}$ = 4.1; p<0.05) congruence, situations showed no effect on the congruence scores. Furthermore no significant differences were observed across brands. This explains why none of the interactions were significant. Difference scores between brand images and the individual self image are graphed in Figure 4 and Figure 5.

Figure 4 Minority Ethnic Sample

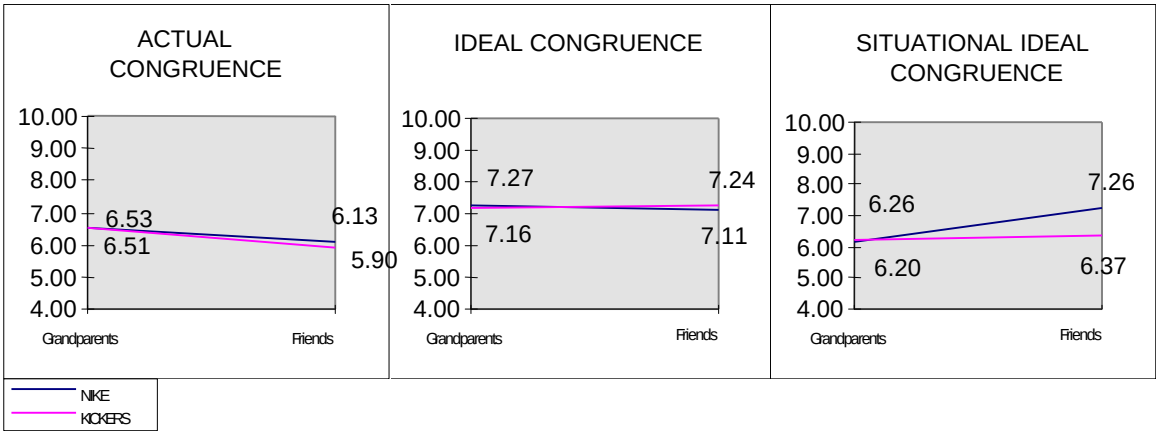
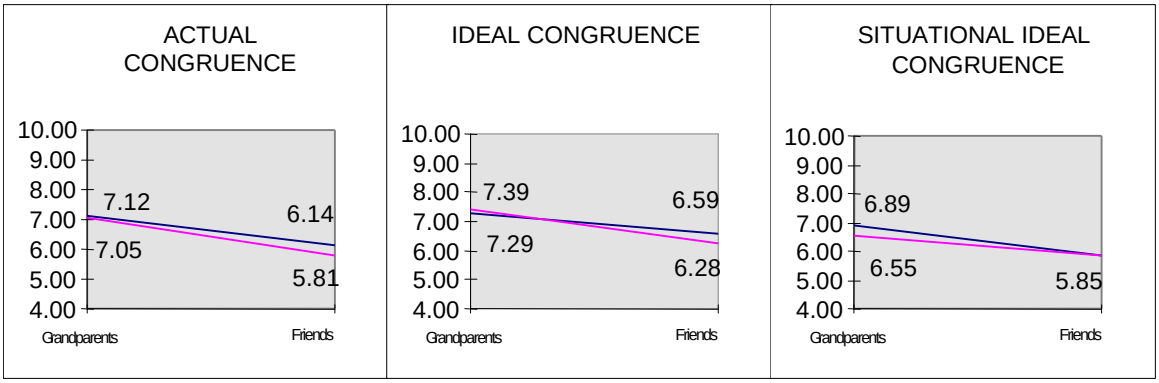


Figure 5 Indigenous Sample



According to the image congruence hypothesis, a subjectís brand preference is a function of the congruence between brand image and a type of self image which the subject would like to project in a particular situation (Graeff 1997). Furthermore, Graeff (1997 :63-64) states:

> ìIf the level of congruence between brand image and a type of self-image (either actual, ideal or situational ideal) explains the difference in subjectsí brand evaluations, the pattern of difference scores for that type of self-image should parallel the pattern found for subjectsí brand evaluationsî.

In other words, a correlation between the brand evaluation (attitude or intention to choose) and a particular self-image would explain an image congruence. Thus, a significant interaction between the situation, brand and the congruence scores would explain the congruence for that self-image, if a significant correlation is present between a type of self-image and the brand evaluation. Since the congruence measure represents a lower (higher) score for higher (lower) congruence, correlations would be expected to be negative. However, no significant correlations were found (in most cases as seen in Table 2 and Table 3). Thus, neither of the three congruencies (actual, ideal and situational ideal congruence) showed the expected fit with the brand evaluations. Furthermore, this means that none of the self-image measures were able to identify an image congruence, between brand attitude and self-image. Results from the control questionnaire (where respondents did not consider a specific situation), indicated that there was no difference between actual congruence and ideal congruence for Nike and Kickers. Also observed was the fact that actual or ideal congruence did not have a significant difference for either brand. Furthermore, neither of the self images were correlated with respondents' attitudes toward the brand, see Table 4.

