Consumers' confidence in competitive positions of products: Antecedents and effect on purchase intention

A thesis examined and passed for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Marketing)

by

Anne-Maree O'Rourke

Primary supervisor: Associate Professor Francois Carrillat

Alternate supervisor: Dr Paul Wang

University of Technology Sydney

UTS Business School

Marketing Discipline Group

September 2017

Certificate of Original Authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as part of the collaborative doctoral degree and/or fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature: Anne-Maree O'Rourke

Date: 30th of September 2017

This research is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Use of Professional Editing

I would like to acknowledge The Expert Editor for providing English editing of this thesis. Please note that there was no actual writing included as part of this service.

Acknowledgments

It has certainly been a non-typical road to completing this thesis. From starting part-time while balancing a full-time industry position to creating two beautiful babies and thus the hardest task of all presented itself - balancing the roles of mother and PhD student. Completing this doctoral thesis, whilst trying to be the best mum I can be, has been the most challenging pursuit I have embarked on in my life so far. They do say dreams don’t come easy. They were right.

In saying that, the completion of this PhD is dedicated to a few people who made it possible. First and foremost, to my supervisor Associate Professor Francois Carrillat, who took me on as a student mid-way through my candidature when I was desperate for supervision. For that, I am truly eternally grateful. You have simply been a wonderful supervisor and mentor to me in so many ways and I count myself very lucky to have been under your wing. To my secondary supervisor Dr Paul Wang, I thank you for being my analysis ‘go to’ person and for your never-ending patience.

Now, to my girls, Sienna and Emilie. You may have delayed my PhD completion, but I wouldn’t change anything for the world. I hope one day you will finally understand what doing a doctoral thesis actually means and that you will proud of me. Making you proud means everything. Dr Mummy loves you both so very much.

To my husband, Brendan, thank you for all the support you have given me over many years. Before I even started this crazy journey, you were so very supportive of me following my academic dream. Without you, this would not have been possible. I hope that your ‘investment’ pays off one day.

To my parents, Mario and Lourdes, thank you for taking on the role of ‘mum’ on the many days (well, years) that I was at university working on my PhD. Completion of this thesis wouldn’t have been possible without your generous help.

I must also mention several academics at UTS that acted as my sounding board over the years: Dr Graham Massey, Professor Grahame Dowling and Associate Professor Paul Burke. I thank you for always making time for me and the advice you gave. Last but certainly not least, my UTS family – Alex Belli, Tia Fallahi, Dr Ingo Bentrott, Ljubomir Pupovac, Atya Zeb, Ekaterina Napolova, and Dr Ryan Tang – the friendship, encouragement, counseling and many, many laughs will never be forgotten.

Abstract

A product's competitive position signals to the consumer the product's salient value amongst its competitors. It is one of the cornerstones of marketing success, yet there has been little focus in the literature on the consumer side of the positioning equation – the consumers' *perception* of the product's position. This thesis concentrates on the latter by examining the antecedents and effects of consumers' *confidence* in their positioning perception. With support from other areas of marketing, it is proposed that better insight into consumer behaviour can be gained by measuring positioning confidence, compared to the common measurement practice of using perceptual mapping in isolation. The relevance of positioning confidence is enhanced by the wavering consumer reliance on information derived from outside the company, thus inherently increasing the risk of fuzzy or mismatched positioning signals that the consumer needs to untangle. Furthermore, research suggests weak consumer perceptions of product differentiation in many categories, which isn't surprising given how crowded many categories have become.

This thesis primarily proposes that consumers' confidence in their perception of the product's position acts as a moderator between the well-established relationship of perceived differentiation and purchase intention in cases where there is a poorer match between the consumers' perception of the product and their purchase goal. A weaker match between what the consumer believes the product stands for and what the consumer ultimately seeks from the product presents a riskier purchasing decision. Thus, it is here where metacognition, in the form of confidence, is more likely to play a role.

This thesis also offers antecedents of positioning confidence, with the first being the alignment between the initial and post (information search) perceived positions. This antecedent refers to the cognitive uniformity between the passively-held positioning perception with which the consumer may enter the information search phase and the more active positioning judgment the consumer makes after consulting various information sources. Secondly, it suggests that perceived clarity acts as a positive moderator between perceived consistency and confidence. Perceived clarity and consistency of positioning messages takes into account how consumers currently conduct their information search, encompassing both the organisation's positioning signals (actual position) and that from consumers and opinion leaders (external position). Perceived clarity relates to how obviously the product's position is portrayed, whereas perceived consistency relates to the level of similarity in the positioning depiction between the two information source types. Lastly, the thesis hypothesises how various combinations of the actual and external position impacts perceived clarity and consistency.

The methodology comprises two studies with a total of 574 Australian consumers obtained via a commissioned panel. The research design is in the form of experiments, with thorough pre-testing determining the product categories and focal brands chosen. The findings show strong statistical support for the proposed role of confidence on the relationship between perceived differentiation and purchase as a function of consumers' purchase goal match, across both studies. There was moderate support shown for the suggested antecedents of positioning confidence, and convincing overall support for the joint impact of the interaction between the actual and external position on perceived clarity and consistency.

There are several implications that have emerged from this dissertation. Firstly, it further develops the theory of positioning perception by introducing a moderator to the well-established relationship between differentiation and purchase and, thus, offering an additional measure of positioning implementation success. It also presents further theoretical support for the role of metacognition when a decision is categorised by higher risk. From a management perspective, this thesis offers brand managers direction on how to increase the confidence of consumers' perception of their product's position, which can increase the likelihood of purchase from consumers who are typically hard to attain (those who identify a weaker match between what the product offers and what they want). Lastly, the limitations associated with the studies are outlined and future research avenues are suggested.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Glossary

Product positioning (or competitive product positioning)

The value proposition that a product offers relative to its set of competitors within the product category.

Intended product position

The proposed position for a product as derived by the organisation. It should be the result of various internal and external analyses and be a strategic decision, one not seen by the marketplace.

Actual product position/source type

The position of a product that has been implemented by the organisation via all consumer touch points, such as the product itself and advertising. Essentially, it is a product information source type—one that is coming from *within* a product's organisation.

External product position/ source type

Positioning messages or signals sent from sources other than the organisation that owns a product, such as word-of-mouth and competitor advertising. Essentially, it is a product information source type—one that is coming from *outside* a product's organisation. This may support or go against the actual product position.

Perceived product position

The consumer judgment of a product's position, derived from the actual position and external positioning cues.

- **Initial perceived position -** pre information search phase.
- **Post perceived position -** post information search phase.

It is possible for a consumer to have a non-existent or weak perceived position.

Perceived differentiation

Refers to how unique, distinctive and/or different the consumer believes a product is in its category. Thus, is a product a "me too" product, or would it be fairly difficult to replace?

Confidence in post perceived position

A consumer's confidence level that their judgment of a product's position is correct i.e. the anticipated product experience will be delivered post purchase. This newly-developed construct stems from the idea of "belief confidence" that has been well applied in other contexts within the disciplines of marketing and psychology.

Position clarity (via information search)

The extent to which the stimuli experienced by the consumer in the information search phase (actual position and external cues) clearly communicates a product position. In this research, it is an independent variable linked to a consumer's confidence in their perceived product position.

Position consistency (via information search)

The extent to which the stimuli experienced by the consumer in the information search phase (actual position and external cues) consistently communicates the same product position. In this research, it is an independent variable linked to a consumer's confidence in their perceived product position.

Position definition level

The level of position definition is terminology derived by this research to describe the level of lucidity with which the position is portrayed across both the actual and external information source types. The types are: completely defined, partially defined, and completely undefined.

Purchase intention

How likely the consumer is to make a purchase or take a step closer to final purchase.

Purchase goal

Which position a consumer is seeking in order to meet their consumer needs.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research background

A product's competitive position identifies the segment the product is targeting and the value proposition it offers that differentiates it from its competitors (Hooley & Greenley, 2005). Having a clear, strong, competitive position for products in the mind of the consumer is considered to be absolutely imperative for products to compete in today's market. For the consumer, it signals what the product stands for against competitive choices and, thus, what they can expect to experience post-purchase. In essence, competitive position is the reason that a target market is interested in buying that product versus other options in the product category (Wind, 1977). From the organisational perspective, a position that is tied to the business unit or firm's business model and delivers better results than any competition produces several benefits. Essentially, successful positioning reduces the likelihood of price-competition and allows for the potential of "owning" a slice of the market. This may result in superior performance (Porter, 2001) on measures such as sales, return-on-investment (ROI), and company image (Blankson, Cowan et al., 2013; Cheng & Hadjicharalambous, 2008). Moreover, it serves as a strategic guide for all resource allocation decisions. Given the academic and managerial acceptance of the importance of competitive positioning, several academics have noted their perplexity in the numerous gaps that exist within the field (Rigger, 1995; Butt, Papadopoulos, & Murphy, 2007; Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007).

The tasks of deriving and implementing a product's position stretch across various disciplines such as marketing, management, economics, psychology, and finance. Positioning formation typically sits within strategic marketing and management literature. Existing thought is that an organisation should engage in various detailed analyses, taking into account a combination of internally-based resource factors such as the firm's core competence and externally-based market factors including market and competitor dynamics. This helps to determine the "right" position for the product that will allow it to be most competitive in the marketplace for the given target market (Leavy, 2003).

Given the various types of tasks in positioning formation and implementation, the literature has distinguished between "three levels of positioning" (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007). The strategic intention of management, a consequence of the analyses described earlier, is the first level, and known as the *intended* position. In order to implement the position, the organisation needs to signal the product's position to the market in all of its activities. Examples include the product itself, packaging, advertising, and all the actions by a firm in the name of the product. This translation of the intended position to the market, the second level, is known as the *actual* position, and sits within marketing and advertising literature. The third level of positioning relates to the consumer's own perception of what the product stands for, labelled the product's *perceived* position. Given that the product's perceived position is the only one that exists in the mind of the consumer, it is arguably the most important. Marketing implementation literature suggests that this is derived from consumers decoding the actual position (pre-purchase) and from their own experience with the product (post-purchase). However, more recent marketing literature outside the area of positioning per se suggests that pre-purchase positioning perception is likely to in fact be a function of both the organisation's positioning cues (actual position) and that coming from consumers such as online forums, social media, and opinion leaders, including product reviews and blogs (external position) (Court, Elzinga, Mulder, & Vetvi, 2009).

Ascertaining a product's position can be cumbersome for consumers in terms of both time and cognitive capacity. Consumers need to sift through the ever-growing availability of organisation and externally-derived information to make an evaluation or judgment on whom the product is targeting, what the product's differentiation is versus the competition, and ultimately the reason to believe the positioning claim. At times, the sources of information portray a positioning message that is weakly defined or misaligned with other messages. Incorrect positioning judgment risks product dissatisfaction and wasted resources, including cognitive effort for the consumer. Consumer behaviour literature dictates that such a judgment would have a level of confidence attached to it, specifically known as *belief-confidence*. Howard and Sheth (1969) defined belief-confidence as the buyer's degree of certainty that his or her evaluative judgment of the brand is correct. Extensive literature has empirically linked belief-confidence to consumer behaviour such as purchase intention either directly or via its moderating effect on attitude, and to allowing consumers to end their information search (Bennett & Harrell, 1975; Howard & Sheth, 1969; Laroche, Kim, & Zhou, 1995; Russo, Medvec, & Melov, 1996).

Extant literature has also acknowledged that consumer-based measures of positioning are required to determine what the positioning perception is in the market and, thus, determine positioning success. The most popular methods available to measure a product's perceived position include multidimensional scaling (perceptual mapping), factor analysis, discriminant analysis, and multiattribute compositional models via conjoint analysis (Wind, 1977). In addition, generic typologies have been developed, with the most recent being Blankson and Kalafatis' (2004) consumer-derived positioning typology that validated eight distinct positioning strategies (top of the range, service, value for money, reliability, attractiveness, country of origin, brand name, and selectivity). Blankson and Kalafatis' work advanced positioning research from previous typologies that were based on very limited empirical evidence and primarily reflected a managerial view.

While the discussed methods aim to measure what the position is in the mind of the consumer, they do not measure strength, confidence, or effectiveness in any form. In fact, only two pieces of research exist in conceptualising and operationalising positioning effectiveness and strength as constructs—Burke (2011), and Fuchs and Diamantopoulos (2012).

Burke's 2011 model suggests three direct influencers to position strength: clear role and relevance, credibility to deliver, and market presence. The Fuchs and Diamantopoulos' 2012 model conceptualises four constructs for positioning effectiveness: dissimilarity, uniqueness, favourability, and credibility. Both models can be thought of as success measures for a product's positioning implementation, however they do not measure the confidence consumers have in the judgment they hold of a product's position and, thus, how it influences individual behaviour. For example, Burke's positioning strength measure (2011) is linked to firm performance and industry health as opposed to direct consumer action. However, the work of these academics shows support for the need for complementary tools to positioning typologies alone, such as perceptual maps or Blankson and Kalafatis' identification tool.

In terms of the precursors to positioning confidence, the literature stipulates that clarity and consistency are key (Crawford 1985; Erdem & Swait, 1998). However the literature does not give managers practical insight into how to achieve high perceived clarity and consistency amongst consumers in a world where the manager is losing control of the brand to external information channels (Bughin, 2014). As consumers rely more and more on content derived from consumers and opinion leaders writing in blogs, or product review websites and social media (Court et al., 2009), how is any misalignment to the actual position affecting perceived consistency? Furthermore, as many product categories are over-crowded (Bughin, 2014), organisations themselves, let alone the external information source, may struggle to determine a superior position for their product. This challenge in finding a position for the product is likely to translate to weak positioning implementation. Hence, how are ambivalent positioning cues affecting consumer clarity of the product's positioning? Given the gap in the literature, real-life examples (see Appendix 1) support the idea that this lack of positioning definition and alignment in fact exists in many categories and is, thus, relevant to investigate as indirect drivers of consumers' level of positioning confidence.

1.2 Research purpose

The literature stipulates that a product's position is central to consumer perception and choice decisions. It is theoretically accepted that the role of competitive positioning is to signal to the target market that the product meets specific and differentiated consumer needs (Wind 1977). On the flip side, it should also signal to consumers that if their perceived product perception does not meet their purchase goal, they shouldn't purchase. Empirical research in the area of positioning outcomes has concentrated on areas such as linking positioning to firm performance (Blankson, Kalafatis, Cheng, & Hadjicharalambous, 2008) and very little on the positioning perception side of the equation (Butt et al., 2007).

This research aims to validate that competitive positioning perception is an integral discriminating tool when matched with the consumer's purchase goal. Companies should be after the "right" customer to purchase, therefore, positioning should also signal to some customers that the product is not a match for their needs and, hence, lead to non-purchase. Otherwise, companies are susceptible to dissatisfied consumers who do not repurchase from the brand or, perhaps more detrimentally, bad-mouth the product. Moreover, in certain cases understanding the level of confidence or certainty that the consumer holds for the positioning perception acts as a moderator to the well-established relationship of perceived differentiation and purchase intention. The circumstance where moderation takes effect is when there is a poorer match between the positioning perception and purchase goal, thus making the purchase decision riskier in the consumer's mind.

To demonstrate this concept, we take the product of Holden Barina (a model within the small car category). Consumer A has a need for a "value for money" small car and conducts some research regarding her product options. Consequently, if the consumer perceives the Holden Barina as primarily providing the "best" value for money when assessed against its competitors within the small car category, there should be an increased probability of purchase (*perceived position matches purchase goal*). Alternatively, consumer B seeks a small car that will provide the best service assesses the Holden Barina as the best value for money car (and *not* the best service), and this perception should decrease the probability of purchasing the Barina *(perceived position does not match purchase goal*). Taking into account purchase goal is chosen over purchase per se, consumers' positioning perception of a product should not lead to purchase unless it actually matches their needs and wants. In other words, a consumer who strongly perceives that the Holden Barina is the best value small car in the market will not purchase unless she is specifically looking for a value car. Given that consumers have discriminating needs, it is the match between the perceived position and their own purchase goal that ultimately drives purchase or non-purchase. This thesis deals with the scenario where the positioning perception does not match the purchase goal, and thus the purchase decision is more complex.

Current practice within academic research and industry is to measure the market's perception of a product's position without any complementary measure of how strongly the belief is held and, hence, is a limited predictive variable of purchasing outcome within the target market. This thesis will show that adding a measure of consumer confidence will act as a moderator between perceived differentiation and purchase intention when there is no high match of consumer positioning perception with purchase goal. Given that the long-standing construct of belief-confidence is currently absent from positioning literature, also absent are the antecedents that lead to confidence in this context. As consumers sift through information sources that signal a product's position and ultimately make their own judgment of positioning, what influences their level of confidence in this judgment?

This research problem sits within the wider need for complementary tools in product positioning measurement, and adds a different consideration to the toolkits started by Burke (2011) and Fuchs and Diamantopoulos (2012). Existing complementary measures appear to consider consumer evaluations of organisational positioning activities, whereas this research suggests that another consideration needs to be regarded when thinking of complementary positioning measures: the consumer's confidence in their own positioning evaluations. More specifically, this research links the outcome of consumer confidence in a product's position to greater likelihood of purchase predictions, thus focusing on the individual-level behaviour of the consumer.

In summary, this thesis will propose and test a framework that encompasses consumer confidence in a product's position, its antecedents, and effects.

1.3 Research motivation

Academically, the research field of competitive positioning has always interested me, having completed one smaller scale research study in the area: *Readiness for competitive positioning: A managerial checklist* (Burke & O'Rourke, 2007). While it was not the purpose of the research, what struck me most in the findings of my pilot-study was the lack of understanding regarding positioning amongst the senior managers who took part in my research. This is baffling given that product positioning is a fundamental concept in marketing that should drive all marketing decisions. From an academic point of view, I am equally as surprised, given the widespread consensus of its strategic importance in both academia and management, at the numerous gaps that remain in a research field that has existed for approximately 40 years.

Having worked for 10 years in industry, the importance of competitive positioning in terms of directing (and justifying) all subsequent marketing decisions is clear. My last role before embarking on this PhD journey was as product marketing manager for Kimberly-Clark, a large global fast-moving consumer goods company. Prior to that, my experience involved several marketing and strategy roles across media and telecommunications industries—Telstra, Foxtel, and Yahoo! Search Marketing. I believe my corporate experience across both goods and service industries will bring practical insights into this research.

During my time in practice, several aspects of positioning operationalisation stood out. It seemed that if sales were healthy, then the competitive positioning strategy was assumed to be working in the market. Regular measurement of consumer perception was rare. In my experience more “everyday” measures, such as customer satisfaction and loyalty tracking, took priority. Where a focus on positioning emerged, the mindset was internally focused in assessing that the intended position was strategically correct sans consumer-driven insights. From my experience, the perceived position tended to be assumed by marketing management. That led to my curiosity regarding the alignment between the intended, actual, and perceived product position. If the alignment is not being measured by top marketing organisations, does positioning alignment actually matter?

Borrowing from the expectations literature, such a mismatch would lead to poor customer post-purchase satisfaction, as the product experience is unlikely to match up to the belief the consumer had about what the product would deliver. However, the literature does not appear to have explored the question of what role a mismatch between the actual and perceived product position plays in affecting *first purchase* within the target market. Intuitively, such a misalignment, if the consumer is aware of it, would lead to a lowering of their confidence in their positioning perception. This led me to explore whether the idea of confidence has been applied to competitive positioning perception; my literature review showed that it had not, even though confidence has been linked to many other areas of marketing. As a consequence, I hypothesised about the inputs to confidence in the context of competitive positioning perception, and the effect they may have in affecting purchase. Hence, this thesis was born.

The instigator for this research—the misalignment between the levels of positioning—now features as an independent variable in the model that my thesis tests. However, the main research problem has extended beyond this misalignment. I hope that the findings of my research will help organisations, including the ones for whom I previously worked, to realise the importance of measuring positioning perception for its products and implement regular tracking that includes a confidence measure.

My corporate experience is backed up by an undergraduate degree in Commerce (Marketing and Business Law) from the University of New South Wales, and a Masters of Business Administration from the Macquarie Graduate School of Management. At the finishing line of my PhD thesis journey, I hope to have made a solid contribution to the field of competitive product positioning that will set a foundation for an academic career focusing on advancing positioning research.

1.4 Researcher stance on competitive positioning concepts

The broad subject of the thesis is the *competitive positioning of products.* The term itself can lead to confusion as to exactly what it encompasses. This is not surprising given the concern expressed in the literature regarding confusion that surrounds the field (Butt et al., 2007). The concept of "positioning" has been applied to several levels within an organisation: the firm, brand, and product. Additionally, there are a number of terminologies used in conjunction with the concept, where prefixes to positioning include *market, consumer, competitive, strategic, brand,* and *organisational* (Butt et al., 2007). While some authors suggest that the terms are interchangeable, others suggest that they are a reflection of the evolution of positioning over time. This author has chosen the term *competitive positioning* in the title of this thesis to communicate the strategic nature of positioning that is taken in the research. Given that the concept of positioning originated in the world of advertising with strong roots in "image" creation, some academics still hold positioning in this light. The prefix *competitive* highlights that positioning should be concerned with the true differentiation that the product stands for above its competitors. It is a relative measure—relative to competition and to target market needs. It is strategic in nature and dictates all marketing decisions, thus making it broader than image alone. However, for ease of writing, the term *product positioning* will be used throughout the thesis instead of the complete term of *competitive product positioning*.

While the idea of a firm having a position is generally used as stand-alone term, the terms *brand positioning* and *product positioning* have been used interchangeably in the literature. This thesis is concerned with a product's position within a product category. The premise is that every product in every category requires individual positioning, as the product will have its own unique value proposition relative to category-specific competition (Kenyon & Mathur, 2002). As put by Kenyon and Mathur (2002): “Customers can only choose individual offerings, not pluralities of offerings.” Brands that go beyond a single product will typically have different competitors in each category in which it competes. Hence, brand level positioning is generally not directly relative to the competition, whereas competitive positioning is (Quester et al., 2007). However, it should be noted that in some cases the brand and product position is the same in the consumers’ mind, such as when the consumer is familiar with the brand but not the details of the product.

Furthermore, the idea underlying this thesis of that the link between consumers’ positioning perception and purchase intention is based on the premise that consumers make purchasing decisions based on the product *as a whole*. In order words, some believe that consumers may be driven at the attribute level: “I want a smart phone with the longest battery life available.” Or at a more holistic level: “I want a smart phone that will give me the best value for money.” It is this author’s stance that while some attribute-level purchasing exists, most high involvement purchases follow Churchill and Iacobucci’s (2002) philosophy that consumers perceive products “as a whole that is not decomposable in terms of separate attributes” (p. 856). Taking this view, consumer perceptions of a product’s position are indeed a direct influencer of customer preference.

Lastly, the ideas drawn upon in this thesis are derived from a wide range of areas within marketing. As mentioned earlier (Section 1.1), this reflects the fact that strategy literature has concentrated primarily on positioning formation, while more general marketing literature has focused on the implementation aspect of positioning. In addition, consumer behaviour concepts come into play in understanding how consumers form perceptions of a product’s position. Hence the ideas and language used in this thesis are from across marketing disciplines.

1.5 Research design

The methodology of this study is quantitative and causal in nature. It proposes a researcher-derived framework based on existing multi-disciplinary literature that introduces the idea of consumer confidence in a product’s position and establishes its antecedents and effects. The framework in question relates to the scenario of high-involvement, first-time purchase (or alternatively. quasi first-time purchases—purchases with a long life-cycle). This is justified by the fact that consumer confidence in product positions for habitual purchasing is likely to be primarily driven by consumers’ direct previous experience. Consumer positioning confidence would unlikely play any meaningful role in purchases of a habitual nature, as they are typically absent of any information search phase (Schiffman, O'Cass, Paladino, D'Alessandro, & Bednall, 2010), upon which this thesis model relies.

The model will be validated via two 3x3 full factorial, between-subjects, designed experiments. The experiment will take the form of an information search phase with a pre- and post-treatment survey. Experiment 1 will focus on testing the moderating role of positioning confidence on purchase when the purchase goal (and likely initial perceived position) is value for money (VFM). Experiment 2 will focus on testing the moderating role of positioning confidence on purchase when the purchase goal (and likely initial perceived position) is top of the range (TOR). VFM and TOR are chosen as they are typical positions which consumers seek in most product categories. In order to enhance the generalisability of results, Experiment 1 will focus on a service, whereas Experiment 2 will focus on a good. The sample will be random in nature and taken from Australian consumers. Pre-testing will be somewhat expansive with the product category and focus products, requiring separate pre-tests in order to validate that they meet the model requirements. The main survey will also need pretesting to enable any required fine-tuning of the research tool.

Ethics approval was granted in December 2015 and the research was classed as of *negligible risk*. This is due to the fact that data collection: 1. Involves gathering perceptions of products from two non-sensitive categories; 2. Is anonymous in nature; and 3. Will be administered online. Ethics approval number is 2015000547.

1.6 Overview of research contribution

This research makes several theoretical and managerial contributions. The primary contributions are as follows:

- Add to the theoretical development of competitive positioning by testing the role that consumers' belief confidence of their positioning perception of a product plays on behaviour. The research shows support for consumer confidence in positioning perceptions as a moderator in the relationship between perceived differentiation and purchase intention, when consumers' perception of the product is a poorer match to their purchase motivation.
    - This research addresses the recent call for more conceptual and theoretical research in the development of knowledge within marketing, specifically, by

addressing the suggestion to conceptualise the relationship amongst constructs (Butt et al., 2007; Yadav, 2010, MacInnis, 2011). In fact, various scholars have pointed out the field of positioning as having subpar theoretical development (Rigger, 1995; Butt et al., 2007; Blankson, Cowan et al., 2013)

  - Theoretically supports past studies that have shown that adding belief confidence in judgment measurement is a better predictor of behaviour than measuring the judgment alone (Howard & Sheth, 1969; Laroche et al., 1995).
  - Given that confidence is a form of metacognition, the findings from this thesis provides a further example of the link between metacognition and decision-making, particularly in times of higher risk (Baranski & Petrusic, 1994; Schwarz, 2004).

- The contribution to theory is further enriched by testing the proposed antecedents of positioning confidence in order to offer an explanation for the variability in the confidence measure. This thesis shows moderate support for the proposed antecedents; that is, a positive relationship between the level of alignment between the initial and post perceived positions and positioning confidence, and secondly, the consumers' degree of positioning clarity as a positive moderator between perceived consistency and positioning confidence. This thesis supports extant literature on the importance of clarity and consistency in positioning implementation (Crawford 1985, Erdem & Swait, 1998), by showing its effect on consumers' confidence in their positioning judgment.

- A further contribution of this thesis is to show how the interaction between the positioning cues from both the organisation (actual position) and the market (external position) influences perceived clarity and consistency. Given the growth spurt and reliance on consumer and market-derived information, the literature thus far has not explored the effect of fuzzy, ill-defined, or misaligned positioning cues on perceived clarity. Nor has it looked at how dissimilar actual and external positions affect perceived consistency. This thesis offers support that the interaction between actual and external positions has an impact on perceived clarity and consistency.

- From a management perspective, this thesis suggests to managers that adding a confidence measure to positioning perception is likely to provide greater insight into consumer behaviour than common current practice—the use of perceptual mapping alone. This thesis helps to provide managers with direction in terms of how to increase consumer confidence in the positioning perception of their product by providing antecedents and showing practically how the actual and external positions shape the antecedents.

Based on the findings of this research, managers should be aiming for a completely defined position over the two information source types that are in fact portraying the *same* position. A completely defined position means that the consumer can conclude on a position for the product from *both* the organisation's positioning cues and signals from outside the organisation. There is moderate support to show that having high-perceived clarity magnifies the relationship between perceived consistency and positioning confidence. This thesis also suggests that managers need to be as active as possible in managing positioning cues that come from outside the organisation e.g. being present in the brand's social media and creatively encouraging consumer-derived content that supports the product's actual position, as external positioning cues are particularly influential in forming overall perceived clarity. While managers have little control in controlling consumers' purchase goals, this thesis ultimately provides some insight into how to increase purchases from this group of the market.

- From a methodology standpoint, the research combines experimental with questionnaire-based measures, and addresses the need for innovation in positioning research methods in positioning (Butt et al., 2007). Research on positioning has typically not delved into experimental methodologies. Methodologically, this thesis further validates the JUMP model (Chandrashekaran, Rotte & Grewal, 2005) and operationalises JUMP in another area of marketing.

1.7 Structure of chapters

This chapter has presented a general preamble to the research fields of competitive positioning and belief confidence. It has also discussed the research problem and research questions being addressed.

Chapter 2 provides a more thorough background on the concept of competitive product positioning, specifically focusing on its multi-disciplinary origins. It introduces the three extant levels of product positioning (intended, actual, and perceived) and offers a new level in the external position. The importance of competitive positioning is discussed, as well as measures of positioning including effectiveness assessments. Whilst the research problem primarily touches on consumers' positioning perceptions, the intended and actual positions are precursors that must be fully grasped. Hence, the chapter evolves into a discussion of the analytical steps organisations need to take in order to derive the intended position, and key executional considerations that lead to the actual position. Ultimately, Chapter 2 endeavours to leave the reader with a solid current appreciation of the field and of latent research gaps; above all, the importance of the research field will be made clear, as will the case for continual research progress.

Chapter 3 moves from strategic marketing to consumer behaviour, presenting literature that offers an understanding of how consumers derive perceptions of a product's position throughout the purchase decision-making process. The premise of Chapter 3 is that consumers' initial positioning perceptions—either made during awareness stage or at the initial stage of information search—are challenged throughout the decision-making process. The nature of the decision-making process for each individual, and for each purchase, is unique; thus, so is the road to perception formation. Literature on the psychology of judgment revision and information distortion brings the need for consistency in information and thought to the limelight, which feeds heavily into the proposed framework. Finally, the chapter concentrates on the construct of belief-confidence, including its role in metacognition and reason processing. Ultimately, the link between confidence and decision-making is detailed, thus arriving at the centre point of the proposed research.

Chapter 4 develops a theoretical framework regarding the role of consumer confidence in competitive positions by suggesting antecedents and effects of this measure. The antecedents stem from the previous literature review chapters, while the consequence of consumer confidence in competitive positions is presented as having a moderator effect on the relationship between perceived differentiation and purchase intention. A list of hypotheses supplements the framework.

Chapter 5 puts forward the planned quantitative methodology to test the proposed hypotheses, and justifies the choice of experimentation over other measurement options.

Chapter 6 presents the results of the quantitative data collection stage, and produces a discussion on the conclusions that support the framework proposed in this thesis.

Lastly, Chapter 7 concludes the research project with a detailed discussion of the results and offers both managerial and academic implications. The limitations of the research are brought to light, and avenues for future research are suggested.

Chapter 2: Conceptualising a Product's Competitive Position:

Defining, forming & implementing this important business phenomena

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the unexpectedly complex question of *what* competitive positioning is and its historical grounding, which primarily sits across the disciplines of economics, strategy, and marketing. While academics have proposed various definitions of competitive positioning over the 40 years of research into marketing, most tend to concur that the term involves the product's target consumer, and the superior advantage it holds over competitors in the mind of the consumer (Hooley & Greenley, 2005). Above all, it allows an organisation to be competitive, and signals to the target market that the product meets their needs and wants, giving consumers a reason to buy. The importance of positioning also extends to its empirical link to financial performance (Blankson, Kalafatis et al., 2008).

Part of the intricacy in deriving, implementing, and measuring a product's position rests in the fact that it comprises of three levels—the intended, actual, and perceived positions (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007). There are also many different positioning typologies posed by various academics. Customer-driven measurement of positioning is crucial, and this chapter presents the various statistical options that exist as well as identified gaps around possible complementary measurement tools.

While it appears that definitions and typologies may be disputed within the literature, one would find it hard to challenge the fact that deriving the intended position for a product is a resource-heavy task involving many analytical steps (Burke & O'Rourke, 2007). Many aspects of marketing analysis—such as segmentation and competitor analysis, both marketing fields in their own right—are precursors to positioning formation. However, the organisation's positioning task does not end at strategy formation, as a firm needs to effectively and consistently signal a chosen position to the market. This chapter segues into Chapter 3, which concentrates on the perceived position of a product—the primary focus of this thesis.

2.2 Definition & conceptualisation

Unsurprisingly, academics have named positioning as one of the most complex concepts in marketing (Bhat & Reddy, 1998). One of the reasons fuelling such a strong statement is that there is no single universally-accepted definition of the concept of positioning amongst marketing scholars and practitioners (Aaker & Shansby, 1982; Rigger, 1995). In fact, this creates an issue regarding where the concept begins and ends (Butt et al., 2007).

Trout, Rivkin, & Ries (1996) defined positioning as "simply concentrating on an idea—or even a word – that defines the company in the mind of the consumer". However, this author argues that this describes the marketing communication concept of image, and not the strategic concept of positioning. On the other hand, Kapferer (2004) defines positioning as "emphasizing the distinctive characteristics that make it different from its competitors and appealing to the public". This author's criticism of this definition is that the appeal of positioning should be aimed at the product's target market, and not necessarily the public as a whole.

This research assumes definitions of product positioning that include the concepts of value proposition creation, superiority over competition, a target market context and, ultimately a strategic rather than tactical phenomenon. Examples of these definitions are:

Kotler (2003): "Positioning is the act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the mind of the target market. The end result of positioning is the successful creation of a customer-focused value proposition, a cogent reason why the target market should buy the product" (p. 308).

Hooley and Greenley (2005): Positioning is the "choice of target market and the differential advantage it is seeking to create as a means of securing that market" (p. 94).

In evaluating the common elements of the many positioning definitions expressed in the literature over the past 40 years, it can be concluded that product positioning involves *choosing a target segment* and a *differentiated value proposition* that is *superior to that of competition* for that target. The outcome of positioning is the *place* a product occupies in the mind of the consumer relative to the product category competition.

At the broadest strategic level, a product can adopt one of two generic positioning strategies: *cost leadership* or *differentiation* (Porter, 1980). These positioning strategies are also known as positioning bases. Supportively, marketing literature provides many narrower positioning typologies. A product that is the cost leader in its category generally offers the lowest price to the consumer. However, many researchers have highlighted risks associated with this strategic option (Porter, 2001); that is, unless the efficiencies leading to cost optimisation are truly near impossible to replicate, competitors may eventually undercut price. This will likely lead to a price war in the category, as there is no alternative method for the original cost leader to compete other than price. By nature, there can only be one product that successfully occupies this position in the category.

The strategic choice of differentiation aims to distinguish a product from its alternatives on a segment need such as convenience or service. In fact, there are many forms of this type of positioning. Its uniqueness, for example, may lead to it becoming the go-to product for that segment.

Whichever position a product takes, if it is well positioned it should enjoy superior sales and margins as well as a loyal customer base (Porter, 1980). Poor positioning, on the other hand, will not give the market a cogent reason to buy the product and, thus, result in poor performance (Porter, 1980). Aside from the positive performance rewards that positioning brings, positioning sets a strategic guide within the organisation for all tactical decisions relating to the product. In turn, this focuses resources to a single mission. As conceptualised by Brooksbank (1994): "Trying to put together all the various elements of the marketing mix without reference to a positioning strategy is like trying to make sense of a 100-piece jigsaw puzzle without the benefit of the picture on the box!" (pp. 13–14).

The process an organisation takes to derive a product's desired position takes into account both external market and internal resource analyses (Leavy, 2003). The market view considers competitor analysis, segmentation, and targeting to find positions that offer both the highest utility to some target customers and differentiation from competitors. The internal view takes into account the firm's assets and capabilities that are sustainably superior to that of the competition to both support the position and add market credibility to the proposition that the product will deliver on its intended position. Once a few strategic alternatives emerge, their financial potential must be taken into account to ultimately choose a single competitive position for a product. The element of choosing *one* strategic road to the detriment of other alternatives is a discipline that many managers struggle with in practice. Deriving competitive positioning is only the first step in the process, as it consequently needs to be transmitted from the organisation to the consumer. The implementation aspect of positioning suggests that all functions within the organisation need to work in unison to ensure that every consumer touchpoint is consistent with the organisation's intended position (Crawford, 1985).

From a consumer's perspective, competitive positioning plays a vital role in the psychology of purchase choice as it tells the consumer what the product stands for, eliminating some perceived risk from the purchase (Wind, 1977). In other words, effective positioning will lead to consumer perceptions of what they can expect the product to deliver post-purchase. If they are new to the category, effective positioning can act as a cue in the cognitive-heavy task of making a product choice, especially in high involvement purchases. Once the consumer has experience with the product, competitive positioning can act as benchmark for the consumer's own product evaluation. Therefore, competitive positioning plays an important role in consumer behaviour, as well as strategic marketing.

In order to conceptualise competitive positioning further, this paper will now examine its historical grounding. This takes us into the disciplines of economics, strategic management, and marketing. Each of these academic roots will be examined separately.

2.3 Historic Foundations

2.3.1 Economics

The concept of product differentiation as fundamental to positioning, was first proposed in 1933 by economist Edward Chamberlin in his pioneering work *Theory of Monopolistic Competition* (d'Aspremont, Gabszewicz, & Thisse, 1979). The question of product differentiation in the world of economics ponders the extent of differentiation in terms of the nature of competition and resultant organisation profitability. However, the idea of product differentiation was not always synonymous with economic thought. In fact, it was the exact opposite of product positioning that first dominated economic thinking, that is, the idea of minimum differentiation or Hotelling's Law. In 1929, Harold Hotelling, an economist, observed that by offering identical products at the same price, competitors share an equal portion of the market (assuming transportation cost is the same). Hotelling's famed model was later questioned as it was argued that in reality, firms find it more profitable to adopt undercutting strategies; that is, to maximise their differentiation in order to obtain a larger portion or the most profitable section of the market (d'Aspremont et al., 1979). This concept is known as *maximum differentiation* in economics, and supports modern thinking on positioning from a strategic and marketing point of view.

2.3.2 Strategic management

In the 1980's, the concept of competitive strategy took the limelight in the field of strategic management with Michael E. Porter's well-celebrated book, *Competitive Strategy* (1980). By Porter's own account, the concepts in the book filled a void in management thinking and was timely as companies were then struggling with growing competition. Strategic planning had become an expected part of corporate thinking, but there was an absence of systematic tools to make it happen. Economic theory focused on the industry viewpoint rather than company or manager-level thinking. Porter's 1980 theory, now embedded in strategic management teaching worldwide, suggests that a firm's competitive strategy is relative to its environment, thus requiring structural analysis of the industry in which the firm operates. These "competitive forces" include threats of entry, intensity of competitive rivalry, pressure from substitute products, and the bargaining power of buyers and suppliers.

In coping with these five forces, which determine the attractiveness of the industry, Porter (1980) proposes three generic strategies under which managers can make offensive or defensive actions to create a defendable position. These are *overall cost leadership*, *differentiation,* and *focus.* Not focusing all company resources on one of the positioning strategies is to be "stuck in the middle". Narrower competitor analysis will also help companies decide which direction to take. This includes insight into the competitor's future goals, current strategies and capabilities, and likely responses to the actions of one's own firm.

Even though Porter's theory was widely accepted, academics noted its over-simplicity. Based on Hooley's work regarding the resource-based view of a firm (see Section 2.7.1), six main dimensions to positioning are proposed, which exist on a continuum (Hooley, Broderick, & Möller, 1998), these are: *price, technical quality, innovation, service, customisation,* and the sixth dimension of *uniqueness* that can be viewed as the idiosyncratic amalgamation of the previous five dimensions. In Hooley's later work, he summarised different competitive positioning options in both strategic management and marketing literature (including his own previous work) to fall under the umbrellas of *quality, price,* and *innovation*.

Much of the other strategic management work from the late 1990s onwards has focused on the underpinnings of positioning. Two distinct viewpoints have emerged and can be classed as the *resource-based view* (RBV) and the *market-based view* (MBV). The resource-based view of the firm explains sustainable competitive advantage through the capability of internally-scarce resources, whereas the MBV of positioning stresses external market orientation by closely analysing current customer needs (Hooley, Piercy, & Nicolaud, 1998).

The idea of utilising a firm's assets and competencies to base a product's competitive position is fundamental to strategy thinking. Research has shown that several assets and capabilities are required for the execution of certain positions (see Appendix 2). The concentration on a firm's assets and capabilities led to the "bigger" idea of the firm's *core competence.* Introduced by Prahalad and Hamel (1990), a core competency must meet three criteria: It provides access to a wide variety of markets, must be difficult for competitors to imitate, and must make a significant contribution to the customer benefit of the end product. The literature urges firms to invest deeply in their core competencies, of which core products are the result. Using this framework, a product's position should be based on the core competence of the organisation (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990).

The alternative branch of thought looks at the market-based view of creating and maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage. The theory states that having a market orientation—the business culture that efficiently and effectively creates the necessary behaviours for delivering superior value to customers—is at the centre of successful competitive positioning (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Having an orientation towards the customer and competition, and having superior inter-functional coordination, has also been proven to have a positive effect on profitability (Narver & Slater, 1990).

In summary, the market-based view places the market itself as the starting point in determining the best position for a product. It considers the traditional marketing concepts of current and future needs and wants, and competitor strengths and weaknesses, and thus derives positional gaps in the market to pursue. It then follows up by asking: how can we assemble the resources to fulfil this position? On the other hand, the resource-based view begins by looking at what competencies the firm has and wants to build, and then considers the product position that would exploit them. Recent literature suggests that a combination of both resource-based and market-based views of positioning is required for optimal success (Hooley, Piercy, & Nicoulaud, 2008).

2.3.3 Marketing

The idea of positioning first entered the marketing arena via Jack Trout's 1969 journal article *Positioning is a game people play in today's me-too market place,* published in *Industrial Marketing*. The concept was then popularised in 1981 in Al Ries and Jack Trout 's bestselling book *Positioning—the battle for your mind*. The concept of positioning entered the marketing space with an advertising lens and, from the literature review undertaken for this thesis, this lens still appears to hold true to some extent. As taken from the preface of the reprinted edition of the classic Ries and Trout book, positioning is defined as "how you differentiate your brand in the minds of your customers and prospects" (2001). It is described as a "new approach to communication" (p. 1), and it is made clear that positioning "is not what you do to the product; it's what you do to the mind of the prospect" (p. 2). Ries and Trout (2001) also make it clear that it is incorrect to use the term "product positioning", as the product itself is not being manipulated. This, of course, contradicts current thinking in strategic marketing, where every marketing facet, including product development, stems from the central notion of gaps in the marketplace and internal capabilities, and therefore determine the desired positioning for the product. Ries and Trout (2001) argue that in our over-communicated marketplace, the mind can only accept concepts that match our prior knowledge or experience, and that sharp, simplified messages that focus on a narrow target work best. They acknowledge that a product does not operate in a vacuum, and marketers must consider competitor positions. With advertising industry backgrounds, the authors take a very tactical approach to positioning, stressing the importance of getting the product name and slogan right when it comes to positioning. Later scholars have noted the limitations of this work as being intrinsic in its failure to operationalise how to successfully manipulate the consumers' mind (Añaña & Nique, 2007).

Following Ries and Trout's book, several marketing academics offered alternative positioning typologies (Aaker & Shansby 1982, Crawford 1985). However, all attempts may be regarded as conceptual and essentially driven by a managerial view. Blankson and Kalafatis (2004) addressed this issue by proposing and validating a consumer/customer-derived positioning typology. Eight validated positioning strategies emerged: *top of the range, service, value for money, reliability, attractiveness, country of origin, brand name,* and *selectivity.*

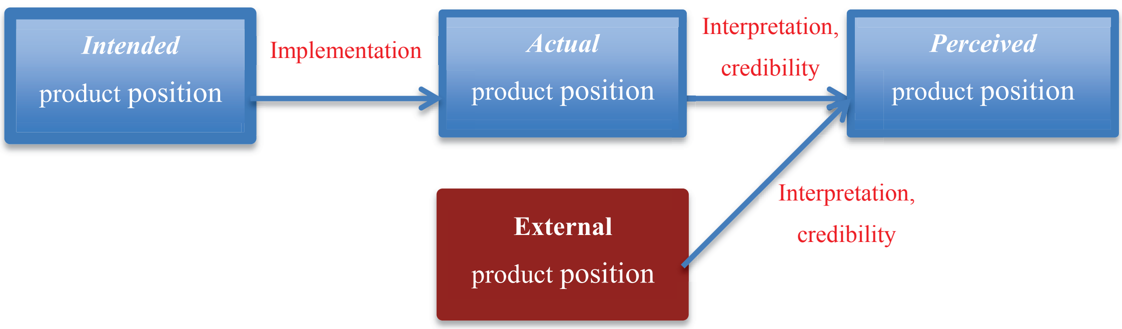
The currently accepted positioning sequence in marketing is to select the target market, select a position, and then implement the position in all activities including aspects such as advertising, packaging, and price (Crawford, 1985). Aaker and Shansby (1982) have specifically described the process of developing a positioning strategy as six-fold: *Identify the competitors, determine how the competitors are perceived and evaluated, determine the competitors' positions, analyse the customers, select the position,* and *monitor the position.*

Please note that Appendix 3 offers a summary of positioning typologies offered by the literature to date, while Appendix 4 compares the approach taken to positioning by strategy versus marketing literature.

2.4 The four levels of competitive product positioning

As indicated thus far in this thesis, current positioning literature distinguishes between three distinct levels of product positioning: *the intended, actual* and *perceived* positions (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007). Firstly, the *intended* position refers to the position that the organisation has decided for the product as a result of thorough analytical processes (Hooley & Greenley, 2005; Porter, 1980, Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007). The organisation then implements its positioning strategy through all "signals" presented to the market via the marketing mix (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007). Clarity and consistency of messaging is key in implementing a product's position (Crawford, 1985). The position that the company signals to the market is known as the *actual* position (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007) through activities such as advertising. Finally, consumers interpret the actual position to form their own perception, known as the *perceived* position. Thus, according to positioning literature, the actual position serves as a basis for the consumer to form their positioning perception. Given that the perceived position of the product is the only one that exists in the mind of the consumer, it holds the ultimate value.

Figure 1: The four levels of positioning



The blue rectangles represent current thinking in the positioning literature. The red rectangle has been added as part of the literature review conducted in this dissertation, from outside traditional positioning literature.

However, literature from outside the area of positioning would suggest that the perceived position stems from not only decoding the actual position, but from positioning cues outside the organisation. This includes word-of-mouth, formal online products, informal blogs and forums, and social media (Court et al., 2009). As put by Christodoulides (2009): "Branding now occurs at this next level with blogs, widgets, viewer-created ads, Facebook groups, podcasting and videocasting and video sharing." Christodoulides suggests that the loss of control is all-embracing such that in the post-Internet era, consumers may even interfere with what is intended for the brand and that in fact "the brand manager who used to be custodian of the brand has now become a host" (2009).

Therefore, this thesis suggests that in reality there are in fact four levels of positioning, with the addition being the external position—that portrayed to consumers by sources outside the organisation (see Figure 1). Consequently, the perceived position is made up of a judgment of the actual and external positions.

The two-pronged antecedent to positioning perceptions extends the idea of clarity and consistency in positioning implementation from within the actual position alone to *across* source types. That is, the degree of clarity and consistency is likely to be judged by a consumer in terms of both the actual and external positions. This thesis explores this area by introducing the idea of three *levels of positioning definition* that can exist across the two information source types. Thus, a product's position may be: completely defined, partially defined, or completely undefined. The underlying concept relates to whether the actual and external sources deliver a position for the product, thus impacting a consumer's perception of positioning clarity for the product. Similarly, the degree of similarity in positioning message between the source types is explored. The outcome is that the operationalisation of clarity and consistency in positioning (Crawford, 1985; Erdem & Swait, 1998) has been updated to work in a post-Internet era. The need to explore the effects of consistency between off-line and on-line branding communication was outlined as a research need in the International Journal of Research in Marketing's special section of Branding in a Digitally Empowering World (Erdem, Keller, Kuksov, & Pieters, 2016). The concepts introduced in this section are further discussed in detail as the thesis progresses.

Given these distinct positioning levels, it can be concluded that unsuccessful positioning can result from:

- Management choosing the wrong intended position.
- Poor execution of a solid intended position by management and its affiliates (such as advertising agencies), leading to an ill-defined or weak actual position
- Poor interpretation or lack of perceived credibility of the actual position, resulting in an unintended perceived position.
- An ill-defined or weak external position, resulting in an unintended perceived position.
- Dissimilarity between the actual and external position, resulting in an unintended perceived position.

Whilst one may assume that the levels of positioning are one and the same, a brand-level positioning study showed that such an assumption is misguided in many cases (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007). For example, that study showed that in practice, an alignment between the actual and perceived position existed in only 55% of cases. Furthermore, desktop research of real-life positioning messages for different brands across the actual and external sources depict dissimilarity in positioning cues between the different source types (see Appendix 1). Hence, while it is certainly the ideal for all levels to be synonymous, this is unfortunately not always the case in reality.

2.5 Performance outcomes of competitive product positioning

As with most marketing constructs, there has been considerable empirical focus on the performance outcomes of competitive positioning and which strategies or typologies lead to more favourable outcomes. Traditionally, the focus has been on proving the link between successful positioning and firm performance measures such as share price and profitability (Porter, 1996; Suzuki, 2000), however recent literature has suggested a shift of focus to strategic business unit and marketing metric outcomes such as customer retention and lifetime value (Zahay & Griffin, 2010).

Pick up any marketing textbook, and the performance outcomes of successful positioning are listed (see Figure 2). However, the links are inherently theoretical, with most academics still considering empirical evidence to be the holy grail of academic research (Blankson, Kalafatis et al., 2008).

Theoretically, the positive outcomes of generic positioning are solid. At its most basic level, either strategic option—cost leadership or differentiation—directly affects the product profit equation. Cost leadership results in optimal product cost compared to that of the competition, and while this usually means that the consumer price is also at the lower-end, a smaller margin would be compensated for by higher sales volume. Differentiation, on the other hand, allows for a price premium as the consumer is willing to pay for the greater utility gained from a unique product, so long as the cost to attain such differentiation does not rise at the same rate as the price the market is willing to pay. This would also allow for healthy volumes at a segment level.

At the product category level, a highly-differentiated category should be more profitable than undifferentiated markets, because it allows for competitors to compete on non-price attributes, which avoids a price war and ultimately lower margins. Customer loyalty would also be scarce in undifferentiated categories, as consumers are constantly seeking the lowest price in these segments, hence high volumes are usually only temporarily enjoyed.

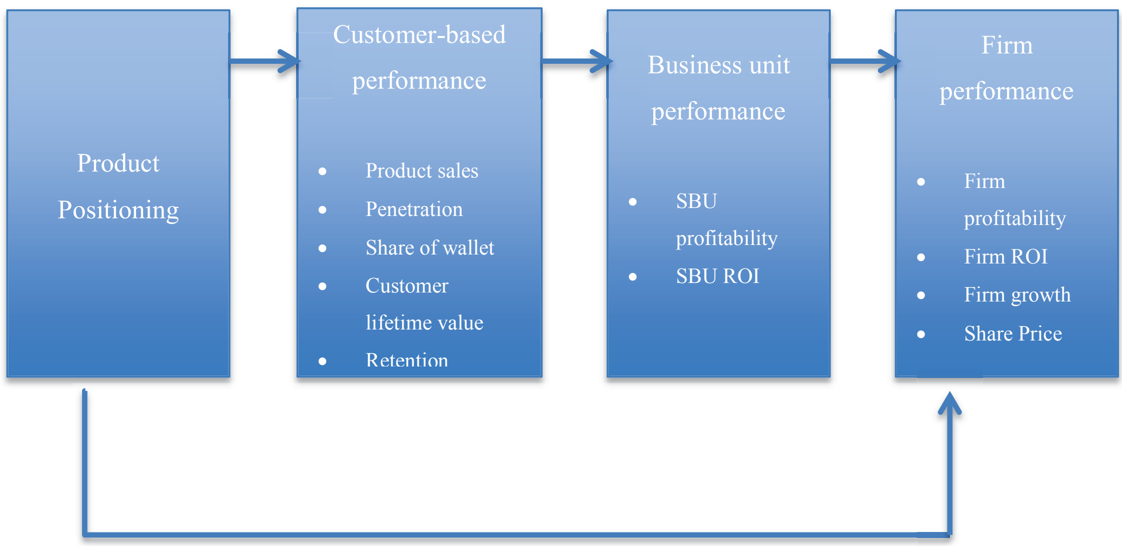
Given the absence of a robust measure for competitive positioning effectiveness/strength (see Section 2.6.2), most academic work has focused on proving the hypothesised association between performance and the presence of a position or variances within typologies. While exploratory in nature and restricted to the U.S. service industry, Blankson and Kalafatis (2004) tested the link of the eight positioning strategies as defined by the authors in earlier research (and discussed previously in this document) against the firm performance measures of sales, profits, ROI, market share, company image, consumer perceptions, and overall organisation objectives. The following combinations of positioning strategies and performance measures were found to be statistically significant:

- Top of the range—sales, ROI, company image.
- Service—company image, consumer perception.
- Value for money—sales, market share.
- Reliability—sales, company image.
- The brand name—market share, company image.

Overall, the findings revealed a positive association between positioning strategies and firm performance (Blankson, Kalafatis et al., 2008).

Given that competitive product positioning occurs at a sub-organisation level such as the strategic business unit level (SBU), some may argue that directly linking positioning to organisation performance is misguided (Gwin & Gwin, 2003). In fact, ultimately it should be measured at a product level (Burke, 2011). However, the literature has struggled with business unit performance measures, mainly due to a lack of reporting at this level, let alone product level measures. What appears to be missing in the literature is individual level prediction, such as purchase within the target market. Given that more recent literature has looked at aggregate customer-based performance measures (see Figure 2), one could argue that individual-level measures are indeed the next step.

Figure 2: Direct and indirect link of positioning to firm performance



Literature is split between proving the link between product positioning and firm performance directly or indirectly via customer based performance and business unit performance

An observation of these studies is that they appear to capture the *intended* position, as it is the managers who chose the positioning strategy, focus, or typology. Capturing any possible links between the perceived position (given that it is the market's view that ultimately matters) and performance appears not be to be addressed.

