



# Slogan recall effects on marketplace behaviors: The roles of external search and brand assessment



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## ABSTRACT

This current study investigates the influence of advertising slogan recall on individuals' brand assessment, and relates these brand assessments to actual marketplace behaviors. The authors propose that the effectiveness of slogan recall will depend on whether individuals conduct an external information search or not. We test the hypotheses using a field study based on an actual advertising campaign implemented by a nonprofit organization, and a follow-up controlled experimental study. Findings support the notion that the influence of advertising slogan recall on brand assessment (i.e., the company-intended association and quality) is greater when individuals do not conduct external information search. Further, the research finds that brand perceptions mediate the influence of slogan recall on marketplace behaviors. The results imply that managers will receive greater returns on investments in advertising slogans when selling low involvement products rather than high involvement products.

## 1. Introduction

A common approach in advertising is to associate a slogan with an advertising campaign. Slogans are generally believed to facilitate learning about some aspect of a brand or company (Dass et al., 2014; Dowling and Kabanoff, 1996). They are employed for a variety of reasons such as, helping to differentiate the company/brand, providing customers with a reason to buy, or stating a distinctive competency (Dowling and Kabanoff, 1996). To achieve these effects, it is important for slogans to first be likeable, and recent research suggests that clear and creative slogans are especially favored by consumers (Dass et al., 2014). However, advertisers indicate that the most important indicator of a slogan's effectiveness is recall (Molian, 1993).

The two most effective advertising slogans based on recall have been recently identified as “Just Do it” [Nike] and “I’m lovin’ it” [McDonald’s] (Kohli et al., 2013). Interestingly, Burger King made headlines in 2014 by altering the third most effective slogan based on recall, “Have it your way” to “Be your way” in order to convey the brand’s acceptance of consumers’ self-expression. The shift predictably led to a great deal of criticism in the media (Crudele, 2014), given that the former slogan had been used for 40 years and was strongly associated with the brand. Other companies change their advertising slogans every few years, which has the effect of limiting recall since a new slogan has to be relearned periodically (Kohli et al., 2013). For

example, Coca-Cola has used advertising slogans such as “Share a Coke”, “Open Happiness”, and “The Coke Side of Life” in just the past ten years.

Presuming that recall accurately reflects the effectiveness of advertising slogans, recent research efforts have been focused on what makes slogans likeable and memorable (Dass et al., 2014; Kohli et al., 2013). While the characteristics of the slogan itself enhance both slogan likeability and recall (Dass et al., 2014; Kohli et al., 2013), the amount of media exposure in terms of the slogan age and advertising spending have the biggest influences on slogan recall (Kohli et al., 2013). The implication is that companies choosing to prioritize the use of advertising slogans must invest heavily over a long period of time in order to generate high levels of recall and reap the benefits.

However, if recall is not a universally appropriate measure of slogan effectiveness, committing the resources necessary to improve slogan recall will not generate the expected returns to these companies. Indeed, the academic research involving slogans is “limited” at best (Dass et al., 2014), and there has been some debate regarding the appropriateness of the recall measure for assessing effectiveness (Briggs, 2006; Mehta and Purvis, 2006). For instance, Briggs (2006) asserts that recall has “little relationship” to the actual influence of an advertisement on brand attitudes or sales. Prior experimental research has examined the effects of different slogan primes on brand perceptions (Boush, 1993; Pryor and Brodie, 1998), but this research does not assess

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slogan recall, which is more relevant in a real marketplace or purchase situation. Given the concerns about the applicability of recall as a measure and the lack of research addressing this issue, there is a need for research that examines the consequences of slogan recall, rather than just the drivers.

To that end, the current study addresses this research gap by considering the outcomes, rather than the antecedents, of advertising slogan recall. Specifically, the authors propose slogan recall will relate to individuals' brand associations and brand attitudes (i.e., brand quality), but that this relationship will depend on whether an individual conducts an external information search. With the prevalence of online search in today's environment, the interplay between promotion and information search has become an important strategic consideration (Mingyu et al., 2014; Ye et al., 2014). To the authors' knowledge, the current study is the first to examine the potential moderating influence of information search on the impact of slogan recall. We contribute a theoretical perspective that merges insights from cue utilization theory (Cox, 1962) and the economics of information (Nelson, 1970). We frame slogan recall and external search as competing sources of information. Our premise is that information from an external information search diminishes the utilization of information from advertising slogans stored in memory when individuals make inferences related to brands.

The study further examines how slogan recall, brand associations, and brand attitudes relate to marketplace behavior (i.e., transaction likelihood and share of wallet) in a field setting. While a vast amount of research considers behavioral intentions or hypothetical transactions, comparatively fewer studies involve reports of actual behavior. The conceptual model is shown in Fig. 1.

