

The Moderating Role of Holistic-Analytic Thinking Style on the Relationship between Product Incongruencies and Word of Mouth

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Cite as:

Santos David, Sayin Eda, Requero Blanca, Uliana Eduarda (2022), The Moderating Role of Holistic-Analytic Thinking Style on the Relationship between Product Incongruencies and Word of Mouth. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 51st, (107560)

Paper from the 51st Annual EMAC Conference, Budapest, May 24-27, 2022



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Abstract

Individuals encounter products that contain incongruent characteristics every day. This research explored how these products might produce different reactions depending on an individual's thinking style (holistic vs. analytic). Prior research has shown that negative information about a brand affects the attitudes of holistic thinkers less than analytic thinkers. Building on this research, we explored whether individuals' thinking style can moderate the impact of incongruencies on product evaluations. Across two studies, participants first completed the thinking style scale, then were randomly assigned to evaluate a notebook (study 1) or a watch (study 2), advertised either as possessing incongruent or congruent characteristics. Finally, participants reported their word of mouth toward the product. Results revealed that holistic thinkers engaged in more positive word of mouth for products with incongruent (versus congruent) characteristics than analytic thinkers. We argued that these effects occurred because holistic thinkers have a greater tolerance for incongruencies than analytic thinkers.

Keywords: *holistic-analytic thinking; word of mouth; product incongruence*

Track: Consumer Behaviour