2.6 Measuring a product's position & complementary tools

2.6.1 Methods for positioning evaluation

Given that a product's position ultimately lives in the mind of the consumer, consumer-based measures of positioning are required to determine positioning success (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007; Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2012). Managers limiting their investment in attaining perceived positioning measures to events such as new product launches or repositioning are "flying blind" in terms of how their product is perceived in the market compared to any competition. The only way to have assurance of alignment between the organisation's intended and perceived market position for a product is via consumer-based measurement of positioning. A regular measure of positioning is an enabler for the organisation to reap the benefits of successful positioning previously discussed.

The literature review reveals that several measures are relied upon to ascertain consumer-derived positioning. However, there is only scant research on how the effectiveness or success of a product's position should be measured. Initial work has begun on conceptualising and operationalising positioning effectiveness as a construct (Burke, 2001; Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2012). However, no valid and reliable measurement instrument yet exists, which is problematic given the investment required to ascertain positioning strategies, and the recognised importance of having successful positioning to compete in today's marketplace.

The most popular methods available to identify a product's perceived position include multidimensional scaling, factor analysis, discriminant analysis, and multiattribute compositional models via conjoint analysis (Gwin & Gwin, 2003) These have essentially remained unchanged since the initial concept of positioning was addressed.

In multidimensional scaling, respondents are asked to group together products based on similarity. They seek to look at a number of dimensions simultaneously rather than analysing each dimension separately, which one may argue better replicates real-life scenarios. For example, respondents may be given pairs of competitors and asked to rank the pairs in their order of similarity. Multidimensional scaling software can create similarities matrix, perceptual maps (with undefined axes) or hierarchical clusters from the data. Even though this method is widely used in practice, direct similarity judgments have been shown to have limited reliability (Summers & MacKay, 1976). The dimensions are also difficult to interpret, hence arguably having limited diagnostic use and may need supporting qualitative research (Von Hippel, 1986). Lastly, a minimum of seven competitors is required to get a significant result (Myers, 1996) that may be problematic in some instances where few competitors exist. Multidimensional scaling tends to suit categories such as commodity and experience goods (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2002).

Attribute profiling involves respondents giving their view on product attributes presented on semantic scales. Participants may, for example, rate each competitor on each product attribute and may also give their "ideal" rating. The responses from the sample are typically averaged. Cluster analysis can be used in attribute profiling in cases where respondents differ greatly in their perceptions, by clustering respondents based on their likeness of perceptions and conducting a separate analysis for each segment. Additionally, factor analysis is commonly used to determine the key dimensions based on the explanation of variance in the total attribute set, using correlation amongst the attributes (Huber & Holbrook, 1979). The factor scores lead to the inputs for the common visual output of perceptual mapping. Given that the attribute used in attribute profiling techniques are pre-determined, the manager may include a large number of attributes to ensure that every important attribute is covered (unless previously culled via qualitative research). In this scenario, factor analysis is useful to reduce the attributes to more broadly-defined dimensions.

A major downfall of attribute profiling is that the factors are a function of the data collected rather than the importance of the attribute to the consumer. Qualitative data may be required to apply different weightings to the factors to reflect their relative importance. Alternatively, discriminant analysis using linear combinations of attributes may be used to determine those that best discriminate amongst the competitors. However, while these dimensions are based on attributes that actually differentiate the competitors, they may still not actually be relevant to preference or choice (Huber & Holbrook, 1979).

As mentioned earlier, the common visual display for positioning is perceptual mapping, where competitor alternatives are points on the space and the product attributes are the axes. The cosine of the angle between any two vectors actually measures the correlation between the vectors. The space between the competitors suggests how “different” consumers perceive products to be on the measured attributes, and if “ideal” points are plotted, it is simple to see how far the competitor is from the consumer’s preference. Additionally, managers could plot the intended measure of an attribute and consequently compare it to market perception, with the cosine of the angle between each pair of objective and subjective vectors measuring the degree of correlation between intended and perceived positions (Wind, 1977).

Moreover, multiattribute compositional models, primarily via conjoint analysis, are also widespread in measuring product positioning. This method measures the joint effect of two or more product attributes on the ordering of a dependent variable, such as the competitor (to determine current positions in the market), or preference (to determine ideal positioning scenarios). The idea is that the respondent is presented with trade-offs between attributes and product configurations.

Economists prefer multiattribute compositional models to attribute profiling as they allow price to be included as a trade-off—as opposed to it being simply an additional dimension—which economists hold as integral in consumer choice. In fact, the desire to include price as prominent player in positioning attributes extends to recent literature (Gwin & Gwin, 2003) who propose a framework based on Lancaster’s 1966 consumer demand model that utilises budget constraints and indifference as well as attribute ratings.

The literature concludes that there are strengths and weaknesses to each of the available positioning methodologies. However, in many cases the literature disputes what the strengths and weaknesses actually are. The choice of methodology may ultimately be context-specific and result in combining various tools (Gwin & Gwin, 2003).

2.6.2 Complementary positioning measurement tools

Even with the presence of imperfections, the methods previously discussed have proven to be fairly effective at measuring a product's position. However, as Burke (2011) points out, those measurement options fail to identify other elements that make up competitive positioning, such as target segment and credibility to deliver the value proposition. They are also inadequate in providing any insight of the *strength* (or similar construct) of the product's position in the mind of the consumer. Likewise, Fuchs and Diamantopoulos (2012) have noted this literature gap and have suggested a model of how *well* the product is positioned from a market perspective. While these models (see Appendix 5) provide valuable thinking in the space, this thesis proposes that gaps still remain in complementary tools for positioning measurement.

Burke's 2011 conceptual paper suggests a model for competitive positioning strength derived from the interrelated endogenous constructs of "clear roles and relevance", "credibility to deliver", and "market presence". The exogenous constructs measuring these factors include "targeting", "clear value proposition", "differentiation from competition", "resource capabilities to deliver", and "alignment". The effect of the model is that strong competitive positions lead to better product performance and industry health, as industries with high aggregate positioning should be performing better than industries marked by low composite positioning. It should be noted that the model has not been tested and validated to date.

Similarly, Fuchs and Diamantopoulos (2012) suggest a model for positioning effectiveness that encompasses four major dimensions. The authors define effective positioning as "how well the product is positioned in the eyes of customers given the company's chosen positioning strategy (which may or may not be optimal)" (p. 233). The proposed constructs to determine positioning effectiveness are "favourability", "dissimilarity", "uniqueness", and "credibility". Favourability refers to the fact that value can be seen in the position. Dissimilarity addresses the distinctness of the brand compared to other competitors in the category. On the other hand, uniqueness focuses on whether the product is "one of a kind" and whether it has features atypical to the product category as a whole. Lastly, credibility is the how believable the product position information is, and the willingness and ability for the firm to deliver.

This research questions the definition, and thus measurement, of the "favourability" construct in Fuchs and Diamantopoulos' work. Favourability measures positive associations via items such as "like/dislike" and "appealing/not appealing" amongst consumers as a whole. I argue the true definition of positioning is that it leads to an appeal *within the target market* as opposed to the public as a whole. In fact, Fuchs and Diamantopoulos cited Kapferer's definition of positioning (p. 233), which my criticism has previously described (Section 2.2). For example, some consumers may not find hybrid cars (environmental position) appealing, however ultimately the effectiveness of that position should be measured by whether the green target market of those vehicles finds the position favourable.

Fuchs and Diamantopoulos' 2012 research included initial validation ($n = 50$) of their effectiveness scale as a significant influencer on consumer purchase intention (explaining about 70% of purchase intention variability). This is positive evidence that complementary positioning tools may be a strong indicator of individual behaviour such as preference or purchase.

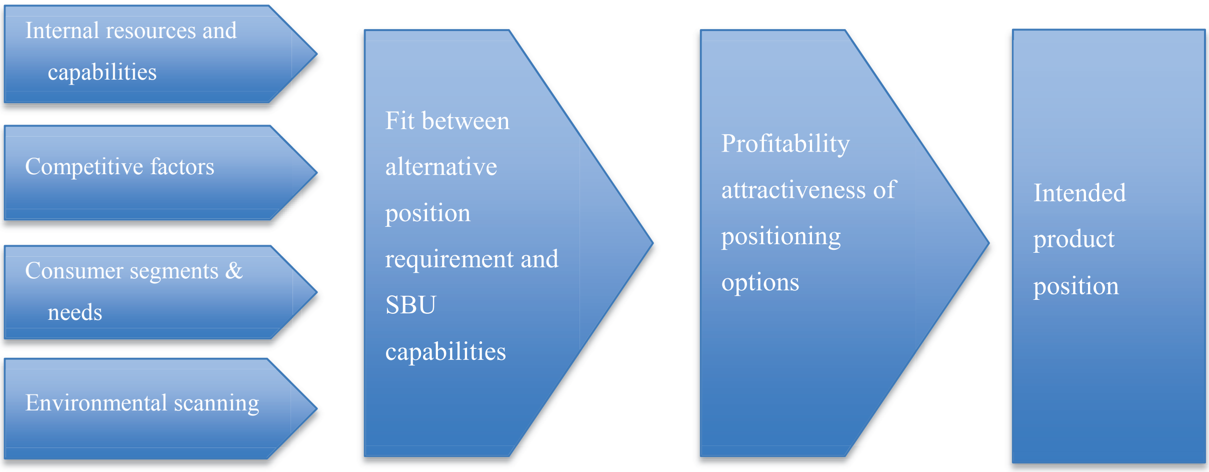
Another aspect to note regarding both the frameworks discussed in this section is that they appear to be measuring consumer evaluations of an organisation's positioning implementation, as opposed to an organisation's own evaluation or journey in deriving their positioning perception (which this thesis looks at). This is an additional consideration as opposed to a competing one.

This concludes the literature review on the concept, importance, and measurement of product positioning and any relevant gaps within the literature. The remainder of the chapter focuses on the organisational requirements to determine and implement successful product positioning.

2.7 Organisational process to derive a product's position—the *intended* position

The selection and adoption of a specific positioning strategy is not a static process, and there is no single positioning strategy that works for all firms (Blankson, Kalafatis et al., 2008). Organisations need to implement a series of analytical processes to determine the "right" position for their circumstances. Research acknowledges that this selection is a resource-heavy task that involves many steps (Brooksbank, 1994), and there are a few management tools available to help managers with the task (Burke & O'Rourke, 2007). The following section outlines the six areas of analysis and assessment proposed by Burke and O'Rourke in their readiness checklist (see Figure 3) which aids managers in developing relevant, worthwhile, and defendable product positions. It takes into account the bifocal perspective of combining market and resource-based analytics, recommended widely throughout the literature review (Leavy, 2003).

Figure 3: Steps in deriving a successful intended competitive position



2.7.1 Internal resources and capabilities

The first step in determining the intended competitive position is to undertake an internal analysis of the firm or SBU's internal resources and capabilities in order to ensure that the chosen position can actually be delivered. In order words, the intended position of the product needs to match the resources, capabilities, and core competencies of the firm. This concept has been introduced in Section 2.2.2.

The organisational process of identifying core competencies typically entails employees scanning and assessing company-critical resources, capabilities, and competencies (Prahalad & Hamel 1990). A historically popular technique for accessing an organisation's internal soundness is a SWOT, which stands for "strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats". However, many have addressed the shortcomings of SWOTs as a bottom-less, static list that is meaningless in reality because, for example, a "strength" is not necessarily a source of competitive advantage (Valentin, 2001; Burke, 2011; Pearce & Robinson, 2011).

Alternatively, Javidan (1998) offers a series of questions that senior managers can tackle in order to identify their capabilities and core competencies. The eight questions are:

1. At [company name] we know how to . . . very well.
2. Is this know-how present in one function, one SBU, or across the corporation?

3. Are we better than our competitors? (Needs to be verified in market)
4. Does it matter? Does this relate to the key buying criteria of the segment? (As derived from market research)
5. How durable is our advantage?
    a. The firm's ability and willingness to continuously invest in the related competencies and capabilities.
    b. The competitors' ability to imitate the firm's competitive advantages.
    c. The competitors' ability to develop substitute advantages.
    d. The extent to which the product/delivery attributes continue to remain key buying criteria.
6. What are the key changes taking place in the industry?
7. How do the (above) key changes affect our competencies or capabilities?
8. What is the implementation plan to leverage/improve/dismantle/ the identified resources, competencies, or capabilities?

Other academics have suggested an approach using system dynamics to map out a firm's internal competencies (Eden & Ackermann, 2000; Burke, 2008). System dynamics can be defined as set of conceptual tools that enable an understanding of the structure and dynamics of complex systems. It is essentially a qualitative and quantitative model that involves developing "driver" maps that look at the interactions of assets and capabilities required for a given product (Eden & Ackermann, 2000).

Regardless of the approach taken to assess a firm's internal resources and core competencies, the strategic output offers some assurance that the firm has what it takes to win in a positioning space (Burke, 2008). It also helps to achieve credibility by allowing the firm to back up its positioning promise, for example "we offer the best performing sports cars because we have the *best engineers in the industry*".

2.7.2 Competitive factors

Given that positioning is always in reference to the competition, competitor identification and analysis is one of the main external market-based inputs in reaching the intended position (Porter, 2001; Kotler & Keller, 2012). While most managers would confidently state who their competitors are, many would argue that managers typically have a myopic view and their true competitor set is in fact considerably wider (Clark & Montgomery, 1999). In fact, it is becoming increasingly challenging to define where an industry begins and ends, and who constitutes direct and indirect competitors (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994). Current literature agrees on the fact it is the consumer who defines "true" competition, being products that form the same consideration and choice sets prior to purchase. In other words, products that the consumer considers potential substitutes to fulfil the same need (Day, Shocker, & Srivastava, 1979). However, another layer of complexity is that these competitive sets may be specific to usage occasions and have fuzzy structures based on the degree to which competitors similarly fulfil numerous needs (Burke, 2007).

The competitor may come from both intra- and inter-industry, and possible future competitors must also be identified and regularly monitored (Kotler & Keller, 2012). A trade-off exists between having a perception of too few competitors, hence facing the risk of being blindsided by a competitor who was not on the radar, or having too broad a focus where the manager is overwhelmed by the volume of information (Porac & Thomas, 1990). The traditional way to determine competition from a consumer perspective is via focus groups, interviews, and surveys that typically lead to perceptual mapping. However, current methodologies include choice modelling experimentation (forced choice), analysing company data such as customer service transcripts or customer complaints, and even "big data" analytics. Once competitors have been identified, it is important to also identify their objectives, current and future strategies, and resources in order to identify current and possible future positions (Lehmann & Winer, 1991; Burke & O'Rourke, 2007).

2.7.3 Environmental scanning

The process of scanning an organisation's environmental landscape allows a firm to foresee and act to changes in the environment, increasing its prospect of long-term viability. This is especially true given that the speed of change in the environment is accelerating (Hooley, Piercy, & Nicoulaud, 2008). Duncan (1972) defined the "market environment" as the relevant physical and social factors outside the boundary of an organisation that are taken into consideration during organisational decision-making. Effective environmental scanning allows for the identification of opportunities and threats that "check" the market relevancy and sustainability of various positioning options. For example, the identification of emerging customer trends could actually identify a gap in the market which a new position for that category could fulfil. On the other hand, a predicted economic downturn could limit the viability of "upper end" product positions.

Environmental scanning is based on both macro- and industry-level based factors. A common framework used to access the macro environment is a "PEST" analysis, examining political, economic, social (including social and legal), and technological environments (Hooley, Piercy, & Nicoulaud, 2008).

2.7.4 Consumer segments and needs

If the market weren't made up of different segments, each with their own diverse needs, the concept of competitive positioning would be defunct. There would be one winner in the category—the product that best provided the universal measure of utility. However, as we know, this is far from the world we live in: consumers are complex individuals with different attitudes and motivations, demographic characteristics and behaviours (Wind, 1978). This human complexity opens up the possibility of competitive product positioning by offering a product that targets a particular segment with a value proposition that best meets their needs over any competition.

Segmentation can be defined as the process of separating a market into groups of customers such that the members of each resulting group are more like other members of that group and less similar to members of other segments (Bonoma & Shapiro, 1983). Whilst there are a large number of ways in which the market can be broken up, academics agree that the most meaningful indicators are those that directly relate to specific customer needs, behaviours, and desired benefits (Sonoma & Sharpiro, 1984, as cited in Foedermayr & Diamantopoulos, 2008). Ideally, market research techniques would be employed to gain deep insights into the segments and enable segment profiling. Segmentation addresses the question that arises in product positioning of *who* is being targeted, and ultimately operationalises the role of segmentation.

2.7.5 Analysis of fit of position requirements and capabilities

The steps discussed thus far should allow for the identification of some positioning choices for the product in question. Based on the premise that some positions are more achievable than others, this step involves matching a product's position options with the internal capabilities that have been already identified. In other words, does the SBU understand the capabilities required to deliver each potential position (as defined by the market), and does it possess those capabilities? (Burke & O'Rourke, 2007).

Burke (2008) suggests a tool for linking competitive positions, success requirements, and capabilities. The model derives segment expectations using choice modelling and matches the organisational requirements to meet these expectations via system dynamics.

2.7.6 Alternative position attractiveness

Other than "internal fit", the other criteria for assessment between the available positioning options relates to the size, growth, margins, and structural attractiveness of the opportunity (Aaker & Shansby, 1982; Burke & O'Rourke, 2007). A company may ask itself to what extent each option meets Kotler's (2003) criteria for a strong position for a product. The criteria are:

- Importance—how valued is the benefit?
- Distinctive and pre-emptive—what are the barriers to imitation?
- Superior—how much better is the proposed solution than the current way it is being served?
- Communicable—will customers easily understand what is being offered?
- Affordable—can the target market afford to pay for the difference?
- Profitable—considers size of the target market, growth of the target market, and margins.

Once the intended position for a product is chosen, the focus moves to the implementation phase that needs both an internal and external execution plan. This is discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.8 Implementing a product's intended position – the *actual* position

A product's position essentially exists in the mind of the consumer, as it the cognitive space that the product occupies against competitor alternatives. Therefore, by definition, competitive positioning can only be deemed to be effective when stakeholders understand for whom the product is intended, and why. While having thorough organisational processes that aim to derive the "right" position is absolutely necessary (as outlined in Section 2.6), it is not sufficient for position effectiveness. In other words, having the "right" intended competitive product position within the mind of the organisation does not automatically translate to the same position in the mind of the consumer. Borrowing the words of the notable German mathematician Bernard Reimann: "The greatest strategy is doomed if implemented badly."

Successful positioning execution has both an external and internal component (Hooley, Piercy, & Nicoulaud, 2008).

Internally, successful positioning implementation involves ongoing communication, the coordination of business functions, and the alignment of incentives to the chosen position for the product (Walker & Ruekert, 1987; Hooley, Piercy, & Nicoulaud, 2008). Communication of the product's position needs to encompass every employee regardless of rank, as each customer touchpoint is a potential signal of a product's position. Communication provides information, but also allows for staff involvement and motivation, especially where feedback is encouraged (Hooley, Piercy, & Nicoulaud, 2008) In order to deliver a coherent positioning strategy, all departments within an organisation need to be aligned. This includes overcoming potential conflict between departments that may be caused by different resource and workflow interdependencies, differences in their objectives, and desire for departmental autonomy (Walker & Ruekert, 1987). Coordination and communication across departments needs to be seamless (Hooley, Piercy, & Nicoulaud, 2008).

Lastly, financial and non-financial incentives are recommended in order to ensure that all employees are motivated in executing the chosen position (Johnson, 2004). For example, from this author's own work experience, it is crucial that key performance indicators (KPIs) are consistent for every employee dealing with the intended position. For example, a niche differentiation strategy may lend itself as a KPI for profitability better than market share. The company culture must also support the intended position, for example a position of "innovation" requires a risk-taking culture where some mistakes are embraced.

Externally, the chosen position needs to be strongly and consistently built in the market to achieve positioning success (Aaker & Shansby, 1982). The literature shows that creating a position in the marketplace is undertaken over time, and includes the deployment of many marketing practices such as advertising, public relations, promotion, sales inducing efforts, product development, cost controls, and establishing pertinent market orientation processes (Blankson, Kalafatis et al., 2008). Another crucial element to implementation success is *consistency* (Crawford, 1985). There are several dimensions to consistency: within a single marketing mix component (for example, between the copy and tone of an advertising message), across marketing mix elements, and delivering the same message over time. Consistency not only aids in the correct encoding of product positions, but also leads to credibility, that is, a consumer's propensity to believe product claims (Erdem & Swait, 1998). As stated by Erdem and Swait (1998), credibility underlies consumer confidence.

Further external considerations of positioning execution, especially in relation to marketing mix variables, are now explored. Given that these considerations are somewhat affected by the position chosen, they will be explored in the context of Porter's two broad generic positioning strategies of *cost leadership* and *differentiation.*

2.8.1 Signalling a cost leadership competitive position

The primary vehicle to signalling a low cost position to the market is inherently *price*. The chosen price must be the lowest unit price available to the consumer vis-a-vis competitor alternatives. In order to ensure the longevity of competing on the lowest price, the firm must have a sustainably lower cost structure compared to its rivals, and a culture focused on process innovation. Porter (1980) identified these factors to be economies of scale, experience and learning effects, capacity utilisation, linkages, interrelationships, degree of integration timing, policy choices, and location and institutional factors. In addition, more current literature has highlighted the importance of having a low-cost leadership mindset, low-cost manufacturing with rapid distribution and replenishment, and a workforce committed to the low-cost strategy (Akan, Allen, Helms, & Spralls, 2006).

In terms of product, in many cases the level of offering is usually basic and may not include an augmented offering that differentiated positions offer. For example, the budget airline Jetstar does not offer free inflight entertainment and meals in order to maintain its cost leadership position. In addition, the market is more likely to accept skeletal customer service and the absence of—or lower—warranties for low-cost positions due to the existence of a price-quality relationship (Kotler & Keller, 2012). By retaining the generic offer, it in fact signals to the market that the product is taking a cost (price) leadership position. Furthermore, cost leaders are more likely to offer standardised products that offer features acceptable to a wide range of customers.

As stated earlier in this section, one of key drivers of implementing a low cost positioning strategy is economies of scale. In order to achieve wide penetration, mass advertising may be required in the short-term until repeat purchase is established. The advertising message needs to deliver the intended position of "lowest price" and is commonly backed up by "lowest price guarantees" (Srivastava & Lurie, 2001).

Location is another of Porter's key factors in achieving a low cost position. In fact, studies have shown that the minimisation of distribution costs to be the most critical executional factor in achieving a cost leader position. Utilising replenishment logistics and pursuing lower cost geographies throughout the value chain have significantly reduced distribution costs for many retailers pursuing this strategy (Akan et al., 2006). It also seems logical that consumers are more willing to accept restricted retail options, such as online exclusivity, when receiving the lowest price in market.

2.8.2 Signalling a differentiation competitive position

Each of the elements of the marketing mix can be used as a way of differentiating the product from competing alternatives. The product itself is a key component of a differentiation strategy. Whilst historically differentiation has occurred at the core and expected levels—that is, the basic offering or additional benefits normally provided with the core offer—it is now mainly takes place at the layers of augmented and potential offers. That is, adding value that is not normally offered in the category (Elliott, Rundle-Thiele & Waller, 2014). A crucial factor in differentiating the product itself is quality, which can include tangible and intangible aspects such as durability, grade of product, and responsiveness of the service provider (Hooley, Piercy, & Nicoulaud, 2008). Whilst a cost leadership strategy relies heavily on process innovation, successful differentiation hinges on a continual focus on product innovation (Akan et al., 2006). In order to achieve this, companies tend to invest heavily in research and development or alternate routes to innovation that include acquisition and external joint venture partnerships (Lengnick-Hall, 1992).

A number of studies have shown that consumers rely on price as an indicator of quality, and therefore products aiming for a high quality differentiation position must have an appropriate supporting price (Zeithaml, 1988; Rao & Monroe, 1989). Using price as an indicator of quality is especially strong where the consumer lacks other information (Levin, Johnson, & Faraone, 1984).

Many hold the brand name itself as a positioning typology (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004) and that similarly to price, consumers typically use the brand name as a cue for quality (Brucks, Zeithaml, & Naylor, 2000). Thus, perceptions at a brand level will affect the perceived position of the product in cases where there are multiple products under a single brand name. In fact, according to Erdem and Swait (1998), brands may be more credible than the underlying individual mix elements in signalling product positions. Firstly, consumers are aware that a brand is of greater value to an organisation than individual mix elements, hence firms need to fiercely protect its brands as a loss of brand reputation has dire consequences. Secondly, brands are less susceptible to moral hazard and adverse selection such as the abuse of warranties. Lastly, brands represent a package of information, and offer more information than individual mix elements (Erdem & Swait, 1998).

Given its potentially high visual impact, packaging can be powerful in creating an image that supports the intended differentiation (Ampuero & Vila, 2006). The role that packaging plays in communicating a product's position is especially strong in the perishable goods category, as purchasing decisions tend to be made at the point of sale. Research has shown that consumers tend to relate particular graphical elements of packaging to certain product positions. Hence colour, typography, form, and illustration all combine to transmit the desired product perception. For example, black packaging is associated with prestigious product positions (Ampuero & Vila, 2006).

Marketing distribution decisions also play an important role in signalling a product's position. Offering superior coverage, expertise, or performance in retailing to better suit the needs of the intended target market can in fact be a form of differentiation in itself (Kotler & Keller, 2012). A common example of this is Amazon, the first company to successfully position itself as a mass online distributor of books, first in physical form and subsequently via digital downloads. However, even where distribution does not form the primary basis for differentiation, it certainly signals a message to market about the product's intended position (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). For example, a product sold in the discount retailer Kmart sends a very different message to the market than a product distributed at the more upmarket retailer David Jones. Thus, the position of the retailer influences the consumer perception of the product's position, making distribution a key part of the positioning implementation plan.

Whilst aspects discussed thus far signal the intended product position to the market, advertising, promotion, and other communication *overtly* convey whom the product is for, what it stands for, and why the target market should believe the claim. Communication vehicle selection and media plans should be taken directly from lifestyle insights gathered from the segment analysis conducted by the organisation when determining the intended position. In order to achieve an integrated communication plan, copywriters, art directors, and photographers all need to be aware of the chosen position in order to creatively incorporate the strategy into every decision regarding the promotion. This includes the message, tone, and talent selection (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007). Marketers aiming for high-end product positions should also be aware that consumers have also been found to use the perceived quality of advertising and advertising expenditure as a signal of product quality (Kirmani, 1990).

2.9 Summary

One could argue that competitive positioning of products sits at the heart of all marketing decisions. It defines who the target market is, what is being offered that is superior to competitors, and why the consumer should believe the positioning (Hooley, Broderick, & Möller, 1998; Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007). It is not a new concept, having heavily impacted economics, strategy, and marketing theory and literature for at least 40 years (and longer in economics). The literature review undertaken has shown that research to date has focused on a few themes. Much of the focus has been on developing positioning typologies, with the most recent cited being that of Blankson and Kalafatis (2004), given its advantageous consumer-driven make-up. The performance outcome of successful product positioning has also received fair focus, with some success in empirically linking it to various organisation and marketing level metrics. The broader strategic question of the factors on which a position should be based has received considerable playtime within the field of strategy, with the latest stance subscribing to a hybrid approach of internal resource-based and external market-based analyses.

The thesis adds to the extant positioning literature which stipulates that positioning encompasses three levels of positioning—the intended, actual, and perceived positions—by adding the *external* position. The steps that an organisation needs to take in deriving the intended position is lengthy and resource-heavy. An organisation consequently executes its strategic positioning intent to deliver the actual position. It is the actual position, along with the external, that the consumer decodes to form their perception of the product's position. From the literature review undertaken in position implementation, it appears that while some intricacies exist depending on the actual position chosen, for example value versus differentiation, clarity and consistency in messaging are crucial elements of any successful positioning execution. In essence, success is prevalent when the levels of positioning are aligned.

This definition of successful positioning is inhibited by the absence of any validated measures of positioning success or effectiveness other than some progress made by Burke (2001) and Fuchs and Diamantopoulos (2012). Hence, this remains one of the various gaps that exist within positioning literature. However, it appears that clarity and coherence of the positioning message experienced by the consumers may play an important role in the confidence that consumers have in that positioning judgment. The notion of the perceived position will be explored in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: The Role of Consumer Behaviour Theory in Product Positioning:

The perceived position, and introducing the construct of belief confidence to positioning

3.1 Introduction

Once an organisation has developed its intended competitive product position and executed its implementation plan, the actual position of the product is in the market for consumers to interpret, judge, and ultimately entice the target market to purchase. Hence, this chapter explores various aspects of consumer behaviour literature to understand how consumers decode positioning signals when determining their positioning perception. In order to begin unravelling such complexity, the consumer decision-making process needs to be examined. Given that the consumer-derived position is indeed a perception, consumer behaviour theory linked to the psychological construct of perception and the process of encoding communication will also be investigated. The consumer decision-making process is not a static one, as consumers continuously revise their positioning judgment, hence we borrow from judgment revision and information distortion literature to understand this phenomenon. Lastly, we take a slight diversion within consumer behaviour literature by exploring the construct of belief-confidence and its application thus far in marketing.

3.2 The perceived product position and perceived differentiation

The end-result of an organisation's strategic and tactical work in positioning its product is the position that lives in the mind of the consumer. This is the position that will entice or dissuade purchase within the target market, and therefore many argue that it is the most important position. However, the literature review undertaken for this research supports the notion that surprisingly few empirical studies have actually explored what may be occur in the consumer mind in terms of positioning; in essence, how consumers derive their positioning perception (Butt et al., 2007). Positioning academics have theoretically stated that both cognition and affect plays a role in positioning judgments (Murphy, Butt, & Papadopoulos, 2007).

In addition to the perceived position for the product, consumers should have another related judgment following their information search: their perceived level of differentiation of the product. This relates to a consumer's evaluation of the overall uniqueness of the product, meaning how easily s/he can receive the same benefits by choosing a competitor product. The perceived position is a function in forming the differentiation evaluation, however it is a distinct judgment. For example, a consumer may assess the Holden Barina as offering a VFM position, however while it offers the best value compared to its competitors, the gap between Holden and competitor Hyundai is not vast in the consumer's mind. Therefore, while the consumer holds a strong perceived position of VFM for the Holden Barina, s/he perceives its overall differentiation to be low given the perceived lack of saliency of the position in the category. Consumers prefer brands or products that they believe to be highly differentiated, whether it is based on an attribute or emotion, as they are seen as more valuable (Keller, 1993). Studies have shown that this phenomenon exists even when the source of differentiation is trivial or meaningless (Broniarczyk & Gershoff, 2003).

Despite the importance of perceived differentiation for brands and products, a study conducted on 17 product categories in Australia and the United Kingdom (Romaniuk, Sharp, & Ehrenberg, 2007) found that most consumers do not perceive differentiation amongst well-known brands. The findings revealed that 1 in 10 current customers of the brands tested in categories such as soft drinks, banks, and supermarkets did not report that the brand was either different or unique in their opinion. Romaniuk et al. (2007) suggest that it appears consumers are extremely selective about which brands to differentiate, or in other words, the perception is not easily formed without true backing. With what appears to be a startlingly weak differentiation perception of many brands, it appears relevant to measure consumer confidence in the interrelated construct of positioning perception.

3.3 The consumer decision-making process

Understanding positioning perception must begin with understanding the consumer decision-making process. The process is complex and involves multiple constructs (Hansen, 2005) Thus, several models exist which aim to cover the layers of complexity. One popular model is the "consumer decision process model" that aims to describe the mental states or steps that are involved in purchase: *need recognition, search, evaluation, purchase* and *post-purchase evaluation* (Schiffman et al., 2010). The time and energy spent in each step is highly dependent on the consumer's level of involvement and, therefore, the perceived risk of making a "wrong" purchase choice (Deshpande & Hoyer, 1983).

When a need for purchase is recognised, it is natural for consumers to begin with an internal search of brands and/or products (Schiffman et al., 2010). Given that brands or products pass the perceptual and cognitive processing thresholds into one's memory (Schiffman et al., 2010), the consumer is likely to have *some* perception of what the product stands for, who it is targeting and why. At this stage, the product's position in the consumer's mind may borrow from the brand's position, for example: "I am not sure what the Ferrari 458 stands for, but I know Ferrari stands for unique design and superior speed performance, so I assume that's what the Ferrari 458 stands for." This idea is consistent with brand signalling literature (Erdem & Swait, 1998).

Competing options selected at this early stage in the decision-making process are known as the awareness set. Prior to going any further in the decision process, a consumer will distinguish between inept set of brands or products (avoided alternatives) and those that will progress to search and evaluation stages (consideration set or evoked set) (Schiffman et al., 2010). It is assumed that the passively-held position for the product would play a role in the this categorisation.

While product options thus far have primarily been derived from passive exposure to advertising, word-of-mouth, and past experience, the *active* information search phase usually involves a wider variety of sources that are more consciously evaluated. Given that consumer media consumption and social interaction habits are changing, so too are their sources of product information. The trend is moving away from more traditional, company-driven sources of information such as store visits, traditional advertising, and direct marketing to consumer-driven sources such as word-of-mouth via social media and online reviews websites. In fact one McKinsey study (Court et al., 2009) found that two-thirds of all touch points in the active evaluation stage are consumer-driven. The explosion in social media and the ability to "review" and "rate" products in conglomerate websites means that consumers have a wider "word of mouth" network than was once available. Hence, one may argue that in the modern age where information is so readily available, it is more likely that a consumer will change their judgment regarding their perception of a product between the awareness to post information search stages compared to circa 20 years ago.

There are various schools of thought to explain how consumers dissect product information in the search phase with the goal of making a product choice (Hansen, 2005). The value perspective dictates that consumers will generally act in accordance with their desire to receive the highest utility per resource unit, making a trade-off between quality and price. Based on cue utilisation theory, consumers employ the risk-reduction technique of using guides such as price, brand, advertising, and colour as indicators of the quality of a product (Hansen, 2005). Other theories, such as the information processing perspective, emphasise consumers as problem-solving individuals who strive for a reasoned decision.

It can be concluded that the perspectives thus far are heavily skewed towards cognition. Thus, the emotional perspective of the purchase process brings to light the possible emotional responses to the perception and judgment of products and consumption experiences. The literature also concludes that consumers often use combinations of decision-making strategies and, thus, there is no single correct theory of consumer decision-making (Hansen, 2005).

Whichever criteria or heuristics the consumer chooses to use in the evaluation stage, ultimately the consumer needs to determine which product will best meet his/her needs from the final set of products they are deciding between (known as the "choice set"), that is, "does the product's position match what I am looking for"?

3.4 Perception and encoding of positioning signals

Regardless of where the consumer is at throughout the decision-making process, the consumer-derived position may be classed as a *perception*. This holds true for all interpretations of marketing stimuli and messages, whether company or consumer-derived. Hence, the process formation of perception needs to be explored.

Perception is a critical part of the brain's information processing function, and can be defined as the process through which we notice, attend to, and interpret objects, messages, and events that we encounter in the world (Quester et al., 2007). Information processing theory states that there are four main steps: *exposure; attention; interpretation,* and *memory,* with the first three detailing the perceptual process.

Exposure occurs when a stimulus comes within range of a person's sensory receptors. Attention occurs when the brain has actually processed the exposure—not everything we are exposed to is attended to. Attention is affected by the effectiveness of the stimulus itself, being situational factors such as the mood of the consumer, and individual factors such as their involvement and current needs and goals. Consumers will more likely pay attention to stimuli relating to product positions that match their own needs, or are a reflection of themselves, and block out unwanted positions such as stimuli relating to high-end fashion that is far outside their level of affordability. Importantly, attention may be conscious or non-focused, therefore consistent messaging over time is more likely to reach a subconscious level of consumer processing (Quester et al., 2007).

Once a consumer cognitively interprets the marketing stimuli, a process of categorisation occurs. The consumer classes the new information in existing mental categories of meaning. This is a critical process in positioning perception. The literature urges marketers to find a balance between the premise that all objects in a category share common attributes—thus emphasising them allows a consumer to sufficiently categorise the product to have more chance of recalling it later—and highlighting what makes the product different (Punj & Moon, 2002).

Studies have shown that more knowledgeable consumers are able to process product level categorisation, while less familiar consumers are more likely to use brand level information to evaluate products regardless of whether the communicated product positioning is inconsistent with what the brand historically has stood for (Sujan, 1985). Consumers also tend to interpret stimuli consistently with their expectations (Quester et al., 2007). This has an impact for products aiming to reposition, products that require a different position to its brand position, and on consumers who possess a strong but incorrect preconceived idea of the product when evaluating stimuli.

Therefore, it can be concluded that retrieval of a product and its position at the point that a purchasing need arrives depends on whether it has been stored in a person's short-term or long-term memory, and how it was categorised in the consumer's memory in the first place.

3.4.1 Judgment revision—from the passive to active perceptions of positioning

As introduced previously, there are various stages that a consumer undergoes during the purchase process. It has been stated that as a consumer recognises a need for purchase they initially rely on product solutions stored in their memory that have a passive position attached to them. These product positions are likely to have derived from repeated exposure over time to marketing signals, such as advertising. However, as the consumer moves from need recognition to search, they move into an active assessment phase. The output is a "new" perception of the product's position that may align or misalign to their initial "passive" positioning perception. In consumer behaviour theory, this concept is formally known judgment revision (Pham & Muthukrishnan, 2002). The active positioning perception, post information search, is likely to be based on a greater amount of information, characterised by a variety of sources and market, that is, direct competitor comparison (Court et al., 2009).

Judgment revision literature dictates that when a person is presented with new information that is consistent with prior information, it will be accepted at face value with little analysis (Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979). Thus, much of the literature dealing with judgment revision focuses on instances where new information challenges previously-held judgments. One model of judgment revision states that when presented with new information that challenges a previous judgment, the previous judgment is directly merged into the revised judgment (Lingle & Ostrom, 1979; Hogarth & Einhorn, 1992).

Others argue that upon receiving new information that challenges a prior evaluation, people first attempt to defend their initial evaluation by seeking out information that supports it— known as "proattitudinal information"—from their memory (Pham & Muthukrishnan, 2002). Studies have shown that the memorability of the proattitudinal information, whether it has been mentally rehearsed, elaborated on, and learned without interference, all positively impact judgment resistance (Haugtvedt & Wegener, 1994; Muthukrishnan, Pham, & Mungale, 2001).

Further considerations in judgment revision are the perceived diagnosticity of the challenge and the degree of commensurability (Pham & Muthukrishnan, 2002). It is rather intuitive that the greater the perceived diagnosticity of the source of information, the more likely that the consumer will revise their judgment. Therefore, it is likely that the information viewed in the information search phase will have an advantage over the passively-interpreted signals leading to the initial passive positioning perception. On the other hand, a lack of commensurability means that where the new material is damaging to the prior information, it is a non-alignable relationship and thus tends to result in less revision (Markman & Medin, 1995). Challenges that are extremely negative are also more likely to induce revision (Skowronski & Carlston, 1987)

Other research highlights that the informational basis for the original judgment needs to be considered. Fabrigar and Petty (1999) found that the amount of revision due to new information depends on the informational basis of the original attitude. Attitudes originally based on affect are more sensitive to new information that is also affective in nature, whereas cognitive-based attitudes are more sensitive to new information that is also based on cognition. It is proposed that this phenomenon is explained by the notion of commensurability, and the fact that abstract information is generally more memorable than attribute-based information and, thus, can be more easily retrieved when faced with opposing information (Pham & Muthukrishnan, 2002).

From the literature review undertaken on judgment revision, it can be suggested that consumers who hold the same perception of a product's position pre and post information search stage may have either only have come across confirming information, or come across disconfirming information but "rejected" the counter information due to a perceived lack of diagnosticity, commensurability, or a disconnect in the informational basis.

3.4.2 Information distortion

Closely aligned to judgment revision is the idea of information distortion. One may assume that prior to a decision people should be relatively unbiased in their seeking and evaluation of information (Frey, 1986). However, research has shown that pre-decisional distortion indeed exists, primarily due to our need as humans to decrease post decisional dissonance (Russo et al., 1996).

Decision-makers attempt to structure information to ensure their leading option comes out on top (Montgomery, 1983). They may achieve this by devaluing the attributes that the preferred option lacks, and concentrating on the advantages of the leading alternatives. Research has shown that consumers search for confirming rather than opposing information in product choice decisions, and interpret available evidence in an overly-confirming manner. This may, in fact, lead to a distortion of the favoured option's true value (Russo et al., 1996). Therefore, existing literature suggests that if a consumer has a "front runner" in the early stages of the purchase decision process, they will seek out confirming information. Even in the absence of an initial preference, a developing preference throughout the information search phase will still lead to the distortion of new information in order to support the growing favoured option (Russo et al., 1996).

The main proposed ideas for why consumers engage in information distortion include *preservation of consistency, reduction of effort,* and *mood maintenance*. It is hypothesised that informational consistency throughout the purchase decision-making process is used as an indicator for choice accuracy, thus eliminating the worry of making an incorrect purchasing decision. This consistency leads to confidence enabling the consumer to end the information search phase which, as previously discussed, is a time-consuming and cognitively-heavy task.

As Russo and co-authors (1996) point out, there is no objective criteria for evaluating information and then competitive position signals, thus consistency appears to be a criteria imposed by many. Extending from this theory, one may hypothesise that consumers also desire consistency between firstly their passively and actively-held positioning perceptions and, secondly, their perception of the organisation's actual position for the product and their own assessment (which is likely to be influenced by external sources). One would assume that the same goals driving information distortion would also drive a desire for the cognitive consistency described—effort reduction, mood maintenance, and perceived choice accuracy.

3.4.3 Consumer hypothesis testing

The concept of the hypothesis-testing brain is gaining prominence in psychology literature. The notion is that the brain works to reduce the error between its predictions of input and the actual incoming input, that is, minimising prediction error. The initial sensory input creates expectations about subsequent input and the brain calculates the difference between the two. In the case where the fit between sensory and actual input is weak, the brain revises the parameters of the hypothesis and thus, over time, gets closer to the actual input (Hohwy, 2012).

Put simply and in the context of this thesis, the brain needs to determine the product's position typically by various sensory inputs, for example, the way the product looks/feels/smells, the appearance of the product website, and so on. For example, the consumer looks at a website for MacBook Pro and the prominent use of black and white (visual input) creates a perception that the "cause" of this is that MacBook has an upmarket position. Therefore, the next sensory input that comes in, for example the quality fittings seen at the Apple store, is evaluated by the brain in terms of its consistency with Apple MacBook being an upmarket product. If there is a poor fit, the consumer will revise its original model, i.e. the upmarket position, to reduce prediction error.

The notion of the human brain seeking prediction minimisation error is further support for the notion of consistency in positioning signals as a prerequisite for positioning perception and, ultimately, confidence. The alternative is that consumers constantly adjust their mental models, and may thus conclude that the prediction error is simply too high to assert judgment confidence.

3.4.4 Prior knowledge effects

Prior knowledge has long been considered an integral determinant in an individual's search behaviour and information processing.

Firstly, there are several overlapping and related terms to consider. Alba and Hutchison (1987) make the well-cited distinction between familiarity and expertise. Familiarity is defined as the number of product-related experiences accumulated by the consumer, whereas expertise relates to the ability to perform product-related tasks successfully. Familiarity is a necessary but insufficient requirement for expertise. Expertise can also be distinguished from product experience in that it is defined as previous purchase or usage of the product. Hence, it is possible for an individual to have had previously purchased the product but have low product expertise, for example, in gift purchases.

Imagine the circumstance where someone has purchased a trip to New York but has fallen ill on the trip, missing out on sightseeing. That individual would then have experience (actual purchase), but no expertise. On the other hand, the construct of product or product class knowledge is multi-dimensional, and comprises all the dimensions previously discussed. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that prior knowledge has a stronger link to actual behaviour compared to product experience (Hoch & Ha, 1986).

Another important distinction is that between subjective and objective product knowledge. Objective knowledge relates to what a consumer actually knows, whereas subjective knowledge is a self-assessment of what s/he knows. Research has found that even though these are highly related, they are distinct constructs (Park & Lessig, 1981).

In terms of the link between product category knowledge and behaviour, one theory suggests that where product knowledge is high, consumers will undertake a smaller external information search as the time and cognitive processing cost in gaining more knowledge through an external information search does not outweigh the benefit (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). These consumers will, therefore, rely on their own knowledge and less so on what the organisation promises about the product. A supporting study also found that internal information was more influential than external information in the decision-making process of consumers with high prior knowledge (Chang & Huang, 2002).

Interestingly, Bettman and Park (1980) noticed that those with moderate product knowledge appear to do more processing of information and rely on product knowledge to a lesser extent. The theory supporting this is that those with low product knowledge may not have the ability to process the information given, whereas those with high knowledge have the ability to process but do not possess motivation as they rely on their own knowledge. Another angle on the relationship between product knowledge and information search is that higher levels of either subjective or objective product knowledge will increase one's ability to engage in an external search for information. That is, higher levels allow consumers to comprehend and organise information more easily (Chase & Simon, 1973). Subjective product knowledge relates to a consumer's confidence about absorbing information for an external search and, thus, high subjective knowledge also affects information search positively.

Raju, Lonial and Mangold's study in 1995 specifically distinguished between subjective and objective knowledge in its testing of the relationship between knowledge and information search. Subjective knowledge was found to have a positive linear relationship to information search (the more subjective knowledge acquired, the deeper the information search), whereas objective knowledge showed an inverted "U" association (as objective knowledge begins to grow, consumers conduct more information search, but this quickly tails off as more objective knowledge is acquired). The latter finding supports Bettman and Park's findings (1980) that those with low objective knowledge did not feel they had the processing ability for an external information search, and those with high objective knowledge did not have the motivation. The consequence for those with high objective knowledge is that they rely on internal information.

Thus one can deduce that consistency and clarity in thought and information regarding competitive positioning may be more crucial to consumers with low subjective product knowledge, as they may not know which signals to take on and which to discount in ultimately forming their positioning perception. Thus the average product category knowledge of the two categories chosen for this study needs to be pre-tested, as well as including this construct as a control in the main study.

3.4.5 Learning models

Learning models originate from the field of discrete choice modelling. As a whole, learning models stipulate that consumers have incomplete information and learn about product attributes over time. While various types of learning models exist, a framework developed by Erdem and Keane in 1996 is of particular interest to this thesis. The authors estimate a structural model where consumers learn about a product's attributes and quality levels through sampling, use experience, and advertising, known as "noisy signals". In the language of learning models, this behaviour is known as "forward-looking customers" as they are engaging in active research, as opposed to myopic consumers who chose, without research, between brand alternatives based on the highest expected utility (Ching, Erdem, & Keane, 2013).

In Erdem and Keane's (1996) dynamic structural model, tested on seven brands from the washing detergent category, the parameters estimated were true quality levels of the brands, prior mean and variance of quality, variances of experience and advertising signals, utility parameters—i.e., quality and price coefficients and the risk parameter, the intercept and trend for no-purchase, and the discount factor. It should be noted that timing of the advertising signals was not accounted for (Ching et al., 2013).

The results from the Erdem and Keane study (1996) showed how advertising and positive use experience can increase perceived quality. The proposed model was a better fit to the data than the alternative general linear model. The authors also showed how consistency in advertising messages and experience with the product may decrease perceived uncertainty, both of which leads to greater brand utility (Erdem, Swait, Broniarczyk et al., 1999). However a disadvantage is that the model cannot directly handle the reality of consumer learning, which is that perceptions may be biased initially and therefore "learning" is susceptible to confirmatory biases (Erdem, Swait, Broniarczyk et. al. 1999, as discussed in Sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2).

Overall, learning models behaviourally demonstrate how quality signals such as advertising impacts overall perceived quality (akin to the match between positioning perception and purchase goal) and brand utility over time. They also provide further support for the importance of consistency in messaging in order to decrease consumer uncertainty.

3.5 The construct of belief-confidence

The idea of *confidence* exists in scenarios where one must make an inference, such as making a correct purchase decision. Confidence in product claims is not a new concept, and the literature already acknowledges that it changes throughout the decision-making process. Howard and Sheth (1969) famously proposed confidence as one of the determinants of purchase intention.

Confidence, or certainty, is a cognitive construct that reflects one's conviction in one's beliefs. In consumer behaviour literature, confidence tends to be applied to either a consumer's overall degree of certainty s/he has in the brand, or the buyer's confidence in his or her ability to judge or evaluate attributes of the brand (Howard & Sheth, 1969). First, it is important to distinguish between the constructs of product-related belief strength and product-related belief confidence (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Belief strength refers to the degree of strength that a subject rates the probability of an object having a particular attribute. For example, on a Likert scale which asks a respondent to rate their belief in the level of nutrition that Coca Cola has, from 1 representing "not nutritious at all" to 7 representing "extremely nutritious", a person who rates on either extreme has a higher belief strength than those rating in the middle. However, two individuals who assert the same position on a given content dimension, for example if both gave a score of 5 on the Likert scale example, may vary in their confidence with this estimate. This refers to the concept of belief confidence. Researchers have not agreed on whether these two proposed constructs differ empirically, and while some have reported a significant linear relationship, others have shown are separate dimensions (Smith & Swinyard, 1988).

3.5.1 Role of confidence in consumer behaviour

Research has shown that there are direct and indirect effects of confidence on purchase intention (Laroche et al., 1995). Various empirical studies have supported a direct relationship, such as that of Bennett and Harrell (1975), who showed that confidence in one's ability to judge one's beliefs about the outcomes of purchase acts as a moderator for purchase intention. Furthermore, Laroche and Sadokierski (1994) showed that when selecting an investment company, confidence in one's evaluation of the company has a direct link to selection. Others have argued for an indirect link to purchase intention via attitude (Warland & Sample, 1973; Fazio & Zanna, 1978). It is also suggested that the effect of confidence and intention will be higher when purchase involvement is high (Laroche et al., 1995).

Aside from its direct influence on purchase intent, it is held that belief-confidence allows the consumer to end the information search phase of the purchase decision-making process, hence moving them further through the "funnel" to purchase. This is because confidence is negatively correlated to arousal and thus perceived risk (Howard & Sheth, 1969).

One study by Chandrashekaran, Rotte, Tax, and Grewal (2007) looked at the level of confidence with which service satisfaction judgments are held to possibly explain the discrepancy in previous literature regarding the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. The study found that satisfaction does indeed translate to loyalty when satisfaction judgment is confidently held, but the linkage is significantly lowered (on average, by approximately 60%) when the same stated satisfaction is held with weak confidence.

It should be noted that while other researchers have proposed the idea of positioning effectiveness and strength which rely on credibility as an input (Burke, 2011; Fuchs and Diamantopoulos, 2012) this can be differentiated from the idea of confidence. Credibility refers to whether the consumer perceives a claim as truthful and dependable, whereas confidence relates to a consumer's belief that their judgment (in this case, the product position that they have "judged") is correct. Erdem and Swait (1998) acknowledge the difference in stating that credibility underlies consumer confidence in a firm's product claim (p. 137).

3.5.2 Metacognition and reasoning systems

Confidence in one's judgments also appears in the psychology literature relating to metacognition. Metacognition refers to thoughts about our own thought or thought processes and, thus, draws a distinction between primary thoughts and secondary thoughts (Dulonsky &

Metcalfe, 2009). Initial thoughts occur at a direct level of cognition and relate to initial associations, e.g. "that dress is a very bright shade of orange". Following the primary thought, people generate secondary thoughts which are typically reflections on the primary thought, for example, "I am not sure if that colour dress would look good on me," or "do I really want to draw attention to myself with a bright dress?" Metacognitive thoughts can intensify, attenuate, or even reverse the impact of the first order thought (Luttrell et al., 2013). The confidence with which people hold their thoughts and judgments is one of the most essential parts of metacognition and is studied in domains such as decision-making and memory. Judgments held with high degrees of self-confidence have been found to be highly stable and predictive of behaviour (Haugtvedt & Kasmer, 2008). A common yet powerful example in metacognition literature that shows the link between metacognitive confidence and decision-making is that of eyewitnesses. Eyewitnesses are more likely to act on their identification judgment (primary cognition) when they have high confidence in their judgment regardless of actual accuracy. Eyewitnesses with low confidence of their identification judgment are unlikely to act, which greatly hinders police investigations (Wells, Olson & Charman, 2002).

Decision-making involves two distinct processing systems—quick, effortless intuition (known as system 1), and another that is effortful and more deliberate (system 2). The literature says that if the judgment at hand is perceived as difficult, for example the information enabling the decision is processed with difficulty or disfluency, people are more likely to evaluate through system 2 processing (Alter, Oppenheimer, Epley, & Eyre, 2007). Therefore, relating the two processes of decision-making to the topic of this thesis, if the consumer's perceived perception of the product highly matches their purchase goal, the decision to purchase is more obvious. Thus, the literature suggests that the consumer will tend to rely on their simple intuition to purchase. However, where there is a lesser match between positioning perception and the purchase goal, the decision to purchase or not is more difficult for the consumer. Therefore, there is support to say that in more difficult decisions, people tend use system 2 processing. The consumer may want to engage in complex analysis to resolve the problem, however, as humans desire to avoid cognitive complexity, they resolve to cues (Olson and Jacoby, 1972; Hansen, 2005). Thus, the consumer's confidence acts as a metacognition and an internal cue to aid the decision when the choice is not obvious. As it has been stated in the literature: "When the correct choice is not immediately evident, we very often rely on our confidence" (Baranski & Petrusic, 1994). As per all types of metacognition, positive thoughts are more likely lead to positive action (Schwarz, 2004).

3.5.3 Antecedents to general construct of confidence

Empirical research has shown that there are several antecedents to confidence, notably the *quantity, credibility* and *consistency* of information (Howard & Sheth, 1969; Smith & Swinyard, 1988). In terms of quantity of information, it has been shown that the amount of information affects confidence when there is consistency of information. In line with perceived risk theory, when there isn't consistency in information, the amount of information does not play a meaningful role in affecting confidence (Heslin, Rotton, & Blake, 1977).

Credibility is linked to the source of information, with sources that are perceived as less biased being rated more highly. Experiments conducted in the area of advertising effectiveness have shown that thought confidence (considered to encompass the definition of belief confidence by this author) is indeed affected by source credibility (Brinol, Petty, & Tormala, 2004).