This model follows a typical advertising learning model of brand choice, as illustrated by Shimp (1981). Individuals' recall of the slogan reflects their processing of an advertising message. This recall then affects their beliefs and attitude toward the brand, respectively represented in our model by the company intended brand association and brand quality. These brand assessments then affect behaviors in the marketplace, such as brand choice and loyalty (Vakratsas and Ambler, 1999), respectively represented in our model by transaction likelihood and share-of-wallet. The study conceptual model makes theoretical contributions by examining slogan recall in the context of this advertising learning model. Specifically, we argue that external information search will function as a boundary condition to the effects of slogan recall on brand assessments and behavioral outcomes. The next section discusses the theoretical background, rooted in the literature on external information search and cue utilization.

## 2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

### 2.1. External information search

In order to make better decisions in the marketplace, consumers acquire information through internal and external information search (Guo, 2001). Internal information search occurs first and involves information that is available in a person's memory. For instance, they may recall advertising slogans related to brands of which they are aware. When this information does not sufficiently inform decision making, consumers often resort to external information search, where they draw information from outside sources. For example, consumers may seek out knowledgeable friends, evaluate company reports and marketing materials, or search for information from independent third-parties such as the media (Schmidt and Spreng, 1996). Services research suggests that external information search is inversely associated with time availability, and positively associated with perceived risk and purchase involvement (Elliott, 1994). Recent research also supports the notion that information search has an inverted U-shaped relationship with knowledge (Maity et al., 2014). Similarly, Schmidt and Spreng (1996) identify two broad antecedents of a person's external information search activity: perceived ability to search (related to knowledge) and perceived motivation to search (related to time, risk, and involvement).

While there is a large body of research that identifies and examines the antecedents of external information search (Guo, 2001; Schmidt and Spreng, 1996), there has been much less research on the outcomes of search. Of course, the general outcome is simply greater information about particular products and services (Nelson, 1970). Relatedly, research also suggests that external information search results in an increase in the size of consumers' consideration or evoked set of brands (Elliott, 1994; Wu and Rangaswamy, 2003). The present study also focuses on the outcomes of search, and we uniquely contribute to the literature by considering the moderating influence of external information search on the decision making process. Specifically, we expect that external information search will affect the use of other potential sources of information, namely advertising slogans.

### 2.2. Utilization of information

External information search and advertising are both sources of information that consumers can use to evaluate products and services (Nelson, 1970, 1974). However, sources of information differ in their usage because consumers consider some information to be more valuable than others (Cox, 1962). This value is partly determined by how much the information contributes to making accurate judgments (Purohit and Srivastava, 2001). There is a long stream of research

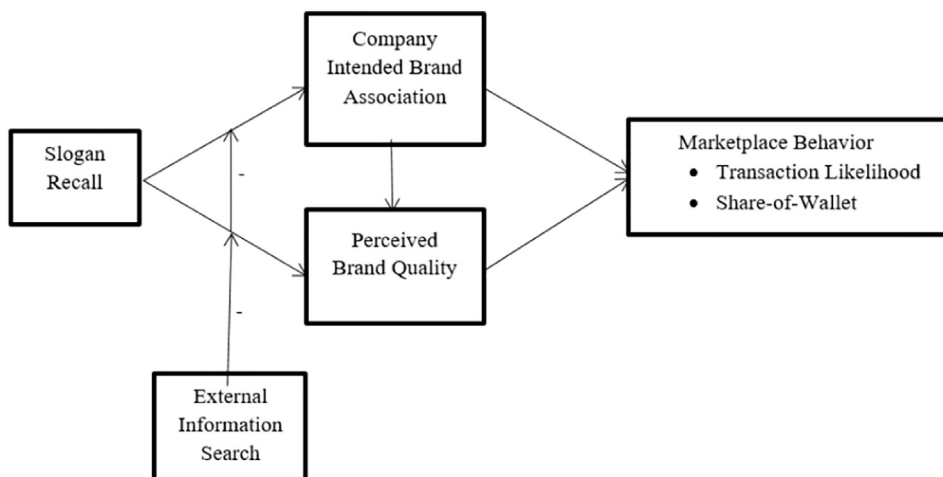


Fig. 1. Conceptual model.

involving consumer utilization of marketing cues, including price, brand name, and advertising (Kirmani, 1997; Rao and Monroe, 1989).

The research in this area has also begun to consider how different types of information cues affect the usage of one another (Chang and Wildt, 1996; Miyazaki et al., 2005; Purohit and Srivastava, 2001). For instance, research suggests that the influence of extrinsic cues diminishes in the presence of intrinsic cue information (Chang and Wildt, 1996). Intrinsic cues relate to physical product characteristics (e.g., texture), while extrinsic cues are not product attributes that are not physical traits (e.g., price) (Richardson et al., 1994). However, the extrinsic-intrinsic categorization is somewhat limited in services contexts where the offering is not tangible. Accordingly, Purohit and Srivastava (2001) categorize information cues as either high-scope or low-scope. While high-scope cues are relatively stable, low-scope cues are transient. Thus, when high-scope cues are considered, they can increase or decrease usage of low-scope cues. Our study similarly considers the influence of two distinct types of information, internal (advertising slogan recall) and external (information search). While internal information can be retrieved at little to no cost to an individual, information search requires consumers to incur time and/or money costs.