Table 2 Minority Ethnic Sample

	Actual Congruence	Ideal Congruence	Situational Ideal Congruence
$Att._{Nike}$	-0.35*	-0.26	-0.03
$IC._{Nike}$	-0.27	-0.20	0.15
$Att._{Kickers}$	-0.28	0.02	-0.15
$IC._{Kickers}$	-0.39**	0.06	-0.04

Table 3 Indigenous Sample[1]

	Actual Congruence	Ideal Congruence	Situational Ideal Congruence
$Att._{Nike}$	-0.08	-0.04	-0.05
$IC._{Nike}$	-0.05	-0.29*	-0.13
$Att._{Kickers}$	-0.04	-0.03	-0.03
$IC._{Kickers}$	-0.17	-0.18	-0.22

Table 4 Results of Control Questionnaire

Brands	Actual congruence	Ideal congruence	Notes
Nike	5.76	6.41	$F_{1,48}$ = 2.06; n.s.
Kickers	6.22	6.80	$F_{1,48}$ = 1.18; n.s.
Notes	n.s. difference between brands $F_{1,48}$ = 1.13	n.s. difference between brands $F_{1,48}$ = 049	

Correlations between subjects brand attitudes and type of congruence

[1] Actual congruence = congruence between actual self-image and brand image. Ideal congruence = congruence between ideal self-image and brand image. Situational ideal congruence = congruence between situational ideal self-image and brand image.

	Actual congruence	Ideal congruence
$Att._{Nike}$	0.09	-0.06
$Att._{Kickers}$	-0.06	-0.22

- As expected the majority of correlation are negative.
- None of the correlation were significant.
- Respondentsí attitudes towards brands did not represent a tendency towards a congruence of self images.

DISCUSSION

One of the aims of this study was to investigate if the image congruence hypothesis is applicable to an age group younger than has previously been studied. Previous research has not considered the fact that age might play a role in image congruence. Another aim was to confirm the higher predictability of dynamic measure (situational self-image) in image congruence in contrast to the static measures (actual self-image and ideal self-image).

A control questionnaire was used in order to assess the reliability of the suggested consumption situations. Hence, when respondents were not given a particular consumption situation, the actual and ideal self-images should have shown an image congruence. In contrast, in the main experiment, respondentsí situational ideal self-image would be expected to show an image congruence. This was due to the fact that actual and ideal self-images are described as static measures whereas situational ideal self-image is a dynamic measure (Graeff, 1997).

Subjects were expected to have a lower congruence score (thus higher congruence) for the brand they preferred in a specific situation. In contrast, they should have had a higher congruence score (thus lower congruence) for the less preferred brand. The results failed to confirm the expectations. Neither of the samples had a congruence, between brand image and any of the self-images (actual, ideal and situational ideal self-image), which was correlated to either situational-specific brand attitude or intention to chose. This is surprising because respondents' situational brand attitudes and intentions to choose have, as expected, differed for different situations. This demonstrates that both situations and brands have successfully influenced the subjectís attitude and intention to choose. Since past research has not examined the effects of age on image congruence, it maybe the case that age (mean = 15) caused the lack of correlation between brand evaluation and image congruence in this study. Furthermore, if subjects had different levels of self-monitoring, respondentsí difference scores would have

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**p<0.05 and **p<0.01*

cancelled themselves out. The fact that self-monitoring influences image congruence has been pointed out by Graeff (1996).

In terms of the predictability of brand attitude, the situational ideal self-image failed to prove Graeffís (1997) findings. While it was expected that situational ideal self-image would indicate an image congruence when actual and ideal self-images failed to do so, due to the different situations and the fact that actual and ideal self-images were considered as static measures, it was also expected that in the control group, the effects of static measures of self-image on brand evaluations should be greater. However this was not the case, brand evaluation (in this case brand attitude) showed no significant correlation.

When subjects from different ethnic backgrounds were compared, a significant difference was found in the choice of brand for both situations. Whilst the majority of subjects in the indigenous sample chose Kickers when visiting grandparents, the majority of subjects in the minority ethnic sample choose Nike. On the other hand when meeting friends, the majority of respondents in the indigenous sample choose Nike whereas the majority of respondents in the minority ethnic sample choose Kickers.

In contrast to the difference in brand choice, the different types of self-images did not show a significantly different mean difference score across the two groups.

CONCLUSION

The respondents in this study made distinct brand choices for different situations. However, this did not appear to be because they had strong attitudes towards either brand or that they were using the image associated with either brand to reflect a self-image. This could perhaps be an ability which comes with greater experience of being a consumer, at this stage decision making does not appear to be backed by any profound factors.

There is evidence for a difference between the two ethnic groups regarding choice of brand and choice of brand in different situations, while this confirms findings in other areas, the specific reasons require further investigation. This has implications for the

Furthermore, brand image may well function in different ways for consumers of different ages, marketers may need to consider the role of brand image in communications targeted at relatively young people.

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Appendix One

Subjects in the grandparents situation (n = 27 for the minority ethnic sample and n = 32 for the indigenous sample) were told to imagine the following:

> ìIt is Sunday, you are asked by your parents to get ready. It was pre arranged that you all will visit your uncle (or aunt, or grandfather and grandmother). Your relatives are very conservative and drive a Jaguar. They always wear clothes appropriate to the occasion. You think that it is important to leave a good impression on your relatives. The reason for this is because, you do not see them very often and you would not like to leave a bad impression on themî.

Subjects in the friends situation (n = 21 for the minority ethnic sample and n = 29 for the indigenous sample) were told to imagine the following:

> ìOne of your friends has told you to join him or her to meet some of your friends and some of his or her friends, who you have not met before. You know that the friends you are going to meet are the same age as you, and they like to spend their time together. They like to hang around the local shopping place or go clubbing. They, generally dress in a similar way, they believe that it is cool to wear the clothes of their choice. You think that it is important to leave a good impression on your new and old friends. The reason for this is because, you spend most of your spare time with them and you would not like to be left out.