There are several facets to consistency of information. One aspect is the homogeneity of message within a *single* source of information. Secondly, there is a level of consistency within a single source *over time*. Lastly, there can be variance in consistency amongst *different sources* of information. Erdem and Swait's model of brand equity signalling (1998) stipulates that credibility underlies consumer confidence in a firm's product claims with brand feature consistency, brand investment, and clarity as inputs to credibility. In conclusion, as supported by Heslin et al. (1977, p. 234), "the trend is clear—consistency creates confidence."

3.6 Summary

The beginning of this chapter showed that consumers hold perceptions of the product's position throughout the consumer purchase journey. Positioning perceptions are not stagnant and are, in fact, revised at different stages. As supported by the phenomenon of information distortion, consumers intrinsically desire consistency throughout this process. As consumers test their passively-held positioning perceptions in the information search phase, there may either be an alignment in thinking or a "change of mind" that occurs. With the plethora of readily-available product information stemming from outside the organisation now entering the consumer's information search, the chance for ill-defined or misaligned positioning messaging is logically greater. Thus, perceived clarity and consistency in its various forms should play a role in determining consumers' confidence of their positioning judgment.

Furthermore, the areas of metacognition and reason processing give support to the fact confidence in the scenario of positioning perception is most relevant when the purchase decision is a difficult one. A weaker match between how consumers perceives a product post information search and their own purchase goal represents a decision characterised by greater risk.

The links between the general literature review in this chapter and what this thesis is proposing will be further drawn upon in the next section, as the model is introduced and justified.

Chapter 4: The Proposed Framework and Hypotheses

4.1 Introduction

The main aim of this thesis is to propose and validate a model (see Figure 4) that incorporates consumer confidence in competitive positions, its antecedents, and its moderating effect on the relationship between perceived differentiation and purchase intention, taking into account the purchase goal.

4.2 Development of antecedents to positioning confidence

The literature review undertaken by this author in Chapters 2 and 3 suggests that there are two themes that are likely to underpin consumers' confidence in competitive positions: *clarity* and *consistency in information and thought.* Support stems from various academic fields including positioning implementation, consumer perception, judgment revision, information distortion, and brand equity signalling.

Consumers are constantly processing positioning signals in order to form their positioning perception. Prior to recognising a need for purchase, consumers are computing these signals in a passive fashion. When a need for purchase arises, it is natural for consumers to begin with an internal search of brands and/or products. Given that recollected brands/products have passed the perceptual and cognitive processing thresholds into memory, the consumer is likely to have some level of positioning perception, even if it borrows from the brand's position at this early stage. This idea is consistent with the brand signalling literature (Erdem & Swait, 1998).

Consumers bring the brands/products from their awareness stage into their information search for more thorough product-level analysis. It is well documented that consumer media consumption and social interaction habits are changing, therefore, so too are their sources of product information, moving from more traditional organisation-driven sources such as store visits, traditional advertising, and direct marketing to market-driven sources such as electronic word-of-mouth communication (eWOM) (Court et al., 2009). Thus, as consumers are arguably evaluating more sources of competitive positioning signals than ever, coupled with the difficulty organisations find in expressing their position to the market (Crawford, 1985), it can be concluded that the consumer experience regarding clarity of positioning expression is likely to vary.

Fuzzy, confusing, or absent competitive positioning information or signals from the organisation, or from market signals not directly controlled by the firm, will make it hard for the consumer to ascertain the true competitive position of the product, let alone provide judgment certainty. This theory is supported by evidence of association between clarity of brand signals and brand credibility in Erdem and Swait's (1998) brand equity research. In addition, a product's clear role and relevance has been identified as an indicator of competitive positioning strength (Burke, 2011).

In terms of the proposed role of consistency in affecting positioning confidence, positioning implementation literature that has long proclaimed that consistency of messaging across mediums and over time is crucial for successful positioning implementation (Crawford, 1985).

Furthermore, psychology-based literature stipulates that consumers who face a challenge to their prior evaluation throughout the information search phase actively seek out proattitudinal information from their memory that supports their initial perception (Pham & Muthukrishnan, 2002). In fact, research has shown that consumers search for confirming rather than opposing information in product choice decisions, and interpret available evidence in an overly confirming manner, even leading to information distortion in order to maintain consistency (Russo et al., 1996). Therefore, it can be deduced from the extant literature that clarity and consistency are important factors in affecting consumer confidence that will ultimately impact consumer behaviour.

As Russo and co-authors point out (1996), there are no objective criteria for evaluating information, and hence no such criteria exist for evaluating positioning signals. Therefore, consistency appears to be a criterion imposed by many (Crawford, 1985). It can deduced that the same goals driving information distortion would drive a desire for consistency between the initial and post positioning perceptions. As discussed in Section 3.4.2, consistency is driven by a desire for effort reduction, mood maintenance, and perceived choice accuracy. An extension of this thinking is that an alignment between the initial and post (information search) positions will result in added confidence in the consumer's ultimate positioning judgment.

4.3 The theoretical model

The theoretical model rests on the notion that there are in fact two types of positioning perceptions a consumer can have, denoted by the preceding terms of "initial" and "post". A consumer's *initial* perceived product position is likely to be a result of passive exposure to positioning cues over time. However, a consumer may not have an initial perceived position, or may in fact hold a weak or ambiguous initial perceived position marked by the belief that the product stands for “many things”. However, some consumers will hold an unambiguous perceived initial position—a belief that the product stands for X—above alternate positions. At the point that a need arises for a high involvement purchase, the consumer undertakes an information search that exposes him/her to product information that is likely to be more diagnostic in nature. As has been highlighted throughout this thesis thus far, the product information is likely to be a combination of both the organisation’s positioning signals and sources external to the company. The output of the information search phase is a *post* (information search) perceived position. The consumers’ post perceived position could vary in the level of similarity to the initial perceived position, as evaluated information sources may confirm or disconfirm the prior perceived product position. This research concentrates on the antecedents and effects of the latter positioning perception—the *post* perceived position. .

4.3.1 Consumers’ confidence in the post perceived position

This research suggests a three-way interaction exists between consumer confidence in the post perceived position, the level of purchase goal match, and the degree of perceived differentiation on the dependent variable of purchase intention. The premise of this hypothesis is the well-established relationship between perceived differentiation and purchase. A highly differentiated post perceived position refers to the scenario where a consumer perceives a product to be distinguishable from its competitors. A highly differentiated product stands out on a positioning dimension and goes above being a “me too” product. Based on basic positioning theory, high perceived differentiation is positively linked to purchase intention (see Section 3.2).

The proposed theoretical model offers a moderator to this relationship in the form of consumers' confidence in their post perceived position, pending a weaker match between the perceived position and what the consumer is looking for (purchase goal). Metacognition literature suggests that judgment confidence plays an important role when the decision is characterised by greater risk (see Section 3.5.2). The idea that risk moderates the relationship between confidence and action is also supported by Laroche and Kim’s 1995 study that found that the link between confidence and intention is stronger when purchase involvement is high. As supported by reason processing theory (Section 3.5.2), in cases of a strong match between the perceived position and purchase objective, the decision to purchase should be almost automatic for the consumer. That is, the decision to purchase that comes from the low risk scenario of a high match between the perceived position and purchase goal is likely to be based on automatic intuition, or system 1 processing. A more complex purchase decision, however, arises from a poor match between positioning perception and purchase goal, which is likely to tap into more thoughtful system 2 processing where the consumer reflects on their metacognitive confidence.

> ***H1:*** *The degree of confidence that a consumer has in his/her (post) perceived position of the product acts as a moderator between the positive relationship of the perceived level of differentiation and purchase intention when there is a poorer match between the consumer's post perceived position and purchase goal. That is;*
>
> - *When there is a poorer match between the post perceived position and purchase goal, the effect of confidence on the relationship between perceived differentiation and purchase intention increases as the values of match decreases.*
> - *When there is stronger match between the post perceived position and purchase goal, positioning confidence will not impact the relationship between perceived differentiation and purchase goal at any value of match.*

It is proposed that a poorer match exists when the alignment between the consumer's post perceived position and purchase goal is at an average or below average level.

4.3.2 Antecedents to consumers' confidence in the post perceived position

The research model includes the proposed antecedents to the construct of consumer confidence in a product's post perceived position. It is proposed that positioning confidence is influenced by three variables: position clarity, position consistency, and the alignment between the initial and post perceived positions.

Position clarity measures the perceived explicability of the information encountered by the consumer in the search phase, in clearly demonstrating the product's position. That is, *can the consumer decipher what the product's position is via their information search or is it "stuck in the middle"?* For example, a product review website that rates product X as "average" on all attribute dimensions is unlikely to lead to position clarity. Position clarity is proposed to act as a positive moderator between perceived consistency and positioning confidence, as will be detailed further shortly.

The remaining two variables identify with the consumer's need for consistency in information and thought. As described earlier (Sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3), various fields of academic literature link consistency to confidence through the reduction in cognitive angst and risk. Specifically, the areas of judgment revision and information distortion support the inclusion of these variables as antecedents to positioning confidence.

Position consistency refers to the perceived uniformity in positioning signals experienced in the information search phase *between* the positioning signals stemming from the organisation (*actual position*) and positioning cues from sources external to the organisation (*external position*). For example, a consumer looks at a product's official website which leads to a perceived position of X, and follows-up by seeking product advice from a friend who suggests that from his/her experience the position of the product is in fact Y. A lack of coherence leads to uncertainty and cognitive angst as a decision needs to be made in terms of which information to discount. Position consistency is, therefore, concerned with the positioning signals encountered during the information search phase being aligned in terms of *which* position it is communicating. The theoretical model suggests that perceived consistency has a positive relationship with consumers' confidence in their post perceived positions.

This thesis hypothesises that positioning clarity and consistency interact together to have a positive effect on confidence. That is, perceived positioning clarity positively moderates the relationship between perceived consistency and confidence. Theoretically, the level of perceived clarity is likely to enhance or attenuate the relationship between perceived consistency and confidence, given that clarity aids comprehension and thus the ability to perceive the level of alignment.

The last proposed antecedent to positioning confidence relates to the alignment between the consumer's initial and post perceived positions. This variable takes into account the fact that consumers may enter the information search phase with a perceived position for the product and have their initial position challenged by disconfirming information sources. A change in positioning perception is likely due to the greater perceived diagnostics of the newer information. However it is also feasible that the initial position for the product has been taken from the brand's position (in line with Erdem and Swait's brand signalling theory) and an information search leads the consumer to assess positioning at product-level. A misalignment between the initial and post perceived positions could operationally transpire in two different ways:

1. The perceived performance of the product on the initial perceived position has changed. For example, respondent X initially perceived the Holden Barina to stand for the position of "value for money", and post the information search that respondent perceives that it does not perform well on that same positioning dimension of "value for money".

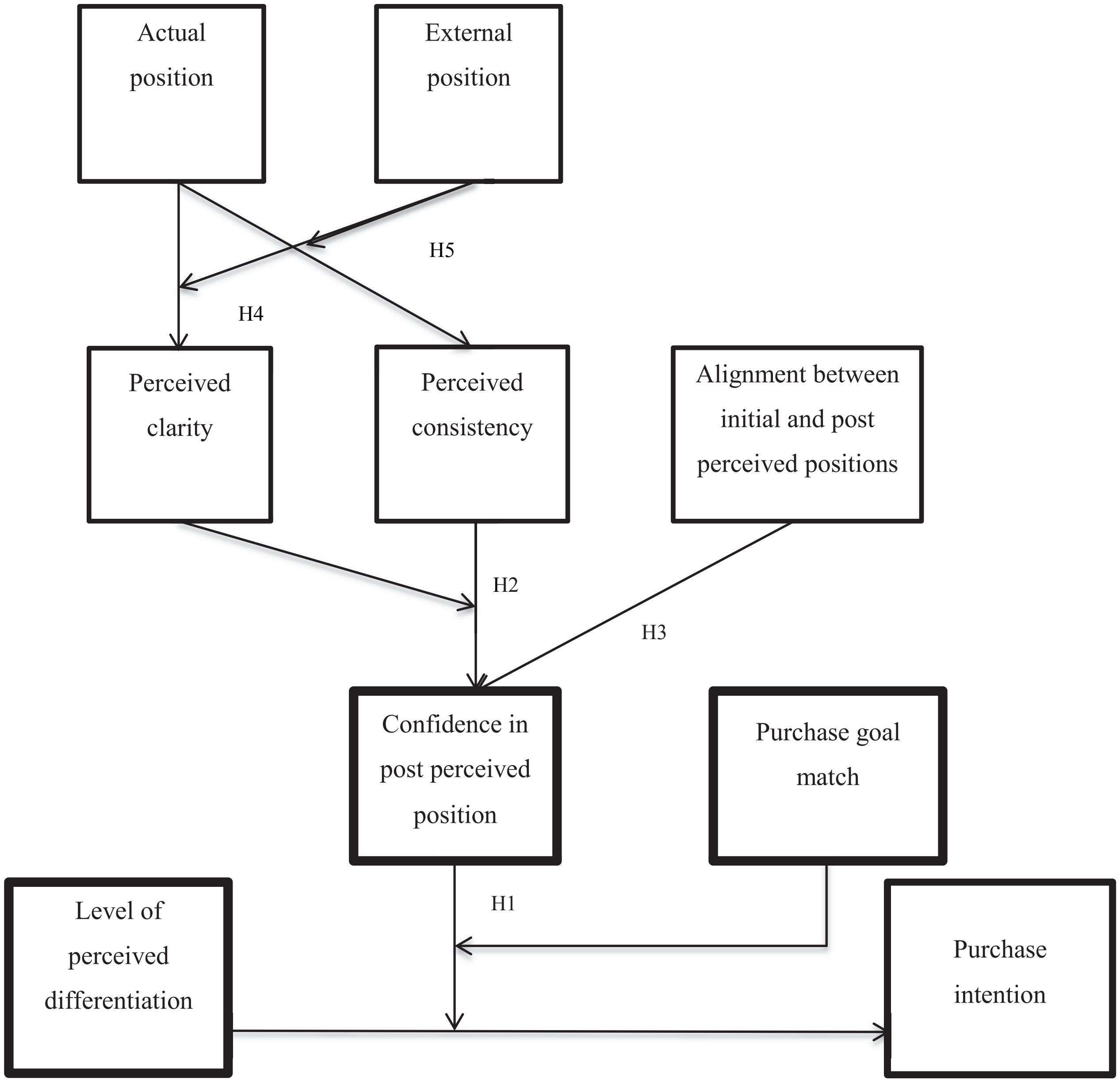
2. The change in the rank of the initial perceived position compared to the post perceived position. For example, respondent X initially perceives the Holden Barina to stand for the position of “value for money”, and this judgment still holds post information search. However, a different position is now the forefront position in the mind of that consumer. This is likely to be more common in cases where the initial perceived position is on the weaker end of the spectrum. In our example, the respondent holds the same judgment on the position of value for money, however his/her information search has resulted in “service” being the more salient post perceived position

Ultimately, the alignment between the initial and post perceived positions represents a form of cognitive consistency. Poor cognitive consistency is likely to cause some cognitive anxiety, especially where the initial perception is well engrained over time. It is proposed that the alignment between the initial and post perceived positions has a positive relationship with positioning confidence. In the case where the consumer does not have an initial perceived position, the effect will be neutral.

> ***H2:*** *Consumers’ degree of positioning clarity acts as a positive moderator between positioning consistency and consumers’ confidence in their (post) perceived position.*

> ***H3:*** *The degree of alignment between the initial perceived position and the post perceived position positively affects consumers’ confidence in their post perceived position.*

Figure 4: Theoretical framework incorporating the antecedents and effect of consumers' confidence in competitive positions of products

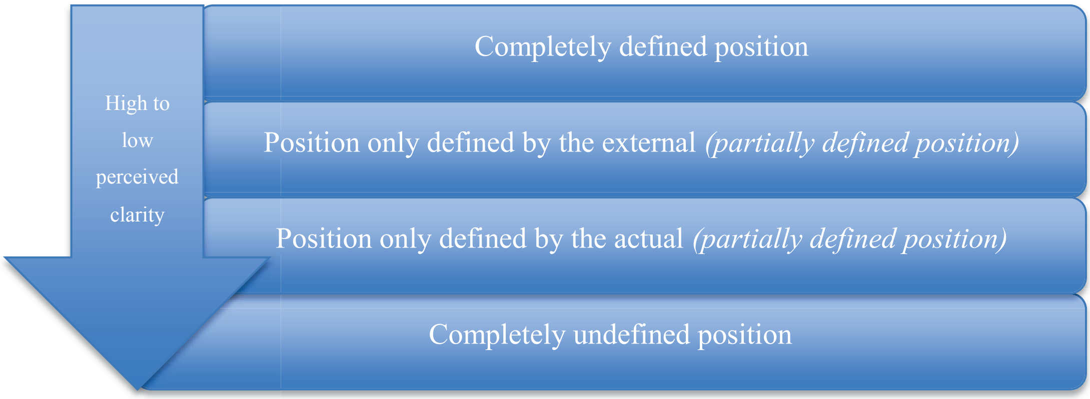


4.3.3 Interaction between actual and external positions—*level of positioning definition and similarity*

A further contribution of the model is to suggest the drivers of perceived clarity and perceived consistency. It is suggested that the actual and external positions interact with each other to impact both perceived clarity and consistency. As consumers delve through product information from both within and external to the brand, they will vary in their ability to decipher a position for the product. This is because the consumer may be unable to decode a position as the cues are simply fuzzy; they do not provide positioning cues at all, or overtly suggest a lack of true position for the product (in the language of Porter, they are "stuck in the middle"). Therefore, across the actual and external position, there is a level of positioning definition that is proposed to impact perceived clarity. That is, positioning definition may be completely defined, partially defined by either the actual or external source, or completely undefined. A position that is completely defined means that a position was delivered via both the actual and external source. A partially defined position means that a position for the product is portrayed via one but not both information source types. Lastly, a completely undefined position is where both information sources fail to deliver a position for the product. This terminology will be outlined in further detail in Section 5.3.2.

Six hypotheses are proposed regarding the level of position definition that comes from the interaction between the actual and external positioning cues and perceived clarity. These hypotheses are derived from the proposed perceived clarity hierarchy depicted in Figure 5. The highest level of perceived clarity is suggested to come from a completely defined position, with the lowest clarity stemming from a completely undefined position. It is believed that a partially defined position that is defined by the external source, as opposed to the actual, will result in superior perceived clarity due to the greater credibility that is placed on the external source type (Bickart & Schindler, 2001).

Figure 5: Proposed perceived clarity hierarchy



> ***H4a:*** *Consumers exposed to a completely defined position will have greater perceived clarity than consumers exposed to a completely undefined position.*

> ***H4b:*** *Consumers exposed to a completely defined position will have greater perceived clarity than consumers exposed to a position defined only by the actual source type.*

> ***H4c:*** *Consumers exposed to a completely defined position will have greater perceived clarity than consumers exposed to a position defined only by the external source type*

> ***H4d:*** *Consumers exposed to a position defined only by the actual source type will have greater perceived clarity than consumers exposed to a position that is completely undefined.*

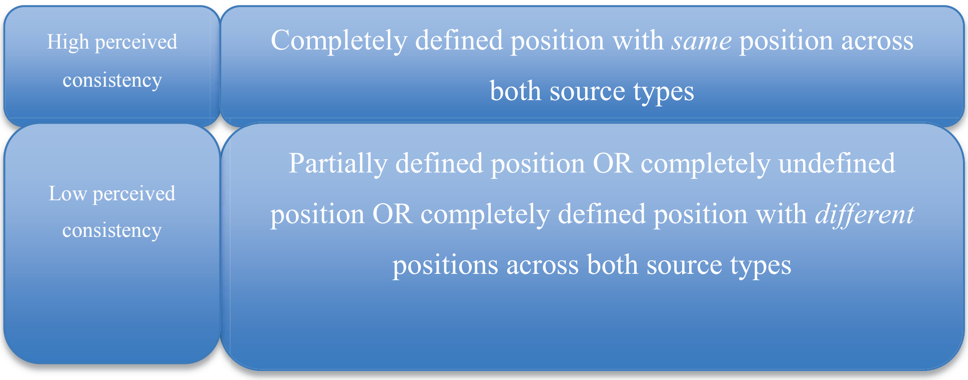
> ***H4e:*** *Consumers exposed to a position defined only by the external source type will have greater perceived clarity than consumers exposed to a position that is defined only by the actual source type.*

> ***H4f:*** *Consumers exposed to a position defined only by the external source type will have greater perceived clarity than consumers exposed to a position that is completely undefined.*

Perceived consistency refers to whether the position expressed *between* the actual and external information sources are the *same* or *different.* Five hypotheses have been drawn from the proposed perceived consistency hierarchy depicted in Figure 6. This thesis proposes that consumers who have been exposed to the *same* position between well-defined source types will consequently have the highest level of perceived consistency. It is proposed that this group of consumers will have significantly greater perceived consistency than consumers exposed to a) a partially defined position, b) a completely undefined position and c) a completely defined position with different positions between the source types. However, this thesis suggests that there is no material difference in perceived consistency between a, b and c. This is because all three scenarios are portraying dissimilar positioning cues, thus the distinction rests in the *type* of dissimilarity. It is unlikely for the consumer to reflect on the type of dissimilarity, merely the existence of the dissimilar cues. Existing literature to support this claim can be found in the fact that consumers generally avoid high-level cognition where it is not necessitated (Zipf, 1949).

As mentioned, an inconsequential difference in perceived consistency is expected between a completely undefined position (NIL-NIL). While on face value a completely undefined position may appear to be consistent, theoretically, consumers are unlikely to perceive a void position (NIL) from the organisation and a NIL position from external sources in the same manner. A consumer that perceives a void position does not perceive the product to stand out from its competitors on any position category. It is improbable that a NIL position derived the firm is characterised by a "stuck in the middle" positioning message. *e.g. we do not offer anything special over our competitors*. A NIL position from the organisation is likely to occur because of advertising that delivers an ineffective or absent positioning message. On the other hand, the external position may indeed produce a more explicit "stuck in the middle" positioning message, such as an expert review with a mid-point rating on all attributes and features for a product.

Figure 6: Proposed perceived consistency hierarchy



H5a: *For consumers exposed to a completely defined position, having the same position between actual and external source types will lead to greater perceived consistency of the product's (post) perceived position than consumers exposed to different positions across the actual and external source types.*

H5b: *Consumers exposed to a completely defined position with the same position between actual and external source types will have higher perceived consistency than consumers exposed to a completely undefined position.*

H5c: *Consumers exposed to a completely defined position with the same position between actual and external source types will have higher perceived consistency than consumers exposed to a partially defined position.*

H5d: *There is no difference in perceived consistency between consumers exposed to a completely defined position with different positions between actual and external source types and consumers exposed to a completely undefined position.*

H5e: *There is no difference in perceived consistency between consumers exposed to a partially defined position and consumers exposed to a completely undefined position.*

H5f: *There is no difference in perceived consistency between consumers exposed to a partially defined position and consumers exposed to a completely defined position with different positions across the actual and external source types.*

As a reminder, the proposed framework may not apply to all purchasing scenarios. The most relevant situation relates to high involvement product categories and a purchase scenario that is either a first or infrequent purchase, thus requiring an active information-gathering stage phase. It is unlikely to be applicable to habitual, low involvement purchases as they are characterised by limited or no information-gathering phase. Likewise, the proposed framework is unlikely to apply to repeat purchases where consumers' positioning confidence tends to be driven by direct prior experience.

In operationalising the model, there are also several control variables that need to act as co-variates in order to account for their impact on the dependent variables. A discussion on the control variables can be found in Chapter 5, which discusses the methodology.

4.4 Summary

This chapter proposes the framework that this research aims to validate and thus will contribute to the discipline of positioning. It primarily proposes the role of positioning confidence as a moderator between the level of differentiation of the consumers' perceived position and purchase intention, when the match between the positioning perception and the consumers' purchase goal is lower. It also brings together the multi-disciplinary literature review presented in earlier chapters of this research by suggesting three independent variables as determinants of positioning confidence—perceived clarity, perceived consistency, and the alignment between the initial and post (information search) perceived positions. Lastly, this thesis will look at how the actual and external positions to which the consumer is exposed in the information search phase impacts perceived clarity and consistency.

The next chapter will examine how the proposed model in this chapter will be tested and validated, as well as providing reasoning for the chosen approach.

5. Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This methodology chapter will outline how the proposed framework (discussed in Chapter 4) will be tested. A quantitative approach of two 3x3 full factorial designs between subject experiments will be outlined and justified. Two separate pre-test surveys will also enable selection of product categories and focus products that have been validated to meet the criteria of the model. The chapter will also detail how the various model constructs will be measured and supporting evidence of the chosen approach is presented. The specific data collection plan, involving a large random sample of Australian consumers, will be outlined.

5.2 Research design summary

The research design features two full-factorial experiments with three factors (i.e., 3x3) between subjects. The design of the experiments encompasses measures taken before and after the treatments. The research design relies on the chosen product category possessing high involvement, infrequent purchase, distinct product positioning within the competing alternatives, and being characterised by varied or moderate product category knowledge within the market. The focus product within the chosen product category should be characterised by a moderately strong initial positioning perception in order to test the alignment between the initial and post positions, and meet certain criteria for testing the hypotheses that will be outlined later in the chapter.

The product category and focus product will be pre-tested in order to verify a selection that best meets the criteria described. While the primary purpose of having two experiments is to allow for the testing of opposing scenarios regarding the (mis)match of the positioning perception to the consumer's purchase goal to support the model's generalizability, experiment 1 will involve a good, whereas Experiment 2 will entail a service.

The measures taken prior to the experimental treatment will capture initial positioning perceptions of the focus product, product category perceptions, and control variables. In order to stimulate target market segments—that is, consumers motivated by homogenous yet distinctive drivers of choice—the subjects will be given their purchase goal. This may be, for example, "you are looking to buy an SUV that is the best value for money", and subjects will be informed that they will be presented with various information on SUVs in the category. In essence, the subjects will undertake a mock information search phase that mimics real-life high involvement purchase behaviour.

Measures taken at the conclusion of the experimental treatment include the consumer's post perceived product position, confidence, and purchase intention. Therefore, some constructs in the model are strictly measured (for example, the initial perceived position), some are computed (such as the alignment between the initial and post perceived positions), and lastly, some are to be manipulated (for example, position clarity via information search).

As depicted, the research design is completely quantitative in nature. Given that this research is dealing with a causal framework, a qualitative approach is not possible. This author also believes there is adequate literature support for the framework proposed. Moreover, a laboratory experiment is chosen over the alternative of a field experiment in order to fully control the manipulation of the variables of position clarity and consistency via information search. In a field experiment, questions regarding consistency and clarity experienced in the information search would naturally be asked with a longer time lag, decreasing the validity of responses.

Given the assessment of a belief at one point in time, a cross-sectional design has been selected. While consumers' initial post perception could be held for years, or may even change over time, this research is concerned with the perception a consumer carries when a purchase need arises. Therefore, the significant points in time are those immediately before and after an information search. Thus, a longitudinal study is not believed to provide any benefit in the context of this study.

The outline of the research design will now be explained in more detail.

5.3 Detailed research design

As introduced in the previous section, the research design encompasses the preliminary step of pre-testing the product categories and focal products/brands to feature in the main study (see Figure 7). The first pre-test focused on the product categories to be chosen for the main research study, whereas the goal of the subsequent pre-test was to select the focal product/brand within the category. Given the product categories were chosen based on several criteria, it wasn't feasible to calculate the chosen categories based on embedded survey logic and follow up with the focal product selection. Therefore the pre-tests were staged in time.

Figure 7: Multi-stage research plan

5.3.1 Product category & focus products pre-test questionnaires

Aside from the standard market research protocol of pre-testing the main questionnaire and executing as a soft launch, two preceding different questionnaires were designed and executed. These pre-tests to the main research study ensured that the chosen product categories and focus product met certain criteria already discussed in this document. That is, the product category chosen is required to have a high perceived perception of distinct positions within the category, be characterised by high involvement, a medium level of product category knowledge.

The product category pre-test survey tested five good and five service categories. There were: *Good*—SUV cars, washing machines, SLR camera, personal laptop computers, flat screen TVs. *Service*—home content insurance, car insurance, home internet provider, airline—international economy class, credit card providers.

The pre-test survey (see Appendix 6) for product category validation followed a 10x10 partially balanced incomplete block design (PBIBD). This efficiently tested 10 product categories with a total sample of 100 participants, whilst simultaneously giving a per product category sample of 30 (see Table 1).

Table 1: PBIBD for product category pre-test

SUV cars	Washing machine	SLR cameras	Personal laptop	Flat screen TV	Home contents insurance	Car insurance	Home internet providers	Business class airfare	Credit card provider
1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Note that ‘1’ represents that a sample of 10 is allocated; ‘0’ represents that no respondents are allocated

A five-item scale of brand parity used by (Muncy 1996) was utilised to determine the perceived differentiation of product options within the category for the eight product categories listed:

- I can't think of many differences between the major brands of _________.
- To me, there are big differences between the various brands of ___________.
- The only difference between the major brands of ________ is the price.
- ____________ is ___________; most brands are basically the same.
- All major brands of _______________ are basically alike.

It should be noted that the scale was validated for nondurable product categories, however with the absence of a durable goods and services-specific scale, this author felt that the scale measure met the objective of the task at hand.

Involvement for the tested categories took the form of purchase decision importance as developed by Mittal (1989).

In selecting from the many types and brands of this product available in the market, would you say that:

- I would not care at all/I would care a great deal as to which one I buy.
- Do you think that the various types and brands of this product available in the market are all very alike or are all very different? They are alike/They are all very different.
- How important would it be to you to make a right choice of this product? Not at all important/Extremely important.
- In making your selection of this product, how concerned would you be about the outcome of your choice? Not at all concerned/ Very much concerned.

Lastly, product category knowledge was measured using the approach described in Section 5.5.6.

Following product category selection, a second pre-test using different subjects tested five focus products for each of the two chosen product categories. The focus product needed to meet the criteria of firstly being characterised by a perception of having a distinct position within the category with the majority of people having the same positioning perception, and secondly, having a moderate level of firm trust.

This second pre-test (see Appendix 7) examined goods and services product categories separately, with a sample of a unique 30 participants completing each questionnaire, thus requiring 60 participants in total. Subjects were questioned on a firm trust measure presented in Section 5.5.6. A measure of product differentiation was also included due to the prerequisite to choose a focus product that has a strong initial positioning perception. The three-item scale developed from Zhou and Nakamoto (2007) was borrowed:

When thinking about the total product offering (including aspects such as price, warranties and after-sales service):

- This product/brand is distinctive from other (insert product category) products/brands.
- This product/brand is different from other (insert product category) products/brands.
- This product/brand can be easily distinguished from other (product category) products/brands.

Finally, in order to determine whether the majority of subjects share the *same* positioning perception, subjects were asked the positioning perception items listed in Section 5.5.1. Less variance in the initial position perception is optimal as it allows for easier operationalisation of the alignment between the initial and post perceived positions.

5.3.2 Main research study

The main study comprises two experiments, with each testing all the hypotheses set out for this thesis. Two experiments allow for the ability to test the hypotheses across two different product categories (one being a good and one being a service), and across two different purchase goals, thus increasing the validity generalisability of findings. The nature of what is being proposed in this thesis is generic across all high-involvement product categories and purchase goals. Therefore, there is no perceived risk of confounding the results by having a service versus goods across the two experiments. The testing of two categories and purchase goals simply enhances the validity and generalisability of the findings. Other than the experimental treatments in the form of product information stimuli, the main research study design includes measures taken both before and after the treatments.

Given the random assignment of subjects and conditions, the study may be classed as a "true experiment". All factors appear in each experiment, as we are testing a model or framework in its entirety instead of only main effects. Hence, in order to ensure that all interaction effects are captured, a full factorial design is chosen.

The model variables tested via pre experimental treatment measurement are:

- Initial perceived position of the focal product.
- Controls such as firm trust and product category knowledge.

After the subjects complete the pre-experimental measures, the respondents will be told that they need to make a purchase in the chosen product category and will be given a purchase goal. In Experiment 1, the purchase goal is value-for-money (VFM), and in Experiment 2, it is top-of-the-range (TOR). VFM and TOR were chosen as purchase goals as they are common purchase goals in most product categories. This is supported by the amount of literature that focuses on luxury and value products as opposed to alternate purchase goals such as reliability, attractiveness, and service. Along with the purchase goal, respondents will be told that they are considering a certain product X. It should be noted that in the experimental design, the purchase goal matches the majority of respondents' initial perceived position. Intuitively, consumers who have a particular purchase goal, for example VFM, will research a product that they believe will satisfy this purchase goal, for example, an initial belief going into the information search that the product delivers the best VFM.

After the purchase goal is outlined, respondents will be provided with market information about the focal product (with reference to other competitors). The stimuli the subjects receive will be manipulated. Following the mock information search, respondents are reminded of their purchase goal and asked about their degree of purchase. In summary, the back-end part of the collection instrument captures the following model variables:

- Post perceived position of the focal product.
- Confidence in the post perceived position (direct measure).
- Perceived level of differentiation.
- Purchase intention.
- Perceived consistency.
- Perceived clarity.
- Perceived level of differentiation.
- Controls such as source and position credibility, psychological characteristics.

The experiment features a 3x3 full-factorial between-subjects design where the position expressed in the actual and external positioning sources is one of three positions. For the first experiment, this is: VFM, REL, and no position (NIL), and for the second experiment the positions will vary across TOR, VFM, and no position (NIL). The first position (VFM and TOR for Experiment 1 and Experiment 2, respectively) represents the purchase goal and also the initial perceived position for most respondents. The second position (REL and TOR for Experiments 1 and 2, respectively) represents an alternate position to that of the purchase goal. In Experiment 1, reliability (REL) is the chosen “place holder” position, as for most VFM products a TOR position would lack credibility. For example, it would be difficult to imagine the realistic portrayal of some well-known VFM brands such as Aldi, Kmart, Great Wall, and Ryan Air as top of the range. Thus, positions such as attractiveness, service, reliability, and country of origin provide a more realistic option. Reliability is chosen for the planning phase, as it is a common position in most categories. However, the fit of the reliability position to the focal product will be re-evaluated in terms of credibility after the category is selected. The last position of NIL refers a lack of position and appears in both Experiments 1 and 2. The idea of NIL is that the consumer does not decipher a position for the product from the particular information source. The product is portrayed as “stuck in the middle” and, thus, is not superior over its competitors in any area. The planned result from the manipulations is that each experiment cell will have different predicted levels of positioning definition (completely defined, partially defined, completely undefined) and variation in whether the position portrayed across the actual and external information sources are the same or different. The experimental design, including the result from the manipulation of the actual position and external cues, can be found in Table 2. The basic design of the 3x3 between-subject experiment is near identical for each of the two experiments. The only difference between the two experiments is the initial perceived position (for most) and purchase goal with TOR for Experiment 1 and VFM for Experiment 2.

As suggested earlier, the actual position represents the organisation’s positioning signals and the external position is positioning indicators that come from outside the organisation. The manipulation of the information search has been operationalised using both the actual position and external cues as this is believed to be the closest replication of real-life. That is, for a high involvement, irregular purchase, it is unlikely that consumers would only consult what the organisation is saying about the product—for example, the product website—and equally as unlikely to solely consult market-derived information—such as blogs, word of mouth, or even independent product reviews—without touching on the actual position. Even for consumers who are sceptical of information that is organisation-derived, such as “advertising”, it is reasonable to think that a consumer would visit a retailer to physically trial the product (if it’s a good) and thus still be exposed to the organisation’s positioning message. The actual position is one of the three levels of positioning that the literature outlines, and it is what the consumer evaluates in deriving the perceived position. However, as discussed throughout this thesis, it is believed that incorporating external cues in the experiment better mirrors real world behaviour, thus increasing the external validity of the research.

Respondents will be exposed to three stimuli to depict the actual position and likewise three stimuli to depict the external position. The following sources of information have been chosen:

<u>The actual position (voice of the organisation):</u>

- Press release—from the brand of the chosen focal product. A press release execution gives the actual position an "official feel", allows for a moderate amount of text and, thus, leaves the position open to less interpretation bias.
- Magazine advertisement.
- Newspaper advertisement.

<u>The external cues (voice of the market):</u>

- Expert's review.
- Online forum.
- A customer's experience with the product (blog).

A diverse range of external cues is needed to overcome source credibility and to touch on the two types of market derived positioning cues —expert reviewers and everyday consumers.

The logic behind choosing a total of six stimuli is that the information search experience provides a realistic appreciation of information sources consulted by consumers (Court et al., 2009). Similarly, it is doubtful whether positioning clarity and consistency for a high involvement category could be achieved with a lesser amount of stimuli, nor a convincing disconfirmation of the respondent's initial positioning perception to test the relevant antecedent variable. There is an equal amount of stimuli representing the actual versus external positions as the two categories of information, driven by the aim to achieve a similar level of influence. The latter will be managed through measuring source credibility of each of the stimuli in the pre-testing phase and employing source credibility as a control variable.

Table 2: Basic experimental design

Experiment 1:

Factor 2: External position		Factor 1: Actual position		
		VFM	REL	NIL
	VFM	Completely defined (same) position	Completely defined (different) position	Position partially defined by external
	REL	Completely defined (different) position	Completely defined (same) position	Position partially defined by external
	NIL	Position partially defined by actual	Position partially defined by actual	Completely undefined position

Experiment 2:

Factor 2: External position		Factor 1: Actual position		
		VFM	TOR	NIL
	VFM	Completely defined (same) position	Completely defined (different) position	Position partially defined by external
	TOR	Completely defined (different) position	Completely defined (same) position	Position partially defined by external
	NIL	Position partially defined by actual	Position partially defined by actual	Completely undefined position

The definitions of the terminology used as the outcome in the experimental design in Table 3 are now described in detail:

- <u>Completely defined position</u>—Each piece of stimulus strongly communicates a product position, whatever the position that may be, across both the actual and external positioning source type. There is a lack of positioning definition when the piece of stimulus does not communicate a product position. That is, all cues in the stimulus are "stuck in the middle" and do not point to a product position. Positioning definition is an *across* source measure and an overall assessment of the actual and external cues. There are two variations of a completely defined position result. Firstly, the position depicted between the actual and external source type is the *same*. For example, the actual and external source types portray a TOR position. Secondly, the position depicted between the actual and external source type is *different*. For example, the actual source type portrays a TOR position but the external source type portrays a VFM position.

- Partially defined position—This occurs when all stimuli from one information source type define the product's position but the stimuli from the opposing source type does not. There are two options with a partially defined position: a position only defined by the actual source (e.g. actual position is TOR and the external position is NIL) *or* a position only defined by the external source (e.g. actual position is NIL and external position is REL, thus NIL–REL) There is a lack of positioning definition when the piece of stimulus does not communicate a product position. That is, all cues in the stimulus are "stuck in the middle" and do not point to a product position.

- Completely undefined position—In this case the lack of positioning definition is coming from both the actual and external source types. Therefore each piece of stimulus does not communicate a product position. That is, all cues in the stimulus are "stuck in the middle" and do not point to a product position. A completely undefined position occurs in the NIL–NIL scenario.

To further clarify the level of positioning definition and similarity terminology, specific scenarios are outlined:

- Actual position is TOR + external position is TOR = completely defined position, with *same* position across actual and external sources.
- Actual position is TOR+ external position is VFM = completely defined position, with *different* positions across actual and external sources.
- Actual position is TOR + external position is NIL = position defined only by actual source (partially defined position).
- Actual position is NIL + external position is REL = position defined only by external source (partially defined position).
- Actual position is NIL + external position is NIL = completely undefined position.

- Similarity—There are two levels of similarity that exist in the experimental conditions.
  1. High-level similarity—This only occurs for completely defined positions that reveal the same position between the actual and external source type e.g.. TOR–TOR; VFM–VFM.
  2. Low-level similarity—This occurs through the following ways:
     a. A completely undefined position; NIL–NIL. While both sources do not define the position, it is unlikely it is doing this in the same way. The likely method of NIL for organisation is that it is being fuzzy in its cues or indulging in advertising "puffery" that is not making it clear to the consumer what the product actually stands for. A

NIL external position more likely to call out a "stuck in the middle" position. Therefore, it is not unlikely for NIL–NIL to deliver the same perceived consistency to a consumer than VFM–VFM or TOR–TOR, as both sources will be forthright and thus similar in delivering the positioning message.

b. A partially defined position e.g. NIL–TOR* or TOR–NIL is defined as medium level in positioning similarity because while one source says nothing about the position is likely to be thought of as "void" in the consumers mind, the lack of similarity across the two sources is unlikely to be as high as when the positions are juxtaposed.
c. completely defined with different positions across both source types e.g. TOR–VFM, VFM–TOR

As can be seen, the position portrayed in the stimuli *within* each source type is always the same e.g. three stimuli of TOR or three stimuli of VFM or three stimuli of NIL. Hence, the level of similarity comes from comparing the actual and external sources, making it a *between*-source variable.

There are several control variables that will be measured in order to minimise its noise (see Section 5.5.6):

- Self-confidence.
- Need for cognition.
- Uncertainty avoidance.
- Firm trust.
- Product category knowledge.
- Source and positioning credibility.
- Brand attitude.
- Brand familiarity.

A pilot of the main survey to a sample of 50 respondents will be conducted in order to address any potential issues relating to the validity and reliability of constructs, survey time, and hypothesis guessing.

---

* It should be noted that the depiction of position X–position Y denotes the actual position first and the external position second. For example: NIL–TOR depicts a NIL actual position and a TOR external position. This representation applies to the entire thesis.

As well as the total survey duration, the amount of time that each respondent spends on each stimulus page will be captured. The stimuli will be rotated both *between* the actual and external sources as well as the three stimuli *within* each source type in order to spread out the order of viewing within each experimental cell.

5.4 Sampling and data collection

Given that there are two experiments each with a 3x3 factorial design, this gives 18 experimental conditions that need to be fulfilled. Considering that the effect sizes are unknown due to the novelty of the research, the studies follow experimental convention by using 30 subjects in each cell (VanVoorhis & Morgan, 2007).

A simple random sample of a commercial consumer panel will be called upon within Australia. Aside from ensuring typical demographic representation such as income and age, the screening process *excludes* the following:

- *Subjects who have bought within the product categories within the last three years/non-ownership of the focal product.*

  This will allow for subjects to treat the purchasing decision in the same manner as a novice purchaser. This is important in order for the respondent to rely on the stimuli information presented in the experiment rather than their own perceptions.

- *Subjects with very low category involvement* (mean of items is < 3 on a 7-item scale)

  The stimuli are cognitively heavy, and a crucial part of the experiment. Subjects with very low category involvement are unlikely to take the time to process the stimuli. The real-life generalisability of the research is stronger for high involvements categories, as this study applies to consumers that conduct a thorough information search that encompasses both the actual and external position. This is likely to be correlated to the consumers' involvement.

The experiment will be self-administered online. This approach will allow for the research project to meet its time and budget restrictions while maintaining a fairly large sample size. There is no physical requirement in the experimental design, such as where a product needs to be tangibly sensed, nor is there a high chance of miscomprehension in the surveys that would warrant the cost and participant inconvenience of a face-to-face experiment. Respondents will be told that the research was a study into consumer perceptions of the product category.

5.5 Construct measures and operationalisation

The next section will discuss how the constructs in the study will be measured and where measurement alternatives exists, the justification for the chosen approach.

5.5.1 Perceived position (initial and post)

Various extant positioning typologies are measured using single-items. For example, Hooley and Greenley's work (2005) in matching resource underpinnings to competitive positions relied on first determining the intended competitive position of the SBU's main offering. In order to extract the information, the five proposed positioning dimensions of price, quality, service, innovation, and customisation are operationalised in a single scale relative to major competitors. Senior managers are asked to evaluate their market offering on a 5-point scale from much lower to much higher than competitor's offerings. For example: "Rate the degree of technical quality of your products or services again competitors." While single item scales may work for managers, as they should be familiar with the typologies, this is unlikely to be the case for consumers. The alternate multi-item positioning typology of Blankson and Kalafatis (2004) is now described.

The consumer-derived typology proposed and tested by Blankson and Kalafatis (2004) poses eight generic positions: top of the range (TOR), services (SER), value for money (VFM), reliability (REL), attractiveness (ATTRACT), country of origin (COO), brand name (BRAND), and selectivity (SEL). The advantage of this scale is that it addresses the long-standing criticism of previous typologies for not incorporating the consumers' perspective and for their difficulty in application (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007, Blankson & Crawford, 2012). The scale displays strong reliability, with Cronbach's alpha scores of a low of .69 and a high at .94 across the eight positions (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007, Blankson & Crawford, 2012). There are 30 items/statements that support the 8 typologies, with each position possessing 2–5 supporting items. Respondents in Blankson's studies have been required to indicate the degree to which the descriptor (statement) is relevant in determining their perception of the products and services in terms of their features, attributes, and benefit. The wording is as follows:

> *Please consider each description(s)/statement(s), i.e. word (or group of words) in the centre of the page in terms of how relevant you perceive them to be in evaluating or comparing between X (insert product category).*

Respondents answered on a 7-point scale, where 1 stood for very irrelevant and 7 stood for very relevant. As stated by the authors, the generalisability of the scale means that it is applicable to both goods and services.

An alternative to using existing general positioning typologies is to allow consumers or industry experts to determine product category-specific positions, typically implemented as a qualitative step of the research (Ghose & Lowengart, 2001). Consumer-derived positions could be gathered via exploratory research techniques such as a focus group (Ghose & Lowengart, 2001) or expert-derived positions via content analysis of advertisements (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007). However, the objective of this research is not to obtain high accuracy of the positions within the category itself, but more to understand the change in an individual's positioning perception throughout the purchasing decision process and the attached confidence construct. Therefore, a return-on-investment analysis of a possible qualitative component does not hold where tested generic typologies are available. In addition, the positions derived from qualitative techniques would likely be implemented via a single-item measure that is open to the disadvantages bestowed on such measures. In fact, when left to the consumer, it appears that they are challenged in distinguishing between product attributes and positions (Ghose and Lowengart, 2001).

It appears that Blankson and Kalafatis' typology has greater merit than the competing typologies for the purpose of this study for several reasons. Firstly, it is consumer-derived, therefore the typologies themselves have arguably greater merit. Secondly, it is multi-item scale and there is substantial support for the superiority of multi-item scales in terms of predictive validity (Diamantopoulos, Sarstedt, Fuchs, Wilczynski, & Kaiser, 2012).

The 30-item scale that operationalises the Blankson and Kalafatis scale represents some challenges for the purpose of this research. Primarily, the length of the measure means that it would be rather cumbersome for subjects in the main study. This is because respondents are required to share their positioning perception twice, that is, for both the initial and post perceived positions. Approaches to deal with the challenge of having to complete a 30-item scale twice is to either condense the scale by selecting two items that represent the highest item to total correlation, or have the subject assess the position name (e.g. value for money) and list the scale items as a descriptors of what the position means (e.g.. reasonable price, value for money, affordability). The first option is not ideal as it rules out the ability to use the JUMP model (Chandrashekaran, Rotte, & Grewal, 2005) to measure confidence (see Section 5.5.3), which relies on multi-item measures of positioning perception that possess three items at a minimum. Furthermore, the second option would transform the scale into a single item measure, which presents reliability issues and counts on consumers reading the definition of the positions to process the supporting items.

Given the stated reasoning, a condensed scale using an item-total correlation is used for the focus product pre-test, as the typology is utilised for four products in the category. For each position, the two positioning items with the highest item-total correlation was chosen, pending that the item-total correlation is greater than 0.4 (see Table 3). The full scale is utilised in the main study. There is a time gap between the two appearances of the scale items in the main study, thus this should assist in minimising any possible perceived cumbersomeness from respondents. In addition, the sample is derived from a paid panel that is, thus, more likely to be motivated in survey response.

Table 3: Blankson and Kalafatis (2004) positioning typology items

Top of the range		**Attractiveness**	
Prestigious	0.889	Attractive	0.595
Status	0.879	Elegant	0.582
Posh		Good aesthetics	
Upper class		Cool	
Top of the range		**Country of origin**	
Service		Patriotism	0.459
Consider people as important	0.706	Country of origin	0.450
Friendly	0.695	**The name**	
Personal attention		Choice	0.584
Impressive service		Leaders in the market	0.524
Value for money		Extra features	
Value for money	0.768	Wide range	
Reasonable price	0.734	The name of the offering	
Affordability		**Selectivity**	
Reliability		Discriminatory	0.477
Safety	0.554	Non-selective	
Reliability	0.522	High principles	
Durability			
Warranty			

Notes: Items with noted item-total correlation depict the 15 items that form part of the condensed scale to be used in the focal product pre-test. The position of selectivity is a 1-item measure in the condensed version, as the remaining items were below an item-total correlation score of 0.4. The main study will use the full scale of 30 items.

Thus in conclusion, the initial and post perceived positions are measured using the validated positioning typology presented by Blankson and Kalafatis. The scale is adapted from the origin in order to enhance clarity and meaning for the categories that will be chosen for main study. A condensed 15-item version will be used in the focal product pre-test, whereas the full, adapted version will be utilised in the main study.

5.5.2 Level of perceived differentiation

The level of perceived product or brand differentiation has been measured both directly and indirectly (Romaniuk et al., 2007). An indirect measure of differentiation is to measure the space between the competitors on a perceptual map, with the greater the "free space", the greater the perceived differentiation. However, some argue that it is a still an inference to determine differentiation from perceived positions (Romaniuk et al., 2007). For example, how does greater distance in one position rank versus smaller distances across many positions? Therefore various studies have opted for directly asking respondents for the overall perceived product/brand difference or uniqueness.

Soscia, Girolamo and Busacca (2010) adopted Gorn and Weinberg's (1984) single-item measure of perceived brand differentiation (called brand similarity), which entails a 9-point scale on the single description of identical (1) to completely different (9). Other authors use various 2-point scales such as *product X is generally like other brands of category Y* and *product X has features that distinguish it from other brands* (Sujan & Bettman, 1989). An alternate 2-item scale is to ask respondents to rate the product or brand on how *different* and *unique* they think it is (Romaniuk et al., 2007).

Lastly, Zhou and Nakamoto (2007) have developed and tested a 3-item scale of *the brand is <u>distinctive</u> from other brands, this brand is <u>different</u> from other brands,* and *this brand can be easily <u>distinguished</u> from other brands.* The Cronbach's α of the scale is .94, showing high reliability.

The consensus in the literature appears to favour a direct measure of perceived differentiation instead of an indirect measure. Therefore, this research will adopt the 3-item scale offered by Zhou and Nakamoto (2007) given it reports high reliability. The adapted wording will bring focus to the fact that differentiation is in context of the competition, especially in light of the fact that the stimuli received by the respondents focuses heavily on one brand.

- From what you know about other {insert product category} brands, how <u>distinctive</u> is X?
- From what you know about other {insert product category} brands, how <u>different</u> is X?
- How easily can X be <u>distinguished</u> from its competitors?

5.5.3 Confidence in post perceived position

While this research applies the notion of belief-confidence to a new construct, that of positioning perception judgment, the measurement of belief-confidence itself is certainly well-established in the literature. There are two competing schools of thought in measuring belief-confidence. The first is the more conventional way of measuring the judgment and consequently measuring confidence separately on a scale. The alternate view is to infer uncertainty from the stated judgment.

In terms of the more "conventional" method of measuring confidence via a scale, most work tends to utilise a single item measure, firstly asking subjects about their belief and consequently asking respondents to indicate their certainty/uncertainty that their belief estimate was accurate. Various researchers have used a certainty label, a Likert scale where the end points are labelled *extremely* (un)certain (Katz, 1984; Warland & Sample, 1973).

Others have been more literal about the use of the word "confidence". One study which looked at the role of confidence in understanding and predicting buyer's attitudes and purchase intentions (Bennett & Harrell, 1975) asked respondents a belief statement with a 7-point probability scale and followed-on with a confidence indication for each belief. That is, *answer on the second scale the level of confidence you have in your answer to the first part.* This was also measured on a 7-point scale from extremely low confidence to extremely high confidence.

The research then asked physicians to rate their confidence in prescribing different brands of drugs, to rate the probability that a fellow respected physician would recommend that they prescribe each brand of drug, and then indicate their level of confidence in their judgments as to what other respected physicians would recommend that they do. Respondents were also asked for their overall confidence, which attempts to measure the overarching confidence respondents would have in using each drug: *Overall, how confident are you in your use of each drug rated on a scale identical to the individual items?* The overall confidence was correlated with a measure of behavioural intention. The two individual item levels of confidence were summed and a median split was used placing half the physicians in a “higher confidence” category and the other half in a “lower confidence” group. The behaviour intention of the two groups was then analysed.

The belief-confidence scale of Kardes and Kalyanaram (1992) questions respondents on various beliefs such as *how favourable or unfavourable is your overall evaluation of brand X?* Each evaluation is followed by an 11-point Likert measure of: *How confident are you about this rating? (not at all confident/very confident).*

While a great deal of research appears to have employed a single-item measure of confidence, a few studies (Zhang & Buda, 1999) have used a composite score of three items *confident/non-confident, certain/not certain,* and *feel sure/unsure* (measured on a 7-point scale).

As stated earlier, an alternate approach to explicit questioning is to infer uncertainty from the reporting of the judgment. This concept, known as the JUMP model (Judgment Uncertainty and Magnitude Parameters) measures magnitude or strength of the judgment simultaneously to uncertainty inherent in the overt judgment (Chandrashekaran, McNeilly, Russ, & Marinova, 2000). The authors of the model argue that there are several benefits to the JUMP model in measuring uncertainty, the primary advantage being the fact that there is no need for a separate measure. The JUMP model suggests that the potential distribution or variance of the overt response to the judgment itself indicates confidence, as when confidence is high the distribution is tight, and vice versa. Choice and confidence are produced from the same underlying process and, thus, do not need to asked in a delayed fashion.

The authors of JUMP borrow from the work of Gigerenzer, Hoffrage, and Kleinbölting, (1991) that implies that uncertainty measures are likely to confounded, for example, it is socially undesirable to lack confidence as it is generally perceived by most people as a sign of mental weakness. Thus making artificial any scale measures of uncertainty that follow a judgment. This school of thought labels belief-confidence as a covert phenomenon.