### 2.3. Slogan recall and information search

Advertising slogans are often used to prime specific brand associations by connecting the brand to a particular attribute in a memorable way (Boush, 1993; Kohli et al., 2013; Rosengren and Dahlén, 2006). Individuals who are able to recall an advertising slogan demonstrate that some learning about a company's intended brand-to-attribute association has occurred, albeit in a low-involvement manner (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2010). This readily accessible information from memory will be given stronger consideration in the absence of countervailing factors, such as information generated from an external search. Thus, for individuals who forgo external information search in a product category, slogan recall should exhibit a positive influence on the company intended brand-to-attribute association.

Since advertising slogans are delivered through convenient communication channels individuals acquire this information at little to no cost. In fact, one of the key roles of advertising in market settings is to lower exchange costs (Ekelund and Mixon, 1995). However, individuals who actively engage in external information search during the decision making process do incur some time and/or monetary cost (Stigler, 1961). Through information search, these persons engage in an active, rather than passive form of learning about the brand. Instead of using the freely available information that is stored in their memory, they have consciously decided to incur some incur additional cost to acquire additional information. Thus, he/she must believe the searched-for information adds value, otherwise, no external information search would be initiated (Stigler, 1961).

One of main reasons that information is valuable to consumers is because it helps consumers make proper categorizations (Cox, 1962). One type of categorization involves assigning attributes to brands. As argued previously, slogan recall should influence brand-to-attribute associations, and slogans are often designed with this purpose in mind (Dowling and Kabanoff, 1996). However, when individuals conduct external information search, we expect them to use the information acquired through search more readily than the information recalled from an advertised slogan since the searched-for information is more diagnostic to them. Thus, we hypothesize,

**Hypothesis 1.** *External information search will moderate the influence of slogan recall on the likelihood of company intended brand association (CIBA). The influence of slogan recall on CIBA will be greater for individuals who do not conduct external information search than for individuals who do conduct external information search.*

Slogans can enhance more general brand attitudes in at least three ways: (1) through the priming of specific brand associations; (2) by the

transfer of likability from the slogan to the brand, and (3) by serving as a memory aid to reinforce positive brand evaluations (Rosengren and Dahlén, 2006). Perceived brand quality closely relates to consumers' overall attitude toward a brand (Janiszewski and Van Osselaer, 2000), and may be described as an individual's judgment about the overall excellence or superiority of a service (Liu et al., 2014; Zeithaml, 1988).

In the cue utilization literature, the most commonly studied use of informational cues is to assess quality (Richardson et al., 1994). Services, in particular, are generally high in credence properties (Darby and Karni, 1973), so even after an individual transacts with the firm, it is difficult to accurately assess quality. Thus, consumers use informational cues as imperfect indicators of quality (Rao and Monroe, 1989). The aforementioned mechanisms through which advertising slogans affect perceived brand quality are relatively costless to the targeted individuals, since all involve low-level or nonconscious information processing. If no external information search is performed, slogan recall would likely affect brand quality through these mechanisms. However, as argued previously, consumers that conduct external information search would reasonably base their quality judgments on more diagnostic informational cues acquired through search. Hence, we hypothesize,

**Hypothesis 2.** *External information search will moderate the influence of slogan recall on brand quality. The influence of slogan recall on brand quality will be greater for individuals who do not conduct external information search than for individuals who do conduct external information search.*

### 2.4. Marketplace behaviors

In the current study we consider two important marketplace behaviors: transaction likelihood and share-of-wallet. Transactions in for-profit contexts relate mainly to consumer purchases, while transactions involve to consumer donations of time and/or money in the nonprofit arena. Company intended brand associations, as well as other brand associations, collectively form a brand's image (Keller, 1993), which has been established as a key determinant of purchase for profit seeking companies (Batra and Homer, 2004), as well as donating to non-profit organizations (Michel and Rieunier, 2012). Since companies strategically position their brands in a way that they believe enables their offerings to perform most effectively in the marketplace, when brand associations are in line with company intentions, individuals should be more likely to enter into transactions with the organization. Research also associates global judgments of service quality with transaction intentions (Zeithaml et al., 1996).

Another aspect of behavior toward the brand is share-of-wallet. As the proportion of an individual's spending in a category devoted to a particular company or brand, share-of-wallet is commonly viewed as an important measure of loyalty (Coil et al., 2007). Brand associations have been shown to positively relate to loyalty behaviors in both for profit and nonprofit contexts (Ming-Huei et al., 2004; Plewa et al., 2015). Similarly, more general service quality judgments are commonly associated with expressions of loyalty (Zeithaml et al., 1996). However, while the relationship between satisfaction and share-of-wallet has been well established (Coil et al., 2007), the possible relationship between brand associations, brand attitudes, and share of wallet has been largely ignored.

