

How Does Incongruity Perception Influence Product Evaluation? Examination of the Inverted U Shape Relation Predicted by Schema Congruity Theory

Xin Gao

Wageningen University

Ilona de Hooge

Wageningen University

Arnout Fischer

Wageningen University

Cite as:

Gao Xin, de Hooge Ilona, Fischer Arnout (2020), How Does Incongruity Perception Influence Product Evaluation? Examination of the Inverted U Shape Relation Predicted by Schema Congruity Theory. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 49th, (63302)

Paper from the 49th Annual EMAC Conference, Budapest, May 26-29, 2020.



How Does Incongruity Perception Influence Product Evaluation? Examination of the Inverted U Shape Relation Predicted by Schema Congruity Theory

Abstract

Schema congruity theory predicts an inverted u shape relation between incongruity and evaluation: from congruity to incongruity, evaluation first increases and then decreases. Previous research manipulated incongruity as three-level categories and results supported the theory. However, we argue that the definition of incongruity implies a continuum, rather than categories. The current research examined the theory by employing a continuous incongruity measurement. Moreover, by applying a within-subject approach, we examined the inverted u shape relation on both group level and individual level. Five pre-registered studies presented respondents with various products made from realistic materials that differed in naturalness and degree of being repurposed. The results showed no relationship between incongruity and product evaluation on group level, nor individual level. We also investigated the causes of incongruity. The results revealed that materials failing to satisfy the product function at least partially explained incongruity perceptions. This knowledge is valuable for product development.

Keywords: *schema congruity theory; product evaluation; new product development*

Track: Consumer Behaviour