In summary, it appears that there are two approaches to confidence measurement: directly measuring confidence post judgment via a confidence scale, or inferring confidence via the variance of the distribution on which the judgment is professed. The majority of researchers who have adopted the first approach have used a single-item Likert-measure of confidence (whether called confidence or certainty). This is normally operationalised as an overall confidence question directly after questioning the evaluation or belief. However, an alternative is to ask respondents if s/he would recommend the focus product to a friend, thus indirectly indicating confidence. However, a three-item reflective measure of confidence has been used in other studies.

For the purpose of this study, both the direct questioning of positioning confidence via a multi-item scale and the indirect method of JUMP will be used. Given that confidence is the main construct of the research, it seems logical to test two different approaches to confidence. The three-item measure discussed will be used to as a measure of overall confidence taken across the condensed version of the Blankson items in totality. The alternate of asking respondents to indicate their confidence (single-item) over each positioning item, with 30 items in total, would be extremely cumbersome for the respondent.

In order to operationalise the JUMP approach, three regression equations are required. The first equation is that of the post perceived position, thus the judgment that the model is concerned with. The second regression equation is that of the variance in the error of the judgment, that is, the dependent variable is derived from first equation in the series. The last regression equation depicts the lack of confidence in the judgment (or “uncertainty” in JUMP terminology), in this case the judgment being the post perceived position.

5.5.3.1 Regression equations to utilise JUMP theory

(1) $PostPos_i = \beta_0 + PosM_i + \varepsilon_i$

where:

$PostPos_i$ = Post perceived position of consumer I – max score from Pos1L, Pos2L, Pos3L, Pos4L, Pos5L, Pos6L,Pos7L,Pos8L

$PosM_i$ = Positioning magnitude. Mean of summated scores for each of Blankson and Kalafatis' (2004) 8 positions

PosM = Pos1L + Pos2L + Pos3L + Pos4L + Pos5L + Pos6L + Pos7L + Pos8L

where Pos1L denotes the positioning level (mean) of position 1 – Top of the Range; Pos2L denotes the positioning level of position 2 – service etc.

ε = error term

(1a) $PosM = X_i\beta$

X_i = denote row-vectors of variables hypothesised to affect positioning magnitude

β = column-vectors of the impacts of X_i

thus, $PosM = \beta_1 Pos1L + \beta_2 Pos2L + \beta_3 Pos3L + \beta_4 Pos4L + \beta_5 Pos5L + \beta_6 Pos6L + \beta_7 Pos7L + \beta_8 Pos8L$

(2) $Var(\varepsilon_i) = \sigma 2$ + Lack of PosConf + k_i

where:

$Var(\varepsilon)$ = variance in error term

$\sigma 2$ = measurement and model error variance

PosConf = confidence in post perceived position of consumer *i*

K_i = Sources of error variance not accounted for by PosConf

(3) Lack of PosConf = $Z\gamma = \gamma_1$ Pos1 + γ_2 Pos2 + γ_3 Pos3 + γ_4 Pos4 + γ_5 Pos5 + γ_6 Pos6 + γ_7 Pos7 + γ_8 Pos8

where:

Z = row-vectors of variables hypothesised to affect PosConf

γ = denote column-vectors of the impacts of the variables hypothesised to affect PosConf

5.5.4 Purchase intention

Purchase intention is a commonly used effectiveness measure to anticipate actual response. While there are many variations to the commonly used 3 or 4 items, the measure of purchase intention for the purpose of this study will use an adaptation of 3-item measure of *likely/unlikely, probable/improbable, impossible/possible* as per Zhang and Buda (1999). The reported Cronbach's alpha of .80 suggests strong internal consistency of the items. Respondents will be reminded of their purchase goal in the item wording. The purchase intention items for this study is as follows:

- It is very <u>likely</u> that I would purchase a {insert product} if my purchase goal was to buy a {insert purchase goal} {insert product category}.
- If I was looking to purchase a {insert purchase goal {insert product category}, it is very <u>probable</u> that I would purchase the {insert product}.
- In looking for a {insert purchase goal}{insert product category}, it is very <u>possible</u> that I would purchase the {insert product}.

5.5.5 Perceived clarity and consistency

A scale used in a study by Simmons and Becker-Olsen (2006) used a 3-item positioning clarity scale with a reported Cronbach's alpha of .94. The scale items are: *X <u>clearly communicated</u> what it stands for*, *X has an image that is <u>difficult to understand</u>,* and *X <u>conveys a clear image</u> in all of its acti*ons. This scale has been adapted to better fit the purpose of this study by changing the wording from *image* to *main point of difference* (see Section 1.4 on positioning terminology). Secondly the negatively-worded item will be reversed due to the potential to confound the factor. The adapted perceived clarity scale will be tested as follows:

- Was the main point of difference for X <u>clearly communicated</u> in the various product information/media sources you saw? Not very clear at all/very clear.
- Was the main point of difference for X <u>easy to understand</u> in the various product information/media sources you saw? Not very east at all/very easy.
- Did the various product information/media sources you saw <u>convey a clear image</u> for X?

The literature search failed to uncover an exact positioning consistency scale. The closest scales measure the external congruence of the advertisement or congruence amongst channels. The external congruence of the advertisement refers to the degree to which a person believes that an advertisement is consistent with the types of advertisements that is usually released by the company.

The three-item scale by Martin, Stewart and Matta (2005) delivered a Cronbach's alpha of .69. The three items are:

- How similar is the type of advertising that you associate with X and the type of message that you see here for X? (not at all similar/very similar).
- How well does this message exemplify the type of advertising that X uses for its other products? (extremely poor example/extremely good example).
- How consistent is this message with the type of advertising that X uses for its other products?' (not at all consistent/very consistent).

On the other hand, the channel congruence scale is a 5-item scale developed by Bezes (2013) and obtained a reliability indicated (Joreskog coefficient) of .875. The 5 items are measured on a 5-point scale:

- The website and the store are the same thing.
- The website and the store feel the same in my mind.
- The website and the store are consistency with one another.
- I think the website matches the store's atmosphere seamlessly.
- The website really reflects what the store is.

However given the altered purpose in this study of positioning consistency, three items have been developed, drawing upon the two parallel scales found. The items are as follows:

- How <u>consistently</u> did the different product information/media sources depict X? Extremely inconsistent/Extremely consistent.
- Did the different product information/media sources represent X in a <u>similar</u> manner? Not similar at all/Very similar.
- Did the various product information/media sources <u>match</u> each other in what they suggested about X? Did not match at all/matched perfectly.

While the face value of the scale appears good, given the adaptation in combining two existing congruence/consistency scales, particular attention will be paid to the fit and reliability of the scale measurement in the pilot-testing phase.

5.5.6 Controls

There are various groups of experimental controls that need to be considered. The first group can be labelled as psychological/personality variables that take into account individual characteristics of respondents, especially when the dependent variable is confidence. In fact individual attributes such as self-confidence, uncertainty avoidance, and need for cognition have been suggested as antecedents to judgment certainty and, thus, need to be accounted for (Chandrashekaran, Rotte, & Grewal, 2005).

The other group consists of controls relating to the respondents' possible pre-disposed perceptions to the tested brand and category and, thus, perceptual differences regarding the experimental stimuli. More specifically, these include, firm trust, product category knowledge, source credibility, positioning credibility, brand attitude, and brand familiarity. These variables are likely to have a superfluous impact on the dependent variables of purchase, confidence, and perceived clarity and consistency. For example, a consumer's high trust in the firm may be driving his/her high positioning confidence instead of this thesis' proposed independent variables.

Given the length of the questionnaire and cognitively heavy stimuli process that will be required for respondents, the number of items will be reduced to between 2–3 in scales that possess a greater amount of items, and where it is believed that the reliability will not be significantly impacted. Ultimately, this will be verified in the pilot-testing phase.

Self-confidence

There are various types of "general confidence" scales in the literature. A self-confidence measure used in Lumpkin and Hunt (1989) seems appropriate to measure as a control for this study. The 3-item scale used in this study is:

- I think I have more self-confidence than most people.
- I think I have a lot of personal ability.
- I am more independent than most people.

Uncertainty Avoidance

This construct measures the extent to which an individual desires certainty and the familiar in life and dislikes the unknown and taking risks. Given the main dependent variable in this study relates to judgment confidence, one would perceive that an individual who is innately uncomfortable with uncertainty may be biased to convince him/herself that they are in fact confident in their positioning judgment to avoid any cognitive angst caused by uncertainty. This research borrows a 3-item scale used by Erdem, Swait, and Valenzuela (2006) to measure uncertainty avoidance as a control variable, which originally reported a Cronbach's alpha of .692

The three items used in this study are:

- Security is an important concern in my life.
- Life is so uncertain that one must continuously be on the alert so as not to be caught at a disadvantage.
- It is important to consider opposing views when making personal and social decisions.

Need for cognition

Need for cognition relates to an individual's tendency to intrinsically enjoy the act of thinking. Given the requirement in this study to process six stimuli of product information to determine a product's position, it appears to be a relevant control variable. Cacioppo and Petty (1982) note a 5-item scale with a Cronbach's alpha of .73

- I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities.
- I only think as hard as I have to.
- The notion of thinking abstractly is not appealing to me.
- I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likely chance I'll have to think in depth about something.
- The idea of relying on thought to get my way to the top does not appeal to me.

However, the pilot study tests the reliability of having a 3-item need for cognition scale that used the first three items listed. As mentioned earlier, control variables of numerous items were tested for possible reduction in response items.

Note that the psychological/personality constructs of self-confidence, uncertainty avoidance, and need for cognition are measured using a *strongly agree/disagree* scale and feature at the end of the questionnaire.

Firm Trust

The level of trust the respondent has in the firm associated with the experimental focal brand/product is likely to influence the two dependent variables of purchase and positioning confidence. In order to account for this influence, firm trust acted as a control variable. A 4-item Likert scale developed by Tax, Brown and Chandrashekaran (1998) was drawn upon. The reported Cronbach's alpha of the scale is strong at .96. The scale, *named trust in the organisation*, measures the degree to which a customer believes that an organisation is honest and can be relied on. The wording of the items has been slightly modified to increase clarity for respondents.

The 4-item scale used in this study is:

- I believe the organisation could be relied upon to keep its promises to me and others who buy its _________{product category}. Strongly agree/Strongly disagree.
- I believe the organisation is trustworthy in their dealings with their customers. Strongly agree/Strongly disagree.
- I would find it necessary to be cautious in dealing with this organisation as a customer. Strongly agree/Strongly disagree.
- Overall, I believe this firm is always honest in its product claims. Strongly agree/Strongly disagree.

Product Category Knowledge

A 3-item scale by Mukherjee and Hoyer (2001) of product class knowledge is borrowed for the purpose of measuring this control variable. The scale measures the degree to which a consumer considers him/herself to be knowledgeable and experienced relative to others. Product category knowledge is likely to have an unwanted effect on purchase intention as those with high category knowledge will be more informed to make a purchasing decision when primed and, thus, needs to be accounted for as a control variable. Mukherjee and Hoyer reported a Cronbach's alpha of .80, suggesting a good level of scale reliability.

The scale items are:

- Compared to others in the market, how knowledgeable do you think you are about the different types of ________ {product category} in the market? Not at all knowledgeable/Very knowledgeable.

- In general, how knowledgeable are you about different types of _________ {product category} in the market? Not at all knowledgeable/Very knowledgeable.
- Compared to others in the market, how much experience do you have with different types of _________________ {product category}. *Very little experience/A lot of experience.*

Source and position credibility

While ideally the goal is to ensure an even influence weighting in terms of impact of the actual and external positioning information that the subject is exposed to during the experiment, respondent bias towards a particular source type will play a role in many cases. Hence, the variable of perceived source credibility is controlled for.

The actual and external sources of information—the press release, magazine advertisement, newspaper advertisement, the expert review, online forum and a customer's experience/blog—are rotated to ensure variance in order of appearance. Although they all portray the same information in a single treatment, the approach counters for any possible differences in source credibility and order bias. For example, experts have been found to be more credible than personal sources (Zhang & Buda, 1999) and outside information sources are deemed to be more credible as a source of information on the whole (Bickart & Schindler, 2001).

Source credibility will be questioned for each of the six stimuli and then separated into the actual and external positioning groups and averaged at the analysis stage. Positioning credibility is captured by asking respondents for the credibility of each of the positions that they are exposed to in the study.

The source credibility construct will borrow from Block and Keller (1995), who questioned subjects regarding the credibility of the message presented in their study via three items, achieving a Cronbach's alpha of .69. The questions asked for the level of agreement with statements such as: *The information in the pamphlet is <u>credible</u>, I think the information in the pamphlet is <u>exaggerated</u>;* and *I think the information in this pamphlet is <u>believable</u>*. However, given the repetitive nature of the items and the fact that it needs to asked six times (once for each source), only two of the three items are tested in the pilot study to deem whether an acceptable level of reliability can be achieved with just two items.

- To what extent do you find the following product information/media sources to be credible?

  Press release. *Not very credible/ Extremely credible*

  Magazine advertisement. *Not very credible/ Extremely credible*

  Newspaper advertisement. *Not very credible/ Extremely credible*

  Expert review/*Australian Traveller* magazine. *Not very credible/ Extremely credible*

  Online forum. *Not very credible/ Extremely credible*

- To what extent do you believe the following product information/media sources to be believable?

  Press release. *Not believable at all / Extremely believable*

  Magazine advertisement. *Not believable at all / Extremely believable*

  Newspaper advertisement. *Not believable at all / Extremely believable*

  Expert review/*Australian Traveller* magazine. *Not believable at all / Extremely believable*

  Online forum. *Not believable at all / Extremely believable*

Given the absence of a scale for positioning credibility, the review leads to scales measuring claim credibility. One such scale is that of Shiu, Walsh, Hassan, and Shaw (2011) that offers a 4-item scale with strong reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .90. The question posed by the authors is: "Overall, the claims made by the shops regarding their ethical labour practices are ...", with responses *Not at all believable/Highly believable, Not at all true/Absolutely true, Not at all acceptable/Totally acceptable,* and *Not at all credible/Very credible*. Due to the perceived ability to shorten the scale without significantly affecting its reliability, two items were chosen to take to pilot testing phase to verify whether it is at an acceptable reliability level. The items of "believability" and "acceptance" are chosen in the belief that these capture all the dimensions of claim credibility (that is: believability, truthfulness, acceptability, credibility, and appear interchangeable on face value). The adapted two items of positioning credibility, adapted from the Shiu et al. (2011) scale are:

- X offers superior {position} to its customers compared to its competitors.

  Not at all believable/Highly believable; I find this very hard to accept/ I find this very easy to accept.

- X does not offer any real main difference to its customers compared to its competitors

  Not at all believable/Highly believable; I find this very hard to accept/ I find this very easy to accept

Brand Attitude and Familiarity

This research will borrow a 3-item scale that measures attitude towards the brand, as used by Sengupta and Johar (2002). The wording of the scale items is adapted in order increase relevance for the chosen categories. The original scale displays strong reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .93. The three items are:

- *I think X is a very good {product category}.*
- *I think X is a very useful {product category}.*
- *My opinion of X is very favourable.*

Respondents' brand familiarity—the extent they know the brand—is measured with a single item measure. Brand familiarity level is fairly straightforward for respondents to answer as it does not involve an abstract psychological construct. The item is:
How familiar are you with the X brand? *Extremely unfamiliar/ Extremely familiar)*

Please note that the questionnaires for the pre-tests and main study can be found in Appendices 6, 7, 9 and 12.

5.6 Operationalisation of hypotheses tests

This chapter ends with a notation of how the hypotheses are operationalised.

H1: The degree of confidence that a consumer has in his/her (post) perceived position of the product acts as a moderator between the level of differentiation of the post perceived position and purchase intention when there is a poorer match between the consumer's post perceived position and purchase goal

- The purchase goal will be given to the subjects at the pre-information search stage in the experiment. The "natural tendency" for a consumer's purchase goal in the category is also measured to deal with any potential validity issues of a *given* purchase goal. This is asked in the form of their purchase goal from their last purchase or, if inapplicable, a future purchase.
- The post perceived position is a measured construct as captured by the Blankson and Kalafatis positioning typology scale.
- Differentiation level of the perceived position is measured construct via direct questioning.

- The consumer's confidence in their post perceived position is both a measured construct via direct questioning in the experiment and will also be indirectly derived via the measurement of the post perceived position itself using JUMP methodology.
- The degree of matching between the purchase goal and the post perceived position is derived from the summated item score of the position that is, in fact, the purchase goal. For example, if the given purchase goal is "top of the range", a summated item Likert score of 6.5 for the position of "top of the range" shows a better match to the purchase goal than a scenario where the position score is 3.0.
- Purchase intention is measured construct via direct questioning.

H2: Consumers' degree of positioning clarity acts as a positive moderator between positioning consistency and consumers' confidence in their (post) perceived position.

- Positioning clarity is a measured construct via direct questioning in the experiment.
- Positioning consistency is a measured construct via direct questioning in the experiment.

H3: The degree of alignment between the initial perceived position and the post perceived position positively affects consumers' confidence in their post perceived position.

- The initial perceived position is a measured construct using the Blankson and Kalafatis's positioning typology scale during the measures taken in the beginning of the experiment survey. The post perceived position is measured in an identical fashion in the latter part of the experiment, post information search, and thus the positions are directly comparable.

- As described earlier (Section 4.3) the alignment is measured in two ways: change in score and change in rank between the initial and post perceived positions.
  $\sum$ [1.1667(score of $InPos_i$ – score of $PostPos_i)^2$ + (rank of $InPos_i$ – rank of $PostPos_i)^2$].
  The change in score of the initial and post positions is weighted (by 1.1667) to ensure that the two measures are of equal importance. The factor 1.1667 is used given the highest possible score is 6 (positioning perception is measured on a 7-point scale) whereas the highest feasible score for rank change component of the formula is 7 (there are 8 positions to be ranked).

Given the questionable reliability in some cases in the use of difference scores in consumer research (Peter, Churchill & Brown, 1993), consumers are also directly asked about their perceived alignment between their initial and post perceived positions.

- Respondents who are not aware of the focal brand are deemed to not have an initial perceive position. The survey flow ensures that subjects skip the items measuring the initial perceived position.

H4a–H4f: Series of hypotheses relating to level of position definition and perceived clarity.

- Positioning definition level is manipulated via the experiment(s). As the subjects undergo an information search of actual and external cues, the level of definition across the source types will either be completely defined (e.g. TOR–REL), partially defined (e.g. TOR–NIL or NIL–TOR), or completely undefined (NIL–NIL).
- Positioning clarity is a measured construct via direct questioning in the experiment.

H5a–H5f: Series of hypotheses relating to similarity of positions across actual and external sources and perceived consistency.

- The level of positioning similarity within the actual and external position is manipulated via the experiment(s). As the subjects undergo an information search, the positioning cues between the two source types either has a high level of similarity (e.g. TOR–TOR), medium level similarity (e.g. NIL–NIL; TOR–NIL or NIL–TOR) or low level of similarity (e.g. VFM–REL)
- Positioning consistency is a measured construct via direct questioning in the experiment.

5.7 Summary

The proposed methodology for the research is quantitative in nature. involving a true experiment of 3x3 full-factorial, between-subjects design, replicated over a chosen good and service product category in order to show the generalisability of the model, and enable testing of all hypotheses. The data collection will occur online from a large same (n = 540) of consumer subjects. The chosen measures of the framework constructs were selected with the idea of regarding multi-item scales over single item measures as the literature strongly suggests that such an approach tends to lead to greater predictive validity. Alternative methodological options were also discussed in the chapter.

6. Results

6.1 Product category pre-test

As mentioned previously (Section 5.3.1), the product category pre-test tested 10 product categories—five goods and five services—with the aim to find *one* good and *one* service category that meet the following criteria:

- Low level of brand parity (BP)
- High involvement (INV)
- Medium level of product category knowledge (PCK)

The sample of respondents for each category consists of at least 30 Australian consumers, 101 in total, obtained via Pure Profile, a consumer panel. The sample is well represented in terms of demographics: Sex (Male = 49%; Female = 51%), geography (Sydney = 20%, Melbourne = 21%, Brisbane = 10%, other capitals = 21%, non-capital cities and regional = 28%), age (18–24 years = 6%, 25–34 years = 14%, 35–44 years = 21%, 45–54 years = 15%, 55–64 years = 22%, 65–74 years = 19%, 75 years and older = 3%) and annual household income (< $24,999 = 11%, $25,000–$49,000 = 20%, $50,000–$99,999 = 30%, $100,000–$199,999 = 28%, $200,000 or more = 1%, do not want to disclose = 10%).

Given the multi-item nature of the scales used to measure the three constructs mentioned in the criteria, a factor analysis and test of Cronbach's alpha were done to confirm the fit and reliability of the constructs (see Table 4). Items that did not meet the threshold of a factor loading of .7 or above were deleted and, thus, were not used in deriving the Cronbach's alpha scores for the constructs.

The Cronbach's alpha test revealed acceptable reliability levels for all constructs across all product categories, with the threshold being set at .7 (see Table 5). The application of involvement to the category of car insurance produced an alpha of .69. However given its proximity to the .7 threshold, the level of reliability was accepted.

Table 4: Factor loadings for constructs tested in product category pre-test

Item	SLR	TV	Washing Machine	Laptop	SUVs	CC	Car insurance	Home contents insurance	Internet service provider	Economy int. airfare
BP 1	0.903	0.814	0.840	0.773	0.816	0.656	0.919	0.463*	0.739	0.618
BP 2	0.923	0.929	0.883	0.880	0.920	0.907	0.927	0.878	0.867	0.774
BP 3	-0.165*	-0.188*	-0.576*	-0.743*	-0.287*	-0.363*	-0.402*	-0.593*	-0.516*	-0.618*
BP 4	0.918	0.907	0.893	0.938	0.934	0.887	0.895	0.878	0.864	0.836
BP5	0.798	0.929	0.887	0.853	0.912	0.905	0.960	0.885	0.916	0.854
INV 1	0.769	0.850	0.824	0.866	0.470	0.753	0.509*	0.932	0.902	0.832
INV 2	0.877	0.791	0.873	0.952	0.834	0.814	0.854	0.814	0.924	0.872
INV 3	0.841	0.896	0.886	0.932	0.801	0.932	0.902	0.848	0.788	0.664
INV 4	0.627*	0.693*	0.810	0.501*	0.791	0.384*	0.589*	0.576*	0.132*	0.291*
PCK 1	0.956	0.918	0.963	0.970	0.961	0.980	0.866	0.821	0.860	0.925
PCK 2	0.960	0.957	0.972	0.974	0.975	0.971	0.931	0.954	0.945	0.955
PCK 3	0.970	0.912	0.978	0.974	0.951	0.977	0.903	0.849	0.907	0.938

* Denotes deleted item due to factor loading of less than .7. The threshold of .7 was chosen given the small sample size of 30.

Table 5: Cronbach's alpha for constructs in product category pre-test

Cronbach's alpha	SLR	TV	Washing Machine	Laptop	SUVs	CC	Car insurance	Home contents insurance	Internet service provider	Economy int. airfare
BP	0.744	0.818	0.908	0.895	0.920	0.872	0.945	0.883	0.739	0.794
INV	0.776	0.797	0.863	0.819	0.761	0.809	0.689	0.790	0.843	0.721
PCK	0.959	0.919	0.969	0.970	0.959	0.975	0.883	0.841	0.884	0.931

After reliability was deemed to be acceptable, the mean of the total item score across the product categories was calculated (see Table 6).

Table 6: Mean of items for constructs in product category pre-test

Mean of total item score	SLRs	TVs	Washing Machines	Laptop s	SUVs	CCs	Car insurance	Home contents insurance	Internet service provider	Economy int. airfare
BP	3.68	4.38	3.64	3.56	4.22	4.41	4.20	3.93	3.53	4.17
INV	4.94	5.20	5.30	5.34	5.63	5.81	5.52	5.39	5.80	5.58
PCK	3.21	3.90	4.03	4.28	3.87	3.47	3.90	3.75	4.46	3.57

Based on results of the three constructs, the categories of *washing machines, laptops, SUVs, home contents insurance,* and *Internet service providers* were chosen as the five categories for the next round of pre-testing. The two eliminated goods of *SLRs* and *TVs* were discounted for different reasons. The category of TVs scored the highest in brand parity (from the goods categories), which ideally needs to be as low as possible for this study. SLRs scored the lowest (from the goods categories) in involvement, and product category knowledge was below the ideal of mid-point level. Furthermore, SLRs had a high percentage of “unsure” as an answer in the brand parity questions (13%) compared to other categories, which is in line with the lower product category knowledge score.

A *t*-test looked for significance in the difference between the means within both brand parity and involvement. The results showed that mean brand parity score for the categories of laptops and washing machines, which had the lowest scores (means of 3.56 and 3.64, respectively) were in fact significantly different to the other good categories, at .05 alpha. In terms of involvement for the goods categories, even though SUVs has the highest mean involvement score at 5.63, it is not statistically significantly greater than that of laptops (mean = 5.34) or washing machines (mean = 5.30).

Thus, laptops and washing machines were chosen to move to the focal brand pre-test stage based on superior results in the brand parity test, whereas SUVs was chosen due to the elimination of alternatives. TVs was not chosen based on high brand parity, and SLRs eliminated based on low product category knowledge.

Amongst the service options, the category of Internet service provider had the lowest brand parity score (mean = 3.53). This score is only significantly different to the brand parity of credit cards (mean = 4.41). Thus credit cards as a category was eliminated due to its high brand parity. In terms of involvement, internet service providers presented with the highest involvement mean score at 5.80, which is significantly higher than home contents insurance (mean = 5.39) but not car insurance (mean = 5.52), at .05 alpha. Thus, with the lowest brand parity score and significantly higher involvement, the category of Internet service providers was to enter the next round of pre-testing. With a lack of significant difference in the scores of the three criteria constructs between the remaining services categories, home contents insurance was chosen to the move to the focal brand test round due to having the lowest brand parity (though minimal).

In summary, the following five categories were chosen to move forward to the focal product pre-test: *washing machines, laptops, home contents insurance, internet service providers,* and *SUVs*.

6.2 Focal product pre-test

The next pre-test aimed to select a single brand/product in the product categories chosen in the first pre-test, that is: SUVs, laptops, washing machines, internet service providers, and home content insurance providers. As per the experimental design, the requirement for one brand/product is that it was perceived by the majority of respondents as having a top of the range (TOR) position and the other, a value for money (VFM) position.

The sample of respondents for each category consisted of at least 20 Australian consumers (as high as 27), obtained via Pure Profile, a consumer panel. Given that the same respondent was allocated 3 of the 5 categories to respond to, there were 59 respondents in total. The sample is well represented in terms of demographics: Sex (Male = 48%, Female = 52%), geography (Sydney = 35%, Melbourne = 10%, Brisbane = 12%, other capitals = 11%, non-capital cities and regional = 32%), age (18–24 years = 2%, 25–34 years = 10%, 35–44 years = 22%, 45–54 years = 19%, 55–64 years = 17%, 65–74 years = 17%, 75 years and older = 10%, do not want to disclose = 3%), and annual household income (< $24,999 = 17%, $25,000–$49,000 = 12%, $50,000–$99,999 = 26%, $100,000–$199,999 = 25%, $200,000 or more = 5%, do not want to disclose = 15%).

As a reminder, the focal product pre-test criteria are as follows:

1. The highest or second-highest mean positioning perception score rests with the desired position
2. When the desired position is VFM, the VFM minus reliability score needs to be at least 1.0 (as reliability is the position signalled in some experimental manipulations of Experiment 1). Similarly, when the desired position is TOR, the TOR minus VFM score needs to be at least 1.0 (as VFM is manipulated in Experiment 2). Both TOR and VFM are measured on a 7-point scale.
3. Firm trust for the chosen brand (control) is not overly high—average of 5.0 or below (out of 7)

The chosen brands can be seen in Table 7, which also displays the results for the correlation analysis applied to the condensed version of the positioning typology scale. The shortened version of the Blankson and Kalafatis typology meant that for 7 out of the 8 positions, a 2-item measure was employed, with the position of "selectivity" using 1 item. Thus, a correlation analysis for the 2 items for each of the 7 positions was conducted in order to ensure reliability of the scale, with a threshold of 0.30 (medium correlation present). As can be seen from the results, all positions met the threshold, thus allowing for the next step of calculating the mean of items for each position across all brands tested. The item means are represented in Table 8.

Table 7: Correlation analysis of condensed positioning typology scale

	Top of the range	Value for money	Reliability	Service	Attractiveness	Country of origin	Brand name
SUVs							
Audi	0.60	0.66	0.59	0.87	0.83	0.46	0.86
Kia	0.69	0.65	0.90	0.85	0.85	0.62	0.70
Hyundai	0.69	0.69	0.84	0.74	0.79	0.70	0.73
BMW	0.59	0.75	0.52	0.85	0.86	0.40	0.85
Mercedes	0.67	0.75	0.68	0.83	0.90	0.37	0.85
Laptops							
Acer	0.51	0.52	0.74	0.89	0.82	0.45	0.82
Lenovo	0.61	0.42	0.81	0.91	0.82	0.58	0.79
Apple	0.42	0.83	0.84	0.85	0.88	0.34	0.66
Asus	0.33	0.60	0.72	0.75	0.83	0.62	0.72
Toshiba	0.44	0.64	0.66	0.83	0.75	0.47	0.75
Washing Machines							
Simpson	0.62	0.82	0.74	0.72	0.74	0.52	0.91
Fisher & Paykel	0.56	0.69	0.83	0.68	0.79	0.50	0.71
Miele	0.55	0.33	0.89	0.77	0.77	0.24	0.64
Electrolux	0.79	0.71	0.65	0.54	0.60	0.58	0.68
Euromaid	0.75	0.81	0.71	0.64	0.54	0.54	0.32
Internet Service Providers							
Telstra	0.84	0.66	0.79	0.74	0.83	0.69	0.79
Dodo	0.79	0.64	0.77	0.75	0.69	0.74	0.82
Optus	0.86	0.61	0.73	0.75	0.82	0.69	0.85
TPG	0.82	0.65	0.78	0.80	0.80	0.61	0.78
iiNet	0.72	0.66	0.72	0.81	0.80	0.64	0.83
Home Contents Insurance							
NRMA	0.59	0.84	0.93	0.73	0.81	0.88	0.74
AAMI	0.79	0.86	0.88	0.77	0.68	0.69	0.88
Youi	0.80	0.75	0.84	0.69	0.56	0.74	0.81
Budget	0.82	0.78	0.82	0.69	0.49	0.59	0.47
Allianz	0.60	0.78	0.77	0.77	0.53	0.73	0.76

Note: Each cell represents the correlation of the 2 items used to measure the position in question, as the pre-test used a condensed version of the full positioning typology scale. The items used to measure each position are the same across categories and brands.

Table 8: Mean of items of positioning typology for focal product pre-test

	Top of the range	Value for money	Reliability	Service	Attractiveness	Country of origin	Brand name
SUVs							
Audi	**4.82**	4.03	4.88	4.68	4.60	4.24	4.72
Kia	3.71	**4.50**	4.50	4.48	4.20	3.88	4.24
Hyundai	3.45	4.29	4.32	4.53	3.95	4.32	3.96
BMW	**4.92**	3.95	4.97	4.77	4.35	4.32	4.77
Mercedes	**5.12**	3.86	5.09	4.81	4.38	4.36	4.88
Laptops							
Acer	3.97	4.45	4.72	4.67	4.37	4.24	4.25
Lenovo	4.13	4.39	4.78	4.70	4.50	4.17	4.22
Apple	**5.50**	4.39	5.45	5.32	5.32	4.57	5.04
Asus	4.24	4.59	4.90	4.78	4.58	4.17	4.45
Toshiba	4.29	4.42	4.89	4.92	4.59	4.20	4.52
Washing Machines							
Simpson	3.93	**4.59**	4.72	4.52	4.16	4.24	4.38
Fisher & Paykel	4.58	4.72	5.13	4.77	4.66	4.35	4.75
Miele	**5.13**	4.13	5.24	4.77	4.63	4.22	4.88
Electrolux	4.11	4.59	4.80	4.66	4.22	4.30	4.39
Euromaid	4.05	4.19	4.60	4.50	4.06	4.03	4.32
Internet Service Providers							
Telstra	4.19	3.89	4.49	4.08	4.11	4.37	4.41
Dodo	3.31	3.77	3.62	3.60	3.50	3.63	3.48
Optus	3.94	3.97	4.34	4.12	4.04	4.00	4.13
TPG	3.84	4.13	4.25	4.15	3.86	4.00	3.95
iiNet	3.98	4.15	4.37	4.32	4.00	4.07	4.07
Home Contents Insurance							
NRMA	4.27	3.91	4.46	4.36	4.26	4.49	4.41
AAMI	4.10	4.04	4.40	4.30	4.12	4.27	4.33
Youi	3.49	3.91	3.93	3.96	3.86	3.99	3.96
Budget	3.31	3.87	3.69	3.81	3.79	4.04	3.79
Allianz	4.01	3.83	4.20	4.18	4.00	4.17	4.14

The red-highlighted means in Table 8 represent brands that met the first criteria, that is, the score received for either TOR or VFM is within the top two scores received across all the positions (though in some cases it may not be statistically significant). Criterion 2 states a requirement that the difference between TOR and VFM for a TOR selection and the difference between VFM and Reliability for a VFM choice was at least 1.0 (VFM and TOR were measured on a 7-point scale). This left Apple, Mercedes, BMW (with rounding) and Miele as possible candidates. However Apple was discounted based on the fact that it achieved a very high score on multiple positions. From the remaining options, the scores for Mercedes (mean = 5.12), BMW (mean = 4.92), and Miele (mean = 5.13) were not significantly different from each other.

The third criterion for selection looked at level of firm trust. Table 10 shows test results for factor analysis, reliability testing, and the mean score achieved on the first trust scale for the three that remain for comparison.

Table 9: Validity, reliability, and mean of items analysis for firm trust construct

	Factor loadings for firm trust (FT) items		
	Miele	BMW	Mercedes
FT2	0.965	0.980	0.991
FT3	0.954	0.974	0.997
FT4	0.972	0.974	0.993
	Cronbach's alpha for firm trust items		
Miele	.977		
BMW	.987		
Mercedes	.993		
	Means of items for firm trust		
Miele	4.96		
BMW	4.57		
Mercedes	4.57		

*FT1 was deleted due to poor factor loading scores across all brands tested, which is not uncommon for negatively worded items.

Given that the mean of items for firm trust for the three brands being considered met the criteria set for the pre-test—that is, they were all at 5.0 or below—they were all deemed to be not excessive.

Considering that all the brands met the criteria, other factors were reviewed in order to distinguish between the options. The *variance* of the positioning perception of TOR was compared for each brand candidate. The variance for each brand was as follows: Miele = 1.4, BMW = 1.86, and Mercedes = 2.09, thus the lower variance for Miele is favourable. Another beneficial point for Miele's TOR score was statistically significantly different to the other brands in the washing machine category, whereas the TOR scores of SUVs Mercedes, BMW, and Audi were not statistically different from each other. This makes Miele more salient as TOR in its category based on the brands tested within each category. Additionally, the pre-test results showed that brand awareness for Miele stands at 85%. This high level of brand awareness was ideal given that awareness is a precedent to respondents having an initial perceived position and, consequently, the ability to measure the proposed antecedent to confidence of an alignment between the initial and post perceived positions.

The pre-test did not result in a brand that met the criteria set out for the pre-test for a VFM brand based on Criteria 2. Therefore, two further service product categories were tested—holiday accommodation, and economy international airlines. Given that Miele has been selected as the TOR option, the VFM option ideally needed to be a service. Holiday accommodation was chosen based on discussions with academics on their perceptions of a service category that would meet the criteria, and economy airlines was chosen as it only just “missed the cut” in the category pre-test.

The two extra product categories were tested on a sample of 34 participants obtained via PureProfile. The sample is fairly well dispersed in terms of demographics: Sex (Male = 30%, Female = 70%), geography (Sydney = 21%, Melbourne = 26%, Brisbane = 17%, other capitals = 12%, non-capital cities and regional = 24%), age (18–24 years = 9%, 25–34 years = 21%, 35–44 years = 9%, 45–54 years = 26%, 55–64 years = 17%, 65–74 years = 15%, 75 years and older = 0%, Do not want to disclose = 3%), and annual household income (< $24,999 = 12%, $25,000–$49,000 = 24%, $50,000–$99,999 = 35%, $100,000–$199,999 = 6%, $200,000 or more = 3%, do not want to disclose = 20%).

The brands tested in each category can be found in Table 10.

Table 10: Correlation analysis of positioning typology for additional categories in focal product pre-test

	Top of the range	Value for money	Reliability	Service	Attractiveness	Country of origin	Brand name
Holiday Accommodation							
Sheraton	0.86	0.52	0.71	0.85	0.88	0.31	0.91
Ibis	0.67	0.76	0.72	0.64	0.87	0.59	0.66
Best Western	0.62	0.77	0.63	0.71	0.71	0.32	0.43
Hilton	0.85	0.56	0.67	0.75	0.92	0.24	0.86
Airbnb	0.62	0.77	0.67	0.71	0.76	0.54	0.43
Economy International Airlines							
Qantas	0.42	0.63	0.83	0.74	0.60	0.65	0.51
Jetstar	0.61	0.73	0.72	0.59	0.77	0.65	0.71
Emirates	0.63	0.43	0.77	0.68	0.72	0.16	0.78
Air Asia	0.76	0.66	0.85	0.60	0.64	0.11	0.57
China Southern Airlines	0.88	0.69	0.84	0.66	0.73	0.13	0.66

Table 11: Mean of items of positioning typology for additions to focal product pre-test

	Top of the range	Value for money	Reliability	Service	Attractiveness	Country of origin	Brand name	Selectivity
Holiday Accommodation								
Sheraton	5.47	4.37	5.41	5.56	5.65	5.27	5.50	3.88
Ibis	4.58	4.65	5.03	5.14	4.65	4.69	5.06	3.24
Best Western	4.24	4.97	4.94	5.09	4.24	4.53	4.79	3.03
Hilton	5.70	4.33	5.47	5.56	5.74	5.34	5.47	3.97
Airbnb	3.70	4.68	4.56	4.59	4.06	4.30	4.47	2.91
Economy International Airlines								
Qantas	5.49	4.51	5.56	5.64	5.31	5.69	5.19	3.68
Jetstar	3.31	4.93	3.73	4.74	4.15	5.19	4.19	3.26
Emirates	5.58	4.46	5.52	5.50	5.74	4.60	5.325	3.71
Air Asia	3.47	4.39	3.93	4.33	3.96	3.59	3.795	3.21
China Southern Airlines	3.16	4.40	3.35	4.21	3.72	3.44	3.69	3.29

The brands highlighted in Table 11 met the first focal product pre-test criteria of having a VFM score that was the highest or second highest raw score of all the positions. Jetstar and China Southern Airlines met the second criterion of having a difference between VFM and Reliability of at least 1.0. Therefore, the level of firm trust for the two airlines was checked (see Table 12), however both brands possessed an acceptable level of firm trust (5.0 or below) for the purpose of this study.

Table 12: Validity, reliability, and mean of items analysis for additions to focal product pre-test

	Factor loadings for firm trust (FT) items	
	Jetstar	China Southern Airlines
FT2	0.97	0.98
FT3	0.98	0.96
FT4	0.97	0.97
	Cronbach's alpha for firm trust items	
Jetstar	0.91	
China Southern Airlines	0.98	
	Means of items for firm trust	
Jetstar	4.64	
China Southern Airlines	3.53	

The brand awareness level of the various brands contrasted drastically with China Southern Airlines at 35% and Jetstar at 94%. As explained earlier, brand awareness is a precedent for having an initial perceived position. In addition, Jetstar's mean VFM score of 4.93 as actually statistically significantly higher than the other economy international airline brands tested, thus making Jetstar the best choice to fulfil the VFM brand requirement.

In summary, the focal product pre-test results led to the choice of Jetstar in the international economy airline category for Experiment 1 (initial position of VFM) and Miele in the washing machine category for Experiment 2 (initial position of TOR). This was based on a process of elimination based on various criteria set out for the tested brands. It was believed that these brands were strong in meeting the requirements to test the hypotheses set out in this thesis.

6.3 Main study - Experiment 1 pre-testing

6.3.1 Experiment 1 stimuli validity checks

The first task of the main study was to prepare and pre-test the validity of the stimuli to be used in the experiment. As mentioned previously, 18 pieces of stimuli in the form of different product communication was required in each of the two experiments. These communication pieces are made up of three each of press releases (PR), magazine advertisements (MAG), newspaper advertisements (NP), expert reviews (ER), online forum pieces (FOR), and customer experience/blog items (FEX). The three positioning pieces in each group constitute one each of VFM, REL, and NIL.

Due to the limited text space and use of images in advertisements, it was believed that the likelihood of multiple interpretations for the stimuli of newspaper and magazine advertisements was greater than for other types of media. Therefore, extra stimuli were tested for newspaper and magazine advertisements, that is, six stimuli for each media instead of the required three.

The stimuli were created using a combination of actual Jetstar advertisements and cabin photos taken by passengers and posted on review websites/blogs. At times the image editing software Photoshop was used as an editing tool to obtain the desired effect. Product features such as pricing and service attributes were developed from desktop research. For example, travel review websites spoke to several aspects of an airline's reliability—on-time performance, luggage arrival, meal choice availability—therefore, these were incorporated into the reliability stimuli execution. A search of various routes on expedia.com.au gave an indication of pricing. The VFM stimuli adopted the lowest price of any airline shown for the route in question, the REL stimuli adopted a price in between the average and highest prices, and the NIL executions were void of a price point given that price is a strong quality indicator, and respondents are more likely to perceive a position instead of the desired NIL effect. Various routes were shown in the advertisements to avoid consumers thinking that the position depicted only related to a given route.

The next step was testing the Jetstar experimental stimuli with a sample of consumers. The testing phase was conducted via Qualtrics and M-Turk. The survey participants were shown the product communication individually (rotated to avoid order bias) and asked which position it represented from 9 closed responses—8 positions and NIL. Sample size varied from 26 to 31 respondents from the United States.

The stimuli were chosen based on the following criteria:

1. The difference between the highest and second-highest scores was large and at a minimum as statistically significant.
2. If the desired positioning perception was VFM, then the scores for REL and NIL were as low as possible to differentiate itself completely from the other experimental conditions. The same was the case where the desired positioning is REL and NIL.
3. Where multiple options were tested, achieving the highest percentage in the desired positioning perception (as a group).

As can be seen from the results in Table 13, it was rarely the case that more than 50% of respondents chose the response option of NIL, when NIL was the desired position. The percentage score achieved by the NIL stimuli was lower than the scores achieved by the VFM and reliability stimuli. However, this is to be expected given that consumers' natural inclination is to read meaning into stimuli. Humans are inherently biased towards perceiving meaning as they assess the risk of under-interpreting to be greater than that of over-interpreting (Cadsby, 2011). Accordingly, providing that the criteria were met for the NIL conditions, the stimuli were chosen to move ahead to main study stage. See Appendix 9 for selected stimuli.

Table 13: Consumer pre-test results for selected stimuli—Experiment 1

	Value for money	Reliability	NIL	Top of the range	Service	Attractiveness	Selectivity	Country of origin	Brand name
PR 1		**85.71%**		3.57%	7.14%	3.57%			
PR2	**92.86%**				3.57%				3.60%
PR3	14.81%	14.81%	**30.00%**		3.70%	3.70%	3.70%	11.00%	18.50%
NP4		**76.92%**	3.87%		19.23%				
NP5	**61.90%**	9.52%	4.76%		4.76%	4.76%			14.29%
NP6	13.64%	4.55%	**50.00%**		13.64%	4.55%	9.09%		4.55%
MAG4	11.00%	**81.50%**			7.50%				
MAG5	18.18%	4.55%	**45.45%**		9.09%	4.55%	9.09%	4.55%	4.55%
MAG6	**95.45%**		4.55%						
FOR1	**96.30%**				3.70%				
FOR2	6.90%	**82.76%**	3.45%		3.45%		3.45%		
FOR3	18.52%	25.93%	**48.15%**		3.70%	3.70%			
ER1	9.52%	4.76%	**52.38%**		9.52%		9.52%	4.76%	9.52%
ER2	**100.00%**								
ER3	7.69%	**92.31%**							
FEX1	10.71%	**78.57%**					3.57%	3.57%	3.57%
FEX2	**92.86%**			3.57%	3.57%				
FEX3	4.76%	4.76%	**47.62%**	14.29%	4.76%	14.29%		4.76%	4.76%

PR = Press release, NP = Newspaper ad, MAG = Magazine ad, FOR= Online forum, ER = Expert review, FEX= Customer's experience /blog.

6.3.2 Experiment 1 pilot test

Prior to launching the main study, a pilot test was conducted via M-Turk (instrument created in Qualtrics). One of the primary objectives of the pilot test was to ensure that the stimuli work together given that the pre-test thus far only tested the stimuli individually. Additionally, the pilot test examines the fit and reliability of all multi-item measures, with particular attention paid to the adapted positioning typology. Some items were slightly modified from the original Blankson and Kalafatis scale in order to allow for greater suitability to the airline category.

The sample that participated in the pilot test was 74 respondents located in the United States.

Due to time and cost, three of the nine conditions were tested—VFM–REL, VFM–VFM, and NIL–NIL—as these conditions were the most likely to produce different outcomes in positioning perception. A one-way ANOVA checked for any significant difference between the three groups in the strength of their VFM post perceived position. One would expect that VFM–VFM would have a significantly stronger VFM perception, followed by the VFM–REL group, and lastly the NIL–NIL group.

The mean VFM (post) positioning perception scores, which were measured via a 7-point scale, were as follows: VFM–VFM 6.51, VFM–REL 4.93, and NIL–NIL 4.40. VFM–VFM is statistically different to both other groups at .01 alpha, while NIL–NIL and VFM–REL had a p value of .13, thus it was just out of the .10 alpha threshold. Given that the sample was small and directionally the means were where they should be, overall the results suggest that the stimuli delivered their intended position signal as a source type level.

Furthermore, all multi-item constructs of 3 items or more were checked for their fit via factor analysis and reliability using Cronbach's alpha. While all positioning constructs of the adapted Blankson and Kalafatis positioning typology achieved a factor loading and Cronbach's alpha of greater than .7, an issue presented itself with the 3-item measure of "selectivity" as a positioning perception (see Table 14). One item (*compared to customers of other airlines, I would imagine Jetstar international economy customers as being comprised of people with low/high principles*) gave a factor loading of .458 (the other two items had loadings above .8) and the three items gave a Cronbach's alpha of .623. Given that the item had a factor loading of under .5, it was deleted for the purpose of the main study in Experiment 1. The correlation of the remaining two items was acceptable at .615.

The 2-item construct of country of origin produced a Pearson correlation of .241, suggesting a low correlation. The items stemmed around the concepts of feeling (un)patriotic and the overall valence of feeling towards the country of origin. Thus, the correlation was likely to vary by geography. Given that the pilot is U.S.-based but the main study sample was from Australia, the two items were left, but will need to be re-checked prior to beginning analysis of the main study data.

Table 14: Validity and reliability analysis for full positioning typology in Experiment 1

	Factor loadings** Item 1, item 2, …item x	Cronbach's alpha
Top of the range	.855, .861, .877; .829, .911	.916
Value for money	.928, .932, .940	.926
Reliability	.889, .796, .771, .806	.827
Service	.942, .879, .953, .911	.940
Attractiveness	.851, .871, .938, .925	.918
Brand name	.805, .799, .802	.815
Selectivity	.880, .458, .854	.762+

** Component matrix loadings reported, extraction method, principal component analysis. NB: Measures are taken from post perceived position as opposed to initial. This is due to the fact that the main constructs in the hypotheses rely on the post perceived position; country of origin construct is absent given only 2 items.
+ prior to removing problematic item with a factor loading of .458

Aside from the adapted positioning typology, all dependent, independent, and control variables that are multi-item measured constructs were tested for fit and reliability (see Table 15). Note that constructs previously tested in the various pre-tests were excluded (firm trust, involvement, product category knowledge). The majority of the newly-tested constructs showed strong fit and reliability, exceeding the .7 threshold. However, the two exceptions were self-confidence and uncertainty avoidance. One item in the 3-item self-confidence construct (*I am more independent than most people*) presented with a factor loading of .529. Given that this loading is between .5 and .7, the item remained in main study questionnaire, but will be rechecked. There may a slight difference in the factor loading results with a larger sample and a different geography of the respondents. However, the problematic item in uncertainty avoidance *(It is important to consider opposing views when making person and social decisions*) presented with a .389 loading and, consequently, a Cronbach's alpha of .390 was deleted as this was well below the ideal point. The correlation of the remaining items was surprisingly low at .336. Thus, given that deleting the low performing item leads to poor correlation between the remaining two items, the original three items will be tested in the main study. The construct will be re-tested for fit and reliability prior to proceeding with the main study analysis.

It should be noted that one item in the brand attitude scale did not seem to fit well for the category based on face value. Therefore, in keeping with the inherent meaning of the item *Jetstar is a useful brand in the international economy airline market,* it was changed to *Jetstar has a lot to offer in the international economy airline market.* As can be seen in Table 15, the fit and reliability of the brand attitude construct (with adjusted item) was strong.

Table 15: Validity and reliability analysis for constructs used in main study

	Factor loadings** item1; item2…item x	Cronbach's alpha
Positioning confidence (direct measure)	.893, .903, .880	.871
Perceived differentiation	.952, .970, .944	.951
Purchase intention	.966, .968, .921	.951
Perceived clarity	.964, .961, .939	.951
Perceived consistency	.949, .961, .953	.949
Self-confidence (control)	.832, .835, .529	.570
Uncertainty avoidance (control)	.789, .780, .389	.390
Need for cognition (control)	.884, .862, .812	.810
Brand attitude (control)	.957, .953, .964	.955

** Component matrix loadings reported, extraction method, principal component analysis. NB: Brand familiarity is not included as it is a single-item measure.

Various 2-item constructs that featured as control variables in the main study were tested for item inter-relatedness, with all constructs presenting with strong correlations of .8 or above (see Table 16).

Table 16: Correlation analysis for constructs used in main study

	Pearson correlation
Credibility of actual source (control)	.876 (PR), .877 (NP), .864 (MAG)
Credibility of external source (control)	.865 (FEX), .872 (FOR), .824 (ER)
Credibility of exposed positions (control)	.929 (REL), .896 (VFM), .922 (NIL)

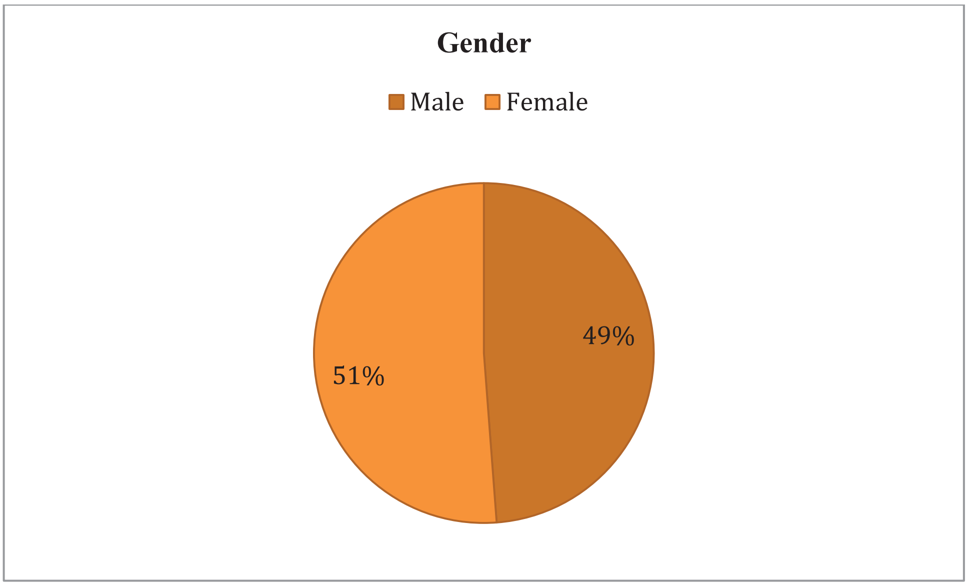
Even though the survey length was always a concern for this research study, the overall median length of response time was 27 minutes. This timeframe seemed manageable to maintain interest and cognition given the remuneration of the respondents.

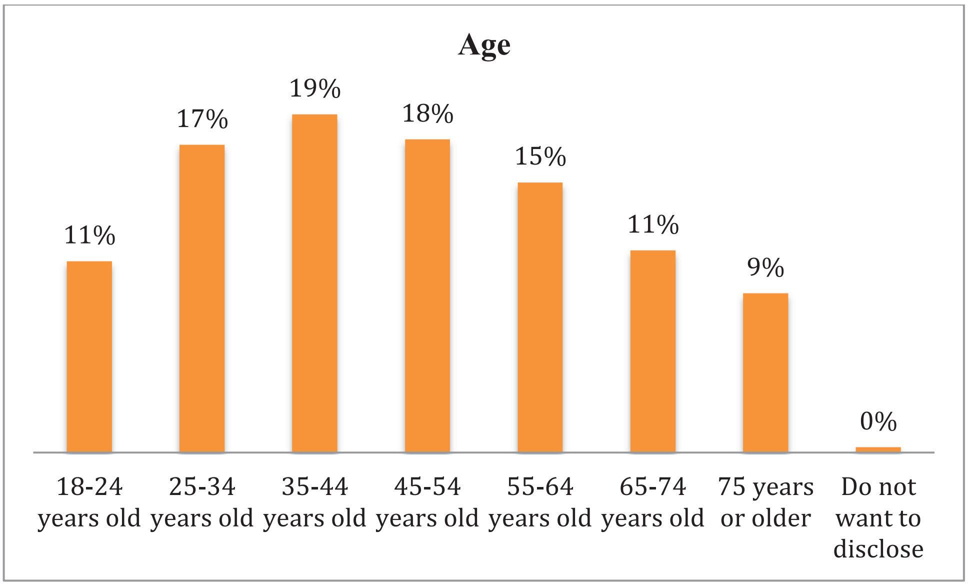
The vague responses to the last question which asked respondents if they knew what the research was about showed that demand bias should not be a substantial factor in Experiment 1.