While brand associations and attitudes should directly influence marketplace behaviors, research suggests that advertising campaigns have an indirect rather than direct influence on behavior that is mediated by beliefs and attitudes related to brands (Shimp, 1981; Vakratsas and Ambler, 1999). The basic rationale is that there must first be some transfer from the ideas conveyed in the advertising to the targeted individual before behavior can be affected. As slogans are encountered in the context of advertising, we expect that the manner in which slogan recall affects behavior to be similar. However, consistent

**Table 1**  
Summary of categorical variables.

Advertising slogan recall	Frequency	% of valid responses
Yes	145	20.9
No	548	79.1
Conduct external search		
Yes	314	45.3
No	379	54.7
Intended brand association		
Yes	210	30.3
No	483	69.7
Transaction with company		
Yes	196	28.3
No	497	71.7

Note: “Yes” responses are coded as “1”; “No” responses are coded as “0”.

with the prior two hypotheses, these effects are only expected when consumers do not conduct information search. Thus, we propose,

**Hypothesis 3a.** *CIBA and brand quality will mediate the influence of advertising slogan recall on transaction likelihood for individuals who do not conduct external information search.*

**Hypothesis 3b.** *CIBA and brand quality will mediate the influence of advertising slogan recall on share-of-wallet (SOW) for individuals who do not conduct external information search.*

### 3. Empirical data and analysis

The hypotheses are tested using two studies. First, the focal study tests the full set of hypotheses (H1, H2, H3a, H3b), using data collected from a national sample of consumers following an actual promotional campaign that incorporated a slogan. Then, a follow-up controlled experiment is conducted to examine one of the key moderation hypotheses (H2).

#### 3.1. Method

A professional market research company collected data over a two-week span in the month of February via telephone interviews. The company called a random sample of individuals drawn from the telephone directory, and willing participants who were eighteen years of age and older were included in the study. Individuals were verbally read the questions and market research company representatives coded the responses. If the respondent was unable or unwilling to respond to a question, this was noted and the caller moved on to next question. The questions included in this study were only a subset of those asked in the context of a more extensive interview that included approximately 65 questions. Many of the questions asked by the market research company were related to a national U.S. advertising campaign launched the prior year by one of the country's largest charitable organizations. The charitable organization name is synonymous with the service brand name in this context. Questions were also asked about some of the other leading charitable organizations in the country. The firm continued calling until they were able to survey a total of 1500 respondents.

#### 3.2. Sample

A total of 693 responses had complete data on the study variables of interest and therefore comprised the final sample. A comparison of respondents included in the sample to those respondents excluded from the sample due to incomplete data reveals that sample respondents were much more likely to be employed full time (54.4% vs. 40.2%). This may be because working individuals were a primary target audience of the focal organization's marketing efforts. Relatedly, those included in the study sample were also more likely to be male (52.8% vs.

45.3%), college graduates (43.1% vs. 36.3%), and between 35 and 54 years of age (47.3% vs 39.5%) than those excluded from the sample due to incomplete data.

#### 3.3. Measures

Slogan recall was assessed by asking respondents, “In the past year, have you seen or heard the phrase [Advertising Campaign Slogan] in advertising for [organization], on [organization] materials, or on the [organization] website (yes/no).” External information search was assessed by asking respondents, “Do you personally investigate charities to which you donate money (yes/no)?” These variables respectively constituted the key antecedent and moderator of interest in our study.

CIBA was assessed by asking respondents “When you think about non-profit or charitable organizations that make a difference in the community, which organizations come to mind?” One of the main objectives of the organization's promotional campaign was to establish and strengthen this association. Responses of those who mentioned the name of the focal organization were coded as “1”, while the responses of subjects not mentioning the name of the focal organization were coded as “0”.

Whether or not a respondent entered into a transaction with the brand was determined by asking, “Approximately how much money did you give to [organization] in the past 12 months”. The responses involving a nonzero dollar amount had engaged in a monetary transaction with the organization during the study time frame, and were coded as “1”. Responses of those who had not engaged in a monetary transaction with the organization during the study time frame were coded as “0”. A summary of the categorical variables is presented in Table 1.

Perceived brand quality was measured with 5 items based on the (Parasuraman et al., 1988) service quality dimensions. The four most important service quality dimensions to the general public in a non-profit context have been found to be reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy (Jones and Shandiz, 2015). The scale items used to measure perceived brand quality ask consumers to rate their level of agreement that four key adjectives – reliable, trustworthy (related to assurance), bureaucratic (reverse scored, related to responsiveness) and compassionate (related to empathy) – apply to the organization on a scale from “1 = Strongly Disagree” to “5 = Strongly Agree”. In addition to these items pertaining to specific service quality dimensions, the measure also included an overall item, “Thinking about everything you know, what is your overall opinion of [organization]” from “1 = Very Unfavorable” to “5 = Very Favorable”. The Cronbach alpha for this measure was 0.79, with a mean of 3.57 and standard deviation of 0.97.

Finally, SOW was calculated using responses to two questions. The amount reportedly given to the focal organization based on the donation question mentioned earlier was divided by the amount provided in response to the question, “Thinking about all the monetary contributions you made to charitable or non-profit organizations in the past 12 months, approximately what was the amount that you gave or pledged to all charities?” Among donors to the organization, SOW was 40% of charitable giving, with a standard deviation of 34%. Spearman's correlation coefficients among variables are presented in Table 2 below.

