

REPETITION EFFECT OF SPORT VIDEO GAMING ON SPORT BRAND ATTITUDE, ATTITUDE STRENGTH, AND THE ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOR RELATIONSHIP

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Aim of abstract

Despite these potential benefits of sport video games (SVG) as a marketing communication tool, little empirical research to date has been conducted on how virtual sport experience can influence the formation of sport brand attitudes and subsequent consumption behavior. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to test whether repetitive sport video gaming fosters stronger attitudes toward a sport brand in SVG, which guide related brand choice behavior. Specifically, this study focused on attitudes and behavior toward a sport brand (NASCAR) embedded in a SVG.

Theoretical background

Conceptualizing attitude as an object-evaluation association, attitude scholars have investigated the attitude-behavior relationship. However, researchers have generally failed to provide strong evidence that attitudes are good predictors of behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Consequently, researchers have approached the attitude-behavior relationship from a moderator variable perspective, focusing on non-evaluative attitudinal dimensions denoting attitude strength (e.g., Fabrigar, Macdonald, & Wegener, 2005). With the moderator approach, previous research has shown evidence of higher attitude-behavior consistency with non-evaluative dimensions of attitude, including attitude accessibility and attitude confidence (Berger & Mitchell, 1989).

With regard to attitudinal effects of repeated message exposure (Zajonc, & Markus, 1985), Berger and Mitchell (1989) showed that repeated exposure to brand messages results in highly accessible and confident attitude, which moderate the attitude-behavior relationship. These findings provide insight that SVG features which enable to repetitively interact with sport brands may affect attitude strength, which lead to behavior.

Methodology

For the purpose of this study, an experiment was designed to test the impact of repeated exposure to either a NASCAR racing video game or a real-life pre-recorded NASCAR televised race. As a result of a pilot study, the study created 4 experimental conditions (one, three, and seven exposures to a sport brand in SVG for virtual experience (VE) condition; and a direct experience (DE) condition). Using a convenience sampling technique, a total of 197 undergraduate and graduate students at a large Midwest university in the US were recruited.

In the videogame groups, after completing the short survey, participants were asked to play SVG in the single, 3 and 7 exposure conditions. Each game was played on a Sony PlayStation system and was viewed on a 27-inch flat screen TV. Participants in the DE group were asked to watch a prerecorded NASCAR event for 20 minutes. Following the subject's exposure to either the NASCAR-themed video game or the televised event, they completed a survey containing post-brand attitude and attitude

confidence measures. After completing the post-test questionnaire, participants took a response time test in a personal laptop computer. Last, participant's brand choice behavior was examined in a brand choice situation. All of the scales (brand attitude, brand confidence, brand familiarity) were adopted from previous research with some modifications (Berger & Mitchell, 1989). Attitude accessibility was measured by using the latency test on a computer program. The behavioral test was conducted in a brand choice situation in which participants were instructed to select one of eight different sport brands in order to get a chance to win two free tickets available for the selected sport brands. Their choice for each brand was ranked in order.

Results/discussion/implications

The results of the ANCOVA test indicated that participants with repeated exposure to the NASCAR brand showed more favorable brand attitudes than those with single exposure, $F(3, 192) = 7.24, p < .001$. Thus, the study provides empirical evidence that virtual sport experiences generated from repetitive SVG play enhance brand attitude.

Regarding the effects of repetitive brand exposure on attitude strength, this study found that repeated exposure to a sport brand in SVG results in sport attitudes that are more accessible from memory, and held with more confidence than a single exposure to sport brands, $F(3, 192) = 5.519, p < .001$ for brand accessibility; and $F(3, 192) = 4.221, p < .01$ for attitude confidence. The study provides empirical evidence that SVG have potential as a marketing tool influencing non-evaluative attitudinal dimensions as well as its evaluative dimensions.

The results of Hierarchical multiple regression with an interaction term found the moderating effect of attitude accessibility and confidence on the attitude-behavior consistency ($\beta = .171, t = 2.430, p < .05$), whereas it did not reveal any moderator effect for attitude accessibility (p -value = .395). Not only did the findings in the current study provide support for the previous research results (Berger & Mitchell, 1989), but also for the proposition that attitudes based on repeated exposure to a sport brand within SVG are highly predictive of subsequent brand choice behavior.

References

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