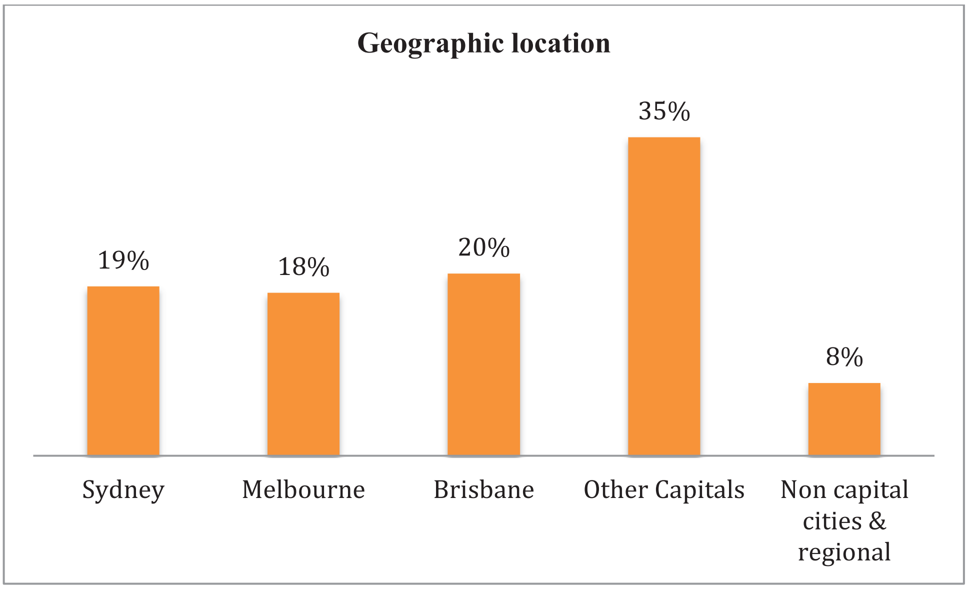
6.4 Main findings – Experiment 1 descriptives

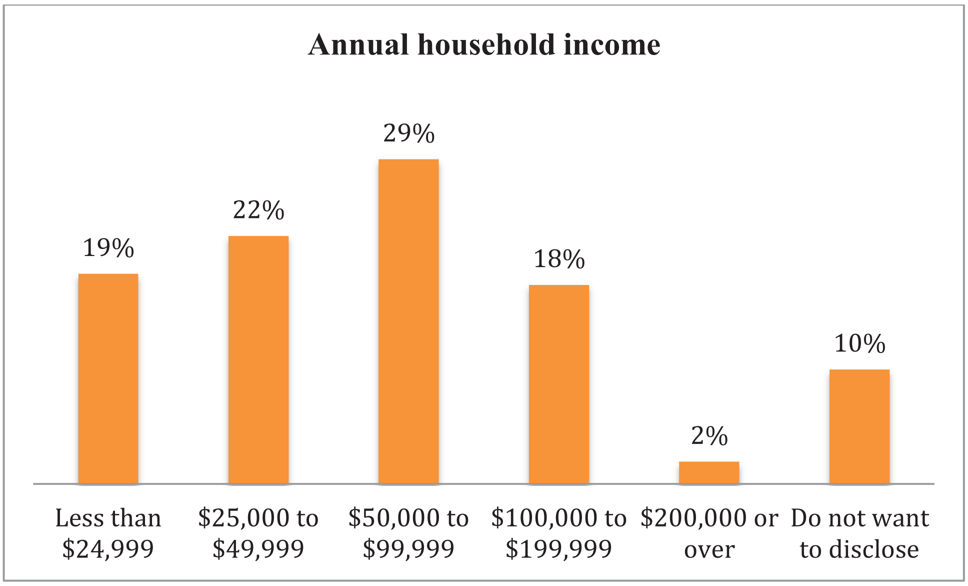
The sample size for Experiment 1 is 291 participants who were well dispersed in terms of demographics, as represented in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Experiment 1 sample demographics









Approximately 97% of the total sample responded that they were aware of the Jetstar brand and, thus, their initial perceived position of Jetstar's international economy service was measured. For 57% of respondents with an initial position, their maximum score on all the eight positions tested was VFM with a mean of 5.1 of a maximum of 7. The mean score for REL as a positioning perception going into the experiment was 4.48 and is thus statistically significantly different to the VFM at .01 alpha.

The median time to fill out the survey was 27 minutes. *See Appendix 9 for the questionnaire instrument used in Experiment 1 of the main study.*

6.5 Main study – Experiment 1 hypotheses testing

Following the pilot study results, the correlation of the 2-item positioning construct of country of origin (COO) produced a much better result with a Pearson correlation of .686. This is very likely due to the difference in geographic region of the sample. Thus, the two items will remain as the measure of COO. Likewise, the 3-item construct of uncertainty avoidance (a control variable for main study) presented with a stronger fit (factor loadings = .803, .754, .732) and reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .637) and, therefore, will remain as a 3-item construct. Lastly, self-confidence (a control variable for main study) also displayed stronger fit (factor loadings = .829, .864, .849) and reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .799) and, therefore, there was little support to change it from a 3-item construct. It should be noted that fit and reliability were re-checked for all constructs tested that presented well in the pilot, with no material deviation from the pilot results.

The first step in analysing the results of the main study was the computation of required variables. Various means of multi-item scales were calculated such as purchase intention, perceived clarity, perceived consistency, and the eight positions. Consequently, more complex variable computations—such as confidence—were formulated using the JUMP methodology, (derived) perceived differentiation, and the alignment between the initial and post perceived positions.

As described earlier, the series of regressions in order to compute JUMP are as follows: **(1)** $\mathbf{PostPos_i = \beta_0 + PosM_i + \varepsilon_i}$

(1a) $\mathbf{PosM = X_i\,\beta}$ **(2)** $\mathbf{Var(\varepsilon_i) = \sigma^2 + Lack\ of\ PosConf + k_i}$ **(3)** $\mathbf{Lack\ of\ PosConf_i = Z\,\gamma_i}$

The following steps were conducted in order to execute the regressions:

PostPos was regressed via an OLS on X to obtain estimates for β_0 and β

The squared residual, $e^2 = (\text{PostPos} - \beta\,\hat{} - \mathbf{X}\,\beta\hat{})^2$, is regressed on Z, to obtain estimates $\boldsymbol{\sigma^2}$ and $\mathbf{y}\hat{}$

e^2 is regressed, via a WLS, on Z with $2(\boldsymbol{\sigma}\hat{}^2 + \mathbf{Z}_i\,\gamma\hat{})^2$ as the weight, where $\boldsymbol{\sigma}\hat{}\hat{}^2$ and $\gamma\hat{}\hat{}$ are the WLS estimates of $\boldsymbol{\sigma^2}$ and **y**.

$\mathbf{Z}_i\,\gamma\hat{}\hat{}$ becomes the estimate of individual post perceived position uncertainty. However the model in this research is concerned with certainty or confidence as opposed to *un*certainty, hence the inverse of the uncertainty measure was taken ($1 - \mathbf{Z}_i\,\gamma\hat{}\hat{}$).

It should be noted that the JUMP procedure specifies that there is a constraint that $\boldsymbol{\sigma}$^^² + $\mathbf{Z}_i$ $\boldsymbol{\gamma}$ ^^ > 0, and this is in fact not always the case in the dataset in question. However, this constraint affects the unbiased estimate of the positioning magnitude, in other words, the mean of the positioning levels. The constraint does not appear to affect the uncertainty estimate (i.e. confidence), which is the sole goal of employing JUMP for this research.

The JUMP score of positioning confidence for the Jetstar experiment correlated weakly with the direct measure of confidence at .199 (p value = .053). However, the indirect measure will be used in this literature to test the hypotheses. The support comes from the argument that it is somewhat fruitless to directly ask a respondent about their judgment confidence given the high potential for social desirability bias (Chandrashekaran, 2005). This is likely to be enhanced in this research as the respondents are presented with detailed stimuli and therefore may feel that they are expected to be confident in their judgment about the product.

The first hypothesis aimed to test the proposed three-way interaction between confidence, purchase goal match, and perceived differentiation via a hierarchical regression. The results (table 17) show a highly significant model (F value = 45.359; p value = .001) with the independent and control variables explaining approximately 69% of variance in purchase intention, with an adjusted R-squared of .689. Possible issues of multicollinearity were ruled out given that the tolerance statistic is higher than .2 in each instance, and VIF was lower than 5.0 for each variable in the model. It should be noted that the controls in the model are mean-centred to reduce any possible multicollinearity.

The proposed three-way interaction was significant in a one-tailed test with at alpha .05 (p value = .04). The beta was negative in sign, which supported the hypothesis that positioning confidence acts as a moderator between the level of differentiation of the post perceived position and purchase intention *when* there is a poorer match between the consumer's post perceived position and purchase goal.

Table 17: Regression results for H1—Experiment 1

Model Summary

	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	Std. error of the estimate
Model	.840	.705	.689	.900

ANOVA

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	514.197	14	36.728	45.359	.001
Residual	215.385	266	0.810		
Total	729.582	280			

Coefficients*

	Unstandardised Coefficients				Collinearity	
	Unstandardised Beta	Std. error	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(constant)	-3.430	1.708	-2.008	.046		
Purchase goal match	.345	0.083	4.163	.000	.284	3.526
Perceived differentiation	.469	0.068	6.940	.000	.335	2.986
Confidence	.519	0.223	2.330	.021	.362	2.761
Brand familiarity (control)	-.015	0.034	-0.450	.653	.749	1.336
Brand attitude (control)	.236	0.057	4.168	.000	.527	1.899
Firm trust (control)	-.001	0.060	-0.024	.981	.414	2.413
Category knowledge (control)	-.134	0.038	-3.551	.000	.749	1.335
Positioning credibility (control)	.158	0.056	2.820	.005	.520	1.924
Cred. of actual position sources (control)	.032	0.051	0.622	.535	.513	1.948
Cred. of external position sources (control)	-.047	0.062	-0.748	.455	.486	2.058
Confidence * Perceived differentiation	.427	0.152	2.809	.005	.267	3.750
Confidence * Purchase goal match	-.438	0.138	-3.176	.002	.275	3.638
Perceived differentiation * Purchase goal match	-.073	0.040	-1.833	.068	.421	2.377
Confidence * Purchase goal match * Perceived differentiation	-.088	0.050	-1.759	.040#	.292	3.423

* Dependent variable: purchase

one-tailed test applied

A spotlight analysis via the PROCESS plug-in for SPSS (a statistical analysis software) was conducted by using model 3 (see Table 18), which represents a three-way interaction (Spiller, Fitzsimons, Lynch, & McClelland, 2013) Given that there are no focal values of purchase goal match that are particularly meaningful, the analysis was conducted at one standard deviation below and above the mean. Thus, 1 standard deviation depicts a “low” purchase goal match, the mean represents an “average” match, and 1 standard deviation above the mean presents a “high” match. The mean for respondents’ purchase goal match—that is, the level of VFM perception given that VFM was the purchase goal given to respondents—is 5.26. One standard deviation below is a purchase goal match score of 4.04 (SD = 1.217) and 1 standard deviation above gives a score of 6.48. The logic of low/average/high for the variables of confidence and perceived differentiation is also derived using 1 standard deviation minus/plus the mean. The purchase goal is represented as a continuous variable with the maximum being 7, given that purchase intention was measured on a 7-point scale.

The spotlight analysis (see Table 19) reveals that when the purchase goal match was low or average, the moderation effect of confidence on perceived differentiation and purchase was significant at the .05 alpha (effect = .532 and *p* value = .014 for low, and effect = .425 and *p* value = .018 for average). However, when the purchase goal match was high, which is defined as 1 standard deviation above the mean, the effect of confidence was still significant but to a lesser degree (effect = .316, *p* value = .048).

Table 18: Spotlight analysis for H1—Experiment 1

Model

Summary

R	R-squared	MSE	F	Df1	Df2	*p* value
.840	.705	.810	52.319	14	266	.001

Outcome: purchase

Model

	Coefficient	Standard error	*t* value	*p* value
constant	4.966	.076	65.417	.001
Purchase goal match	.344	.098	3.500	.001
Perceived differentiation	.470	.079	5.920	.001
Confidence	.510	.319	1.600	.111
Brand familiarity (control)	-.015	.034	-0.457	.648
Brand attitude (control)	.236	.069	3.403	.001
Firm trust (control)	-.001	.070	-0.020	.984
Category knowledge (control)	-.134	.045	-2.999	.003
Positioning credibility (control)	.158	.084	1.920	.056
Cred. of actual position sources (control)	.032	.052	0.602	.548
Cred. of external position sources (control)	-.047	.084	-0.557	.578
Confidence * Perceived differentiation	.425	.202	2.104	.036
Perceived differentiation * purchase goal match	-.073	.056	-1.308	.192
Confidence * Purchase goal match	-.437	.200	-2.196	.029
Perceived differentiation * Confidence * Purchase goal match	-.088	.068	-1.294	.099#

#one-tailed test

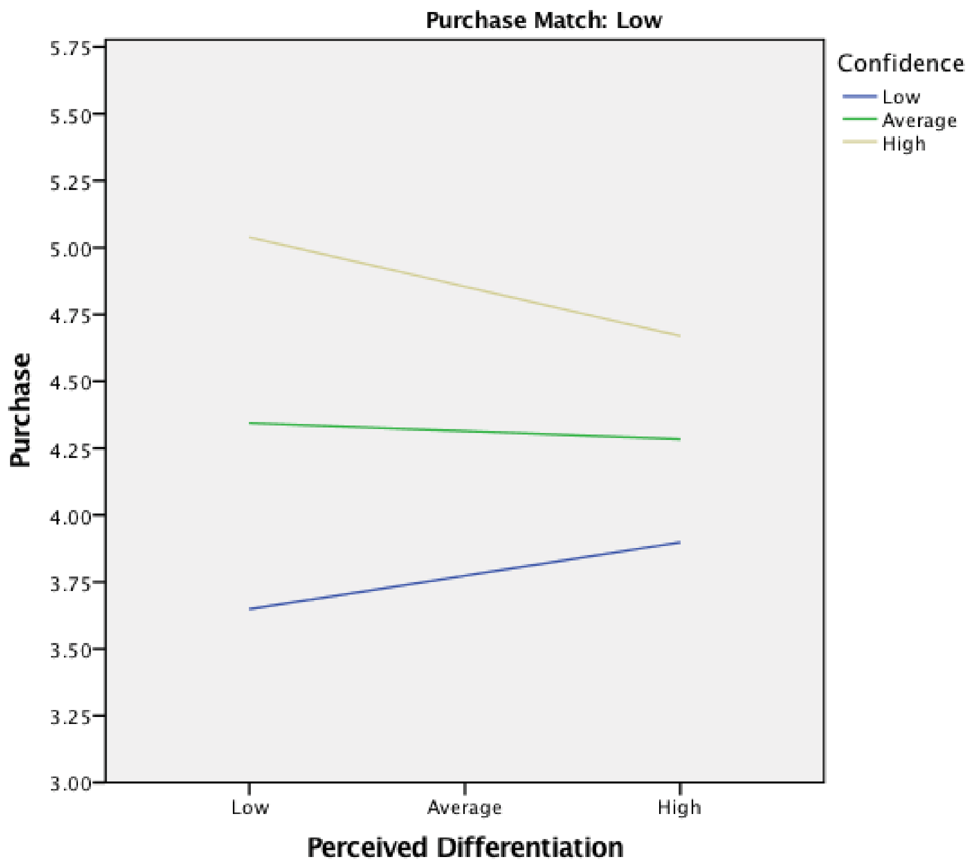
Table 19: Conditional effect of perceived differentiation * confidence interaction at values of purchase goal match

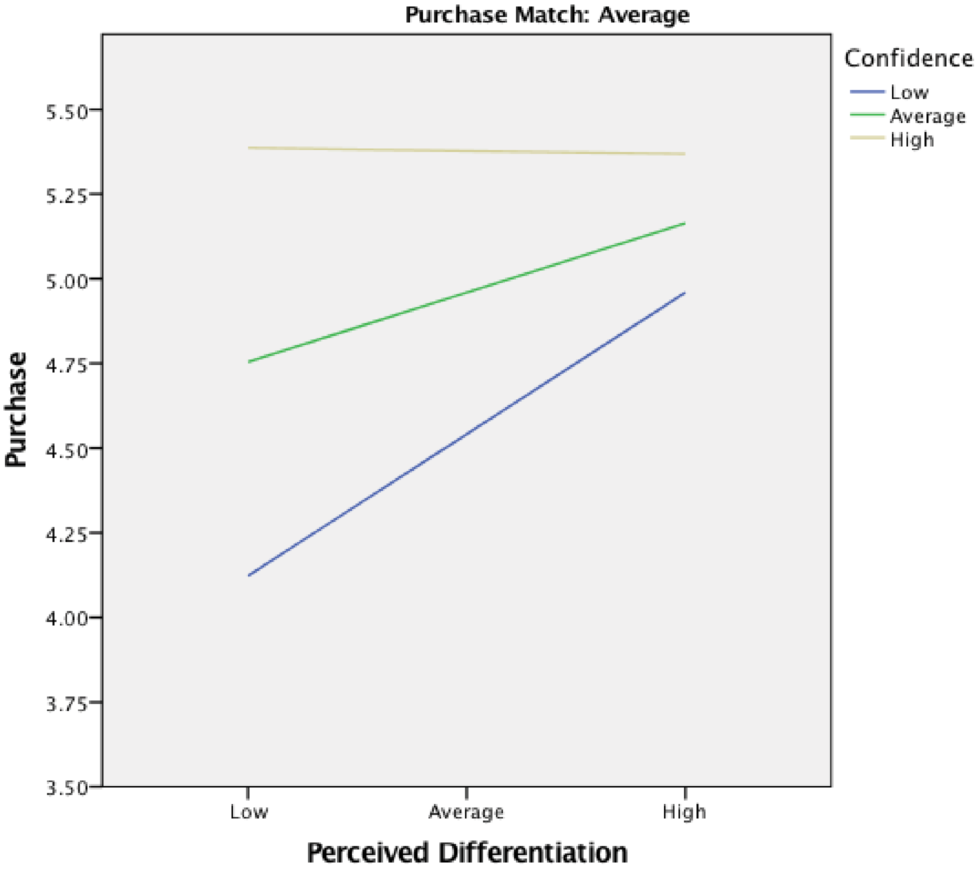
Purchase goal match	effect	se	*t* value	*p* value#
4.04 (-1 SD)	.532	.243	2.194	.014
5.26 (mean)	.425	.202	2.104	.018
6.48 (+1 SD)	.316	.191	1.667	.048

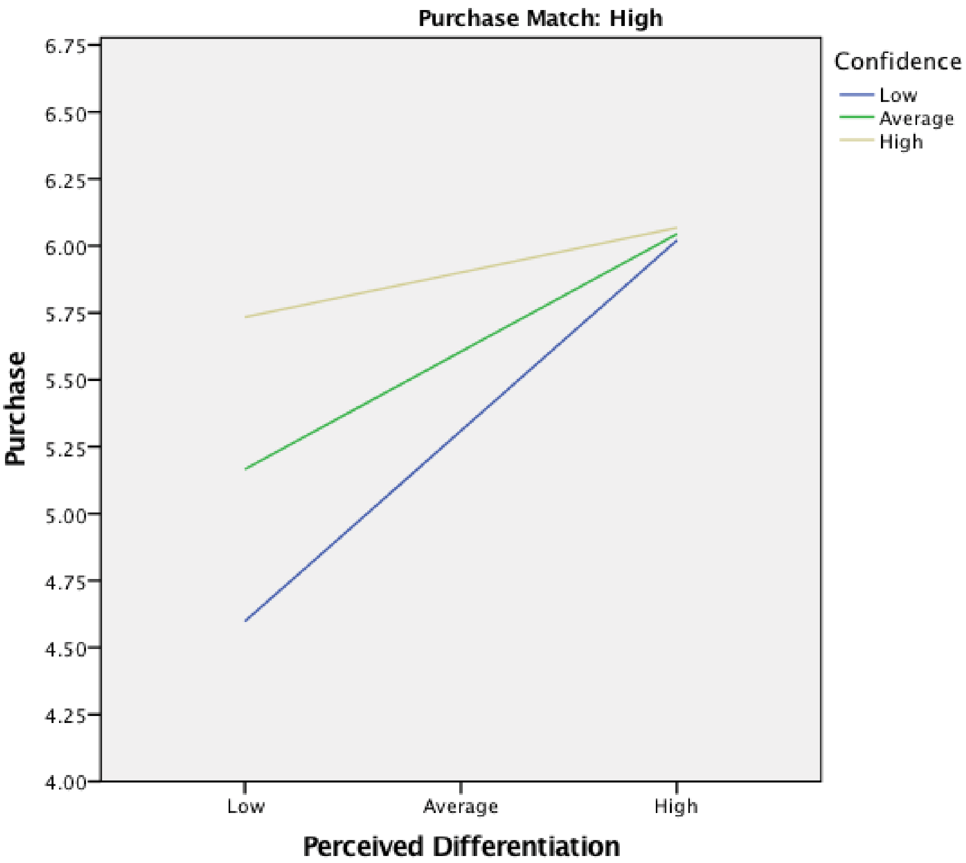
#one-tailed test

The visual representation (see Figure 9) shows that when purchase match was low, confidence had a greater effect on purchase when perceived differentiation was also low (change of 0.9 for high perceived differentiation versus 1.5 for low differentiation). Similarly, when purchase match was at an average level, confidence played more of a role when perceived differentiation was low than when it was high (change of 1.25 for low perceived differentiation versus 0.45 for high differentiation). It can also be seen that when both purchase match and perceived differentiation was high, confidence had virtually no impact.

Figure 9: Experiment 1 spotlight analysis graphs for H1




Purchase Match: Average
Confidence
Low
Average
High
Purchase
5.50
5.25
5.00
4.75
4.50
4.25
4.00
3.75
3.50
Low
Average
High
Perceived Differentiation


Purchase Match: High
Confidence
Low
Average
High
Purchase
6.75
6.50
6.25
6.00
5.75
5.50
5.25
5.00
4.75
4.50
4.25
4.00
Low
Average
High
Perceived Differentiation

A Johnson-Neyman analysis was conducted to pinpoint the exact value of purchase goal match where confidence becomes a moderator between perceived differentiation and purchase (see Table 20). The results show that for the Jetstar experiment, the point of significance (at alpha of .05) was where purchase goal match was 6.47 (1.121 above the mean) or lower, thus making 80% of the data in the zone of significance.

Table 20: Johnson-Neyman analysis for H1—Experiment 1

Purchase match (score from the mean)	Effect of confidence * perceived differentiation on purchase	Standard error	*t* value	*p* value#
-4.279	**.801**	**.406**	**1.975**	**.025**
-3.979	**.775**	**.388**	**1.998**	**.024**
-3.679	**.748**	**.370**	**2.022**	**.022**
-3.379	**.722**	**.353**	**2.047**	**.021**
-3.079	**.696**	**.336**	**2.072**	**.020**
-2.779	**.669**	**.319**	**2.097**	**.019**
-2.479	**.643**	**.303**	**2.121**	**.018**
-2.179	**.617**	**.288**	**2.144**	**.017**
-1.879	**.590**	**.273**	**2.165**	**.016**
-1.579	**.560**	**.259**	**2.182**	**.015**
-1.279	**.538**	**.245**	**2.193**	**.015**
-.979	**.511**	**.233**	**2.195**	**.015**
-.679	**.485**	**.222**	**2.186**	**.015**
-.379	**.459**	**.212**	**2.162**	**.016**
-.079	**.432**	**.204**	**2.119**	**.018**
.221	**.406**	**.198**	**2.054**	**.021**
.509	**.381**	**.193**	**1.969**	**.025**
.521	**.380**	**.193**	**1.965**	**.026**
.821	**.353**	**.191**	**1.851**	**.033**
1.121	**.327**	**.191**	**1.714**	**.044**
1.421	.301	.193	1.560	.060
1.721	.274	.197	1.394	.083

one-tailed test

In order to test H2 and H3 regarding the antecedents to confidence, a hierarchical regression was used to test the proposed antecedents of perceived clarity*perceived consistency and the alignment of the initial and post perceived positions on the dependent variable of positioning confidence. The model, with controls, was highly significant with an *F* value of 3.639 and a *p* value of .001, giving an adjusted R-squared of .116 (see Table 21). This indicates that the model explained approximately 12% of the variation of positioning confidence. The controls and interaction variable in the model were mean-centred to control for multicollinearity, which did not appear to be an issue given that all tolerance statistics and VIF values were within thresholds.

Table 21: Regression analysis for H2 and H3—Experiment 1

Model Summary

	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	Std. error of the estimate
Model	.400	.160	.116	.379

ANOVA

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	6.767	13	.521	3.639	.001
Residual	35.472	248	.143		
Total	42.239	261			

Coefficients*

	Unstandardised Coefficients				Collinearity	
	Unstandardised Beta	Std. error	*t*	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(constant)	8.644	.182	48.145	.000		
Alignment between initial & post positioning perceptions	.000	.001	-0.668	.250#	.960	1.041
Perceived clarity	.033	.029	1.160	.247	.400	2.498
Perceived consistency	-.054	.032	-1.674	.048	.388	2.587
Self-confidence (control)	-.013	.021	-0.617	.538	.835	1.198
Uncertainty avoidance (control)	.029	.027	1.071	.285	.836	1.196
Need for cognition (control)	-.007	.017	-0.396	.692	.916	1.091
Firm trust (control)	-.001	.026	-0.048	.962	.424	2.358
Brand familiarity (control)	.016	.014	1.108	.269	.812	1.231
Brand attitude (control)	.011	.025	0.439	.661	.542	1.846
Credibility of external sources (control)	.061	.026	2.347	.020	.513	1.948
Credibility of actual sources (control)	.074	.020	3.609	.000	.542	1.846
Credibility of exposed position(s) (control)	-.051	.023	-2.197	.029	.560	1.787
Perceived clarity * Perceived consistency	-.021	.012	-1.734	.044#	.839	1.193

* Dependent variable: confidence

one-tailed test applied

The interaction between perceived clarity and consistency as an antecedent to confidence was significant at a .05 alpha (*p* value of .044), but was also negative in direction (beta of -.021). A deeper look into the interaction via the PROCESS plug-in for SPSS model 1 (see Table 22) suggests that the effect of consistency on confidence was only significant when clarity was at an average level (*p* value = 0.48) or 1 standard deviation above the mean (*p* value = .018). The effect of consistency on confidence was no longer significant when clarity is low (1 standard deviation below the mean). However, as per the regression results, given the *t* value and effect values were in fact negative in sign and a directional test was applied, no conclusions can be made (Levine & Banas, 2002).

Table 22: Conditional effect of perceived consistency*confidence interaction at values of perceived clarity—Experiment 1

Perceived clarity	Effect of consistency on confidence	Standard error	*t* value	*p* value#
3.91 (-1 SD)	-.0273	.0329	-0.8304	.203#
5.12 (mean)	-.0536	.0322	-1.6664	.048#
6.48 (+ 1 SD)	-.0799	.0381	-2.0983	.018#

One-tailed test

The next predicted driver of confidence in the regression model relates to the alignment between the initial and post perceived positions. The predicted positive impact of the alignment variable on positioning confidence was not supported in Experiment 1 given that results produced a *p* value of .25.

The series of hypotheses proposed for H4 and H5 will be examined via contrast testing using ANOVA. This method allows for the comparison of specific experimental cells in terms of whether there is a significant difference in the outcome variable being measured. A preliminary step was to test whether the relationships between the interaction variable of position definition level and purchase goal and the dependent variables of perceived clarity and perceived consistency are statistically significant. The level of position definition is determined by three groups: consumers who were exposed to a completely defined position in the experiment, consumers exposed to a position only defined by either the actual or external source type and thirdly, those exposed to a completely undefined position. The aim of this test is to determine whether multiple experimental groups that fall under the same group of positioning definition can be combined for the purpose of forming a contrast group. For example, for the definition level of “completely defined”, both the groups of REL–REL and VFM–VFM fit this description. Thus, it needs to be determined whether the groups should in fact be separated, or whether they may be weighted together for the contrasts under H4 and H5. This question was answered via a general linear model (GLM) analysis in SPSS.

The result for the relationship position definition level*purchase goal match and perceived clarity showed a lack of significance (*F* value = .951; *p* value = .528), thus it can be concluded that groups that fall under the same positioning definition may be weighted in the contrasts. However, the results for the relationship of position definition level*purchase goal match and perceived consistency is significant (*F* value = 1.617; *p* value = .043). Hence, groups that fall under the same positioning definition may be tested individually in the contrasts where perceived consistency is the outcome variable.

The results for the contrasts to test hypotheses H4a–H4f can be found in Table 23. It should be acknowledged that only the "equal variances" contrast test output is reported, as the Levene's test statistic of .692 is not significant with a *p* value of .699, thus we cannot reject the hypothesis that the variances of the groups are equal. The ANOVA output reports an *F* value of 3.097 that is significant at a .01 alpha (*p* value = .002). This suggests that there is a significant difference in the means of perceived clarity for the groups tested. Next, the findings will delve into the specific hypothesis testing. It should be noted that a one-tailed test was applied to each contrast, given the directional hypotheses.

H4a compares consumers who were exposed to a completely defined position, that is, REL–REL and VFM–VFM are weighted together and compared to the group exposed to a completely undefined position NIL–NIL) in order to determine if these two groups have significantly different levels of perceived clarity. The results show that the first contrast has a significantly higher level of perceived clarity than the second at the .01 alpha level (*p* value = .001). Thus Experiment 1 shows support for hypothesis H4a.

Table 23: Contrast analysis for perceived clarity—Experiment 1

Descriptives

Group (actual/external)	Mean for perceived clarity
1. VFM/VFM	5.591
2. REL/VFM	5.563
3. NIL/VFM	5.465
4. VFM/REL	4.970
5. REL/REL	5.710
6. NIL/REL	5.186
7. VFM/NIL	4.896
8. REL/NIL	5.010
9. NIL/NIL	4.552
Total	5.212

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.692	8	282	.699

Perceived clarity

ANOVA

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	*F*	Sig
Between groups	38.618	8	4.827	3.097	.002
Within groups	439.537	282	1.559		
Total	478.154	290			

Perceived clarity

Contrast Test

	Contrast	Value of contrast	Std. Error	*t*	df	Sig. (1-tailed)
Assume equal variances	H4a	1.0985	.2718	4.042	282	**.001**
	H4b	.6976	.2216	3.147	282	**.001**
	H4c	.3251	.2200	1.478	282	.070
	H4d	.4009	.2696	1.478	282	.070
	H4e	.3725	.2174	1.714	282	**.044**
	H4f	.7734	.2683	2.883	282	**.002**

Perceived clarity

Bold represents supported hypothesis

The second contrast of H4b compares consumers exposed to a completely defined position, thus VFM–VFM and REL–REL are weighted together and compared to consumers exposed to a position defined only by the actual source type, thus the combined group of VFM–NIL and REL–NIL. The mean level of perceived clarity of the two groups is compared with the first group to have a predicted higher level of mean clarity than the second group. The results show a high level of significance with a *p* value of .001, therefore we can accept H4b at .01 alpha.

The subsequent contrast focuses on H4c and tests whether there is a significantly higher level of perceived clarity between consumers exposed to a completely defined position to those exposed to a position defined only by the external source type. Thus groups VFM–VFM and REL–REL are weighted together and compared to the weighted group of NIL–VFM and NIL–REL. The findings produce a *p* value of .070 and, thus, H4c is not supported, as it does not meet the threshold of .05 alpha for one-tailed tests.

The next contrast predicts that the scenario where only the actual source type defines the position leads to greater perceived clarity than the case where the position is completely undefined. Operationally, the weighted group of VFM–NIL and REL–NIL is contrasted to the single group of NIL–NIL. Like H4c, results produced a *p* value of .070 and, thus, H4d is not supported, as it does not meet the threshold of .05 alpha for one-tailed tests.

The next contrast, focused on H4e, tests whether there is a significant difference in perceived clarity between groups where the consumers are exposed to a position defined only by the external source type and those where the position is defined only by the actual source type. In order to test for a significant difference between these two groups of partial position definition, VFM–NIL and REL–NIL are weighted together and compared to the weighted group of NIL–VFM and NIL–REL. The results show support for H4e, in that having the partially defined position expressed by the external rather than the actual source type is better for perceived clarity, at .05 alpha with a *p* value of .044.

The last contrast test for perceived clarity relates to comparing consumers exposed to a position defined only by the external source type to consumers who sighted a completely undefined position. Thus NIL–VFM and NIL–REL are grouped together and compared against NIL–NIL in a weighted contrast test. The results show a *p* value of .002 and thus H4f, which predicts greater perceived clarity from a position defined only by the external source type compared to a completely undefined position, is accepted at .01 alpha.

Considering the significant relationship between the interaction variable of level of position definition*purchase goal match and perceived consistency, groups are tested individually instead of being grouped together in a weighted contrast for H5. Thus, in order to test the series of sub-hypotheses under H5, unweighted contrasts are required to allow for this separation (see Table 24).

The overall model result shows that the Levene statistic of .984 in homogeneity of variances test is not significant with a *p* value of .448. Thus, we accept the hypothesis that assumes equal variances and follow the contrast test results that presume equal variance. The ANOVA test gives a *p* value of .002, signifying that there are significant differences between the groups overall.

Table 24: Contrast analysis for perceived consistency—Experiment 1

Descriptives

Group (actual/external)	Mean for perceived consistency
1. VFM/VFM	5.452
2. REL/VFM	5.469
3. NIL/VFM	5.414
4. VFM/REL	4.960
5. REL/REL	5.720
6. NIL/REL	5.098
7. VFM/NIL	4.469
8. REL/NIL	4.940
9. NIL/NIL	4.781
Total	5.165

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	Df1	Df2	Sig.
.984	8	282	.448

Perceived Consistency

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig
Between groups	32.344	8	4.043	3.097	.002
Within groups	368.183	282	1.306		
Total	400.527				

Perceived Consistency

Contrast Test

	Contrast		Value of contrast	Std. Error	*t*	df	Sig.
Assume equal variances	H5a – 1	REL-REL v REL-VFM	.2517	.2880	0.874	282	.190#
	H5a – 2	REL-REL v VFM-REL	.7608	.2858	2.662	282	**.004#**
	H5a – 3	VFM-VFM v REL-VFM	-.0171	.2880	-0.060	282	.480#
	H5a – 4	VFM-VFM v VFM-REL	.4920	.2858	1.722	282	**.043#**
	H5b – 1	VFM-VFM v NIL-NIL	.6704	.2880	2.328	282	**.010#**
	H5b – 2	REL-REL v NIL-NIL	.9392	.2880	3.262	282	**.001#**
	H5c – 1	VFM-VFM v VFM-NIL	.7641	.2880	2.654	282	**.004#**
	H5c – 2	VFM-VFM v NIL-VFM	.0375	.2858	0.131	282	.448#
	H5c – 3	REL-REL v REL-NIL	.7810	.2858	2.733	282	**.004#**
	H5c – 4	REL-REL v NIL-REL	.6224	.2838	2.193	282	**.015#**
	H5d – 1	VFM-REL v NIL-NIL	-.1783	.2835	-0.629	282	**.530**
	H5d – 2	REL-VFM v NIL-NIL	-.6875	.2857	-2.407	282	.017
	H5e – 1	VFM-NIL v NIL-NIL	.0938	.2857	0.328	282	**.743**
	H5e – 2	NIL-VFM v NIL-NIL	-.6329	.2835	-2.233	282	.026
	H5e – 3	REL-NIL v NIL-NIL	-.1581	.2835	-0.558	282	**.577**
	H5e – 4	NIL-VFM v NIL-NIL	-.3168	.2814	-1.126	282	**.261**
	H5f – 1	REL-NIL v REL-VFM	.5294	.2835	1.867	282	.063
	H5f – 2	REL-NIL v VFM-REL	.0202	.2813	0.072	282	**.943**
	H5f – 3	VFM-NIL v VFM-REL	-.2721	.2835	-0.960	282	**.338**
	H5f – 4	VFM-NIL v REL-VFM	-.7813	.2857	-2.735	282	.007
	H5f – 5	NIL-REL v REL-VFM	-.3707	.2814	-1.317	282	**.189**
	H5f – 6	NIL-REL vVFM-REL	.1384	.2792	0.496	282	**.620**
	H5f – 7	NIL-VFM v REL-VFM	-.0546	.2835	-0.193	282	**.847**
	H5f – 8	NIL-VFM v VFM-REL	.3063	.2858	1.072	282	**.285**

one-tailed test

Bold represents supported hypothesis

The first contrast of H5a examines the perceived consistency of consumers who are exposed to a completely defined position that is the *same* across the source types to consumers exposed to a completely defined position that is *different*. Given the directional hypothesis of H5a, a one-tailed test was applied. The results conducted for Experiment 1 show support for two of the four contrasts conducted to test H5. The first (REL–REL v REL–VFM) and third group contrasts

(VFM–VFM v REL–VFM) are not significant (*p* value = .190 and *p* value = .48, respectively). However the second group contrast (REL–REL vs VFM–REL) is significant at .05 alpha (*p* value = .043) and lastly, the fourth contrast group (VFM–VFM v VFM–REL) is significant at .01 alpha (*p* value = .004). In order to accept the directional hypothesis, the *t* values are positive for the significant contrasts.

The results show strong support for H5b, with both of the two contrasts supporting the fact the consumers exposed to a completely defined position, with the same position between actual and external source types, have higher perceived consistency than consumers exposed to a completely undefined position. Both contrasts, VFM–VFM vs NIL–NIL and REL–REL vs NIL–NIL, were supported at .01 alpha with *p* values of .010 and .001, respectively, when applying a one-tailed test.

Three of the four contrasts which examined H5c using a one-tailed test proved to be significant at .05 alpha. Therefore, there is moderate support for the idea that consumers who are exposed to a completely defined position, with the same position between actual and external source types, have higher perceived consistency than consumers exposed to a partially defined position. The combination of VFM–VFM vs NIL–VFM proved to be insignificant with a *p* value of .448. However, the difference in perceived consistency between the contrasts were significant: VFM–VFM vs VFM–NIL (*p* value = .004), REL–REL vs REL–NIL (*p* value =.004), and REL–REL v NIL–REL (*p* value = .015).

Results show moderate support for H5d with one of the two contrasts supporting the hypothesis that there is no difference in perceived consistency between consumers exposed to a completely defined position—with different positions between actual and external source types—and consumers exposed to a completely undefined position. The first contrast of VFM–REL vs NIL–NIL was insignificant with a *p* value of .530, however the second contrast of REL–VFM vs NIL–NIL was significant at .05 alpha with a *p* value of .017.

H5e predicts that there is no difference in perceived consistency between consumers exposed to a partially defined position and consumers exposed to a completely undefined position. This was supported in three of the four contrasts. The first contrast (VFM–NIL vs NIL–NIL), third contrast (REL–NIL vs NIL–NIL), and fourth contrast (NIL–VFM vs NIL–NIL) produced *p* values of .743, .577, and .261 respectively. However the second contrast of NIL–VFM vs NIL–NIL is significant at .05 alpha.

Eight contrasts tested H5f, which suggested that there is no difference in perceived consistency between consumers exposed to a partially defined position and consumers exposed to a completely defined position with different positions across the actual and external source types. This hypothesis was supported in six of the eight contrasts and is, thus, moderately supported overall. The contrast of REL–NIL vs REL–VFM was significant at .10 alpha (*p* value of .063) and VFM–NIL vs REL–VFM at .01 alpha (p value of .007), with all other contrasts well out of the significance zone.

The following section will bring together the summary of the findings from Experiment 1 under the specific hypothesis test.

6.6 Summary of findings from experiment 1

H1: Supported

H1 for the Jetstar experiment was tested via a hierarchical regression. The findings show that consumers' confidence in their positioning perception acted as a significant moderator of the relationship between perceived differentiation and purchase intention when there was a poor match between the positioning perception and their purchase goal (VFM) (*p* value = 0.40; one-tailed). In other words, there is a negative three-way interaction between confidence, purchase goal match, and perceived differentiation on the dependent variable of purchase intention, supporting H1. As predicted, the effect of confidence on the relationship between differentiation and purchase is greater as the strength of the match between the purchase goal and positioning perception lessens.

H2: Not supported

The hypothesis that the interaction between perceived clarity and perceived consistency positively affects consumers' confidence in their positioning perception was not supported. Even though the *p* value of .044 for perceived clarity*consistency when regressed on confidence is significant at .05 alpha—given the negative beta of -.21 and the fact that a one-tailed test was applied to test a positive relationship—no conclusion on the interaction variable and confidence can ultimately be made from this study.

H3: Not supported

The findings of Experiment 1 do not support the idea that the degree of alignment between the initial and post perceived positions positively affects the consumer's positioning confidence. The model tested via hierarchical regression produced a *p* value of .250 for the "alignment variable" when regressed on confidence.

H4a: Supported

The results support the idea that consumers exposed to a completely defined position have greater perceived clarity than consumers exposed to a completely undefined position. The hypothesis is supported with a one-tailed test at .01 alpha, with a *p* value of .001.

H4b: Supported

The hypothesis that consumers who observed a completely defined position will have greater perceived clarity than if the position is defined only by the actual source type is accepted at .01 alpha using a one-tailed test, with a *p* value of .001.

H4c: Not supported

There is a lack of support for the proposal that consumers who are exposed to a completely defined position have greater perceived clarity than consumers exposed to a position that is only defined by the external source type. A one-tailed test disconfirms this hypothesis with a *p* value of .070, thus is insignificant at .05 alpha.

H4d: Not supported

The findings show a lack of support for the idea that consumers exposed to a position defined only by the actual source type will have greater perceived clarity than if the position is completely undefined. As with H4c, a one-tailed test produced a *p* value of .070, thus the result lacks significant at .05 alpha.

H4e: Supported

The hypothesis that consumers exposed to a position defined only by the external source type will have greater perceived clarity than if the position is defined only by the actual source type is supported at .05 alpha (*p* value = .044) when a one-tailed test is applied.

H4f: Supported

The hypothesis that consumers who observed a position defined only by the external source type will have a greater perceived clarity than if the position is completely undefined is supported at .01 alpha (*p* value = .002) using a one-tailed test.

H5a: Moderately supported

There are mixed results in Experiment 1 for the hypothesis that amongst consumers exposed to a completely defined position, having the *same* position between actual and external source types will lead to greater perceived consistency of the product's (post) perceived position than for consumers exposed to different positions. In the case where it is a different position that is portrayed across the source types, it appears that whether it is the actual *or* external source type delivering a position that is different to the purchase goal/initial perceived position impacts the level of perceived consistency. Having two source types depicting the same position leads to greater perceived consistency than when the actual position supports the purchase goal and initial perceived position (the initial position for most consumers) but external source does not. The two contrasts that support this finding delivered *p* values of .043 and .004, based on a one-tailed test.

H5b: Supported

The hypothesis that consumers exposed to a completely defined (and same) position will have higher perceived consistency than consumers exposed to a completely undefined position was supported with the two contrast tests conducted, at .01 alpha.

H5c: Supported overall

The idea that consumers exposed to a completely defined (same) position will have higher perceived consistency than consumers exposed to a partially defined position was supported in three of the four contrast tests, at .05 alpha. The combination of VFM–VFM vs NIL–VFM was the only contrast that failed to show any significant difference in subsequent consistency perception.

H5d: Moderately supported

This hypothesis suggested that there is inconsequential difference in perceived consistency between the group of respondents that received a completely defined (different) position and consumers exposed to a completely undefined position. However this hypothesis was only supported in one of two contrasts. VFM–REL vs

NIL–NIL produced an insignificant *p* value (.530), but the group comparison of REL–VFM vs NIL–NIL was significant at the .05 alpha level.

H5e: Supported overall

This hypothesis proposed an insignificant difference in perceived consistency between groups exposed to a partially defined position and those exposed to a completely undefined position. There was moderate support for this hypothesis with three of the four contrasts producing a insignificant difference. The comparison of NIL–VFM vs NIL–NIL produced a significant result at .05 alpha.

H5f: Supported overall

The last consistency hypothesis proposed that there is no difference in perceived consistency between consumers exposed to a partially defined position and consumers exposed to a completely defined position with different positions across the actual and external source types. This hypothesis was supported in six of the eight contrasts, with the contrast of REL–NIL vs REL–VFM and VFM–NIL vs REL–VFM producing a significant difference in perceived consistency, at .10 and .01 alphas, respectively.

In summary, some hypotheses outlined for testing were supported in Experiment 1. More specifically, the proposed three-way interaction relating to the effect of positioning confidence and the interaction between the actual and external sources of positioning signals on perceived clarity were supported in the Jetstar brand study. On the other hand, the two hypotheses relating to the antecedents of confidence were not supported in Experiment 1. Lastly, the hypotheses predicting the interaction between the actual and external positioning source types on perceived consistency were predominantly supported, with varying levels of confirmation.

The thesis will now move forward to Experiment 2, which will test the same hypotheses on a different focal brand—Miele.

6.7 Main study—Experiment 2 pre-testing

6.7.1. Experiment 2 stimuli validity checks

As with Experiment 1, the first task of the main study is to prepare and pre-test the validity of the stimuli to be used in the experiment. As mentioned previously, 18 pieces of stimuli in the form of different product communication is required in each of the two experiments. These communication pieces are made up of three each of press releases (PR), magazine advertisements (MAG), newspaper advertisements (NP), expert reviews (ER), online forum pieces (FOR), and customer experience/blog items (FEX). The three positioning pieces in each group constitute one each of VFM, REL, and NIL. Multiple versions of each stimuli were pre-tested in order to achieve the highest percentage of people that viewed the desired position in each stimuli.

The product communication for Miele was created with the aim of keeping a similar style to the Jetstar stimuli, length, and use of imagery. The product communication was created using a combination of global Miele advertisements and actual laundry photos found on websites such as Pinterest via desktop research. As with the Jetstar experiment, the image editing software Photoshop was used at times as an editing tool. Product features such as pricing and washing machine attributes were configured via desktop research. Given that the true RRP of the W1 Prestige washing machine in Australia was $4,495, and the cheapest Miele was approximately $1,500, a price point of $3,000 was chosen for the TOR stimuli, $1,400 for the VFM stimuli, and no price was shown for the NIL stimuli given it is an overpowering cue for positioning (Shapiro, 1968). The true value of $4,495 was not used as the TOR price point due to perceived lack of credibility amongst an informally-tested small sample. The text in the stimuli was created after reviewing numerous product review websites and forums on the topic of washing machines.

As a preceding step to consumer pre-testing, six marketing communication academics reviewed the 36 pieces of product communication stimuli via email and were asked to judge which was the primary product position expressed by each stimuli. This is a greater amount of stimuli than was pre-tested in Experiment 1. The motivation is to increase the percentage score of consumers that hold the desired positioning perception for each of the required stimulus in the main study. The experts were not told which position each stimulus was designed to communicate in order to avoid any potential respondent bias (see Appendix 10).

The results from the expert review pre-test gave 100% scores for all of the expert reviews, customer's experience, and online forum stimuli. The poorest scores were for NP1, MAG2, MAG5, with two of six experts perceiving a different positioning to the desired position (each choosing a different option in all cases), and one in six experts perceiving a different positioning for the stimuli of PR3, NP3, NP4, MAG1, MAG3. In summary, 28 of the 36 stimuli tested received perfect scores. Of the 8 stimuli that didn't receive a perfect score, 66% agreement was the lowest score achieved, which still shows reasonable validity. Nevertheless, improvements were made to the lower scoring stimuli (see more later in this section).

Some experts who gave responses outside of VFM/TOR/NIL were probed in order to gain insight into why they perceived the positions they did. For example, two experts expressed caution in using the word "gentle", as the experts linked the word to a reliability position.

Given the quantitative and qualitative feedback from the marketing communications academics, adjustments to some of the 36 pieces of the stimuli were made and this was re-tested with a consumer base. Each online consumer survey, conducted in Qualtrics, contained 12 pieces of communication (3 surveys in total to test 36 stimuli) and achieved a sample of at least 20 respondents (obtained via Amazon Mechanical Turk). The consumer pre-test results drove the final selection of the stimuli for Experiment 2 on the same criteria set for Experiment 1 (see Table 25).

For all stimuli groups, two alternative styles were tested: For example, expert review codes ER1, ER2, and ER3 were presented in a style different to ER3, ER4, ER5, therefore the cumulative scoring within the theme was considered. The selected stimuli can be viewed in Appendix 11.

Table 25: Consumer pre-test results for selected stimuli—Experiment 2

Stimuli	**Top of the range**	**Value for money**	**NIL**	Reliability	Service	Attractiveness	Selectivity	Country of origin	Brand name
PR 1[†]	**59.09%**	4.55%		4.55%	4.55%	9.09%	9.09%		9.09%
PR2		**100.00%**							
PR3	8.70%	4.35%	**43.48%**	13.04%	8.70%	13.04%	8.70%		
NP4	4.55%		**63.64%**		4.55%	13.64%	4.55%		9.09%
NP5	5.00%	**70.00%**		15.00%	10.00%				
NP6	**54.44%**	13.64%	9.09%			22.73%			
MAG4	**68.18%**	4.55%	4.55%			9.09%	9.09%		4.55%
MAG5	16.67%		**61.11%**			5.56%	5.56%		11.11%
MAG6	4.55%	**90.91%**	4.55%						
FOR4		**90.91%**		4.55%	4.55%				
FOR5	**70.00%**	5.00%	5.00%			10.00%	10.00%		
FOR6	4.55%	4.55%	**86.36%**				4.55%		
ER1	4.00%	4.00%	**84.00%**	4.00%			4.00%		
ER2		**95.45%**		4.55%					
ER3	**86.36%**	9.09%	4.55%						
FEX4	**72.73%**					18.18%	9.09%		
FEX5		**70.00%**		22.00%	4.00%		4.00%		
FEX6	9.09%	4.55%	**77.27%**		4.55%				4.55%

PR = Press Release, NP = Newspaper Ad, MAG = Magazine Ad, FOR= Online Forum, ER = Expert Review, FEX = Customer's experience /blog. Bolded text represents desired position

[†] The press release stimuli were modified and retested a number of times in order to achieve the desired result.

Considering the strong initial result from the expert panel and the subsequent strong result of the “improved” stimuli in the consumer pre-test, the 18 stimuli chosen for Experiment 2 are believed to meet the validity threshold—that is, to deliver on the desired positioning perception in order to create the required manipulations of the main study. Overall, the stimuli selection of Experiment 2 achieved a marginally stronger pre-test validation score than Experiment 1.

6.7.2 Experiment 2 pilot test

A pilot test was conducted online via M-Turk (instrument created in Qualtrics) with a total sample of 66 U.S. respondents. The goal of the pilot test was to determine if the stimuli were working in totality to achieve the desired positioning perception and to ensure fit and reliability of the category-adapted positioning typology scale. Considering that each respondent in the main experiment received six pieces of stimuli, the pre-tests conducted thus far only tested the stimuli individually. Therefore, the pilot study tested whether the intended position depiction held when the six stimuli are presented together.

Due to time and cost, three of the nine experimental conditions were tested—TOR–VFM, TOR–TOR, and NIL–NIL—as these conditions are the most likely to produce different outcomes in positioning perception. This followed the logic of Experiment 1. A one-way ANOVA checked for any significant difference between the three groups in terms of the strength of the respondents’ TOR post perceived position. One would expect that the TOR–TOR exposure would result in a significantly stronger TOR perception, followed by the TOR–VFM group and lastly the NIL–NIL group.

The mean TOR (post) positioning perception scores, which were measured via a 7-point scale, are as follows: TOR–TOR 6.22, TOR–VFM 4.75, and NIL–NIL 3.4. The three groups are statistically different from each other at the 99% confidence interval, suggesting that the stimuli work together in totality to deliver its intended position.

Possible hypothesis-guessing was also checked for by asking respondents what they thought the research was about in an open response format at the end of the research instrument. The majority of respondents either answered that they did not know or gave a generic answer such as “How customers make choices”. There were no any respondents who gave a detailed, correct depiction of the true research purpose.

The median length of completion time was 22 minutes for respondents with an initial perceived position (n = 15). This suggests that the data collection task is fairly manageable for respondents in order to maintain interest and cognition, particularly given the remuneration received by the respondents.

Some items of the scale were adapted from both the original Blankson and Kalafatis scale and the scale applied to Experiment 1 in order to make more sense to the study context of washing machines. Thus, fit and reliability statistics of the Blankson and Kalafatis were checked, with most items displayed factor loadings of above .7, presenting a good fit of the items (see Table 26). The loadings of two items (one in *brand name* and one in *selectivity*) sit at between .626 and .671, which is still at an acceptable level; all Cronbach's alpha scores are above .7, which shows good internal consistency. Unlike in Experiment 1, the *selectivity* measure will remain with all three items.

As was the case in Experiment 1, the 2-item construct of *country of origin* produced a Pearson correlation of .239, suggesting low correlation. However, as was uncovered in Experiment 1, the correlation is likely to vary by geography. Given that the pilot is U.S.-based but the main study sample is from Australia, the two items will remain but will need to be re-checked prior to commencing analysis of the main study data, and dealt with if the correlation remains low.

Table 26: Validity and reliability analysis for full positioning scale as applied to Experiment 2

Positioning construct	Factor loadings** Item 1, item 2, … item x	Cronbach's alpha
Top of the range	.925, .881, .960, .922, .955	.959
Value for money	.920, .867, .934	.893
Reliability	.863, .913, .923, .870	.914
Service	.849, .911, .878, .780	.876
Attractiveness	.949, .912, .958, .932	.954
Brand name	.877, .762, .624, .886, .876	.870
Selectivity	.885, .671, .884	.747

** Based on rotation method, component matrix loadings reported. NB: Measure taken from post perceived position as opposed to initial. This is due to the fact that the main constructs in the hypotheses rely on the post perceived position; country of origin construct is absent given only two items

Other multi-item constructs have not changed in their wording between Experiments 1 and 2 and, thus, as expected their factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha are very similar, and all are over the .7 threshold. An exception exists with brand attitude, as the original scale wording was applied in the Miele experiment, whereas adjusted wording was applied in the Jetstar study as discussed in the pilot study section for Jetstar. The fit and reliability statistics for brand attitude in the Miele pilot are as follows: factor loadings = .959, .944, .and 939, and α = .941. It should also be noted that due to an error, perceived clarity and perceived consistency were measured as a 2-item scale in both the pilot and Experiment 2. The two items correlate well for each construct with a Cronbach's alpha that is both strong and not dissimilar to the 3-item score in Experiment 1 (see Table 27), thus the 2-item scale presents well in terms of reliability.