Notably, a chi-square test confirms that the relationship between the primary antecedent (advertising slogan recall) and the proposed moderator (external information search) is nonsignificant ( $\chi^2_{(1)} = 0.017$ ,  $p > 0.8$ ). While research suggests that advertising has the effect of increasing search behavior for the advertised brand (Ye et al., 2014), the external search in our model pertains to more generalized search behavior in a particular product category.

#### 3.4. Model estimation and hypothesis testing

Path analysis is implemented to test the conceptual model using AMOS. While both path analysis and structural equation modeling approaches have the advantage of examining a system of variable

**Table 2**  
Correlations among variables and demographic characteristics.

	SR	IS	BQ	BA	TR	SOW	GE	Age
Slogan recall (SR)								
External info search (IS)	- 0.01							
Brand quality (BQ)	<b>0.08</b>	- 0.09						
Brand association (BA)	<b>0.08</b>	- 0.04	<b>0.21</b>					
Transaction (TR)	0.07	0.04	<b>0.23</b>	<b>0.39</b>				
Share-of-wallet (SOW)	0.07	- 0.23	<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.35</b>	N/A			
Gender (GE) [1 = male; 2 = female]	0.00	- 0.05	0.02	- 0.01	0.04	0.00		
Age	- 0.13	<b>0.10</b>	- 0.16	- 0.08	0.02	- 0.14	- 0.02	
Education (ED)	0.00	<b>0.16</b>	- 0.07	<b>0.10</b>	<b>0.12</b>	- 0.21	- 0.03	- 0.04

Note: Correlations in **bold** are significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

relationships simultaneously, path analysis is appropriate for this study since most of the variables are measured with single rather than multiple indicators (Sirgy and Samli, 1985). For brand quality, the multiple indicators were averaged together, and this average score represented the construct in models. Also, since many of the model variables are dichotomous and thus violate the assumptions of maximum likelihood estimation, bootstrapping is applied to examine the model estimates (Finney and DiStefano, 2006).

Applying 5000 bootstrap samples, the core model was first estimated as depicted in Fig. 1 with three exceptions: 1) transaction likelihood was used as the sole dependent variable so the model could be tested using the entire sample of respondents, 2) external information search was not included in this model since it would be used as a grouping variable in later analyses, and 3) respondents' age, education level, and gender were included as control variables and allowed to influence the model endogenous variables. This model exhibited a good fit to the data ( $\chi^2_{(7)} = 12.4$ ; CFI = 0.96; IFI = 0.96; RMSEA = 0.03). Bootstrapping returns bias corrected confidence intervals for each of the paths estimated in the model. Four of the five core model paths were significant. Slogan recall had a significant influence on CIBA ( $\beta_{lower} = 0.004$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.160$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), but not the service brand quality ( $\beta_{lower} = -0.048$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.097$ ;  $p = 0.50$ ). CIBA had a significant influence on brand quality ( $\beta_{lower} = 0.153$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.277$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Both CIBA ( $\beta_{lower} = 0.090$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.250$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and brand quality ( $\beta_{lower} = 0.151$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.269$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) had a significant influence on transaction likelihood.

To test H1 and H2, multiple group analysis was conducted on the core model. The sample was split according to respondents' information search behavior and the core model was estimated in each group. A model that imposed equality constraints on the paths from slogan recall to CIBA and brand quality was compared to a model that allowed these paths to vary across the two groups. A chi-square difference test revealed that the unconstrained model represented a significant improvement in fit over the constrained model ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 8.04$ , DF = 2,  $p < 0.02$ ). Further, the influence of slogan recall on CIBA was significant and positive among the group of respondents that did not conduct external search ( $\beta_{lower} = 0.054$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.299$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and non-significant among the group of respondents did conduct external search ( $\beta_{lower} = -0.129$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.115$ ;  $p = 0.83$ ), supporting H1. Slogan recall also had a significant positive influence on brand quality among the group of respondents that did not conduct external search ( $\beta_{lower} = 0.003$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.416$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), and a nonsignificant influence in group of respondents that did conduct external search ( $\beta_{lower} = -0.384$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.178$ ;  $p = 0.48$ ), supporting H2.

We plotted the relationship between slogan recall and CIBA among respondents who did and did not conduct external information search to further examine this moderation effect. Fig. 2 below illustrates this analysis.

Among consumers that did not conduct external information search, the proportion of customers who made the CIBA increased from 28% to 46% when the slogan is recalled. However, the proportion of consumers

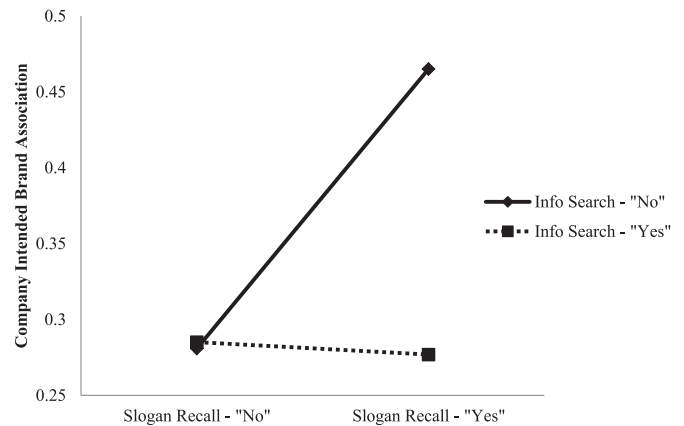


Fig. 2. CIBA proportions by slogan recall and information search.

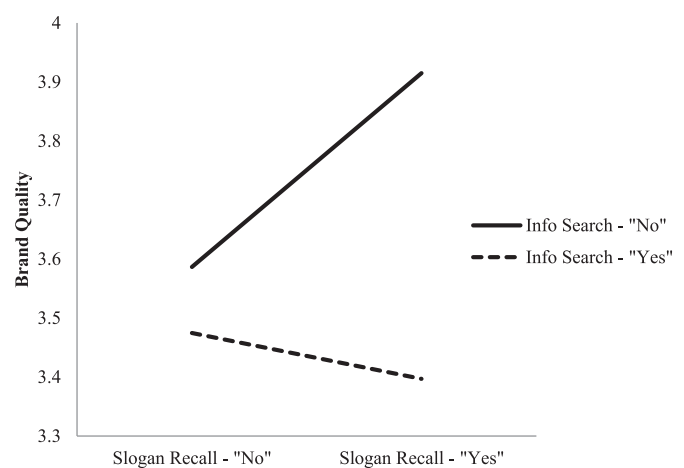


Fig. 3. Interaction effects on brand quality.

who made the CIBA was similar whether or not the slogan was recalled among consumers that did conduct external information search (29% vs. 28%).

As illustrated in Fig. 3 above, recall is associated with higher brand quality among consumers that do not conduct external search ( $M_{[no\ recall, n = 299]} = 3.59$  vs.  $M_{[recall, n = 80]} = 3.92$ ;  $F = 8.19$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), but not among consumer that do conduct external search ( $M_{[no\ recall, n = 249]} = 3.47$  vs.  $M_{[recall, n = 65]} = 3.40$ ;  $F = 0.29$ ,  $p = 0.59$ ).

### 3.5. Mediation analysis

To test H3a, we use the bootstrap model results to test the significance of the indirect effect of slogan recall on the marketplace behaviors. Recent research suggests that the presence of a significant indirect effect is the only condition necessary to establish mediation, and

that bootstrapping is a relatively powerful approach for detecting this effect (Preacher and Hayes, 2008; Zhao et al., 2010). Consistent with hypothesis 3a, the overall indirect effect of slogan recall on transaction likelihood was not significant among the group of consumers that conduct external information search ( $\beta_{lower} = -0.047$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.020$ ;  $p = 0.45$ ), and significant among the group of consumer that do not conduct external information search ( $\beta_{lower} = 0.028$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.112$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). An alternative model including a direct path from slogan recall to transaction likelihood was also tested, but this path was not significant, even for consumers that do not conduct external information search ( $\beta_{lower} = -0.078$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.120$ ;  $p = 0.72$ ). This implies that the influence of slogan recall on transaction likelihood is completely mediated by the brand assessments.

Further analysis to examine the mediation roles of CIBA and brand quality using a “phantom model” approach (Macho and Ledermann, 2011) reveals that both the indirect paths from slogan recall to transaction likelihood through both CIBA ( $\beta_{lower} = 0.016$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.096$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and perceived brand quality ( $\beta_{lower} = 0.001$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.034$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) were significant. These findings collectively support H3a, suggesting that both CIBA and brand quality mediate the influence of slogan recall on transaction likelihood.

To test H3b we use a subsample of the respondents that actually engaged in a transaction with the focal organization ( $n = 196$ ). Using this subsample, we estimate path models identical to those used to test H3a, except that that the dependent variable in the model was SOW, rather than transaction likelihood. Consistent with H3b, the overall indirect effect of slogan recall on SOW was not significant among the group of consumers that conduct external information search ( $\beta_{lower} = -0.159$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.044$ ;  $p = 0.30$ ), and significant among the group of consumer that do not conduct external information search ( $\beta_{lower} = 0.000$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.219$ ;  $p = 0.05$ ). An alternative model including a direct path from slogan recall to SOW was also estimated, but this additional path was not significant, even for consumers that do not conduct external information search ( $\beta_{lower} = -0.244$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.206$ ;  $p = 0.87$ ).

Further analysis to examine the mediation role of CIBA and brand quality reveals that the neither the indirect path from slogan recall to SOW through CIBA ( $\beta_{lower} = -0.006$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.183$ ;  $p = 0.07$ ) or through perceived brand quality were significant ( $\beta_{lower} = -0.012$ ;  $\beta_{upper} = 0.095$ ;  $p = 0.22$ ). Thus H3b is not fully supported. While CIBA and brand quality collectively mediate the relationship between slogan recall and SOW, the individual constructs did not. Table 3 summarizes the results of the test of hypotheses from this focal study.