Table 27: Item correlation for perceived clarity and consistency—Experiment 2

Construct	Pearson correlation
Perceived Clarity#	.883
Perceived Consistency##	.799

Cronbach's alpha = .938, tested as a 3-item scale in Experiment 1 with a Cronbach's alpha of .951

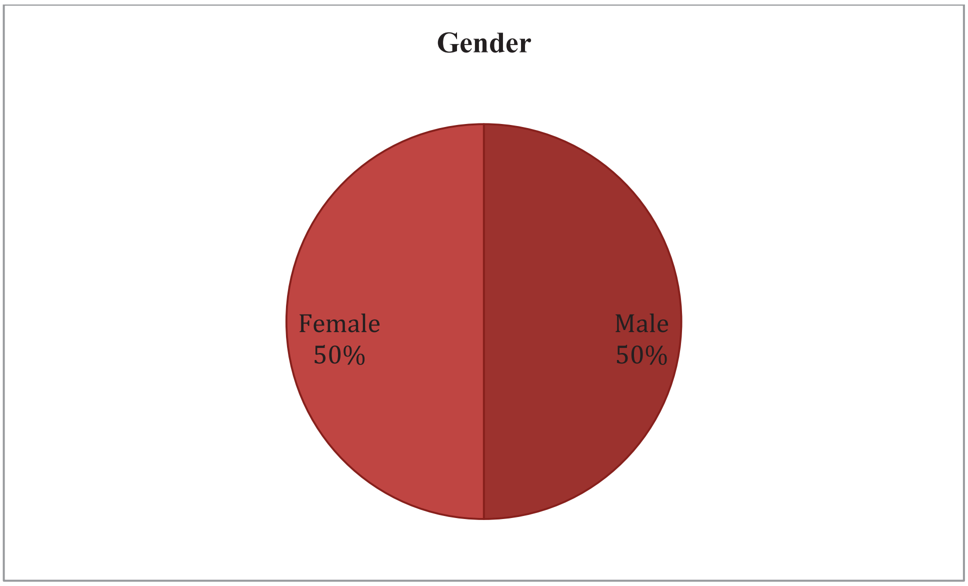
Cronbach's alpha = .888, tested as a 3-item scale in Experiment 1 with a Cronbach's alpha of .945

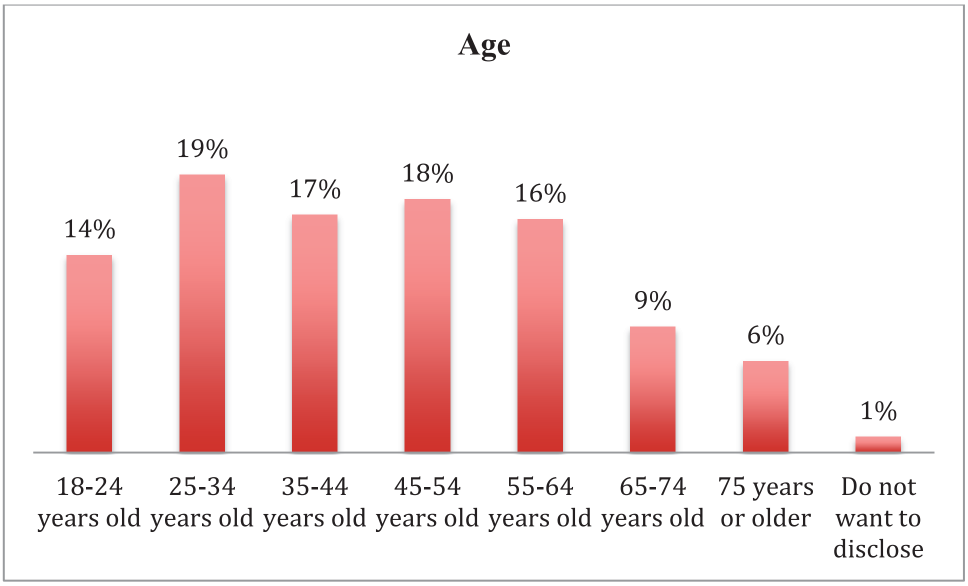
Based on good results from the pilot test on stimuli manipulation and scale validity, and reliability, survey completion time, and the absence of hypothesis guessing, the main study was employed.

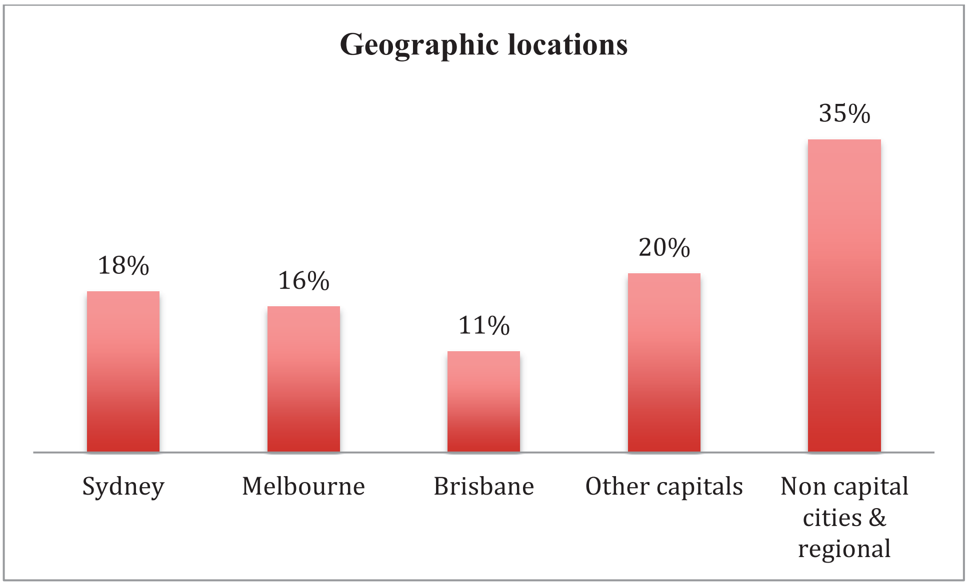
6.8 Main study—Experiment 2 descriptives

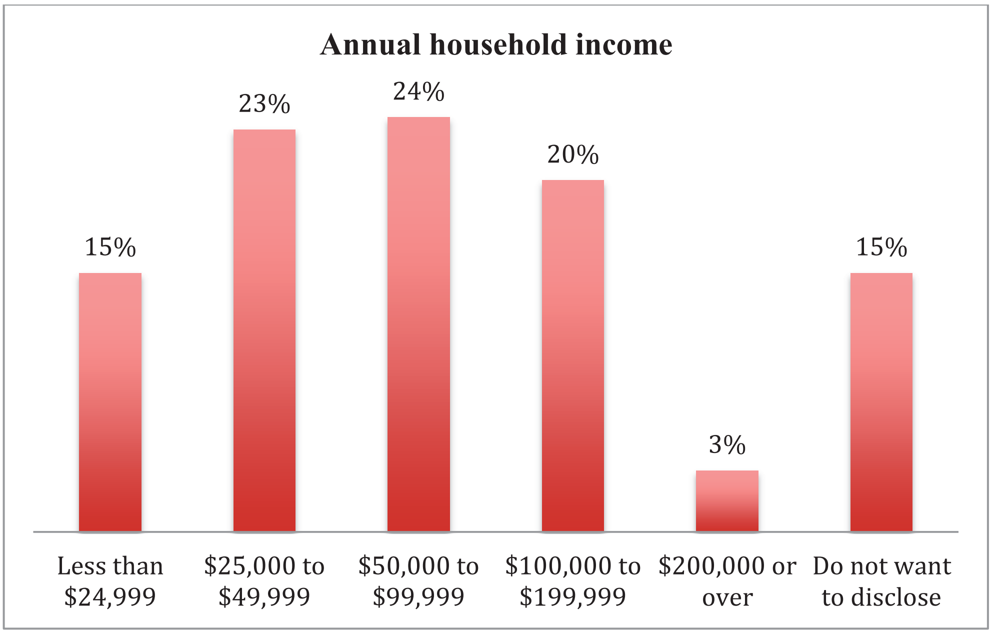
The sample size for the online experiment was 283 consumer participants, obtained via an Australian research panel that appear well-dispersed in terms of demographics, as represented in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Experiment 2 sample demographics









Approximately 77% of the total sample responded that they were aware of the Miele brand and, thus, their initial perceived position of a Miele washing machine was measured. For 37% of respondents with an initial position, their maximum score on all the eight positions tested was TOR, with TOR having a mean of 5.1 out of a maximum of 7 for all participants overall. The mean score for the positioning perception of VFM going into the experiment was 3.9 and was thus statistically significantly different to the TOR score, which was a criteria set out for brand selection.

The median duration for Experiment 2 was 25 minutes. See Appendix 12 for the main study data collection instrument used for Experiment 2.

6.9 Main study—Experiment 2 hypotheses testing

Following up from the pilot study results, the correlation of the 2-item positioning construct of *country of origin* (COO) produced a much better result with a Pearson correlation of .592. Therefore this denotes an acceptable correlation for the 2-item COO scale. As was the case with Experiment 1, the discrepancy is very likely caused by the different geographic region of the sample. Thus, the two items will remain as the measure of COO. The fit and reliability was re-checked for all constructs tested in the pilot study, with no material deviation from the pilot results.

As with Experiment 1, the first task in order to enable hypotheses testing is to compute the required variables, including JUMP, the alignment between the initial and post perceived positions, and the mean of items within the various multi-item scales used.

As with Experiment 1, the JUMP score of positioning confidence correlated very weakly with the direct measure of confidence at .115 (*p* value of .053), however the JUMP methodology was employed as the measure of confidence given the advantages listed in the literature (Chandrashekaran, Rotte, & Grewal, 2005).

To test the first hypothesis, a hierarchical regression was conducted to study the proposed three-way interaction of H1. The model tested gives an adjusted R-squared of .624. Overall, the proposed model can explain approximately 62% of the variance in the dependent variable of purchase, which is significant at a *p* value of .001 (see Table 28). Looking at the collinearity statistics for the independent and control variables, all fall within the threshold to suggest that multicollinearity is not of a concern, with the tolerance statistic being less than 0.2 and VIF not higher than 5.0.

Looking at the coefficients data, purchase goal match and perceived differentiation both have a positive direct impact on purchase (*p* value = 0.130 and *p* value = .001, respectively). Confidence, however, does not have a significant direct impact on purchase (*p* value = .762), which thus far is in line with the theory that it acts as a moderator rather than a direct predictor of purchase.

Table 28: Regression results for H1—Experiment 2

Model Summary

	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-Squared	Std. error of the estimate
Model	.805	.648	.624	.95523

ANOVA

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	343.021	14	24.502	26.852	.001
Residual	186.144	204	0.912		
Total	529.166	218			

Coefficients*

	Unstandardised Coefficients				Collinearity	
	Unstandardised Beta	Std. error	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(constant)	.091	.442	0.206	.837		
Purchase goal match	.285	.114	2.508	.013	.250	4.008
Perceived differentiation	.712	.079	9.035	.001	.357	2.801
Confidence	-.068	.223	-0.303	.762	.406	2.465
Brand familiarity (control)	.047	.051	0.924	.357	.614	1.628
Brand attitude (control)	.089	.080	1.110	.268	.548	1.826
Firm trust (control)	.107	.088	1.212	.227	.508	1.970
Category knowledge (control)	-.085	.051	-1.669	.097	.726	1.377
Positioning credibility (control)	-.017	.067	-0.248	.804	.603	1.659
Cred. of actual position sources (control)	.094	.062	1.523	.129	.608	1.646
Cred. of external position sources (control)	-.056	.060	-0.938	.349	.678	1.475
Confidence * Perceived differentiation	.398	.144	2.758	.006	.445	2.245
Confidence * Purchase goal match	-.019	.154	-0.123	.902	.593	1.687
Perceived differentiation * Purchase goal match	-.073	.048	-1.520	.130	.491	2.036
Confidence * Purchase goal match * Perceived differentiation	-.181	.092	-1.965	.026#	.417	2.339

* Dependent variable: purchase

\# one-tailed test applied

Red text represents hypotheses testing

The three-way interaction between confidence, purchase goal match, and perceived differentiation is significant (p value = .026) at a one-tailed test level. The beta is negative in sign, which supports our hypothesis that positioning confidence acts as a moderator between the level of differentiation of the post perceived position and purchase intention when there is a poorer match between the consumer’s post perceived position and purchase goal.

In order to study the significant three-way interaction further, a spotlight analysis was conducted in order to test the effect of confidence on the relationship between perceived differentiation and purchase at different levels of purchase goal match. From the significant negative moderated moderation depicted in the hierarchical regression, it can be seen that the lower the purchase goal match, the more confidence a positive moderation has on perceived differentiation and purchase, however, but we do not know the moderation effect at different levels of purchase goal match.

As was done in Experiment 1, model 3 in the PROCESS plug-in for SPSS was used (see Table 29) to provide further insight into the significant three-way interaction (Spiller et al., 2013). Given that there are no focal values of purchase goal match that are particularly meaningful, the analysis was conducted at 1 standard deviation below and above the mean. Thus, 1 standard deviation depicts a "low" purchase goal match, the mean represents an "average" purchase goal match, and 1 standard deviation above the mean presents a "high" purchase goal match. The mean for respondents' purchase goal match—that is, the level of TOR perception given that TOR was the purchase goal—is 4.94. One standard deviation below is a purchase goal match score of 3.57(SD = -1.37) and 1 standard deviation above gives a score of 6.31. The logic of low/average/high for the variables of confidence and perceived differentiation is also derived using 1 standard deviation minus/plus the mean. The purchase goal is represented as a continuous variable with the maximum being 7.0, given that purchase intention was measured on a 7-point scale.

As per Table 30, the spotlight analysis tells us that when the purchase goal match is low or average, the moderation effect of confidence on perceived differentiation and purchase is significant at .05 alpha (*p* value = .007 for low, and .015 for average). However, when the purchase goal match is high, which is defined as 1 standard deviation above the mean, the effect of confidence is not significant (*p* value = .122).

To visualise the moderated moderation, three graphs have been produced (Figure 11). It can be seen that when both the purchase match and perceived differentiation are low, high confidence changes the mean purchase score for the group from approximately 3.50 to 4.15 (change = 0.65). However, when the purchase match is low but perceived differentiation is high, the effect of confidence on the dependent variable of purchase is even greater, moving the bar from approximately 2.78 to 3.87 (change = 1.09).

At the level of an average purchase match and low perceived differentiation, mean purchase intention moves from approximately 4.25 to 4.80 (change = 0.55). Given that the slopes at each level of perceived differentiation are nearly flat, the change is very similar for average and high levels of perceived differentiation, where the purchase match level is at average.

At a high level of perceived match, the slopes between perceived differentiation and purchase are upward sloping at each confidence level. At a low level of perceived differentiation, having low versus high confidence moves the mean purchase from approximately 4.96 to 5.65 (change = 0.69). However, at the high level of perceived differentiation, confidence does not play a significant role, moving from 5.65 to 5.79 (change = 0.14).

Table 29: Spotlight analysis for H1—Experiment 2

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	*F*	Df1	Df2	*p* value
.8051	.648	.9123	35.524	14	204	.001

Outcome: purchase

Model

	coefficient	Standard error	*t* value	*p* value
constant	4.559	.097	46.798	.001
Purchase goal match	.279	.132	2.110	.036
Perceived differentiation	.710	.088	8.039	.001
Confidence	-.039	.277	-0.141	.889
Brand Familiarity (control)	.047	.052	0.906	.366
Brand Attitude (control)	.089	.081	1.092	.276
Firm trust (control)	.107	.096	1.115	.266
Category knowledge (control)	-.085	.057	-1.495	.136
Positioning credibility (control)	-.016	.072	-0.229	.820
Cred. of actual position sources (control)	.094	.074	1.267	.207
Cred. of external position sources (control)	-.056	.069	-0.812	.418
Confidence * Perceived differentiation	.375	.172	2.176	.031
Perceived differentiation * purchase goal match	-.076	.043	-1.792	.075
Confidence * Purchase goal match	-.034	.202	-0.168	.867
Perceived differentiation * confidence * purchase goal match	-.181	.108	-1.670	.048#

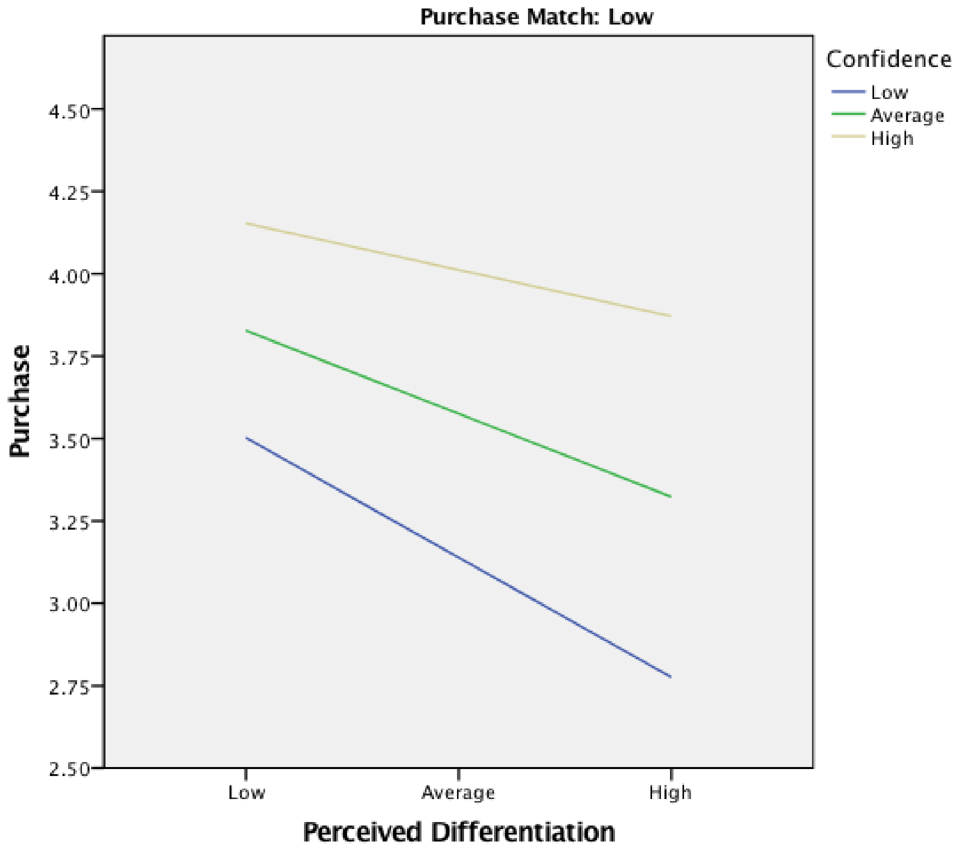
#one-tailed test

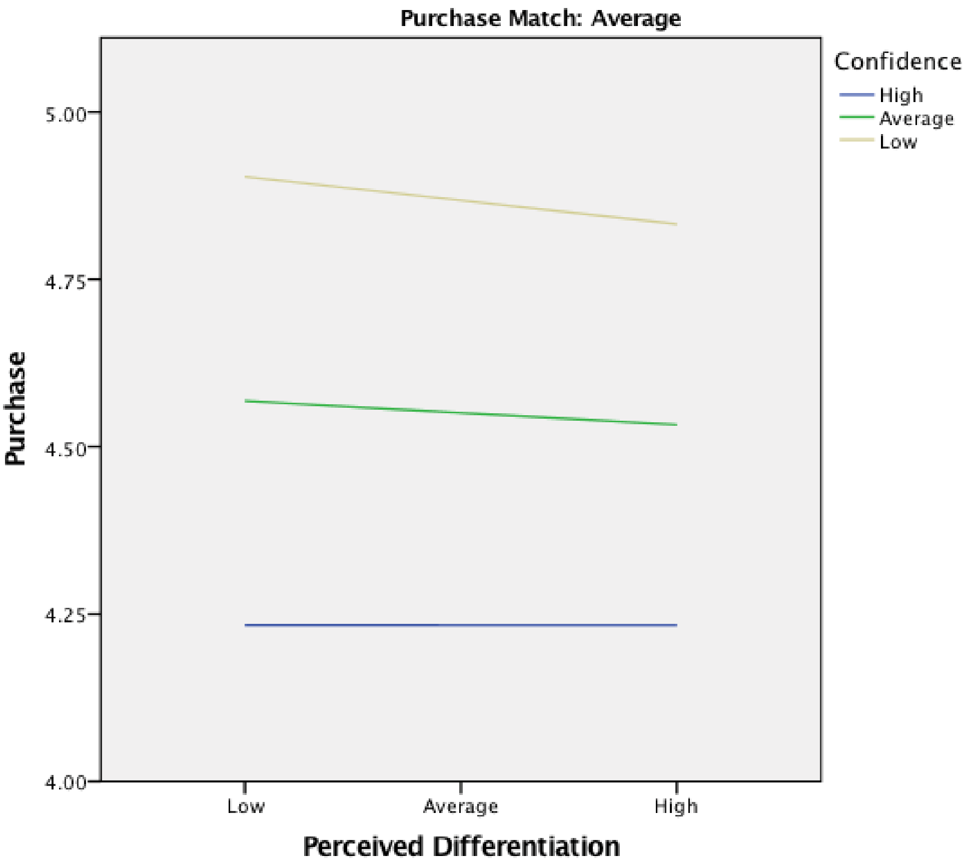
Table 30: Conditional effect of perceived differentiation*confidence interaction at values of purchase goal match

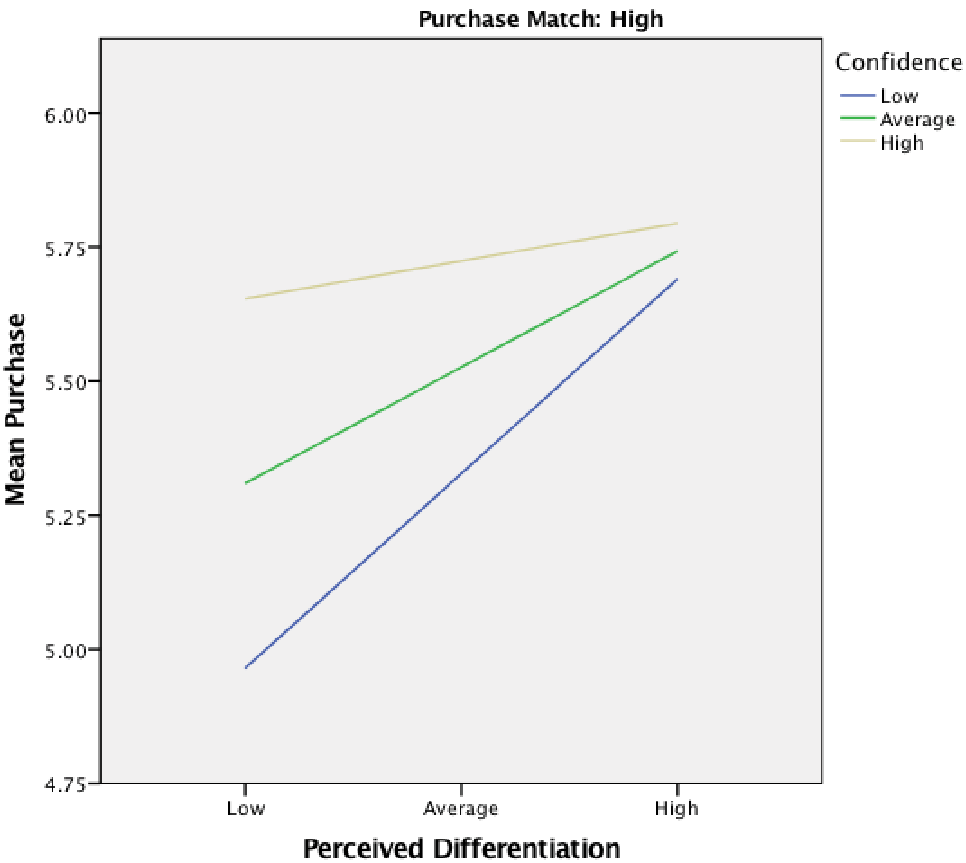
Purchase goal match	effect	se	*t* value	*p* value#
3.57 (-1 SD)	.581	.234	2.476	.007
4.94 (mean)	.375	.172	2.176	.015
6.31 (+1 SD)	.169	.186	0.906	.122

#one-tailed test

Figure 11: Experiment 2 spotlight analysis graphs for H1




Purchase Match: Average
Confidence
High
Average
Low
Purchase
5.00
4.75
4.50
4.25
4.00
Low
Average
High
Perceived Differentiation


Purchase Match: High
Confidence
Low
Average
High
Mean Purchase
6.00
5.75
5.50
5.25
5.00
4.75
Low
Average
High
Perceived Differentiation

Now that the spotlight analysis has shown that a low and average level of purchase goal match—defined as the mean purchase goal and one standard deviation below— and confidence plays a positive moderation role between perceived differentiation and purchase, further analysis can pinpoint the exact level of purchase match. A Johnson-Neyman analysis was conducted (see Table 31) which showed that when the purchase goal match score is 5.37 or lower, confidence takes an effect as a moderator between perceived differentiation and purchase. The purchase goal match score of 5.37 is .433 above the mean of 4.94. In this experiment, 61% of respondents were in the zone of significant, based on .05 alpha and a one-tailed test, thus confidence played a significant effect on moderating the relationship between perceived differentiation and purchase.

Table 31: Johnson-Neyman analysis for H1—Experiment 2

Purchase match (score from the mean)	Effect of confidence * perceived differentiation on purchase	standard error	t	p value
-3.067	**.930**	**.409**	**2.272**	**.012**
-2.817	**.884**	**.385**	**2.300**	**.011**
-2.567	**.839**	**.360**	**2.329**	**.010**
-2.317	**.794**	**.337**	**2.359**	**.010**
-2.067	**.749**	**.313**	**2.389**	**.009**
-1.817	**.703**	**.291**	**2.419**	**.008**
-1.567	**.658**	**.269**	**2.446**	**.008**
-1.317	**.613**	**.249**	**2.467**	**.007**
-1.067	**.568**	**.229**	**2.477**	**.007**
-.817	**.523**	**.212**	**2.470**	**.007**
-.567	**.477**	**.196**	**2.433**	**.008**
-.317	**.432**	**.183**	**2.335**	**.010**
-.067	**.387**	**.174**	**2.221**	**.014**
.183	**.342**	**.169**	**2.027**	**.022**
.242	**.331**	**.168**	**1.972**	**.025**
.433	.296	.167	1.771	**.039**
.683	.251	.170	1.474	.071
.933	.206	.178	1.159	.124
1.183	.161	.189	.852	.198
1.433	.115	.202	.570	.285
1.683	.070	.219	.321	.374
1.933	.025	.237	.105	.458

Bold = zone of significance

A separate hierarchical regression, with confidence as the dependent variable and the proposed theoretical antecedents to confidence and controls as multiple regressors, was conducted. The hierarchical regression described tests H2 and H3. The results from Experiment 2 show a significant model with the independent variables and proposed controls to positioning confidence with a *p* value of .034. The R-squared of .107 and adjusted R-squared of .050 is low but in line with the explained variance of most psychological contrast in regression models. The R-squared values for Experiment 2 are slightly lower than those of Experiment 1, where the R-squared value was .160, and adjusted R-squared was .116. However, it is more crucial that the model is robust, which the results suggest it is at .05 alpha (see Table 32). The controls and interaction variables have been mean-adjusted to reduce any possible multicollinearity. The collinearity statistics show that all variables are within limits for both the tolerance and VIF statistics.

Table 32: Regression output for H2 and H3—Experiment 2

Model Summary

	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	Std. error of the estimate
Model	.327	.107	.050	.444

ANOVA

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	*F*	Sig.
Regression	4.830	13	.372	1.884	.034
Residual	40.430	205	.197		
Total	45.260	218			

Coefficients*

	Unstandardised Coefficients				Collinearity	
	Unstandardised Beta	Std. error	*t*	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(constant)	.733	.233	3.145	.002		
Alignment between initial & post positioning perceptions	.002	.001	2.105	.018#	.882	1.134
Perceived clarity	-.014	.029	-0.491	.624	.510	1.962
Perceived consistency	.058	.032	1.837	.068	.520	1.924
Self-confidence (control)	-.051	.030	-1.690	.093	.863	1.159
Uncertainty avoidance (control)	-.001	.032	0.000	1.000	.849	1.178
Need for cognition (control)	-.032	.024	-1.337	.183	.933	1.072
Firm trust (control)	.036	.039	0.922	.358	.551	1.816
Brand familiarity (control)	.026	.022	1.191	.235	.715	1.398
Brand attitude (control)	-.048	.036	-1.348	.179	.596	1.678
Credibility of external sources (control)	.038	.029	1.296	.196	.604	1.656
Credibility of actual sources (control)	-.052	.026	-1.996	.051	.715	1.399
Credibility of exposed position(s) (control)	.042	.030	1.402	.162	.646	1.547
Perceived clarity * Perceived consistency	0.21	.013	1.679	.048#	.827	1.209

* Dependent variable: confidence

\# one-tailed test applied

Red text represents hypotheses testing

H2 deals with the proposed positive interaction between perceived clarity and perceived consistency. Experiment 2 supports this hypothesis with a *p* value of .048 and a positive beta, thus H2 is accepted at .05 alpha. As per Experiment 1, a moderation model via the SPSS PROCESS plug-in (model 1) gives us an insight of the effect of consistency at different levels of clarity (see Table 33). The positive effect of consistency on confidence is significant at an average or high level of clarity (1 standard deviation above the mean) with *p* values of .029 and .01 respectively, based on a one-tailed test. However the effect becomes insignificant where clarity is low (1 standard deviation below the mean) given the *p* value is .199.

Table 33: Conditional effect of perceived consistency*confidence interaction at values of perceived clarity—Experiment 2

Perceived clarity	Effect of consistency on confidence	Standard error	*t* value	*p* value#
3.50 (- 1 SD)	.030	.0348	0.847	.199
4.96 (mean)	.061	.0319	1.906	.029
6.482 (+ 1 SD)	.092	.0389	2.365	.010

one-tailed test

Lastly, H3 suggests that greater alignment between the initial and post position, a calculated variable, the more the consumer has confidence in his/her perception of the product's (post) position. H3 is accepted in Experiment 2 as a *p* value of .018 and a positive beta show support for the relationship between cognitive consistency before and after the information search phase, and positioning confidence at .05 alpha.

In order to test H4 and H5 in the model, a series of contrast tests in ANOVA will be performed as per Experiment 1. The first step was to test whether the relationship between the interaction variable of level of definition and purchase goal on perceived clarity is statistically significant. Similarly, the interaction was tested on the dependent variable of perceived consistency. The result of a GLM shows that the relationship level of positioning definition*level of purchase goal match on perceived clarity lacks significance (*F* value = 1.063, *p* value = .383), thus, groups that fall under the same positioning definition will be weighted in the contrasts. However, as with Experiment 1, the results for the relationship level of positioning definition*level of purchase goal match and perceived consistency is significant (*F* value = 1.726, *p* value = .012), thus, groups that fall under the same positioning definition will be tested independently in the contrasts.

The results for the contrasts to test hypotheses H4a–H4f can be found in Table 34. Only the "equal variances" contrast test output is reported, as the Levene statistic of 1.008 is not significant with a *p* value of .430, thus we cannot reject the hypothesis that the variances of the groups are equal. The ANOVA output reports an *F* value of 4.3, which is significant at .05 alpha (*p* value = .001), thus, there is a significance difference in the perceived clarity means of the groups tested.

Table 34: Contrast analysis for perceived clarity—Experiment 2

Descriptives

Group (actual/external)	Mean for perceived clarity
1. VFM/VFM	5.266
2. TOR/VFM	4.328
3. NIL/VFM	5.063
4. VFM/TOR	5.400
5. TOR/TOR	5.532
6. NIL/TOR	4.436
7. VFM/NIL	4.145
8. TOR/NIL	4.387
9. NIL/NIL	4.952
Total	4.848

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.008	8	274	.430

Perceived Clarity

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig
Between groups	67.594	8	8.449	4.300	.001
Within groups	538.373	274	1.965		
Total	605.966	282			

Perceived Clarity

Contrast Test

	Contrast	Value of contrast	Std. Error	*t*	df	Sig. (1-tailed)
Assume equal variances	H4a	0.4473	.3075	1.455	274	.070
	H4b	1.1328	.2508	4.517	274	**.001**
	H4c	0.6499	.2498	2.602	274	**.005**
	H4d	-0.6855	.3083	-2.223	274	.010
	H4e	0.4829	.2508	1.925	274	**.028**
	H4f	-0.2026	.3075	-0.659	274	.250

Perceived clarity

The first contrast (H4a), compared consumers who were exposed to a completely defined position—TOR–TOR and VFM–VFM as a weighted group—to the group that observed a completely undefined position, NIL–NIL. Given the *p* value of .070, it is just out of the significance zone at the set alpha of .05 for a one-tailed test. Thus, there is lack of support that a completely defined position leads to significantly greater perceived clarity than a completely undefined position.

The second contrast predicts a greater level of perceived clarity when consumers are exposed to a completely defined position—VFM–VFM and TOR–TOR—as a weighted group compared to consumers exposed to a position defined only by the actual source type, thus the weighted group of VFM–NIL and TOR–NIL. The findings give support for H4b at the .01 alpha with a *p* value of .001 based on a one-tailed test.

The next level of analysis concentrates on the scenario where the consumer is exposed to a completely defined position versus those who observed a position only defined by the external source type. Therefore groups VFM–VFM and TOR–TOR are weighted and compared to the weighted group of NIL–VFM and NIL–TOR. This contrast tests H4c and looks at the mean perceived clarity of the two groups. The results give support to this hypothesis at .01 alpha with a *p* value of .005 based on a one-tailed test. It confirms that a completely defined position leads to greater perceived clarity than a position defined only by the external source type.

The subsequent contrast analysis takes the scenario where the position is only defined by the actual source type, hence VFM–NIL and TOR—NIL form a weighted group and is compared to the circumstance where the position is completely undefined, NIL–NIL. The results show significance at .01 alpha, with a *p* value of .01. However the *t* value (-.686) and value of contrast (-2.22) are negative. Given that the hypothesis is directional, the negative sign of the contrast indicates H4d is not supported. Therefore, the hypothesis that exposure to a partially defined position will lead to greater perceived clarity than a completely undefined position is not upheld.

The next contrast compares perceived clarity between consumers who are exposed to a position defined only by the external source and those where the position is defined only by the actual source. Therefore VFM–NIL and TOR–NIL are weighted together and contrasted to the weighted group of NIL–VFM and NIL–REL in order to test H4e. The results support this hypothesis at .05 alpha with a *p* value of .028. A position defined only by the external source type leads to greater perceived clarity than if a partially defined position was observed via the actual source type.

The final contrast compares consumers exposed to a position defined only by the external source type to consumers who sighted a completely undefined positioned. Thus NIL–VFM and

NIL–REL form a weighted group and is contrasted against NIL–NIL. The findings show a lack of support for H4f, with a p value of .250.

Given the significant relationship between the interaction variable of level of position definition*purchase goal match and perceived consistency as outlined earlier, groups are tested individually and not grouped together in a weighted contrast. Thus, in order to test H5, non-weighted contrasts were created as per Experiment 1. A one-tail test was applied for sub-hypotheses that predict a significant difference in the mean for perceived consistency, given the directional nature of these sub-hypotheses. Whereas a two-tailed test was applied to sub-hypotheses predicting non-significance (see table 35).

Table 35: Contrast analysis for perceived consistency—Experiment 2

Descriptives

Group (actual/external)	Mean for perceived consistency
1. VFM/VFM	5.578
2. TOR/VFM	4.432
3. NIL/VFM	5.063
4. VFM/TOR	5.143
5. TOR/TOR	5.581
6. NIL/TOR	4.629
7. VFM/NIL	4.661
8. TOR/NIL	4.323
9. NIL/NIL	5.081
Total	4.951

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	Df1	Df2	Sig.
2.836	8	274	.005

Perceived Consistency

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig
Between groups	53.311	8	6.664	4.582	.001
Within groups	398.497	274	1.454		
Total	4.51.807	282			

Perceived Consistency

Contrast Test

	Contrast		Value of contrast	Std. Error	*t*	df	Sig.
Does not assume equal variance	H5a–1	TOR-TOR v TOR-VFM	1.1496	.3716	3.094	56.913	**.001**#
	H5a–2	TOR-TOR v VFM-TOR	0.4378	.3005	1.456	53.843	.080**#**
	H5a–3	VFM-VFM v TOR-VFM	1.1471	.3458	3.317	53.351	**.001**#
	H5a–4	VFM-VFM v VFM-TOR	0.4378	.2680	1.624	61.017	**.050**#
	H5b–1	VFM-VFM v NIL-NIL	0.4975	.2752	1.801	59.984	**.038**#
	H5b–2	TOR-TOR v NIL-NIL	0.5000	.3069	1.629	54.617	**.054**#
	H5c–1	VFM-VFM v VFM-NIL	0.9168	.3172	2.891	59.595	**.003**#
	H5c–2	VFM-VFM v NIL-VFM	0.5156	.2489	2.072	53.384	**.022**#
	H5c–3	TOR-TOR v TOR-NIL	1.2581	.3325	3.784	59.157	**.001**#
	H5c–4	TOR-TOR v NIL-TOR	0.9677	.3484	2.777	59.977	**.004**#
	H5d–1	VFM-TOR v NIL-NIL	-0.0622	.2464	-0.253	62.979	**.801**
	H5d–2	TOR-VFM v NIL-NIL	0.6496	.3294	1.972	48.623	.054
	H5e–1	VFM-NIL v NIL-NIL	0.4194	.2992	1.402	55.694	**.167**
	H5e–2	NIL-VFM v NIL-NIL	0.0181	.2255	0.080	56.338	**.936**
	H5e–3	TOR-NIL v NIL-NIL	0.7581	.2846	2.664	57.645	.010
	H5e–4	NIL-VFM v NIL-NIL	0.4677	.3030	1.544	55.157	**.128**
	H5f–1	TOR-NIL v TOR-VFM	0.1085	.3534	0.307	54.462	**.760**
	H5f–2	TOR-NIL v VFM- TOR	0.8203	.2276	2.955	57.838	.005
	H5f–3	VFM-NIL v VFM- TOR	-0.4816	.2926	-1.646	55.178	**.105**
	H5f–4	VFM-NIL v TOR-VFM	0.2303	.3652	0.630	56.239	**.531**
	H5f–5	NIL-TOR v TOR-VFM	0.1819	.3684	0.494	56.598	**.623**
	H5f–6	NIL-TOR v VFM-TOR	-0.5300	.2965	-1.787	54.503	.079
	H5f–7	NIL-VFM v TOR-VFM	0.6315	.3078	2.052	41.077	.047
	H5f–8	NIL-VFM v VFM-TOR	0.5181	.2836	1.827	46.607	.074

one-tailed test

The results display a Levene statistic of 2.836 in a homogeneity of variances test that is significant at .01 alpha, with a *p* value of .005. Thus, we reject the hypothesis that assumes equal variances, and follow the contrast test results that are not underpinned by the assumption of equal variance. The ANOVA test gives a *p* value of .001, suggesting that there are significant difference between the groups overall.

The first test of H5a examines the perceived consistency of consumers who are exposed to a completely defined position of top of the range—that is, TOR–TOR—to a completely defined position that is different across source types and where the actual position matches the purchase goal, being TOR–VFM. The second group contrasts consumers who are exposed to a completely defined position of top of the range TOR–TOR, to a completely defined position that is different across source types and where the external position matches the purchase goal, VFM–TOR. The next two groups mimic the first two contrasts, except the first group in each contrast of TOR–TOR is replaced with VFM–VFM. Therefore, the third contrast group looks at VFM–VFM vs TOR–VFM. and the fourth group contrasts VFM–VFM to VFM—TOR.

The results from the contrast tests conducted for Experiment 2 show support for three of the four contrasts conducted to test H5a. The first (TOR–TOR vs TOR–VFM) and third group comparisons (VFM–VFM and TOR–VFM) are significant at .01 alpha (*p* value = .001 for both contrasts). The second group contrast (TOR—TOR vs VFM–TOR) lacks significance given the application of a one-tailed test (*p* value of .08). Lastly, the fourth contrast group (VFM–VFM vs VFM–TOR) is significant at .05 alpha (*p* level of .05). The *t* values are positive for all four contrasts, suggesting a positive direction between similarity of the completely defined position across source types and perceived consistency. Thus, it can be concluded that the current evidence supports Hypothesis 5 that predicts that consumers exposed to the same completely defined position across source types will have greater perceived consistency than those exposed to different position across source types.

The results display robust support for H5b, with each of the two contrasts supporting the fact the consumers exposed to a completely defined position with the same position between actual and external source types have higher perceived consistency than consumers exposed to a completely undefined position. Both contrasts, VFM–VFM vs NIL–NIL and TOR–TOR vs NIL–NIL, were supported at .05 alpha with *p* values of .038 and .05 respectively, applying a one-tailed test.

Each the four contrasts that examined H5c using a one-tailed test proved to be significant. Therefore, there is good support for the idea that consumers who are exposed to a completely defined position, with the same position between actual and external source types, have higher perceived consistency than consumers exposed to a partially defined position. The combinations of VFM–VFM vs VFM–NIL, TOR–TOR vs TOR–NIL, and TOR–TOR vs NIL–TOR proved to be significant at .01 alpha with a *p* values of .003, .001, and .004, respectively. The contrasts of VFM–VFM vs NIL–VFM was significant at .05 alpha with a *p* value of .022.

Results show moderate support for H5d, with one of the two contrasts supporting the hypothesis that there is no difference in perceived consistency between consumers exposed to a completely defined position with different positions between actual and external source types and consumers exposed to a completely undefined position. The first contrast VFM–TOR vs NIL–NIL was insignificant with a *p* value of .801, however the second contrast of TOR–VFM vs NIL–NIL was significant at .05 alpha with a *p* value of .05.

Hypothesis H5e predicts that there is no difference in perceived consistency between consumers exposed to a partially defined position and consumers exposed to a completely undefined position. This was supported in three of the four contrasts. The first contrast (VFM–NIL vs NIL–NIL), second contrast (NIL–VFM vs NIL–NIL), and fourth contrast (NIL–VFM vs NIL–NIL) produced *p* values of .167, .936, and .128, respectively. However, the second contrast of TOR–NIL vs NIL–NIL is significant at .01 alpha with a *p* value of .01.

Eight contrasts tested H5f, which suggested that there is no difference in perceived consistency between consumers exposed to a partially defined position and consumers exposed to a completely defined position, with different positions across the actual and external source types. This hypothesis was supported in four of the eight contrasts and, thus, the mixed results only provide moderate support for the hypothesis overall. The contrasts that supported the hypothesis were: TOR–NIL vs TOR–VFM (*p* value = .750), VFM–NIL vs VFM–TOR (*p* value = .11), VFM–NIL vs TOR–VFM (*p* value = .531), and NIL–TOR vs TOR–VFM (*p* value = .623).

As the results from Experiment 2 conclude, it should be noted that using PROCESS to test the model in its entirety was considered, however given the different controls used for each part of the model (y = purchase, $\underline{y}$ = confidence, and y = perceived clarity/perceived consistency), PROCESS is ruled out. The different controls required stem from the fact that the dependent variables in the model are vastly diverse constructs. For example, an individual's self-confidence is a likely contributor to his/her positioning confidence but less likely as a control to purchase intention. In using separate regressions to model each dependent variable, the appropriate controls could be customised each time, whereas the same controls must govern the entire model in PROCESS.

The findings from the regression, general linear model, and contrast analyses for Experiment 2 are now summarised, under their relevant hypotheses.

6.10 Summary of findings from experiment 2

H1: Supported

Analysis of the Miele experiment via a hierarchical regression showed that consumers' confidence in their positioning perception of the Miele W1 acted as a significant moderator on the relationship between perceived differentiation and purchase intention when there was a poor match between the positioning perception and their purchase goal (p value = 0.26). In other words, there is a negative three-way interaction between confidence, purchase goal match, and perceived differentiation on the dependent variable of purchase intention in the Miele experiment, thus supporting H1.

H2: Supported

The hypothesis that the degree of positioning clarity acts as a moderator between positioning consistency and clarity was supported in the Miele experiment. The model tested via hierarchical regression produced a p value of .048 for perceived clarity*consistency when regressed on confidence, thus it is significant at .05 alpha. Furthermore, a two-way interaction model in PROCESS showed that at average or high levels of perceived clarity the effect of consistency on confidence is significant (p values of .029 and .010, respectively). In fact, high levels of perceived clarity result in a greater moderation effect than an average level of perceived clarity. On the other hand, when perceived clarity is low, the effect of perceived consistency on confidence is insignificant.

H3: Supported

Where a consumer had an initial perceived position of the Miele W1, the findings of Experiment 1 supported the idea that the degree of alignment between the initial and post perceived positions positively affects the consumer's positioning confidence. The model tested via hierarchical regression produced a p value of .018 for the "alignment variable" when regressed on confidence, thus it is significant at .05 alpha.

H4a: Not supported

The results of Experiment 2 do not support the idea that consumers exposed to a completely defined position have greater perceived clarity than consumers exposed to a completely undefined position. The hypothesis produced a p value of .07, which is outside the one-tailed threshold of alpha .05.

H4b: Supported

The hypothesis that consumers who observed a completely defined position will have greater perceived clarity than if the position is defined only by the actual source type is accepted for Experiment 2 at .01 alpha with a *p* value of .001.

H4c: Supported

Experiment 2 provided support for the concept that consumers who are exposed to a completely defined position have greater perceived clarity than if the position exposed to is defined only by the external source type. The support for this hypothesis exists at the .05 alpha level, with a *p* value of .005.

H4d: Not supported

The findings of Experiment 2 do not support the idea that consumers exposed to a position defined only by the actual source type will have greater perceived clarity than if the position they are exposed to is completely undefined. While the *p* value of .01 is significant at .05 alpha, the negative sign of the *t* value and contrast value means that the hypothesis is not supported given the positive direction of the prediction.

H4e: Supported

The hypothesis that consumers exposed to a position defined only by the external source type will have greater perceived clarity than if the position is defined only by the actual source type is supported at .05 alpha (*p* value = .028) in Experiment 2.

H4f: Not supported

The hypothesis that consumers who observe a position defined only by the external source type will have a greater perceived clarity than if the position is completely undefined is not supported, with a *p* value = .250 for Experiment 2.

H5a: Moderately supported

Experiment 2 supports the idea in three of four contrasts (at .05 alpha) that for consumers exposed to a completely defined position, having the *same* position between actual and external source types will lead to greater perceived consistency of the product's (post) perceived position than for consumers exposed to different positions.

H5b: Supported

The hypothesis that consumers exposed to a completely defined (and same) position will have higher perceived consistency than consumers exposed to a completely undefined position was supported at .05 alpha.

H5c: Supported

The notion that consumers exposed to a completely defined (same) position will have higher perceived consistency than consumers exposed to a partially defined position was supported in all four contrasts at .05 alpha.

H5d: Moderately supported

This hypothesis suggested that there is immaterial difference in perceived consistency between the group of respondents that received a completely defined (different) position and consumers exposed to a completely undefined position. The contrast findings of VFM–TOR vs NIL–NIL is not significant, thus supporting the hypothesis, but the comparison of the difference in perceived consistency between TOR–VFM vs NIL–NIL was significant at the .05 alpha (two-tailed test).

H5e: Supported overall

H5e proposes an insignificant difference in perceived consistency between groups exposed to a partially defined position and those exposed to a completely undefined position. There was moderate support for this hypothesis, with three of the four contrasts producing an insignificant difference. The grouping contrast of TOR–NIL vs NIL–NIL produced significant different levels of perceived consistency at .01 alpha (two-tailed test).

H5f: Moderately supported

The hypothesis that there is no difference in perceived consistency between consumers exposed to a partially defined position and consumers exposed to a completely defined position with different positions across the actual and external source types was supported in four of the eight contrasts.

6.11 Summary of hypotheses testing from experiments 1 and 2

Overall, many of the hypotheses had some level of support offered across the two experiments conducted as part of this dissertation. Table 36 depicts the results for Experiment 1 and Experiment 2 and, consequently, the overall level of support of each hypothesis across both studies.

Table 36: Summary of hypotheses testing results

	Experiment 1 Jetstar	Experiment 2 Miele	Across both experiments
H1	Supported	Supported	Strongly supported
H2	Not supported	Supported	Moderately supported
H3	Not supported	Supported	Moderately supported
H4a	Supported	Not Supported	Moderately supported
H4b	Supported	Supported	Strongly supported
H4c	Not supported	Supported	Moderately supported
H4d	Not supported	Not supported	Not supported
H4e	Supported	Supported	Strongly supported
H4f	Supported	Not supported	Moderately supported
H5a	Moderately supported – 2/4	Moderately supported – 3/4	Moderately supported
H5b	Supported –2/2	Supported –2/2	Strongly supported
H5c	Supported overall – 3/4	Supported –4/4	Supported
H5d	Moderately supported – 1/2	Moderately supported – 1/2	Moderately supported
H5e	Supported overall – 3/4	Supported overall – 3/4	Supported
H5f	Supported overall - 6/8	Moderately supported - 4/8	Moderately supported

7. Discussion

7.1 Summary of results

This thesis set out to test the effect of measuring consumers' confidence in their perception of a product's position on confidence. This was motivated by various drivers, including: 1. The call from marketing strategy literature to add complementary tools to positioning measurement in order to better predict consumer behaviour (Butt et. al., 2007; Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2012; Burke, 2011); and 2. The predictive use of the confidence construct in many areas of marketing to predict and explain certain consumer phenomena (Chandrashekaran, Rotte, Tax, & Grewal, 2007).

In light of a meaningful effect from applying confidence to positioning perception, the thesis aimed to offer some antecedents to positioning confidence in order to direct brand or product managers in how to influence consumers' confidence in this context. The proposed antecedents of perceived consistency and perceived clarity were derived from this author taking note of various examples of unclear or inconsistent positioning signals for brands, when considering both messages that are coming from the organisation and externally (see Appendix 1 for some examples).

Both experiments have shown support at .05 alpha for the primary hypothesis that consumers' confidence in their positioning perception is a moderator to the well-established relationship between the product's perceived differentiation and purchase in cases where there is a poor or average match between the positioning perception and the consumers' purchase goal. As predicted, when there is a poorer match between the purchase goal and the positioning perception the effect of confidence on the relationship between perceived differentiation and purchase is greater as the match level decreases. In cases where there is a stronger match between the purchase goal and how the consumer perceives the product, this perceived "match" has a main effect on purchase and overrides positioning confidence.

From the spotlight analysis graphs across the two studies, there also appears to be an overall trend where confidence seems to play a greater role effecting purchase when perceived differentiation is low. Theoretically, consumers who perceive the product to be poorly differentiated in its category are more likely to believe that there is a similar alternative to the product provided by another competitor in the category. For consumers who have low confidence in their positioning perception and perceive the product to be less unique in its category, the incentive to purchase is even lower. However, for consumers who perceive the product as poorly differentiated, the results show that high confidence in the perceived position appears to somewhat offset this negative.

The support for the thesis' primary hypothesis makes a substantial theoretical and managerial contribution for various reasons. One, it tells managers that if consumers do not believe that the product will offer a superior solution compared to competitors in what they are ultimately seeking, then it is important that consumers have surety in their positioning perception. When consumers are confident on one of the positioning dimensions, this confidence gives them a justification to purchase the product.

For example, a consumer is looking to purchase a small car and is motivated by finding a brand that offers the best VFM in the market. She believes that the Holden Barina would offer this, and embarks on an information search of both company-based and outside sources to support her prior belief. After she completes the research she makes two judgments:

- What the Holden Barina stands for (position). That is, is it VFM, as she thought, or does it represent a different position such as attractiveness, reliability, top of the range etc.?
- How unique the Holden Barina's offering is compared to its competitors (perceived differentiation). That is, can she obtain what the Barina is offering elsewhere?

After her information search, the consumer's updated belief is that the Holden Barina actually stands for offering the best *service* in the small car category. In fact, she assesses that another competitor, the Hyundai Elantra, beats the Barina on VFM based on her research. The consumer believes that the overall level of differentiation of the Holden Barina is at a moderate level. This is because whilst she believes the Barina offers the best service in the category, she perceives that other competitors also offer this positioning dimension to an acceptable degree, therefore driving her perception of Barina's overall distinguishability as average. For the consumer to perceive the Barina as highly differentiated, she would likely have assessed all other competitors as lacking or performing weakly on the dimension of service.

Extant theory would suggest that given that the consumer perceives the Holden Barina to have a moderate of differentiation, she has an average chance of purchasing. However, this thesis suggests that given the purchase goal match level is low (the consumer's primary goal is VFM but has rated the Barina's position as service), the confidence the consumer has in her judgment of Barina as offering the best service in its category will increase her likelihood of purchase (acting as a positive moderator between perceived differentiation and purchase). Theoretically, this may be explained via metacognition (Petty, Briñol & Tormala, 2002). That is, the thought or feeling she has regarding her positioning judgment is positive because she feels sure that she has judged the Barina correctly, even though it is not exactly what she is after. This encouragement inspires a more positive response in the consumer than if the metacognitive outcome was negative, that is, being unsure of her judgment. Based on the findings of this thesis, should the consumer have perceived the Barina to offer the best VFM as per her purchase goal, confidence would not have played a role. In an obvious choice decision, the motivation provided by metacognition is not required.

Given that the perception is that Holden Barina did not meet her purchase goal, it seems intuitive that the consumer may purchase from a competitor that better complements her purchase goal. However, on the flip side, unless she researched all competitors to the same degree concurrently, the consumer may be motivated to end the cognitively-taxing information search. She may also have a brand predisposition towards Holden that first led her to research the Barina above competitive alternatives. Thus, information distortion literature would advocate a possible predisposition towards purchase (Montgomery, 1983; Russo et al., 1996), with the positive reflection on the positioning evaluation providing the cognitive justification to purchase (Petty, Briñol & Tormala, 2002).

In practice, managers are ultimately not completely able to control a consumer's purchase goal. However, by being able to influence confidence in positioning perception, managers can increase sales from outside their target market, i.e. consumers with a purchase goal different to the product's intended position. This thesis offers managers some guidance on how to increase consumers' confidence in their perception of the product's position. Accordingly, the next goal of the thesis was to establish some antecedents to the proposed important variable of positioning confidence.

There was strong theoretical support for the hypothesis that the alignment between the initial and post perceived positions (when the consumer had an initial perceived position) would have a positive impact on confidence (Montgomery, 1983; Russo et al., 1996; Erdem & Swait; 1998). However this was only empirically supported in Experiment 2, as Experiment 1 did not find a significant link. This inconsistency in findings may have three possible reasons:

1. It is possible that the statistical power is too low. This occurrence may mean that the study fails to find significance when in fact the effect exists, known in statistical hypothesis testing as a type II error.

2. In Experiment 2, participants were perhaps more confident about what Miele stood for coming into the experiment (initial perceived position), which for most people was TOR, than for Jetstar in Experiment 1, which for the majority was VFM. A discrepancy in the surety with which consumers held their initial perceived position for the product may explain a difference in their cognitive need to have this initial position confirmed.

3. It may be that confirmation of the initial position is more important to the consumer when the initial position is TOR rather than VFM. The "value" in the VFM position usually suggests that the product is perceived to perform fairly well on another position such as service, reliability, attractiveness, etc., thus resulting in a balanced utility/cost equation for the consumer. Therefore, it may be easier for consumers to accept a different position as a post perceived position when their initial positioning perception is VFM.

A power test was applied using the statistical software G*Power. The Cohen's f^2 was used as a measure of local effect size in calculating power to isolate the one independent variable in question—the alignment between the initial and post perceived positions. The power test gave a result of 16.84%[‡]. Since the power figure is much lower than the desired minimum power figure of 80% (VanVoorhis & Morgan, 2007), it can explain why the alignment variable is not significant. The implication of the power results is that there is an 83% chance of incorrectly rejecting the hypothesis that there is a relationship between the alignment of the initial and post perceived positions and confidence. Therefore, the first option of the three explanations appears highly plausible.

The power of the same alignment variable in Experiment 2, where it produced a significant result, is 80.64%. Therefore, it meets the minimum desired threshold. The difference in effect size drives the strikingly different power result between the two studies.

Moving to evidence for the second possible explanation regarding respondents' surety of their initial positioning perception of Miele versus Jetstar coming into the experiment, consumers' *confidence* of the initial position using the JUMP methodology in both experiments was calculated. In fact, there is no statistical difference between how confident respondents were in what Jetstar vs Miele stood for coming into the experiment, measured as the maximum position (mean for Miele = 5.033 and SD = .819, mean for Jetstar 4.997 and SD for Jetstar .937).

[‡] The power figure of 16.84% was derived in the G*Power statistical software based on a Cohen's f^2 value of 0.00179806 {$f^2 = (0.160205 - 0.158695) / (1 - 0.160205) = 0.001510 / 0.839795 = 0.00179806$}

Therefore, there is a lack of support for the second proposed explanation for the inconsistent findings for H3.

The lack of power as an explanation proposes an answer, however, the third explanation should also be explored. Ultimately, the third explanation cannot be accepted without further testing, likely to be additional experiments replicating TOR and VFM as initial positions. However, there is some evidence in the data to support the explanation. The inter-factor correlations of the two positions used in each experiment can be compared to determine if a positive link exists between the two positions at a theoretical level. The inter-factor correlation of TOR and VFM in Miele is .075 taken on the scale measuring the post perceived position, suggesting a very weak association between the two positioning constructs. However, the inter-factor correlation of VFM and REL in Jetstar is .489, indicating a medium-level correlation. The discrepancy between the inter-factor correlations of the positions used to manipulate "consistency" could explain the difference in the findings between the two experiments. Thus, it may be that confirmation of the initial position is more of an imperative to the consumer when the initial position is TOR rather than VFM.

However, it should be noted that there was no significant difference in the inter-factor correlations between the two combinations of positions in the pre-test results. In line with this, inter-factor correlations from the scale measuring the respondents' initial position in the main study produces a very different result to the post position. The inter-factor correlation of TOR and VFM for Miele is 0.07, showing no difference between the correlation if you use the initial versus the post positioning scales. However, the inter-factor correlation for VFM and REL in the Jetstar experiments is low at .269, but higher than that in Miele. Therefore, respondents perceive that the positions are more closely aligned on a theoretical basis as they are exposed to the stimuli, as opposed to when they come into the experiment. Overall, there is support for the explanation that the effect size of the alignment between the initial and post perceived positions on confidence varies across different positioning dimensions.

In conclusion, it appears that a combination of lack of power and the type of positioning may be behind the insignificant result. It may be that the extent to which cognitive consistency plays a role in driving confidence is position-dependent. Given the cognitive consistency effect is stronger for TOR products than VFM, and the given sample size and number of predictors, the power is too low to produce a significant result should the relationship be true. Further research would provide a more concrete answer.

Other than the alignment between the initial and post perceived positioning, this thesis suggested that the interaction between perceived clarity and perceived consistency as possible antecedents to positioning confidence. Experiment 2 produced a significant positive relationship between perceived consistency and clarity and the dependent variable of confidence, as predicted. However, Experiment 1 produced a significant relationship with a negative sign. Given that the hypothesis supposes a positive relationship and accordingly a one-tailed test was applied, there is a lack of conclusion that can be drawn from the Jetstar experiment for this hypothesis.

On the basis of this thesis, there has been moderate overall support (one of two experiments) to show that the interaction between perceived clarity and consistency affects confidence. It may be that consistency in positioning messaging is valid in building positioning confidence when dealing with TOR product, however a VFM position doesn't need as much constant reinforcement to affect confidence (as per the third possible explanation of the lack of significant of cognitive consistency in the Jetstar experiment). However, given that this thesis didn't set out to test confidence by different positions per se, this could be examined in future research.

The tertiary aim of the thesis was to test whether various manipulations of positioning messages via the organisation (actual position) and the market (external position) would meaningfully affect consumers' perceived clarity and consistency. The thesis proposed six hypotheses relating to combinations of actual and external positions and whether they resulted in a completely defined position, partially defined position, or completely undefined position, and the subsequent impact on perceived clarity. The thesis showed strong support for two hypotheses, moderate support for a further three hypotheses, with one hypothesis on perceived clarity lacking support across both experiments.

There was support to show that consumers exposed to a completely defined position will have greater perceived clarity than consumers exposed either to a completely undefined position (moderate level of support), or to a position that is only defined by the actual source type (strong level of support). In fact, there was strong support to show that a position partially defined by the external position as opposed to the actual position is better for perceived clarity. Lastly, there was no support across both studies to support the idea consumers exposed to a position defined only by the actual source type will have greater perceived clarity than consumers exposed to a position that is completely undefined.

These findings indicate that when external positioning cues do not define the position for the product, there is a risk in the subsequent perception of positioning clarity. Overall, it appears that the external position plays a more important role than the actual position in terms of clarity of position perception. Theoretically, this is likely to be due to the higher perceived credibility of external sources of information (Bickart & Schindler, 2001). Empirically, respondents in the Miele experiment rated external sources of information significantly more highly than actual sources of information (mean = 4.729 for external source credibility and 3.918 for actual source credibility, significantly different at .01 alpha). Similarly, in the Jetstar experiment, the mean level of credibility for the external source type sat at 4.855, as opposed to the statistically lower (.01 alpha) mean level of credibility for the actual source type at 4.167.

Moreover, the thesis produced moderate support for the idea that a partially defined position is better for building perceived clarity than a completely undefined position. One would assume that the only circumstance that would affect perceived clarity to a greater extent than a partially defined position *n* is where *both* the actual *and* external positioning signal sources are delivering an unclear position for the product. However while this was supported in Experiment 1, there was no evidence for the hypothesis in Experiment 2. The Miele experiment showed that the case of “NIL–NIL” did not produce less perceived clarity than a partially defined position.

The conclusion from the results of this thesis is that the best outcome for perceived clarity is having a completely defined position. A completely defined position—that is, a position that is *something* and *not* NIL—delivered via both the actual and external source types is better than both the cases of a partially defined position (moderate to strong support) or a completely undefined position (moderate support). In terms of a partially defined position, having it defined by the external source as opposed to the actual source type leads to better outcomes for perceived clarity. Whilst there is moderate support that a completely undefined position leads to less perceived clarity than a completely defined position or a position defined only by the external source, there are was no support for it being any different to a position only defined by the actual source. Therefore, it seems that for perceived clarity, it may the case that two undefined positioning sources is no worse than if the position is only defined by the actual source.

The thesis next examined the construct of perceived consistency, and suggested five hypotheses on how specific combinations of the actual and external position affect consistency. There was either moderate or strong support for all of the perceived consistency hypotheses presented in this thesis. The highest level of perceived consistency is derived from the circumstance where consumers were exposed to a completely defined position that delivered the *same* position between the source types (moderate level of support). There was moderate overall support to say the same position over two source types is stronger in delivering perceived consistency than a completely defined position with different positions (5 of 8 contrasts), strong support that it is better than a completely undefined position (4 of 4 contrasts), and a good level of support that it is better than a partially defined position (7 of 8 contrasts).

Lastly, there was moderate overall confirmation that the *type* of similarity between the positioning messages does not matter in terms of perceived consistency. That is, there is no material difference between consumers exposed to a completely defined position with different positions between actual and external source types and consumers either exposed to a completely undefined position (2 out of 4 contrasts) or a partially defined position (10 out of 16 contrasts). Similarly, there was moderate support for the hypothesis that there is no difference in perceived consistency between consumers exposed to a partially defined position and consumers exposed to a completely undefined position (6 out of 8 contrasts). While the scenario of NIL–NIL may appear to deliver the *same* (lack of) positioning message on face value, there is moderate support from this thesis to show that this is unlikely to be the case in the consumer's mind. The lack of perceived similarity is likely because the actual source is likely to be more implicit than the external source in delivering the "NIL" position. This is supported by all contrasts, showing that when both the actual and external source types deliver the same position, this leads to greater perceived consistency than the case of NIL–NIL.

Therefore, there is moderate overall evidence from this thesis that having a completely defined position that in fact portrays the *same* position across the actual and external sources will lead to significantly greater perceived consistency in the consumers' mind.

7.2 Theoretical implications

The results of this study contribute to marketing theory in several ways. This research supports a vast body of work indicating that the measurement of consumer belief confidence is worthwhile in predicting consumer behaviour, including purchase intention (Bennett & Harrell, 1975; Howard & Sheth, 1969; Laroche et al., 1995; Russo et al., 1996). With this research, the construct of confidence now has a place in the positioning literature by showing that measuring consumers' confidence in their positioning perception has a role to play in predicting consumer behaviour. It also extends the use of the JUMP model (Chandrashekaran, Rotte, & Grewal, 2005) into another area of marketing, thus supporting its use as a methodology for confidence measurement.

This research adds to the theoretical knowledge of the well-established positioning construct of perceived differentiation and its link to purchase intention, adding a moderated moderation to the relationship. Most scholars and practitioners would accept the idea that the more unique and distinct the offering the consumer perceives a product to be, the greater the chance the consumer will purchase the product as opposed to "me too" alternatives. However, this research adds to this knowledge in that the strength of this relationship can be further understood by the following two factors: 1. The confidence the consumer has in what they product stands for (positioning confidence); and 2. The level of "match" between what the consumer believes the product stands for and what s/he actually wants (purchase goal match). At times where the purchase goal is average or low for the consumer, positioning confidence positively moderates the relationship between perceived differentiation and purchase intention. This insight helps to build on positioning theory, that has previously been criticised as being incomplete (Rigger, 1995; Butt et al., 2007; Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007).

By introducing the concept of positioning confidence, another complementary tool for product positioning measurement has been added to the literature. Positioning confidence should be a parallel consideration to what has been previously proposed by Burke (2011) and Fuchs and Diamantopoulos (2012). Consumers' confidence in their own positioning evaluations is an *inward-focused* measure of positioning implementation success, whereas what was offered by the preceding work was an *outward-focused* measure, as they require a direct reflection of the brand's or firm's activities. Measuring both the inward-focused measure of positioning confidence and the outward-focused measure of positioning effectiveness (Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2012) in conjunction with each other should provide a more holistic outlook of positioning implementation success, and offer the ability to better predict consumer behaviour.

In terms of marketing implementation, extant theory is clear that consistency is key in delivering the positioning message (Aaker & Shansby, 1982; Crawford, 1985). Further, Erdem and Swait (1998) show that consistency aids credibility in positioning execution. This thesis adds to existing theory by showing moderate support that perceived consistency, with the moderator of perceived clarity, positively affects the confidence consumers have in their positioning perception of a product or brand. Prior to this research, there was no theory to explain different levels of perceived clarity and consistency that results from different combinations of the actual and external positions. This research fills this gap by testing various combinations of the actual and external positions that lead to various levels of positioning definition and similarity, which this thesis has shown to significantly affect perceived clarity and consistency. In a world where the brand manager is losing control of the brand

(Christodoulides, 2009; Fournier & Avery, 2011), this thesis provides preliminary insight on the effect it has on perceived clarity and consistency of positioning messages.

Lastly, the findings of this thesis further support the extant metacognition and confidence literature in the fact that confidence may play a greater role in decisions that are characterised by higher perceived risk (Laroche et al., 1995). The rationale can be derived from literature in reasoning processes, which states that when confronted with non-obvious decisions, humans tap into their more deliberate, analytical processing (system 2), as opposed to obvious decisions which are based on intuition and may bypass metacognition altogether (system 1). The researchers Petty, Briñol and Tormala (2002) stated that metacognitions are likely to require some consciousness and mental effort. The use of metacognitive confidence as a cue when system 2 reasoning is employed (Alter et. al., 2007; Olson & Jacoby, 1972; Hansen, 2005) is supported by this thesis. The reinforcement exists in the fact that consumers' confidence in their positioning judgment was only found to have a statistically significant effect during a riskier decision, defined as a non-perfect match between the consumer's perceived position for the product and the purchase goal. However, confidence did not play any role when the match was very strong, and so the purchase decision was obvious. In short, this thesis supports the general concept that positive metacognition leads to positive action (Petty, Briñol & Tormala, 2002).

7.3 Managerial implications

From my own experience in industry, it is evident that perceptual maps are a commonly-used tool for positioning mapping of products and brands. However, as discussed in the first half of this thesis, perceptual maps alone are not overly insightful in terms of predicting actual consumer behaviour. This thesis provides support for brand and marketing managers to measure consumers' confidence of their positioning perception. Given that, at present, managers are likely be measuring the judgment itself, it is therefore probable that the confidence measure at hand would be a complementary "add on" exercise to current practice. Even if managers do not identify the confidence level of potential consumers of their product/brand, they may still employ tactics to increase the clarity and consistency of the positioning messages encountered by potential consumers. This thesis has shown support that increasing perceived clarity and consistency via the actual and external sources will have a positive impact on confidence. Ultimately, this leads to greater purchase likelihood amongst consumers who do not assess the product as strongly meeting their purchase goal.

The first recommendation is that managers investigate the typical consumer information search sources, either via market research or cookie profiling. With this knowledge, managers should aim to increase clarity and consistency of the product's messaging in these sources in order to increase positioning confidence, especially if the intended position is TOR (where the findings of this thesis are stronger). This should fully be under the company's control when it is the actual position that is the source of poor clarity or consistency. However, it is a little trickier when the culprit is an external source. One option available to managers is to change the intended and, thus, actual position to better match the external position. However, this depends on how wide the discrepancy is and if the firm has the capability to deliver on the external position. An alternate option is to influence the external position itself. While managers have limited control of shaping external positioning cues, as this is ultimately the say of consumers, managers can be clever about being active in this area.

For example, the manager may run a competition inviting consumers to send their commentary or pictures that support the product's actual position. More specifically, imagine a competition run on BMW's website which invites people to send in a picture of the most "posh" place on earth that they have taken their BMW. People might send in pictures of their BMW parked outside the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Paris, outside Vogue headquarters in the United States, the Palazzo Versace Hotel on the Gold Coast, all of which would reinforce BMW as a top of the range brand from market sources. Similar campaigns have been employed by brands in recent years (Moth, 2013). One example is National Geographic magazine that ran a photo contest titled *Wanderlust* asking consumers to send a photo that captured glimpses of the unforgettable people, places, and experiences that impacted their lives from their travels around the world (Fontein, 2016). This tactic supports what National Geographic magazine is ultimately known for: breath-taking, high-quality imagery, from an external information source.

This thesis has shown support for clarity as a positive moderator of perceived consistency and confidence. Thus, managers should ensure that the product's positioning message is as obvious as possible in every information source coming from the brand. Consequently, the positive effect of consistency on confidence will be even greater. This thesis has shown managers which specific combinations of the actual and external position leads to greater clarity. In terms of increasing clarity, managers need to ensure that both the actual and external sources are not signalling a fuzzy, unclear, or "stuck in the middle" position for the product/brand. In terms of clarity, the external source type is more influential than the actual source; thus, it is inadequate for brand managers to simply ensure clarity of their own positioning cues. This thesis showed moderate support for the concept that having the actual and external source type portray a poorly defined position for the product is worse for perceived clarity than having one source type poorly defining the position. This tells managers that having only the actual source type depict the product's position is as risky as having both source types say nothing about what the product stands for. In terms of consistency, managers should ensure that the *same* position is delivered across company-derived and external information source types.

This thesis provides moderate to good support for a practical guide regarding the rank or hierarchy for perceived positioning clarity and consistency in a post-Internet era (see Figures 5 and 6). The only aspect of Figure 5 that was not supported was in the idea that a position only defined by the actual position is superior to a completely undefined position in developing perceived consistency.

Ultimately, this thesis should show managers that complementary tools in positioning measurement are worth considering and can provide valuable consumer insight that using perceptual mapping techniques alone lack. This thesis shows moderate support to managers that by increasing positioning clarity and consistency perceptions, s/he can positively influence consumers' confidence in their perception of the product's position. This research has shown strong support for the positive effect of increasing consumers' positioning confidence for a segment of consumers that managers may have previously thought were impossible to reach – consumers who perceived a weak match between what the product stands for and what they are seeking. The results of this thesis should encourage brand managers to increase positioning definition in their own positioning signals—such as their advertising, PR, and company website—and aim as much as possible to control the level of definition and consistency in the positioning messages coming from external source types such as social media and blogs.

7.4 Limitations

All research has its shortcomings, and this thesis is no different. The first limitation will explore the sample used, which was entirely Australian-based, and therefore some may say the geographic generalisability of the research is hindered. However, this is less likely to affect the findings regarding the effect of confidence, and more likely to perhaps affect the antecedents to confidence. In other words, there may be cultural difference to sources of positioning confidence that have not been captured in this thesis.

Another limitation relates to the number of studies employed by this research. Given the size of each study (3x3), resources to complete this thesis on time and within budget only allowed for two experiments. The use of different products with differing initial perceived positions was used to enhance the generalisability of the study. However, given that the findings have produced some varying results across the two studies (antecedents), a greater number of studies with VFM and TOR as the initial position would cement the hypothesis proposed to explain the difference in results—that is, whether consistency is position dependent or not.

This research used stimuli in the form of advertisements, public company information, and online product information from the market as sources to act as positioning signals. Perceived clarity, perceived consistency, and, in fact, the post perceived position for most participants would have come directly from the stimuli exposure. However, while pre-testing aimed to reduce variance in positioning perception from each stimulus, perception for the desired position still did not sit at 100%. It is not possible to distinguish how individual respondents perceived each stimulus in the main study, which is thus a limitation to the usefulness of the stimuli in igniting differences in the variables they were designed to manipulate.

Product positioning is inherently relative to any competition. In reality, most consumers would research more than one product option before making a purchase for a high involvement product. Thus, ideally respondents in the experiments of this study would also have reviewed competitive stimuli, however this was deemed implausible due to the high cognitive processing already required with six focal brand-based stimuli (which was believed to be necessary in order to create enough inconsistency in some conditions). Compensation for this limitation was made by mentioning the focal brand relative to competition within most (but not all) of the stimuli that were executed, however the minimal competitor referencing remains a shortcoming of this study.

This research applied the Blankson and Kalafatis scale of generic positioning typology to measure the initial and post perceived positions. This was chosen due to convenience and this author's belief that it fittingly applied to the categories tested. Open responses at the end of the pre-test and main surveys did not disprove this belief. The alternative of measuring each individual respondent's positioning perception as an open answer would have added time to an already long data collection instrument. However, we must account for the fact that, perhaps for a small group of respondents, the products represented a position that was not available as a response, for example, a sustainability position.

Another limitation to the research related to the fact that all variables are self-reported in a lab experiment setting, thus predicting behaviour based on reports from respondents as opposed to measuring actual behaviour. The measure of purchase intention has attracted criticism for this very reason. Nevertheless, the alternative, which would be a field experiment of respondents who are about to purchase in the category—or have just purchased in the category—would present its own research limitations, such as the ability to correctly recall the communication messages to which they were exposed in their information stage. As with all field versus lab experiments, controlling for confounding factors in a real-life setting is limited.

7.5 Future research

Despite the worthwhile inroads this research has made in understanding the antecedents and effects of measuring consumers' confidence in their judgment of a product's position, further studies in this field is warranted.

First, in order to add further validity to the findings of this thesis regarding the three-way effect between confidence, purchase match, and perceived differentiation on purchase, additional studies should seek to replicate the findings. A further goal would be to obtain a better understanding of the antecedents of positioning confidence. The results of this thesis warrants research in determining whether antecedents to positioning confidence is in fact position-specific, or if the suggested antecedents apply across the board but with differing intensity. Qualitative research such as consumer focus groups may reveal further antecedents to positioning confidence which have not been considered by this research.

This research looked at consistency in positioning messages *between* the organisation's signals (the actual position) and the market (the external position). However, an additional research question would be the impact on consumers' positioning confidence of consistency *within* the various positioning messages coming from an organisation and, likewise, consistency *within* the plethora on market messages. While one assumes that in most cases the positioning signals coming from an organisation are fairly coherent, the external positioning signals are more likely to be plagued by inconsistency within the source type. Given this thesis has recognised the stronger weight placed on the external position by consumers, inconsistencies within the external position appear to be worth further research.

Based on the results of this thesis, it would be useful to understand the degree and method with which organisations monitor consumers' perceived clarity and consistency of positioning messages of their brands and products. Likewise, it would be worthwhile to have insight into whether organisations monitor actual and external positioning messages in terms of level of definition and alignment to the intended position, beyond simply the valance of what is said about the brand.

Overall, there is much work that is outstanding in terms of the theoretical development of positioning perception in an age where the context is, commonly, crowded product categories with weak differentiation, and heavy consumer reliance on market-based product information. Given that a product's perceived position is the position that matters, it certainly warrants focus in the literature.

7.6 Conclusion

With many overcrowded product categories vying for similar positions, arguably leading to a reduced level of perceived differentiation amongst consumers, this thesis offers a moderator to the well-established relationship of perceived differentiation and purchase. That is, consumers' confidence in their perception of a product's position; an input into their ultimate differentiation assessment. The idea of measuring confidence is not new. However, introducing it as a complementary tool of positioning measurement is new. Taking from metacognition theory, this thesis primarily proposed that when consumers' positioning perception is imperfectly aligned, thus making the purchase decision riskier, consumers tap into the confidence they assert for what the product stands for, which acts as moderator between differentiation and purchase. Two experiments (2 x 3x3 full factorial; n = 574) confirmed the three-way interaction hypothesis at .05 alpha. Now that the main theory is proven, it leads to the question: *How can managers influence, and thus increase, consumers' confidence in their positioning judgment?*

This thesis shows moderate support for two proposed antecedents: Firstly, the alignment between the initial and post perceived positions, backed by various psychological phenomena as per the literature review. Secondly, the idea that perceived clarity in a product's positioning messaging acts as a positive moderator between perceived consistency and purchase. While perceived clarity and consistency have been long discussed in positioning implementation literature, the contribution from this thesis is that it fills the gap in understanding how these constructs are affected by how consumers actually consume information today. This understanding comes from examining *both* company and consumer/market sources. The interaction between the two source types has not been considered in terms of positioning perception before this thesis.

This thesis supports the fact that a position that is defined by both the actual and external source types *and* is the *same* across both instils the greatest amount of perceived clarity and consistency. While managers inherently possess less control over the external position, the results of this thesis urges managers to influence the external position as much as possible given that when the market is doing a good job of defining the product's position but the company is not, this has greater weight in perceived clarity than the reverse situation.

There is an opportunity for further research to provide more concrete support for the proposed antecedents, given it was proven in one of the two experiments. Moreover, this thesis has only started the journey into understanding the antecedents of positioning confidence.

In summary, reflecting on Ries and Trout's (1993) statement that "marketing is a game of perception", it appears that a bigger prize is won in the form of consumers outside the target market through creating *confident* perceptions in what a product ultimately stands for.

References

Aaker, D. A., & Shansby, J. G. (1982). Positioning your product. *Business Horizons 25*(3), 56–62.

Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1977). Attitude-behavior relations: A theoretical analysis and review of empirical research, *Psychological Bulletin 84*(5), 888-918.

Akan, O., Allen, R. S., Helms, M. M., & Spralls, S. A., III (2006). Critical tactics for implementing Porter's generic strategies, *Journal of Business Strategy 27*(1), 43–53.

Alba, J., & Hutchinson, J. (1987). Dimensions of consumer expertise. *Journal of Consumer Research, 13*(4), 411–454.

Alter, A. L., Oppenheimer, D. M., Epley, N., & Eyre, R. N. (2007). Overcoming intuition: metacognitive difficulty activates analytic reasoning. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *136*(4), 569-576.

Ampuero, O., & Vila, N. (2006). Consumer perceptions of product packaging. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 23*(2), 100–112.

Añaña, E. D. S., & Nique, W. M. (2007). A professional category positioning: The role of personal values and their influence on consumer perceptions. *Journal of Database Marketing & Customer Strategy Management, 14*(4), 289–296.

Attia, S. T., & Hooley, G. (2007). The role of resources in achieving target competitive positions. *Journal of Strategic Marketing, 15*(2–3), 91–119.

Baranski, J. V., & Petrusic, W. M. (1994). The calibration and resolution of confidence in perceptual judgments. *Attention, Perception, & Psychophysics*, *55*(4), 412-428.

Bennett, P. D., & Harrell, G. D. (1975). The role of confidence in understanding and predicting buyers' attitudes and purchase intentions. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *2*(2), 110–117.

Bettman, J. R., & Park, C. W. (1980). Effects of prior knowledge and experience and phase of the choice process on consumer decision processes: A protocol analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research, 7*(3), 234.

Bezes, C. (2013). Effect of channel congruence on a retailer's image. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, *41*(4), 254-273.

Bhat, S. & Reddy, S. K. (1998). Symbolic and functional positioning of brands. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 15*(1), 32–43.

Bickart, B., & Schindler, R. M. (2001). Internet forums as influential sources of consumer information. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *15*(3), 31–40.

Blankson, C., Cowan, K., Crawford, J., Kalafatis, S., Singh, J., & Coffie, S. (2013). A review of the relationships and impact of market orientation and market positioning on organisational performance. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, *21*(6), 499–512.

Blankson, C., & Kalafatis, S. P. (2004). The development and validation of a scale measuring consumer/customer-derived generic typology of positioning strategies. *Journal of Marketing Management, 20*(1–2), 5–43.

Blankson, C., & Kalafatis, S.P. (2007). Congruence between positioning and brand advertising. *Journal of Advertising Research, 47*(1), 79–94.

Blankson, C., Kalafatis, S. P., Cheng, J. M. S., & Hadjicharalambous, C. (2008). Impact of positioning strategies on corporate performance. *Journal of Advertising Research, 48*(1), 106–122.

Block, L. G., & Keller, P. A. (1995). When to accentuate the negative: The effects of perceived efficacy and message framing on intentions to perform a health-related behavior. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *32*(2), 192–203.

Bonoma, T. V., & Shapiro, B. P. (1983). *Segmenting the industrial market*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Brinol, P., Petty, R. E., & Tormala, Z. L. (2004). Self-validation of cognitive responses to advertisements. *Journal of Consumer Research, 30*(4), 559–573.

Broniarczyk, S. M., & Gershoff, A. D. (2003). The reciprocal effects of brand equity and trivial attributes. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *40*(2), 161-175.

Brooksbank, R. (1994). The anatomy of marketing positioning strategy. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning 12*(4), 10–14.

Brucks, M., Zeithaml, V. A., & Naylor, G. (2000). Price and brand name as indicators of quality dimensions for consumer durables. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 28*(3), 359–374.

Bughin, J. (2014). Brand success in an era of digital darwinism. *Journal of Brand Strategy*, *2*(4), 355-365

Burke, S. J. (2008). Market success requirements, capability requirements and positioning: a tool for identification and linking. *The Business Review–Cambridge, 11*(1), 26–31.

Burke, S. J. (2011). Competitive positioning strength: market measurement. *Journal of Strategic Marketing, 19*(5), 421–428.

Burke, S., & O'Rourke, A. (2007). Readiness for competitive positioning: A managerial checklist. *Proceedings of the Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Conference,* Dunedin. doi: http://www.anzmac.org/conference_archive/2007/papers/SBurke_2.pdf

Butt, I., Papadopoulos, N., & Murphy, S. (2007). Development of positioning as a research stream: A critical assessment of impediments and a look forward. *Proceedings of the Australia and New Zealand Marketing Academy*, Dunedin. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Irfanb_Butt/publication/241169194_Development_of_Positioning_as_a_Research_Stream_A_Critical_Assessment_of_Impediments_and_a_Look_Forward/links/575d407208aed8846215f860.pdf

Cacioppo, J. T., & Petty, R. E. (1982). The need for cognition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 42*(1), 116-131.

Cadsby, T. (2011, August 15). The danger of reading something into nothing. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from: https://hbr.org/2011/08/the-danger-of-reading somethin

Chandrashekaran, M., McNeilly, K., Russ, F. A., & Marinova, D. (2000). From uncertain intentions to actual behavior: A threshold model of whether and when salespeople quit. *Journal of Marketing Research, 37*(4), 463–479.

Chandrashekaran, M., Rotte, K., Tax, S. S., & Grewal, R. (2007). Satisfaction strength and customer loyalty. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *44*(1), 153–163.

Chandrashekaran, M., Rotte, K., and Grewal, R. (2005). *Knowledge in error: Decoding consumer judgments with the JUMP Model*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Chang, C. & Huang, C. (2002). The joint effect of product involvement and prior knowledge on the use of information sources and the choice of decision-making paths by consumers. *International Journal of Management, 19*(2), 315–322.

Chase, W. G., & Simon, H. A. (1973). Perception in chess. *Cognitive Psychology, 4*(1), 55–81.

Ching, A. T., Erdem, T., & Keane, M. P. (2013). Learning models: An assessment of progress, challenges, and new developments. *Marketing Science*, *32*(6), 913–938.

Christodoulides, G. (2009). Branding in the post-internet era. *Marketing Theory, 9*(1), 141–144.

Churchill, G. A., & Iacobucci, D. (2002). *Marketing research: Methodological foundations.* Orlando, FL: Harcourt College Publishers.

Clark, B. H., & Montgomery, D. B. (1999). Managerial identification of competitors. *The Journal of Marketing*, 63(3), 67–83.

Court, D., Elzinga, D., Mulder S., & Vetvi, O. (2009). The consumer decision journey. *McKinsey Quarterly,* 1, 1–11.

Crawford, C. M. (1985). A new positioning typology. *Journal of Product Innovation Management, 2*(4), 243–253.

d'Aspremont, C., Gabszewicz, J. J., & Thisse, J. F (1979). On Hotelling's stability in competition. *Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society*, *47*, 1145–1150.

Day, G. S., Shocker, A. D., & Srivastava, R. K. (1979). Customer-oriented approaches to identifying product-markets. *The Journal of Marketing*, *43*(Fall), 8–19.

Deshpande, R., & Hoyer, W. D. (1983). Consumer decision making: Strategies, cognitive effort and perceived risk. *Proceedings from American Marketing Association Educators Conference, 49* in 1983 AMA Educators' Proceedings. eds. P. E. Murphy et al., Chicago: American Marketing Association, 88-91.

Diamantopoulos, A., Sarstedt, M., Fuchs, C., Wilczynski, P., & Kaiser, S. (2012). Guidelines for choosing between multi-item and single-item scales for construct measurement: a predictive validity perspective. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *40*(3), 434-449.

Dodds, W. B., Monroe, K. B., & Grewal, D. (1991). Effects of price, brand, and store information on buyers' product evaluations. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *28*(Nov), 307–319.

Dunlosky, J., & Metcalfe, J. (2009). *Metacognition: A textbook of cognition, educational, life span, and applied psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Duncan, R. B. (1972). Characteristics of organizational environments and perceived environmental uncertainty. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *17*(3), 313–327.

Elliott, G., Rundle-Thiele, S., & Waller, D. (2014). *Marketing, 3rd Edition*. John Wiley & Sons Limited, Australia.

Eden, C., & Ackermann, F. (2000). Mapping distinctive competencies: a systemic approach. *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, *51*, 12–20.

Erdem, T., & Keane, M.P. (1996). Decision-making under uncertainty: Capturing dynamic brand choice processes in turbulent consumer goods markets. *Marketing Science*, *15*(1), 1-20.

Erdem, T., Keller, K. L., Kuksov, D., & Pieters, R. (2016). Understanding branding in a digitally empowered world. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *33*(1), 3-10.

Erdem, T., & Swait, J. (1998). Brand equity as a signaling phenomenon. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 7*(2), 131–157.

Erdem, T., Swait, J., Broniarczyk, S., Chakravarti, D., Kapferer J.N., Keane, M., Zettelmeyer, F. (1999). Brand equity, consumer learning and choice. *Marketing Letters, 10*(3), 301–318.

Erdem, T., Swait, J., & Valenzuela, A. (2006). Brands as signals: A cross-country validation study. *Journal of Marketing, 70*(1), 34–49.

Fabrigar, L. R., & Petty, R. E. (1999). The role of the affective and cognitive bases of attitudes in susceptibility to affectively and cognitively based persuasion. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 25*(3), 363–381.

Fazio, R. H., & Zanna, M. P. (1978). On the predictive validity of attitudes: the roles of direct experience and confidence. *Journal of Personality, 46*(2), 228–243.

Foedermayr, E. K., & Diamantopoulos, A. (2008). Market segmentation in practice: Review of empirical studies, methodological assessment, and agenda for future research. *Journal of Strategic Marketing, 16*(3), 223–265.

Fontein, D. (2016). *4 excellent user generated content contests using social media* [blog post]. Retrieved from: https://blog.hootsuite.com/4-excellent-user-generated-content-contests-using-social-media/

Fournier, S., & Avery, J. (2011). The uninvited brand. *Business Horizons*, *54*(3), 193–207.

Frey, D. (1986). Recent research on selective exposure to information. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 19*, 41-80.

Fuchs, C., & Diamantopoulos, A. (2012). Customer-perceived positioning effectiveness: conceptualization, operationalization, and implications for new product managers. *Journal of Product Innovation Management, 29*(2), 229–244.

Ghose, S., & Lowengart, O. (2001). Perceptual positioning of international, national and private brands in a growing international market: An empirical study. *The Journal of Brand Management*, *9*(1), 45-62.

Gigerenzer, G., Hoffrage, U., & Kleinbölting, H. (1991). Probabilistic mental models: A Brunswikian theory of confidence. *Psychological Review*, *98*(4), 506.

Gorn, G. J., & Weinberg, C. B. (1984). The impact of comparative advertising on perception and attitude: Some positive findings. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *11*(2), 719-727.

Gwin, C. F., & Gwin, C. R. (2003). Product attributes model: a tool for evaluating brand positioning. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, *11*(2), 30–42.

Hamel, G., & Prahalad, C. K. (1994). Competing for the future. *Harvard Business Review*, *72*(4), 122-128.

Hansen, T. (2005). Perspectives on consumer decision making: an integrated approach. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour, 4*(6), 420–437.

Haugtvedt, C. P., & Kasmer, J. A. (2008). Attitude change and persuasion. *Handbook of Consumer Psychology*, *21*(1), 419-435.

Haugtvedt, C. P., & Wegener, D. T. (1994). Message order effects in persuasion: An attitude strength perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *21*(1), 205–218.

Heslin, R., Rotton, J., & Blake, B. (1977). Confidence in information: Source and dogmatism effects. *Journal of Research in Personality, 11*(2), 227–236.

Hoch, S. J., & Ha, Y. W. (1986). Consumer learning: advertising and the ambiguity of product experience. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *13*(2), 221–233.

Hohwy, J. (2012). Attention and conscious perception in the hypothesis testing brain. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 3:96. Retrieved from: 10.3389/fpsyg.2012.00096

Hogarth, R. M., & Einhorn, H. J. (1992). Order effects in belief updating: The belief-adjustment model. *Cognitive Psychology, 24*(1), 1–55.

Hooley, G., Broderick, A., & Möller, K. (1998). Competitive positioning and the resource-based view of the firm. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, *6*(2), 97–116.

Hooley, G., & Greenley, G. (2005). The resource underpinnings of competitive positions. *Journal of Strategic Marketing, 13*(2), 93–116.

Hooley, G., Piercy, N., & Nicoulaud, B. (2008). *Marketing strategy and competitive positioning*. United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited.

Howard, J. A., & Sheth, J. N. (1969). *The theory of buyer behavior*, New York: Wiley.

Huber, J., & Holbrook, M. B. (1979). Using attribute ratings for product positioning: some distinctions among compositional approaches. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 16(Nov), 507–516.

Javidan, M. (1998). Core competence: what does it mean in practice? *Long Range Planning, 31*(1), 60–71.

Johnson, L. K. (2004). Execute your strategy without killing it. *Harvard Management Update 9*(12), 3–6.

Kapferer, J. N. (2004). *The new strategic brand management*. London: Kogan page publishers.

Kardes, F. R., & Kalyanaram, G. (1992). Order-of-entry effects on consumer memory and judgment: An information integration perspective. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *29*(3), 343.

Katz, J. (1984). Why doctors don't disclose uncertainty. *Hastings Center Report*, *14*(1), 35-44.

Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, *57*(Jan), 1–22.

Kenyon, A., & Mathur, S. S. (2002). The offering as the strategic focus. *Journal of Strategic Marketing, 10*(3), 171–188.

Kirmani, A. (1990). The effect of perceived advertising costs on brand perceptions. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *17*(2), 160–171.

Kohli, A. K., & Jaworski, B. J. (1990). Market orientation: the construct, research propositions, and managerial implications. *The Journal of Marketing*, *54*(April),1–18.

Kotler, P. (2003). *Marketing management* (11th Ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Kotler, P., & Keller, K. (2012). *Marketing management* (14th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Laroche, M., Kim, C., & Zhou, L. (1995). Direct and indirect effects of confidence on purchase intention. *Advances in Consumer Research, 22*, 333–339.

Laroche, M., & Sadokierski, R. (1994). Role of confidence in a multi-brand model of intentions for a high-involvement service*. Journal of Business Research, 9(1), 1-12*

Leavy, B. (2003). Assessing your strategic alternatives from both a market position and core competence perspective. *Strategy & Leadership, 31*(6), 29–35.

Lehmann, D. R., & Winer, R. S. (1991). *Analysis for marketing planning*. Homewood, IL: Irwin.

Lengnick-Hall, C. A. (1992). Innovation and competitive advantage: what we know and what we need to learn. *Journal of Management, 18*(2), 399–429.

Levine, T., & Banas, J. (2002). One-tailed F-tests in communication research. *Communication Monographs*, *69*(2), 132–143.

Levin, I. P., Johnson, R. D., & Faraone, S. V. (1984). Information integration in price-quality tradeoffs: The effect of missing information. *Memory & Cognition, 12*(1), 96–102.

Lingle, J. H., & Ostrom, T. M.. (1979). Retrieval selectivity in memory-based impression judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37*(2), 189-194.

Lord, C. G., Ross, L., & Lepper, M. R. (1979). Biased assimilation and attitude polarization: The effects of prior theories on subsequently considered evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37*(11), 2098-2109.

Lumpkin, J. R., & Hunt, J. B. (1989). Mobility as an influence on retail patronage behavior of the elderly: Testing conventional wisdom. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 17*(1), 1–12.

Luttrell, A., Briñol, P., Petty, R. E., Cunningham, W., & Díaz, D. (2013). Metacognitive confidence: A neuroscience approach. *Revista de Psicología Social*, *28*(3), 317-332.

MacInnis, D. J. (2011). A framework for conceptual contributions in marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, *75*(4), 136–154.

Markman, A. B., & Medin, D. L. (1995). Similarity and alignment in choice. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 63*(2), 117–130.

Martin, I. M., Stewart, D. W., & Matta, S. (2005). Branding strategies, marketing communication, and perceived brand meaning: The transfer of purposive, goal–oriented brand meaning to brand extensions. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *33*(3), 275-294.

Mittal, B. (1989). Measuring purchase-decision involvement. *Psychology & Marketing, 6*(2), 147–162.

Montgomery, H. (1983). Decision rules and the search for a dominance structure: Towards a process model of decision making. *Advances in Psychology, 14*, 343–369.

Moth, D. (2013). *Eight examples of brands that have run Instagram photo competitions* [blog post]. Retrieved from: https://econsultancy.com/blog/62174-eight-examples-of-brands-that-have-run-instagram-photo-competitions/

Mukherjee, A., & Hoyer, W. D. (2001). The effect of novel attributes on product evaluation. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *28*(3), 462-472.

Muncy, J. A. (1996). Measuring perceived brand parity. *Advances in Consumer Research, 23*, 411–417.

Murphy, S., Butt I., & Papadopoulos, N. (2007). The role of affect in the development of positioning strategy and judgments. *Proceedings of ASAC Conference – Marketing Division, 28*(3), 146-154.

Muthukrishnan, A. V., Pham, M. T., & Mungale, A. (2001). Does greater amount of information always bolster attitudinal resistance? *Marketing Letters, 12*(2), 131–144.

Myers, J. H. (1996). *Segmentation and positioning for strategic marketing decisions*. Chicago, IL: American Marketing Association.

Narver, J. C., & Slater, S. F. (1990). The effect of a market orientation on business profitability. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(4), 20-35.

Olson, J., & Jacoby, J. (1972). Cue utilization in quality perception process in SV - In M. Venkatesan (ed.), *Proceedings of the Third Annual Conference of the Association for Consumer Research* (pp. 167–179). Chicago, IL: Association for Consumer Research,.

Park, C. W., & Lessig, V. P. (1981). Familiarity and its impact on consumer decision biases and heuristics. *Journal of Consumer Research, 8*(2), 223-231.

Pearce, J. A., & Robinson, R. B. (2011). *Strategic management: Formulation, implementation and control*. Boston: McGraw-Hill Irwin.

Peter, J. P., Churchill Jr, G. A., & Brown, T. J. (1993). Caution in the use of difference scores in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *19*(4), 655-662.

Petty, R. E., Briñol, P., & Tormala, Z. L. (2002). Thought confidence as a determinant of persuasion: the self-validation hypothesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *82*(5), 722-741.

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion.. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, *19*, 123–205.

Pham, M. T., & Muthukrishnan, A. V. (2002). Search and alignment in judgment reviision: implications for brand positioning. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *39*(1), 18–30.

Porac, J. F., & Thomas, H. (1990). Taxonomic mental models in competitor definition. *Academy of Management Review, 15*(2), 224–240.

Porter, M. E. (1980). *Competitive strategy: Techniques for analyzing industry and competitors*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Porter, M. E. (1996). What is strategy? *Harvard Business Review, 76*(6), 61–78.

Porter, M. E. (2001). Strategy and the Internet. *Harvard Business Review*, *79*(3), 62–78.

Prahalad, C., & Hamel, G. (1990). The core competence of the corporation. *Harvard Business Review, 68*(3), 79–91.

Punj, G., & Moon, J. (2002). Positioning options for achieving brand association: A psychological categorization framework. *Journal of Business Research*, *55*(4), 275–283.

Quester, P., Neal, C., Pettigrew, S., Grimmer, M. R., Davis, T., & Hawkins, D. (2007). *Consumer behaviour: Implications for marketing strategy.* Sydney: McGraw-Hill.

Raju, P. S., Lonial, S. C., & Mangold, W. G. (1995). Differential effects of subjective knowledge, objective knowledge, and usage experience on decision making: An exploratory investigation. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *4*(2), 153-180.

Rao, A. R., & Monroe, K. B. (1989). The effect of price, brand name, and store name on buyers' perceptions of product quality: An integrative review. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *8*(2), 351–357.

Ries, A., & Trout, J. (1981). *Positioning: The battle for your mind*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Chicago.

Ries, A., & Trout, J. (1993). *The 22 immutable laws of marketing: Violate them at your own risk*. New York, NY: Harper Business.

Ries, A., & Trout, J. (2001). *Positioning: The battle for your mind, 20th anniversary edition.* New York: McGraw-Hill. Chicago

Rigger, W. (1995). Positioning in theory and practice: Towards a research agenda. *Proceedings from the European Marketing Academy Conference.*

Romaniuk, J., Sharp, B., & Ehrenberg, A. (2007). Evidence concerning the importance of perceived brand differentiation. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, *15*(2), 42–54.

Russo, J. E., Medvec, V. H., & Meloy, M. G. (1996). The distortion of information during decisions. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *66*(1), 102–110.

Schiffman, L., O'Cass, A., Paladino, A., D'Alessandro, S., & Bednall, D. (2010). *Consumer Behaviour* (5th ed.). Australia: Pearson Education.

Schwarz, N. (2004). Metacognitive experiences in consumer judgment and decision making. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 14(4), 332-348.

Sengupta, J., & Johar, G. V. (2002). Effects of inconsistent attribute information on the predictive value of product attitudes: Toward a resolution of opposing perspectives. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *29*(1), 39-56.

Shapiro, B. P (1968). The psychology of pricing. *Harvard Business Review*, *46*(4), 14-25.

Shiu, E. M. K, Walsh, G., Hassan, L. M., & Shaw, D. (2011). Consumer uncertainty, revisited. *Psychology & Marketing*, *28*(6), 584–607.

Skowronski, J. J., & Carlston, D. E. (1987). Social judgment and social memory: The role of cue diagnosticity in negativity, positivity, and extremity biases. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52*(4), 689-699.

Simmons, C. J., & Becker-Olsen, K. L. (2006). Achieving marketing objectives through social sponsorships. *Journal of Marketing*, *70*(4), 154-169.

Smith, R. E., & Swinyard, W. R. (1988). Cognitive response to advertising and trial: Belief strength, belief confidence and product curiosity. *Journal of Advertising, 17*(3), 3–14.

Soscia, I., Girolamo, S., & Busacca, B. (2010). The effect of comparative advertising on consumer perceptions: similarity or differentiation? *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *25*(1), 109-118.

Spiller, S. A., Fitzsimons, G. J., Lynch, J. G. Jnr, & McClelland, H. (2013). Spotlights, floodlights, and the magic number zero: Simple effects tests in moderated regression. *Journal of Marketing Research, 50*(2), 277–288.

Srivastava, J., & Lurie, N. (2001). A consumer perspective on price-matching refund policies: Effect on price perceptions and search behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research 28*(2), 296–307.

Sujan, M. (1985). Consumer knowledge: Effects on evaluation strategies mediating consumer judgments. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12(June), 31–46.

Sujan, M., & Bettman, J. R. (1989). The effects of brand positioning strategies on consumers' brand and category perceptions: Some insights from schema research. *Journal of Marketing Research, 26*(4), 454-467.

Summers, J. O., & MacKay, D. B. (1976). On the validity and reliability of direct similarity judgment. *Journal of Marketing Research, 13(*3), 289-295.

Suzuki, Y. (2000). The effect of airline positioning on profit. *Transportation Journal*, *39*(3), 44–54.

Tax, S. S., Brown, S. & Chandrasekaran, M. (1998). Customer Evaluation of Service Complaint Experiences: Implications for Relationship Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, *62*(2), 60-76

Trout, J. (1969) "Positioning" is a game people play in today's me-too market place. *Industrial Marketing*, 54 (6), 51-55.

Trout, J., Rivkin, S., & Ries. A. (1996). *The new positioning: The latest on the world's #1 business strategy*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Valentin, E. (2001). SWOT analysis from a resource-based view. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 9*(2), 54–69.

VanVoorhis, C. R. W., & Morgan, B. (2007) Understanding power and rules of thumb for determining sample sizes. *Tutorials in Quantitative Methods for Psychology 3*(2), 43–50.

Von Hippel, E. (1986). Lead users: a source of novel product concepts. *Management Science, 32*(7), 791–805.

Walker, O. C., Jnr, & Ruekert, R. W. (1987). Marketing's role in the implementation of business strategies: A critical review and conceptual framework. *The Journal of Marketing*, *51*(July), 15-33.

Warland, R. H., & Sample, J. (1973). Response certainty as a moderator variable in attitude measurement. *Rural Sociology*. *38*(2), 174.

Wells, G. L., Olson, E. A., & Charman, S. D. (2002). The confidence of eyewitnesses in their identifications from lineups. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *11*(5), 151-154.

Wind, Y. (1977). The perception of a firm's competitive position. In F. Nicosia, & Y. Wind (Eds.) *Behavioral models for market analysis: Foundations for marketing action*. Hinsdale, IL, Dryden Press.

Wind, Y. (1978). Issues and advances in segmentation research. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *15*(Aug), 317–337.

Yadav, M. S. (2010). The decline of conceptual articles and implications for knowledge development. *Journal of Marketing, 74*(1), 1–9.

Zahay, D., & Griffin, A. (2010). Marketing strategy selection, marketing metrics, and firm performance. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, *25*(2), 84–93.

Zeithaml, V. A. (1988). Consumer perceptions of price, quality, and value: a means-end model and synthesis of evidence. *The Journal of Marketing, 52*(3), 2–22.

Zhang, Y., & Buda, R. (1999). Moderating effects of need for cognition on responses to positively versus negatively framed advertising messages. *Journal of Advertising*, *28*(2), 1–15.

Zhou, K. Z., & Nakamoto, K. (2007). How do enhanced and unique features affect new product preference? The moderating role of product familiarity. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 35*(1), 53–62.

Zipf, G. K. (1949). *Human behavior and the principle of least effort*. Cambridge: Addison Wesley.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Examples of ill-defined and/or dissimilar positioning

Bose Lifestyle speakers – Bose website - (actual position)

MENU

BOSE

Lifestyle® SoundTouch® 535 entertainment system

BLACK

$5,499.00

FIND A STORE

Shop with confidence

OVERVIEW

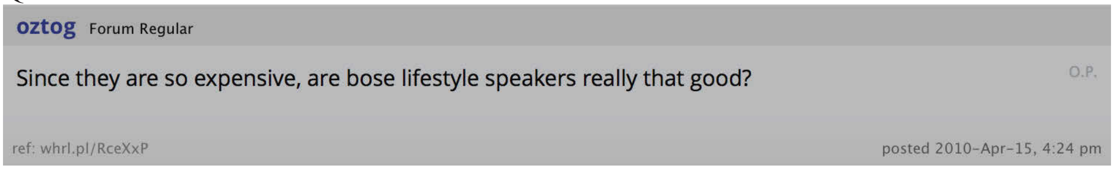
Our best surround sound system

if creating the best home entertainment experience matters to you, look no further. the lifestyle® soundtouch® 535 entertainment system combines our most advanced technologies with simplicity, versatility and elegance. five compact jewel cube® speakers deliver real surround sound to every seat in the room, while an acoustimass® module provides impactful bass. beyond tv, films, sports and video games, this system is also a powerful music machine. it lets you easily enjoy wireless music when connected to your existing home wi-fi® network or *bluetooth*® devices.

- Dynamic surround sound from five Jewel Cube® speakers, customised to your room for a consistent, high-quality performance
- Advanced control console ensures all your components work easily as a single system
- Wirelessly play music services like Spotify® and Deezer®, Internet radio stations and your stored music library
- Guided setup and simplified use with easy-to-follow onscreen messages
- Easily connect and control up to 6 HD video/music sources; video upscaling to 1080p

Snippet from Whirlpool; an Australian online appliance forum (external position)

Question:



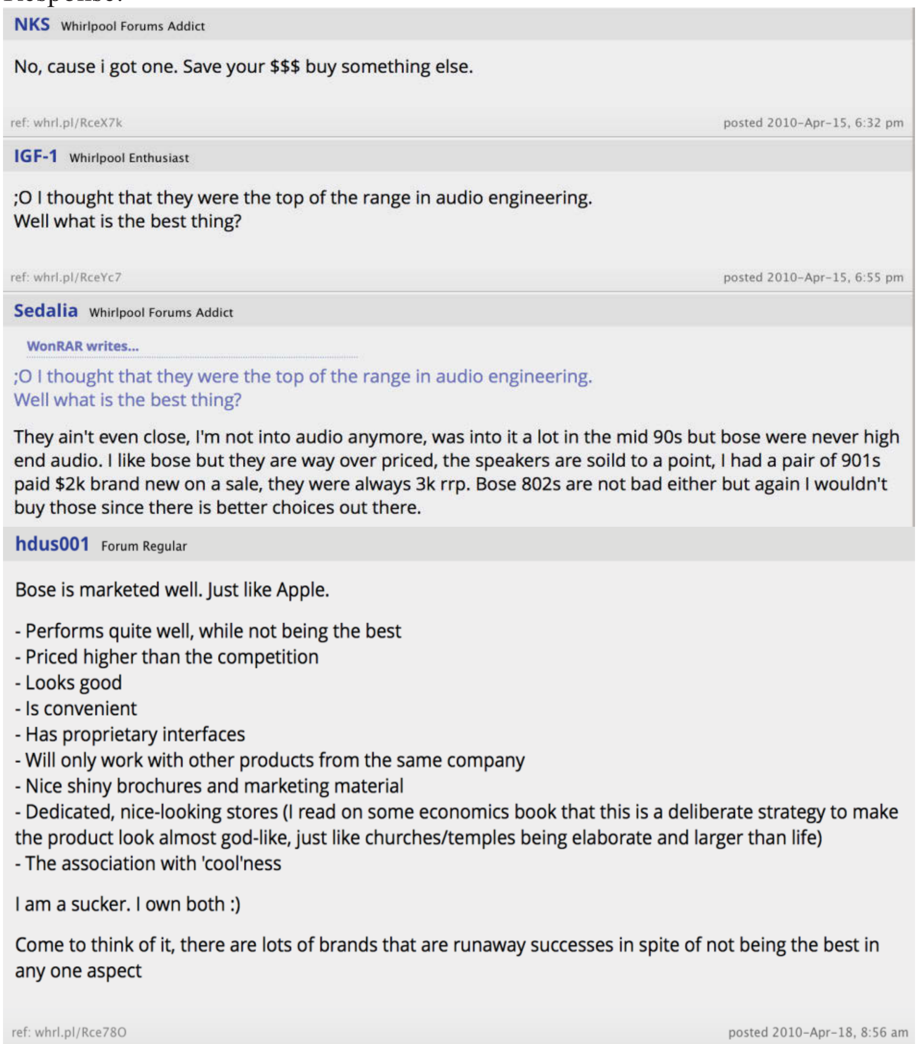
oztog Forum Regular

Since they are so expensive, are bose lifestyle speakers really that good?