#### 4. Follow-up study

In this follow-up study we retest Hypothesis 2, namely the moderating role of external information search on the effect of brand slogan recall on perceived brand quality, using an experimental approach. This approach addresses some of the measurement limitations in the main

study, such as only assessing aided (rather than unaided) slogan recall, and applying only a dichotomous measure of external information search. It also enhances the generalizability of the findings by evaluating this key effect in a for-profit context as opposed to a nonprofit context.

Fifty-six undergraduate students at a large public university in the U.S. were asked to complete a study in exchange for course credit (56.4% female;  $M_{age} = 21.2$ ). Participants were asked to type the advertising slogan for each of the following four brands – McDonalds, BMW, Nike and Campbell's Soup. Each of these brand slogans were rated highly in recall, according to a recent study by Kohli et al. (2013). After attempting to type the slogan, individuals were told that they would be rating brands from a particular product category (“Shoes”), and were allowed to decide how many related articles (minimum of one to a maximum of five) they would like to read before providing their rating of the brands. They were then presented their desired number of articles, drawn from BusinessWeek archives, and all the articles provided some information about “Nike”. Positive articles about Nike were alternated with negative articles to ensure that high search by itself would not contribute to higher positive attitude to Nike (e.g., an article about Nike as an innovator was the first result, while the second was Nike as a sweat shop and so on). After reading the articles, participants were asked to provide a quality assessment of Nike and McDonalds.

#### 4.1. Measurement

Slogan recall was coded as a dichotomous variable (0 = no; 1 = yes) based on whether the typed slogans matched the actual advertising slogan of the respective companies. The number of articles chosen by each individual was recorded as the extent of external information search (ranging from 1 to 5). Brand quality was measured with three items on overall quality, reliability and trustworthiness using a seven point scale (1 = very low to 7 = very high). An analysis of the three items revealed a high reliability ( $\alpha = 0.90$ ).

#### 4.2. Findings and discussion

Analysis revealed that around 78% of the participants correctly recalled the Nike slogan of “Just do it”, while the recall of McDonald's “I'm loving' it” was about 75%. A regression equation was estimated using the PROCESS plug in for SPSS (Model = 1) with brand quality as the dependent variable, slogan recall as the key predictor, and external information as the moderator variable. For Nike, the interaction effect of slogan recall and external search is significant ( $\beta = -1.14$ ,  $t(56) = 3.09$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) warranting a closer look at the interaction using spotlight analysis. In support of H2, we find that at low levels of search (one standard deviation below the mean) there is a significant effect of slogan recall on brand quality ( $\beta = 2.32$ ,  $t(56) = 2.78$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) with correct slogan recall increasing brand quality assessment. However, when search was high (one standard deviation above the mean), there

**Table 3**  
Summary of hypothesis test results from focal study.

Study hypothesis	Tested path	Info search	Std. estimate	Lower bound (95% CI)	Upper bound (95% CI)	p-Val.	Hypothesis support?
Hypothesis 1 (moderation)	SR → CIBA	No	0.176	0.054	0.299	0.005	Yes
	SR → CIBA	Yes	-0.015	-0.129	0.115	0.832	
Hypothesis 2 (moderation)	SR → BQ	No	0.215	0.003	0.416	0.046	Yes
	SR → BQ	Yes	-0.099	-0.384	0.178	0.476	
Hypothesis 3a (mediation)	SR → BQ & CIBA → Tran	No	0.065	0.028	0.112	< 0.001	Yes
	SR → CIBA → Tran	No	0.050	0.016	0.096	0.003	
	SR → BQ → Tran	No	0.015	0.001	0.034	0.030	
Hypothesis 3b (mediation)	SR → BQ & CIBA → SOW	No	0.096	0.000	0.219	0.051	Partial
	SR → CIBA → SOW	No	0.070	-0.006	0.183	0.068	
	SR → BQ → SOW	No	0.025	-0.012	0.095	0.216	

Note: SR = slogan recall; CIBA = company intended brand association; BQ = brand quality; Tran = transaction; SOW = share-of-wallet.

was no effect of slogan recall on brand quality ( $p > 0.1$ ).

When the same regression model is run for McDonald's (with search as the number of Nike articles read) we do not find a significant interaction ( $\beta = -0.43$ ,  $t(56) = 1.01$ ,  $p > 0.32$ ) suggesting that the moderating effect of external information search on slogan recall only applies when search specifically related to brand or product category is conducted. Consistent with the study conceptualization, this result supports the notion that the actual information gathered from search affects the utilization of information recalled from advertising slogans.

## 5. Discussion and implications

These studies contribute to the research on advertising slogans and external information search. Prior work has mainly treated both these two constructs as ends in themselves, so research generally focuses on the drivers of slogan recall and information search (e.g., Kohli et al., 2013; Schmidt and Spreng, 1996). Our study is one of the very first to examine outcomes of slogan recall in the context of an advertising learning model (Shimp, 1981), and in doing so, empirically link advertising slogan recall to brand associations (i.e., CIBA), brand attitudes (i.e., quality), and subsequent marketplace behavior (i.e. transaction likelihood and SOW). Prior studies have typically just applied slogan primes, making it difficult to draw any implications regarding the effects of actually recalling a slogan (Boush, 1993; Pryor and Brodie, 1998). It is also the first to our knowledge to consider the possible moderating effects of external information search (e.g., Wu and Rangaswamy, 2003). Across two studies using vastly differing methods, we were able to support the moderating role of external information search as it relates to the influence of slogan recall on brand assessments.

The results from a national U.S. study suggest that advertising slogan recall only affects specific company-intended brand associations and more general brand quality, when individuals do not conduct external information search. The reasoning for this effect builds on and contributes to research in the areas of information asymmetry and cue utilization (Chang and Wildt, 1996; Cox, 1962; Ekelund and Mixon, 1995; Nelson, 1970). The authors categorize slogan recall as an internal information cue and information search as an external information cue. Per economics research on information asymmetry, the information acquired from external search is done so at a time or monetary cost, while the information from slogan recall is freely accessible. Our framework implies that the information generated from an external information search would therefore be viewed as more predictive of brand attributes and brand quality since individuals willingly incur cost to acquire that external information.

This study's findings are consistent with research suggesting that advertising information (i.e., slogan recall in our study) only affects behavior indirectly through brand associations and attitudes. While much of the research on this topic has been experimental, this study was conducted in the context of an actual advertising campaign that made use of an advertising slogan in an attempt to influence a targeted audience. Further, the outcomes were based on actual reports of behavior to assess transaction likelihood and SOW, instead of intentions, and the study is one of the first to apply SOW in a charitable giving domain. Findings support the notion that the influence of slogan recall on transaction likelihood is completely mediated by the brand assessments, but only partially support the mediated influence of slogan recall on SOW. However, that the results involving transaction likelihood were detected under these realistic circumstances suggests that the findings are not only statistically, but also practically meaningful.

### 5.1. Managerial implications

Collectively, the study finding suggest that practitioners should receive a greater return on their investments in advertising slogans when applied to low-involvement product categories (associated with little

information seeking) rather than the high-involvement product categories, for which consumers typically conduct external information search (Zaichkowsky, 1985). At a minimum, practitioners investing in advertising slogans should ensure that a segment of their target audience typically neglects external information search. Thus, marketing research should be conducted to ascertain whether targeted consumers typically engage in external information search when making purchases in the relevant product category. For example, in the present study's context of charitable organizations, over half of the respondents did not search for information on organizations to which they donate. With a large portion of the targeted audience approaching decision making in this manner, investing in building a memorable slogan can be justified since recall of the slogan would ultimately affect marketplace behaviors on a large scale. In higher involvement product categories (e.g., automobiles), spending to increase slogan recall would be harder to justify; in low involvement product categories (e.g., soft drinks), the investment in slogans can be justified more easily due to the behavioral implications. Slogans in high involvement contexts may be applied more effectively to enhance recall and clarify brand positioning (Dahlén and Rosengren, 2005), rather than to directly improve consumer assessments of a brand.

The effects of slogan recall were less compelling in terms of SOW, even for individuals that neglect information search. Thus, while our study strongly supports the ability of a slogan to encourage a transaction, the use of slogans may be less effective as a means of encouraging loyalty. Companies focusing on customer relationship management may not find investments in advertising slogans as fruitful an investment, as those attempting to generate initial purchases.

Managers should also be aware that slogan recall only indirectly affects market behaviors through brand associations and attitudes. This suggests that the primary benefit of advertising slogans is as a brand-building tool. Firms with weak brands may see those brands strengthened by a recognizable slogan, but may not experience immediate returns in terms of behavior, so expectations should be tempered.

### 5.2. Limitations and future research

The results of this study should be considered in light of certain limitations. First, the comprehensive conceptual model was tested in a nonprofit context. Though a follow-up experiment in a more traditional purchase context was able to confirm the moderating role of external information search on the effect of slogan recall on perceptions of brand quality, the ultimate behavior toward the brand would manifest much differently. Instead of donation behavior being the desired outcome, purchase behavior would be of utmost concern in traditional settings. Though likelihood and SOW can be applied to purchases or donations, the role of customer satisfaction in traditional consumer contexts may affect the relationship between brand attitudes and behavior (Syed Alwi and Kitchen, 2014). Thus, future research should consider models involving more traditional purchase behaviors.

Also, future studies may explore more comprehensive measures of search. In the first study, individuals were free to conduct search in any number of ways, including seeking out interpersonal sources such as family and friends, but the measure of search was dichotomous. In the follow-up experimental study, search was measured using a 1–5 scale, but the mode of search was limited to considering articles in the business press. Thus, each approach to search had inherent limitations and future researchers may consider approaches that can simultaneously overcome the measurement and conceptual restrictions.

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