O.P.

ref: whrl.pl/RceXxP posted 2010–Apr–15, 4:24 pm

Response:



NKS Whirlpool Forums Addict

No, cause i got one. Save your $$$ buy something else.

ref: whrl.pl/RceX7k posted 2010–Apr–15, 6:32 pm

IGF-1 Whirlpool Enthusiast

;O I thought that they were the top of the range in audio engineering.
Well what is the best thing?

ref: whrl.pl/RceYc7 posted 2010–Apr–15, 6:55 pm

Sedalia Whirlpool Forums Addict

WonRAR writes...

;O I thought that they were the top of the range in audio engineering.
Well what is the best thing?

They ain't even close, I'm not into audio anymore, was into it a lot in the mid 90s but bose were never high end audio. I like bose but they are way over priced, the speakers are soild to a point, I had a pair of 901s paid $2k brand new on a sale, they were always 3k rrp. Bose 802s are not bad either but again I wouldn't buy those since there is better choices out there.

hdus001 Forum Regular

Bose is marketed well. Just like Apple.

- Performs quite well, while not being the best
- Priced higher than the competition
- Looks good
- Is convenient
- Has proprietary interfaces
- Will only work with other products from the same company
- Nice shiny brochures and marketing material
- Dedicated, nice-looking stores (I read on some economics book that this is a deliberate strategy to make the product look almost god-like, just like churches/temples being elaborate and larger than life)
- The association with 'cool'ness

I am a sucker. I own both :)

Come to think of it, there are lots of brands that are runaway successes in spite of not being the best in any one aspect

ref: whrl.pl/Rce78O posted 2010–Apr–18, 8:56 am

This appears to deliver a position of Brand or Attractiveness for the Bose Lifestyle speakers with comments such as '*Looks good*', '*the association with coolness*' and '*nice looking stores.*' There are also many comments that directly dispute Bose's actual position of top of the range such as *'Performs quite well, while not being the best.'*

This case of Bose Lifestyle speakers is an example of different positions being portrayed between the actual and external positioning information sources.

Snippet from Whirlpool; an Australian online appliance forum (external position)

Question:

User #707850 3 posts
billyfieldman
I'm new here, please be nice

O.P.

Are the Fisher Paykel dryers more reliable than Electrolux? Looking for smallish dryer that would be problem free for next few years.

Are these any good?
Electrolux EDV5051 5kg sensor dryer
Fisher Paykel DE5060M1 5kg sensor dryer

Response:

User #740413 28 posts
Charlotte
I'm new here, please be nice

I'm no real help, I'm on the hunt for a dryer too and was tossing up between the 6kg model of both of these as well as the Beko 6kg. What I can say is that the F&P has horrendous reviews regarding a specific error on productreviews.com.au. The Electrolux doesn't have glowing one's but they're better than the one's for this particular model of F&P and some of the issues listed are somewhat standard with a sensor dryer.

reference: whrl.pl/ReGRQQ
posted 2016-Aug-14, 8:20 pm

User #724574 76 posts
j4cks0n
Participant

I've got the 6kg Electrolux. I don't know much about dryers but the Electrolux produces dry clothes and has worked well over the last six months. I only use it on rainy days. I got it because it was the cheapest brand name dryer which can automatically switch off once the clothes are dry (sensor). The sensor function works well. I've got mine wall mounted and inverted.

The F&P model would probably also be fine. I can't see there being much difference. I reckon these vented dryers are much of a muchness. They all have similar features and similar electricity consumption.

One thing I would say is clean the lint filter after every load.

reference: whrl.pl/ReGR7f
posted 2016-Aug-14, 10:00 pm

This appears to deliver a position of 'NIL' with comments such as '*I can't see there being much difference. I reckon all these vented dryers are much of a muchness.'*

This is an example of a weakly defined external position for the Fisher and Paykel dryer.

Appendix 2: The internal resource based review of positioning

A study conducted by Attia and Hooley (2007) found that the following that various assets and capabilities could be linked to delivery of the three umbrella competitive positions of *quality price and innovation* This is based on the premise that particular resources are more important for certain positions.

Competitive Position		Assets required	Capabilities required
	Quality	**Production & manufacturing expertise**, company/brand name, good supply chain management, good relationship with suppliers, exclusive distribution system, **the extent or nature of the distribution network**, the uniqueness of the distribution, good relationship with distribution channel intermediaries	Good at understanding customer' needs and requirements, good at setting prices which both attract customers and achieve financial objectives, produce products that customers really want, **production and manufacturing expertise**
	High Price	**Company or brand name reputation**, credibility with customers due to being the price leader, providing superior levels of customer service and high quality	Being good at creating/enhancing and maintaining relationships with key customers, producing products that customers really want and building relationships with target customers
	Low Price	Advantage in production, cost advantage	Effective human resources management, good marketing management ability, good operations management expertise, **having strong financial management**, integrated logistics and planning capabilities
	Innovation	**Superior levels of customer services**	**Ability to launch successful new products**, **effective new product development processes**, good at using information about customers, and competitors and superior level of customer service

The assets and capabilities that appear in bold represent those that were found to have a significant link to the relevant positioning typology as defined by the authors of that research. The study was limited to the British Pharmaceutical market (Attia & Hooley, 2007).

Appendix 3: Key positioning typologies

Author(s)	Year	Typology description
Aaker and Shansby	1982	- Positioning by Attribute - Product attribute, feature or benefit e.g.. Volvo emphasizing durability - Positioning by Price/Quality - At both ends of the scale – either high price and high level of service, features/performance such as BMW or 'value' proposition such as Kmart, Aldi - Positioning by the Product User - Associating the product with a user, class of users such as a celebrity, social class, product usage e.g.. Positioning a shampoo for frequent hair washers (usage) - Positioning with respect to a product class - Positioning as a substitute product alternative e.g.. Up&Go as an alternative to traditional breakfast cereal or aspirational product class e.g.. Nespresso 'bringing the café experience home' - Positioning with respect to a competitor - Whilst all positioning strategies are implicitly positioned against a competitor, this approach makes an explicit reference such as Avis' famous strategy of 'we're number two, so we try harder'
Blankson and Kalafatis	2004	- Top of range - Upper class, top of the range, status, prestigious, posh - Service - Impressive service, personal attention, consider people as important, friendly - Value for money - Reasonable price, value for money, affordability - Reliability - Durability, warranty, safety, reliability - Attractiveness - Good aesthetics, attractive, cool, elegant - Country of origin - Patriotism, country of origin - The brand name

		○ The name of the offering, leaders in the market, extra features, choice, wide range ○ Selectivity ○ Discriminatory, non-selective, high principles
Crawford	1985	• Features ○ Concrete attributes eg. air-conditioning ○ Abstract attributes eg. quality • Benefits ○ Direct/functional eg. cost reduction ○ Indirect benefits eg. makes driver feel younger • Surrogate positioning – refers to intangible aspects of brand but lets consumer come up with their own conclusion eg. the bestselling car
Hooley, Moller and Broderick	1998	• Price • Technical quality • Innovation • Service • Customized • Uniqueness (amalgamation of previous positions) Hooley later condenses the above into three competitive positioning umbrellas: • Price • Quality • Innovation
Porter	1980	Porter's generic positioning strategies: • Cost Leadership • Differentiation ○ Quality – durability, grade of product, reliability of service ○ Packaging ○ Branding – image & reputation – 'emotional element' ○ Service ○ Distribution • Focus

Appendix 4: Strategic management versus marketing lens

	Strategic Management lens	**Marketing lens**
Terminology	Strategic Competitive Positioning, Competitive Positioning	Brand Positioning, Product Positioning

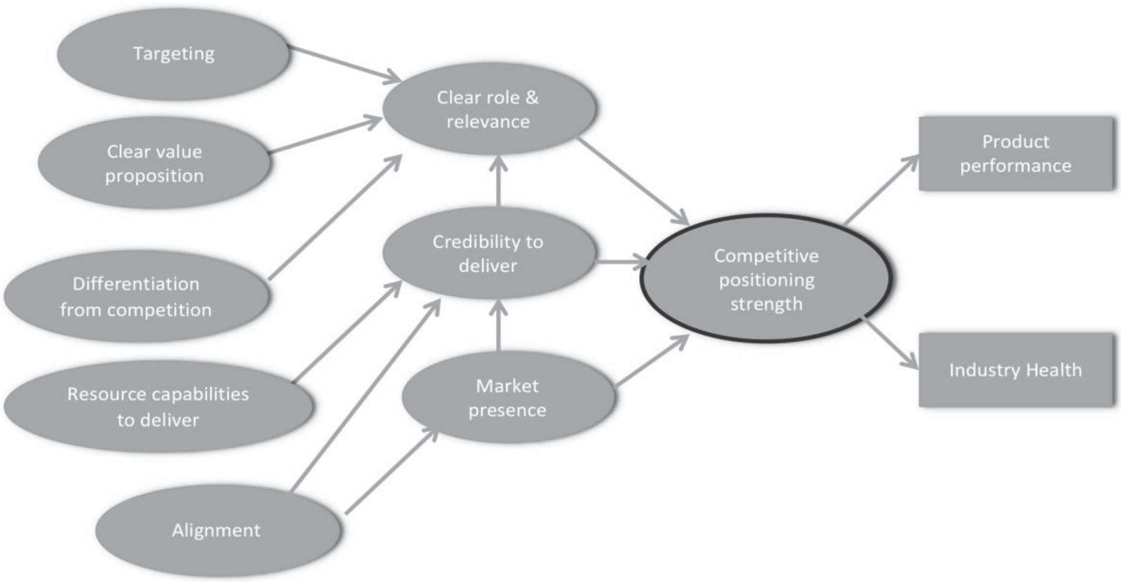
Key cited typologies	Porter's generic positioning strategies:
	• Cost Leadership
	• Differentiation
	  o Quality – durability, grade of product, reliability of service
	  o Packaging
	  o Branding – image & reputation – 'emotional element'
	  o Service
	  o Distribution
	
	Hooley Competitive Positioning umbrellas:
	• Price
	• Quality
	• Innovation
		Crawford's three positioning typologies:
		• Features
		  o Concrete attributes e.g. Air-conditioning
		  o Abstract attributes e.g. quality
		• Benefits
		  o Direct/functional e.g. Cost reduction
		  o Indirect benefits e.g. Makes driver feel younger
		• Surrogate positioning – refers to intangible aspects of brand but lets consumer come up with their own conclusion e.g. the bestselling car
		
		Blankson & Kalafatis' consumer-derived positioning typologies:
		• Top of range
		• Service
		• Value for money
		• Reliability
		• Attractiveness
		• Country of origin
		• The brand name
		• Selectivity

Measures of positioning	Managerial and consumer derived research	Advertising, slogans, Managerial and consumer derived research

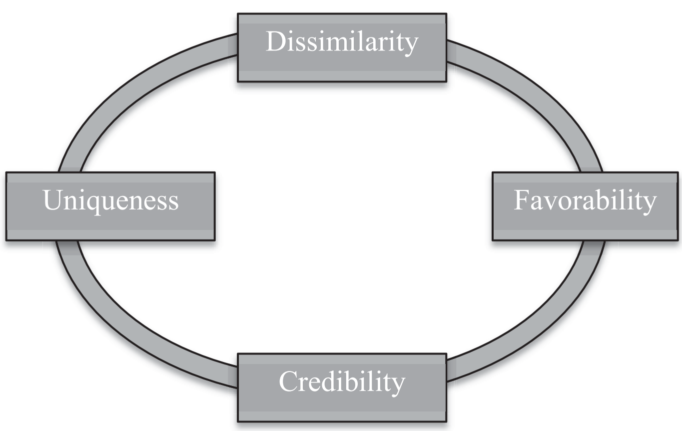
Literature focus	• Organizational processes deriving positioning – market versus resource-based views • Measuring positioning effectiveness • Link to firm performance measures	• Positioning typologies • Link to subfirm level performance measures • Positioning execution – literature heavy around the construct of advertising
Prominent Publications	Journal of Strategic Marketing, Harvard Business Review, Strategic Management Journal, The Journal of Management	Journal of Marketing Management, Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice

Appendix 5: Current complementary tools in positioning perception measurement

a) Burke's model of positioning strength (2011):



b) Fuchs and Diamantopoulos model (2012): The model has four dimensions supported by a multi-item measure as displayed below



Dissimilarity	Identical/distinct
	Similar/dissimilar
	Does not set itself apart/ sets itself apart
	Same/different
Uniqueness	Unique/not unique
	Extraordinary/ordinary
	Atypical/typical
	Special/standard
Favorability	Good/bad
	Like/dislike
	Positive/negative
	Appealing/not appealing
Credibility	Believable/not believable
	Plausible/not plausible
	Convincing/not convincing
	Trustworthy/untrustworthy
	Realistic/unrealistic

Appendix 6: Pre-test questionnaire for product category

My name is Anne-Maree O'Rourke and I am a PhD student at University of Technology Sydney. My supervisor is Associate Professor Francois Carrillat. The purpose of this online survey is to find out about consumer perceptions of different product categories. You can change your mind at any time and stop completing the survey without consequences. However please note that full payment is only received from PureProfile for complete responses in accordance to their policy. The research data gathered from this survey will be published in a form that does not identify you. If you have concerns about the research that you think I can help you with, please feel free to contact me on (02) 9514 9818 If you would like to talk to someone who is not connected with the research, you may contact the Research Ethics Officer on 02 9514 9772 or Research.ethics@uts.edu.au and quote this number 2015000547.

Q7 Are you....

- ❍ Male (1)
- ❍ Female (2)

Q8 Where do you currently live?

- ❍ Sydney (1)
- ❍ Melbourne (2)
- ❍ Brisbane (3)
- ❍ Adelaide (4)
- ❍ Hobart (5)
- ❍ Perth (6)
- ❍ Other (7)

Q9 Is your address classed as...

- ❍ Metro (1)
- ❍ Regional (2)

Q10 What is your postcode?

Q11 What is your age?

- ❍ 18-24 years old (1)
- ❍ 25-34 years old (2)
- ❍ 35-44 years old (3)
- ❍ 45-54 years old (4)
- ❍ 55-64 years old (5)
- ❍ 65-74 years old (6)
- ❍ 75 years or older (7)
- ❍ Do not want to disclose (8)

Q12 Employment Status: Are you currently...?

- ❍ Employed (1)
- ❍ Out of work and looking for work (2)
- ❍ Out of work but not currently looking for work (3)
- ❍ A homemaker (4)
- ❍ A student (5)
- ❍ Retired (6)
- ❍ Other (7)

Q13 What category best describes your annual household income?

- ❍ Less than $24,999 (1)
- ❍ $25,000 to $49,999 (2)
- ❍ $50,000 to $99,999 (3)
- ❍ $100,000 to $199,999 (4)
- ❍ $200,000 or over (5)
- ❍ Do not want to disclose (6)

The following survey will ask you some questions about three product categories: **Brand 1, Brand 2 and Brand 3**. Answers can be based on your own perceptions and doesn't have to be based on personal experience with the product categories.

Q1 The following section will ask you about …..s. Please answer the following statements regarding ....s in terms of how true you believe it to be: Note that 'brand/s' = 'airline/s' in the below questions . Please carefully read all statements before answering.

I can't think of many differences between the major brands of ....s (1)	❍ Extremely untrue 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ Neutral 4	❍ 5	❍ 6	❍ Extremely true 7	❍ Unsure 8
I would care a great deal as to which one .... I buy (2)	❍ Extremely untrue 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ Neutral 4	❍ 5	❍ 6	❍ Extremely true 7	❍ Unsure 8
A .... is a ...., most brands are basically the same. (3)	❍ Extremely untrue 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ Neutral 4	❍ 5	❍ 6	❍ Extremely true 7	❍ Unsure 8
To me, there are big differences between the various brands of ....s (4)	❍ Extremely untrue 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ Neutral 4	❍ 5	❍ 6	❍ Extremely true 7	❍ Unsure 8
The only difference between the major brands of ....s is the price (5)	❍ Extremely untrue 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ Neutral 4	❍ 5	❍ 6	❍ Extremely true 7	❍ Unsure 8
All major brands of ....s are basically alike (6)	❍ Extremely untrue 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ Neutral 4	❍ 5	❍ 6	❍ Extremely true 7	❍ Unsure 8

Q2 Please consider the following questions regarding ....s. Note that …. in the below questions . Please carefully read all statements before answering.

In general, how knowledgeable are you about different types of ....s in the market? (1)	❍ Not at all knowledgeable 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ Neutra l 4	❍ 5	❍ 6	❍ Very knowledgeable 7	❍ Unsure 8
How important would it be to you to make a right choice of ....? (2)	❍ Not at all important 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ Neutra l 4	❍ 5	❍ 6	❍ Very important 7	❍ Unsure 8
In making your selection of ...., how concerned would you be about the outcome of your choice? (3)	❍ Not at all concerned 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ Neutra l 4	❍ 5	❍ 6	❍ Very concerned 7	❍ Unsure 8
Do you think that the various types and brands of ....s available in the market are all very alike or are all very different? (4)	❍ They are all very alike 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ Neutra l 4	❍ 5	❍ 6	❍ They are all very different 7	❍ Unsure 8
Compared to others you know, how knowledgeable are you about the features of different types of ....s in the market? (5)	❍ Not at all knowledgeable 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ Neutra l 4	❍ 5	❍ 6	❍ Very knowledgeable 7	❍ Unsure 8
Compared to your friends, how much experience do you have with different types of ....s? (6)	❍ Very little experience 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ Neutra l 4	❍ 5	❍ 6	❍ A lot of experience 7	❍ Unsure 8

Q3 Have you ever purchased a .... for either yourself or someone else?

❍ Yes (1)
❍ No (2)

Q4 When was your last purchase?

❍ Within last 6 months (1)
❍ 6 months - 1 year (2)
❍ Over 1 year - under 3 years (3)
❍ Over 3 years ago (4)

Appendix 7: Pre-test questionnaire for focal product

My name is Anne-Maree O'Rourke and I am a PhD student at University if Technology Sydney. My supervisor is Associate Professor Francois Carrillat.

The purpose of this online survey is to find out about consumer perceptions of different product categories.

You can change your mind at any time and stop completing the survey without consequences. However please note that full payment is only received from Pure Profile for complete responses in accordance to their policy.

The research data gathered from this survey will be published in a form that does not identify you.

If you have concerns about the research that you think I can help you with, please feel free to contact me on (02) 9514 9818

If you would like to talk to someone who is not connected with the research, you may contact the on 02 9514 9772 or Research.ethics@uts.edu.au and quote this number 2015000547.

S1

Do you currently own or regularly drive any of the following SUVs?

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Kia Sorrento (1)		
BMX X5 (2)		
Mercedes Benz GLC (3)		
Audi Q7 (4)		
Hyundai Santa Fe (5)		

{if answer 'yes' to any of S1}

Thank you for participating in our survey today.

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

S2

Have you purchased an SUV in the last 3 years? (any model)

Yes (1)

No (2)

{if answer 'yes' to S2}

Thank you for participating in our survey today.

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

L1

Do you currently own or actively use any of the following laptops?

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Apple Macbook Pro (1)		
Asus Zenbook (2)		
Toshiba Kira (3)		
Dell Inspiron (4)		
Acer Aspire (5)		

{if answer 'yes' to any of L1}

Thank you for participating in our survey today.

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

L2

Have you purchased a laptop in the last 18 months?

Yes (1)

No (2)

{if answer 'yes' to L2}

Thank you for participating in our survey today.

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

L3

In purchasing a laptop, would the Apple Macbook being a macintosh stop you considering it as a possibility?

I would still consider it (1)

I would not consider it (2)

{if answer 'no' to L3}

Thank you for participating in our survey today.

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

W1

Do you currently own or regularly use any of the following washing machines?

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Simpson 7kg front washer (1)	☐	☐
Fisher & Paykel 7kg front washer (2)	☐	☐
Miele 7kg front washer (3)	☐	☐
Electrolux 7kg front washer (4)	☐	☐
Euromaid 7kg front washer (5)	☐	☐

{if answer 'yes' to any of W1}

Thank you for participating in our survey today.

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey.

Thank you for considering our survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

W2

Have you purchased a washing machine in the last 3 years? (any model)

Yes (1)

No (2)

{if answer 'yes' to W2}

Thank you for participating in our survey today

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey.

Thank you for considering our survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

H1

Have you purchased a new home contents insurance policy in the last 3 years?

Note: renewals with existing providers don't count.

Yes (1)

No (2)

{if answer 'yes' to H1}

Thank you for participating in our survey today.

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey.

Thank you for considering our survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

H2

If you currently have home contents insurance, is it with any of the following providers?

	Yes (1)	No (2)
AAMI (1)		
NRMA (2)		
Youi (3)		
Budget Direct (4)		
Allianz (5)		

I don’t have home contents insurance (99)

{if answer ‘yes’ to any of H2}

Thank you for participating in our survey today.

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

I1

Have you started a new home internet service plan (excludes mobile broadband and internet on your mobile device) in the last 3 years?

Note: renewals with existing providers don’t count.

Yes (1)

No (2)

{if answer ‘yes’ to I2}

Thank You!

Thank you for participating in our survey today.

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

I2

If you currently have home internet (excludes mobile broadband and internet on your mobile device), is it with any of the following providers?

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Telstra (1)		
Optus (2)		
iinet (3)		
Dodo (4)		
TPG (5)		

I don't have home internet (99)

{if answer 'yes' to any of I2}

Thank you for participating in our survey today

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey.

Thank you for considering our survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

D1

Are you...

Male (1)

Female (2)

D2

Where do you currently live?

Sydney (1)

Melbourne (2)

Brisbane (3)

Adelaide (4)

Hobart (5)

Perth (6)

Other (7)

D3

Is your address classed as...

Metro (1)

Regional (2)

D4

What is your postcode?

(1) ________________________________

D5

What is your age?

18-24 years old (1)

25-34 years old (2)

35-44 years old (3)

45-54 years old (4)

55-64 years old (5)

65-74 years old (6)

75 years or older (7)

Do not want to disclose (8)

D6

Employment Status: Are you currently...?

Employed (1)

Out of work and looking for work (2)

Out of work but not currently looking for work (3)

A homemaker (4)

A student (5)

Retired (6)

Other (7)

D7

What category best describes your annual household income?

Less than $24,999 (1)

$25,000 to $49,999 (2)

$50,000 to $99,999 (3)

$100,000 to $199,999 (4)

$200,000 or over (5)
Do not want to disclose (6)

IntroSUV
The next part of the survey will ask you various questions regarding your perceptions of SUV cars as a product category.

SA1
The following questions will ask about your opinions about various car manufacturers in terms of how trustworthy you find them. In other words, the company that produces the car. I am interested in your opinion of that car manufacturer, whether you have had direct experience with the organization or not.

The following questions relate to Hyundai as an organization.

	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree 7
I think I would find it necessary to be very cautious in dealing with Hyundai as a customer (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I believe Hyundai to be extremely trustworthy in their dealings with their customers (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I believe Hyundai as an organisation can be relied upon to keep its promises to me and others who buy Hyundai cars (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Overall, I believe Hyundai is always honest in its product claims (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SA2
The following questions relate to Kia as an organization.

	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree 7
I think I would find it necessary to be very cautious in dealing with Kia as a customer	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I believe Kia to be extremely trustworthy in their dealings with their customers	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I believe Kia as an organisation can be relied upon	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree 7
to keep its promises to me and others who buy Kia cars							
Overall, I believe Kia is always honest in its product claims	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SA3

The following questions relate to BMW as an organization.

	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree 7
I think I would find it necessary to be very cautious in dealing with BMW as a customer (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I believe BMW to be extremely trustworthy in their dealings with their customers (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I believe BMW as an organisation can be replied upon to keep its promises to me and others who buy BMW cars (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Overall, I believe BMW is always honest in its product claims (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SA4

The following questions relate to Mercedes as an organization.

	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree 7
I think I would find it necessary to be very cautious in dealing with Mercedes as a customer (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I believe Mercedes to be extremely trustworthy in their dealings with their customers (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I believe Mercedes as an organisation can be replied upon to keep its promises to me and others who buy Mercedes cars (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Overall, I believe Mercedes is always honest in its product claims (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SA5

The following questions relate to Audi as an organization.

	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree 7
I think I would find it necessary to be very cautious in dealing with Audi as a customer (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I believe Audi to be extremely trustworthy in their dealings with their customers (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I believe Audi as an organisation can be replied upon to keep its promises to me and others who buy Audi cars (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Overall, I believe Audi is always honest in its product claims (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

IntroSUVB

Now I am interested in your opinions about the SUV cars listed below. They are some of the competitors in the mid-size SUV market.

PLEASE NOTE: You do not have to have personal experience with the product. It's simply your impression!

SB1

Pick a number from the scale to show how much you agree or disagree with each statement and write it in the space provided.

The level of prestige this car possesses...

	Extremely low Prestige 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely high Prestige 7
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SB2

If I were to buy this car, I would feel that I was being...

	Extremely unpatriotic 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely patriotic 7
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

	Extremely unpatriotic 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely patriotic 7
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SB3

I find the design of this car to be...

	Extremely unattractive 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely attractive 7
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SB4

The level of status I would get by having this car...

	Low level status 1	2	3	4	5	6	High level status 7
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SB5

The brand/organisation that makes this car considers customers to be...

	Extremely unimportant 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely important 7
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SB6

In terms of safety, I believe this car to be...

	Extremely unsafe 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely safe 7

	Extremely unsafe 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely safe 7
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SB7

Considering the price of the car, I believe it offers...

	The worst value for money 1	2	3	4	5	6	The best value for money 7
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SB8

In buying and servicing the car, I think my encounter with the staff would be...

	Extremely unfriendly 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely friendly 7
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SB9

In owning this car, I think it would prove to be...

	Extremely unreliable 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely reliable 7
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SB10

My sentiment regarding the car’s country of origin (where it is made) is...

	Extremely negative 1	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely positive 7 (7)
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SB11

In terms of this car's place in the SUV market, it is a...

	Pure follower 1	2	3	4	5	6	Pure leader 7
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SB12

I find the design of this car to be...

	Extremely inelegant 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely elegant 7
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SB13

Thinking about the type of customer (age, sex, income etc) the brand/organisation is going after for this car, I find that it is...

	Not at all discriminatory 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely discriminatory 7
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SB14

Thinking about the level of choice in regards to the SUV's attributes, features & benefits, this car...

	Offers no choice 1	2	3	4	5	6	Offers great choice 7
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SB15

Given what you get for the car's price, I find this SUV to be...

	Very unreasonably priced 1	2	3	4	5	6	Very reasonably priced 7
Audi Q7 (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hyundai Santa Fe (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Kia Sorrento (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
BMW X5 (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mercedes Benz GLC (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC1

The following questions ask you about how you feel regarding your assessment of the Hyundai Santa Fe in the previous question (section B).

How confident are you in the assessment you gave about the Hyundai Santa Fe in the previous section (section B)?

	Extremely unconfident 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely confident 7 (7)
(1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC2

Are you certain that your evaluation of the Hyundai Santa Fe in the previous section (section B) is accurate?

	Extremely uncertain 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely certain 7 (7)
(1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC3

How sure do you feel that if you bought a Hyundai Santa Fe, your actual experience with the product would match the evaluation you gave in the previous section (section B)?

	Extremely unsure 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely sure 7 (7)
(1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC4

The following questions ask you about how you feel regarding your assessment of the Audi Q7 in the previous question (section B).

How confident are you in your assessment of the Audi Q7 in the previous section (section B)?

	Extremely unconfident 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely confident 7 (7)
(1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC5

Are you certain that your evaluation of the Audi Q7 in the previous section (section B) is accurate?

	Extremely uncertain 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely certain 7 (7)
(1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC6

How sure do you feel that if you bought an Audi Q7, your actual experience with the product would match the evaluation you gave in the previous section (section B)?

	Extremely unsure 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely sure 7 (7)
(1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC7

The following questions ask you about how you feel regarding your assessment of the BMW X5 in the previous question (section B).

How confident are you in your assessment of the BMW X5 in the previous section (section B)?

	Extremely unconfident 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely confident 7 (7)
(1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC8

Are you certain that your evaluation of the BMW X5 in the previous section (section B) is accurate?

	Extremely uncertain 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely certain 7 (7)
(1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC9

How sure do you feel that if you bought a BMW X5, your actual experience with the product would match the evaluation you gave in the previous section (section B)?

	Extremely unsure 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely sure 7 (7)
(1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC10

The following questions ask you about how you feel regarding your assessment of the Kia Sorrento in the previous question (section B).

How confident are you in your assessment of the Kia Sorrento in the previous section (section B)?

	Extremely unconfident 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely confident 7 (7)
(1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC11

Are you certain that your evaluation of the Kia Sorrento in the previous section (section B) is accurate?

	Extremely uncertain 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely certain 7 (7)
(1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC12

How sure do you feel that if you bought a Kia Sorrento, your actual experience with the product would match the evaluation you gave in the previous section (section B)?

Extremely unsure 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely sure 7
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC13

The following questions ask you about how you feel regarding your assessment of the Mercedes Benz GLC in the previous question (section B).

How confident are you in your assessment of the Mercedes Benz GLC in the previous section (section B)?

Extremely unconfident 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely confident 7
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC14

Are you certain that your evaluation of the Mercedes Benz GLC in the previous section (section B) is accurate?

Extremely uncertain 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely certain 7
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SC15

How sure do you feel that if you bought a Mercedes Benz GLC, your actual experience with the product would match the evaluation you gave in the previous section (section B)?

Extremely unsure 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely sure 7
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

IntroSUVD

The next set of questions asks you about a hypothetical scenario where you learn more about the car model in question. For example, you see an advertisement for it or talk to a friend who owns the vehicle.

SD1

If you heard that the Audi Q7 offered the best value for money from its SUV competitors, how believable would you find this to be?

I would find it very difficult to believe 1	2	3	4	5	6	I would find it very easy to believe 7
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SD2

If you heard that the BMW X5 offered the best value for money from its SUV competitors, how believable would you find this to be?

I would find it very difficult to believe 1	2	3	4	5	6	I would find it very easy to believe 7
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SD3

If you heard that the Mercedes Benz GLC offered the best value for money from its SUV competitors, how believable would you find this to be?-

I would find it very difficult to believe 1	2	3	4	5	6	I would find it very easy to believe 7
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SD4

If you heard that the Hyundai Santa Fe was a premium offering compared to its SUV competitors, how believable would you find this to be?

	I would find it very difficult to believe 1	2	3	4	5	6	I would find it very easy to believe 7
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

SD5

If you heard that the Kia Sorrento was a premium offering compared to its SUV competitors, how believable would you find this to be?

	I would find it very difficult to believe 1	2	3	4	5	6	I would find it very easy to believe 7
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Question SA1 to SD5 are repeated for the following categories: laptops; washing machines; home internet; home contents insurance

Survey Feedback

That is all the questions we have for you today.

Before you finish, we would like to ask for any feedback or suggestions you have on our online survey. Any comments are appreciated and will help us to improve our future surveys.
Please answer in the textbox given below.

STOP

Complete –

Appendix 8: Selected stimuli for experiment 1

Press Release: ***CODE: PR1***

September 2016

Most reliable airline of the year – international economy award

At Jetstar, we differentiate ourselves from our international airline competitors by offering unbeatable reliability. Safety, on-time performance and baggage-arrival guarantees that make us stand out from other international airlines.

We are proud to say that our perfect safety record as well as our focus on reliability in our international economy offering has been independently recognized as we have recently been awarded the *Most reliable airline of the year – international economy* award for 2016.

Unique features include a baggage arrival guarantee – that is, in the odd event that your luggage does not arrive when it should, your airfare will automatically be refunded. Additionally, delays in boarding time of greater than 3 hours* will also result in a full refund of your fare.

We would have not won this award without our impressive safety history - with no major incident on record and backed up by our new fleet and world-class maintenance procedures.

With so many new entrants to the market, we are not aiming to be the most affordable overseas air ticket every time, but we certainly guarantee to be the most reliable without fail. International economy flights are available via jetstar.com.au or through local travel agents nationally.

*excludes circumstances outside the control of Jetstar such as extreme weather

Press Release: ***CODE: PR2***

Jetstar

September 2016

Best value airline of the year – international economy award

At Jetstar, we differentiate ourselves from our international airline competitors by offering unbeatable value, with affordability that continues after your economy ticket is bought. In fact, at Jetstar, we aim to make overseas travel accessible to all Australians.

We are proud to say that Jetstar has independently just been awarded the *Best value airline of the year – international economy* award for 2016.

We believe we received this award because we offer the lowest international ticket price out there. We also offer ‘extras’ bundles that can be pre-purchased at amazing value. These bundles include in-flight meals and entertainment, reward points and even free seat selection. So when the cost of the extras bundle is added to the ticket price, you are still way ahead in terms of affordability compared to other airlines.

For those not pre-purchasing an extras bundle, our in-flight menu of sandwiches, pies, sausage rolls are priced equivalent to supermarket prices.

We are not ashamed to say that we have taken all the bells and whistles out of our service and reduced cost where possible in order to offer the best value in the market. International economy flights are available via jetstar.com.au or cheapflights.com.au

Press Release: ***CODE: PR3***

September 2016

Jetstar international economy –we'll take you to your destination

Your common overseas routes from Australia such as New Zealand, Japan, Indonesia and Thailand are all served by our Jetstar international offering. We also serve one destination in the US – Honolulu.

Our international fleet includes the Airbus A320, which takes 180 passengers, and the Boeing 787 Dreamliner for our long-haul destinations that boasts 314 seats in economy.

As you would expect, there are several ways you can book your seat with Jetstar. The most popular method is via jetststar.com or by calling us on 1800 JET STAR.

You won't be disappointed Jetstar's international economy offering. International economy flights are available today.

Newspaper advertisement *CODE: NP3*

Jet without the lag

At Jetstar International Economy, we take punctuality and baggage arrival as seriously as getting you there safely!

Jetstar

Visit your trusted travel agent today

Melbourne to Honolulu starting at $1,100 return

Newspaper advertisement: *CODE: NP5*

Don’t just go to the airport to wait for a loved one.

With airfares from Melbourne to Honolulu starting at an unbeatable $650 return in economy, YOU CAN afford to be on that Jetstar plane

Jetstar

Visit cheapflights.com.au to grab yourself a bargain today

<u>Newspaper advertisement</u>: ***CODE: NP6***

Let Jetstar fly you to your next overseas destination

Jetstar

Economy class tickets are sold through travel agents nationally

<u>Magazine advertisement</u>: ***CODE: MAG4***

The icon of reliability. The epitome of safety.

Jetstar international economy class – we get you and your luggage there on time, every time!

Jetstar

Visit your trusted travel agent today

Sydney to Auckland starting at $550 return

Magazine advertisement: ***CODE: MAG5***

Jetstar International…

…Fly with us today!

Jetstar

Visit your local travel agent today to book your ticket in our economy class cabin

<u>Magazine advertisement</u>: ***CODE: MAG 6***

Jetstar International economy…

…Bet you are gobsmacked at just how reasonably priced it is to go overseas!

Jetstar

Visit cheapflights.com.au to grab yourself a bargain
Sydney to Auckland starting at $250 return.

Online Forum: ***CODE: FOR1***

tripadvisor® AUSTRALIA

'Tripadvisor' is an online community where people can hold conversations about various topics. Members are everyday people. The following thread relates to international economy airlines

Jane_1980 *Hi Everyone, I am booking a holiday to Fiji for my family (first overseas holiday ever!) and wondering if anyone has flown with Jetstar? What are the main advantages of Jetstar over other airlines? HELP!*

JohnnyBoy I've flown to Fiji with Jetstar and I would say its advantage is VALUE! The ticket price is pleasantly affordable for overseas travel (same as domestic travel with Qantas in some cases) and who needs 'fancy' for air travel. It's all about the destination. You'll have more money for cocktails in Fiji by choosing Jetstar. Super! ☺

MrSmith_8 I agree with JohnnyBoy – go with Jetstar for value. I have flown Fiji airways and while it costs 50% more, you don't get 50% more in value. With Jetstar you simply book a food and entertainment package up front – the bundles are great value. You even earn frequent flyer points. So after you include the bundle package cost, you are still way ahead price-wise

TravelGuru My sister-in-law travels overseas regularly and she swears by Jetstar. She's the type of person that has to get the best deal with everything she buys!

J.Johnson @Jane_1980 – from my experience, Jetstar always comes out much more affordable, no matter which country you're flying to. And there's always a deal or special with Jetstar, you should keep your eye out. It's already the best value, so with a special, it's crazy!

BigMouth55 Agreed…the real advantage of going Jetstar is value! At such a low price though, I do get worried if they are skimming on maintenance. So if you need reliability go with Virgin Australia or even Fiji Airways, for value choose Jetstar!

<u>Online Forum</u>: ***CODE: FOR2***

'Tripadvisor' is an online community where people can hold conversations about various topics. Members are everyday people. The following thread relates to international economy airlines

Jane_1980 *Hi Everyone, I am booking a holiday to Fiji for my family (first overseas holiday ever!) and wondering if anyone has flown with Jetstar? What are the main advantages of Jetstar over other airlines? HELP!*

JohnnyBoy I've flown to Fiji with Jetstar and I would say its advantage is its RELIABILITY! It's timely (unlike more expensive Qantas) and its pretty safe too – no crashes on record. Never a break down with it's equipment on board or running out of something on the menu. Super! ☺

MrSmith_8 I agree with JohnnyBoy – go with Jetstar for dependability. I have flown Fiji Airways and while it costs 50% more, it's always late and they have lost my luggage not once, but twice! Who wants that when you travel abroad! I have also flown with Jetstar and they were on time, every time, and my luggage arrived when I did!

TravelGuru My sister-in-law travels overseas regularly and swears by Jetstar. It's usually me picking her up from the airport, and the flight is always on time!! In Fiji, you're usually transferring to the other side of the island or even another island. So if you need reliability go with Jetstar, for value choose Virgin Australia or even Fiji Airways!

J.Johnson @Jane_1980 – I think they've introduced some baggage arrival and on-time guarantee for international! They seem to be really backing themselves as being the most reliable!

BigMouth55 Agreed…the real advantage of going Jetstar is its safety record and reliability! It's value doesn't really stack up when you consider the fact you don't receive any food, entertainment, seat selection or reward points. Once you add all the additional costs in, the value for money isn't really there anymore. Though its reliability is clear as day!

Online Forum: ***CODE: FOR3***

'Tripadvisor' is an online community where people can hold conversations about various topics. Members are everyday people. The following thread relates to international economy airlines

Jane_1980 *Hi Everyone, I am booking a holiday to Fiji for my family (first overseas holiday ever!) and wondering if anyone has flown with Jetstar? What are the main advantages of Jetstar over other airlines? HELP!*

JohnnyBoy I've flown to Fiji with Jetstar and I would say its advantage is that it is a good all-rounder. What I paid for the flight was about, MID-RANGE when you add in the cost for food and entertainment (maybe you can make do without for domestic, but not international). The flight experience itself was OK ☺

MrSmith_8 *I agree with* JohnnyBoy – there's not too much which makes travelling overseas with Jetstar special. I have flown Fiji Airways, amongst others
and they are all pretty much the SAME in economy. Maybe not with business class. But in economy the service, reliability, leg space, look of the cabin….even the price of the tickets aren't too different once you add in all the 'extras' you end up paying for with Jetstar

TravelGuru My sister-in-law is a Fiji frequent flyer! She's flown Virgin Australia, Fiji Airways and Jetstar. The advantage? From what she tells me, it gets you to your destination. From A to B !! Not sure there is a real advantage!!

J.Johnson @Jane_1980 - I'd give it a 5 out of 10 in most areas. Think that the traditional higher end airlines have had to reduce their costs due to fuel price pressure (like Qantas) and the lower airlines have had to lift their game to compete so there isn't a real difference anymore

BigMouth55 Agreed…from what I know, it's really hard to find a major advantage. But you know, I don't think it's a bad airline either. I mean as long as it gets you to where you are going, does it have to be the best at something?

Expert Review: ***CODE: ER1***

AUSTRALIAN
TRAVELLER

Please find our independent review of Jetstar's international economy class, conducted by James McKinnon, editor-in-chief at Australian Traveller magazine

Jetstar's international economy class offering performed average on all dimensions rated and while it's certainly not the worst airline, it's not the best either. There wasn't an area where Jetstar stood out in comparison to its rival airlines. Air New Zealand is the best in class for *reliability* with Virgin Australia leading the charge in terms of *value for money*

Australia Traveller's summary of Jetstar:

Value for money

Reliability

Service

Top of the range

Attractiveness

Country of origin

The brand name

Expert Review: ***CODE: ER2***

Please find our independent review of Jetstar's international economy class, conducted by James McKinnon, editor-in-chief at Australian Traveller magazine

Jetstar has surprised us with its international economy offering in terms of pushing the envelope in affordability. When it comes to **value for the money**: ticket price, cost of in-flight food, entertainment, shopping and even extra luggage cost, Jetstar has come out in front in terms of how reasonably priced it is, beating rivals Air Asia and Air New Zealand. If its value over reliability and service you are after, then Jetstar is your overseas carrier.

Australia Traveller's summary of Jetstar:

Value for money

Reliability

Service

Top of the range

Attractiveness

Country of origin

The brand name

Expert Review*:* ***CODE: ER3***

Please find our independent review of Jetstar's international economy class, conducted by James McKinnon, editor-in-chief at Australian Traveller magazine

Jetstar has surpasses all alternatives tested by a mile in terms of being the most **reliable** economy offering for its international flights and comes ahead of all competitors including Virgin Australia and Air Asia. An impressive safety record, fleet age, timeliness and baggage arrival is what you can expect. The cost of a Jetstar international economy flight has come in at more expensive than the competitors reviewed, but we do mostly find that reliability comes at a price.

Australia Traveller's summary of Jetstar:

Reliability

Value for money

Service

Top of the range

Attractiveness

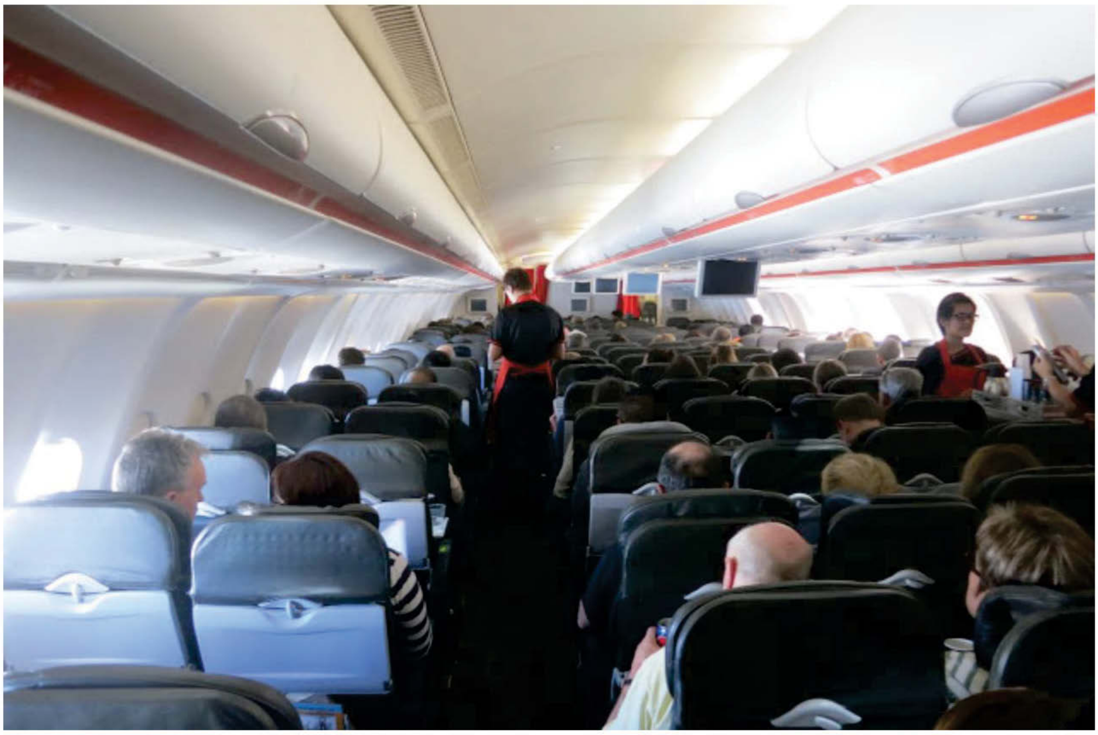
Country of origin

The brand name

<u>Customer Product Experience:</u> ***CODE: FEX1***

Felicity Xuereb has recently travelled on Jetstar economy class to Bangkok and she has shared the experience on her well-read personal blog.

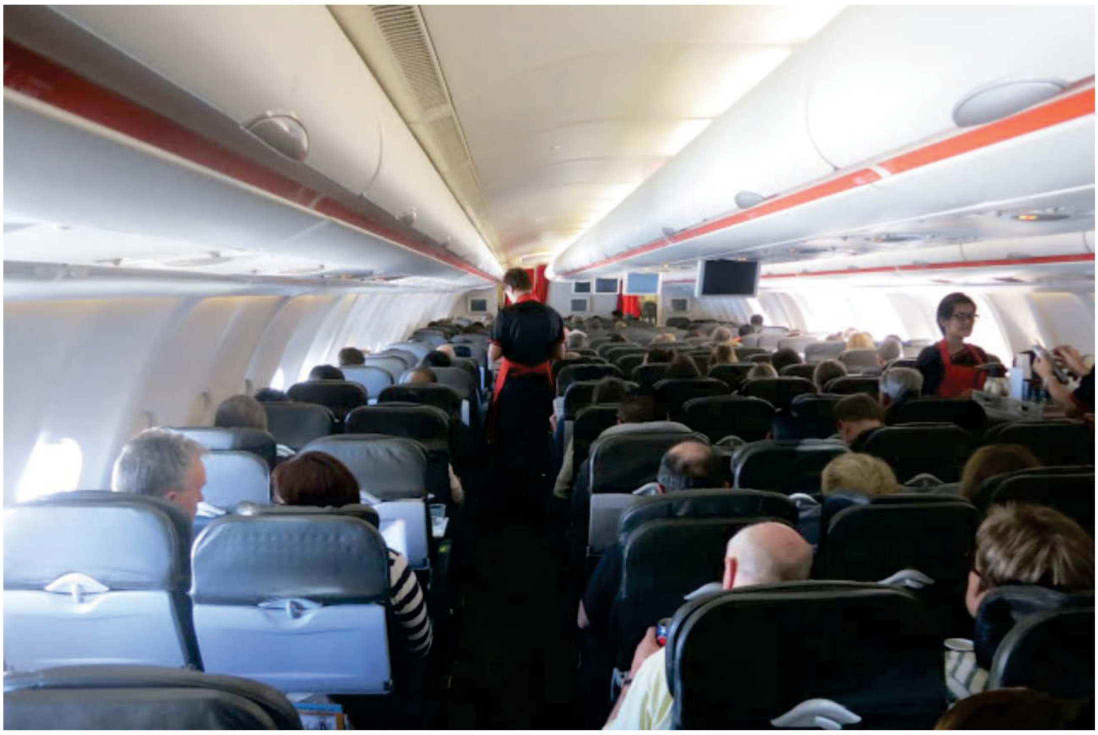
It was time for me to book a much-deserved overseas holiday and I have chosen Thailand as the destination! First step was to book the flights of course. I'm not one for budget airlines where they skimp on every possible corner. I don't mind paying a bit more for an airline you can count on – who wants to get overseas only to find that your luggage hasn't arrived! I spoke to Cameron from Harvey World Travel who straight up said Have you considered Jetstar? They have an unbeatable safety, on-time and baggage arrival record. I have flown Jetstar for domestic but not international before. He gave me the pricing from Sydney to Bangkok for Jetstar, Thai Airways and AirAsia…and Jetstar's pricing was higher than these competitors. Though you always pay a bit more for reliability, don't you? Here is a picture I took of the cabin…and did the flight depart on time? On the dot in fact!



Customer Product Experience: ***CODE: FEX2***

Felicity Xuereb has recently travelled on Jetstar economy class to Bangkok and she has shared the experience on her well-read personal blog.

It was time for me to book a much-deserved overseas holiday and I have chosen Thailand as the destination! First step was to book the flights of course. I'm not one for premium airlines where you pay for things you don't even use. I was after the cheapest airline that could take me to my destination, no personal TV screen or food desired! I spoke to Cameron on cheapflights.com.au's LiveChat who straight up said Have you considered Jetstar? If it's value for money you want, it's no contest. He gave me the pricing from Sydney to Bangkok for Jetstar, Thai Airways and AirAsia…and Jetstar's pricing was clearly lower than these competitors. He explained that baggage fees, in-flight entertainment and the on board menu (should you want it) were extremely well priced, so the value will still be coming. Here is a picture I took of the cabin…and what did I do with the money I saved? Shopped at the Bangkok city markets of course!



Customer Product Experience: ***CODE: FEX3***

Felicity Xuereb has recently travelled on Jetstar economy class to Bangkok and she has shared the experience on her well-read personal blog.

It was time for me to book a much-deserved overseas holiday and I have chosen Thailand as the destination! First step was to book the flights of course. I was simply after an airline to take me to my destination! I spoke to Cameron from Flight Centre who straight up said The different airlines are much of a muchness really, there's no major difference between them these days in Economy. He gave me the pricing from Sydney to Bangkok for Jetstar, Thai Airways and AirAsia…and they were all pretty much on par. I asked about cabin attractiveness, food and entertainment but given it's an international offering, the difference seems to be minimal from my research. In the end I went for Jetstar as the departure time suited me best. Here is a picture I took of the cabin…Bangkok - here I come!

Appendix 9: Main study data collection instrument for experiment 1

My name is Anne-Maree O'Rourke and I am a PhD student at University of Technology Sydney. My supervisor is Associate Professor Francois Carrillat.

The purpose of this online survey is to understand your opinions and purchase behavior for different airline brands in the economy class international air travel market

It should take approximately 25 minutes.

You can stop completing the survey at any time without consequences. However please note that full payment is only received from Pure Profile for complete responses in accordance with their policy.

The data gathered from this survey will be published in a form that does not identify you.
If you have concerns about the research that you think I can help you with, please feel free to contact me on (02) 9514 9818

If you would like to talk to someone who is not connected with the research, you may contact the Research Ethics Officer on 02 9514 9772 or Research.ethics@uts.edu.au and quote this number: 2015000547.

Q1a

When did you last travel overseas in economy class of a commercial airline (if ever)?

Never (1)

Within last year (2)

1-3 years ago (3)

Over 3 years ago (4)

{if answer 2 or 3, the respondent is screened out}

Thank you for participating in our survey today.

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey.

Thank you for considering our survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

Q1b

In the last 3 years, have you travelled with the following airlines in their international economy cabin?

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Virgin Australia (1)	❍	❍
Emirates (2)	❍	❍
Qantas (3)	❍	❍
Jetstar (4)	❍	❍
Air Asia (5)	❍	❍

{if answer 'yes; to any of the above, the respondent is screened out and received same thank you message as Q1a}

C1

The following questions relate to how important the purchase of an international economy class airline ticket would be to you

How important would it be for you to make the right choice of airline when flying overseas in economy class?

Not at all important 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very important 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

C3

In making your selection of international economy class airline, how concerned would you be about making the right choice?

Not at all concerned 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very concerned 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

{if total for C1 and C3 is less than 3, the respondent is screened out and received same thank you message as Q1a }

Q1d

Are you aware of the Jetstar brand? (ie. You have heard of it)

Yes (1)

No (2)

{If no, respondent is directed to DD1)

Q1e

Do you feel that you know what the Jetstar brand stands for in the international economy class airline category?

I have no idea what the Jetstar brand stands for 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	I have an extremely clear idea of what the Jetstar brand stands for 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q1f

Overall do you like the Jetstar brand?

I really don't like this brand 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	I really like this brand 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q1g

How familiar are you with the Jetstar brand?

Extremely unfamiliar 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely familiar 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q1h

Now, thinking about the Jetstar brand within the international economy class airline category, to what extent do you agree with the following statements

	Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
I think Jetstar is a good international economy class airline brand (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My opinion of Jetstar is very favourable as an international economy class airline brand (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Jetstar has a lot to offer in the international economy class airline market (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q1i

Have you ever travelled with Jetstar?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Q1ia

Which one(s)

In International business class (1)

In International economy class (2)

In domestic business class (3)

In domestic economy class (4)

Q1j

How much personal experience do you have with the Jetstar brand?

No experience at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	A lot of personal experience 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

DD1

Are you...

Male (1)

Female (2)

DD2

Where do you currently live?

Sydney (1)

Melbourne (2)

Brisbane (3)

Adelaide (4)

Hobart (5)

Perth (6)

Other (7)

DD3

Is your address classed as...

Metro (1)

Regional (2)

DD4

What is your postcode?

(1) ____________________

DD5

What is your age?

18-24 years old (1)

25-34 years old (2)

35-44 years old (3)

45-54 years old (4)

55-64 years old (5)

65-74 years old (6)

75 years or older (7)

Do not want to disclose (8)

DD6

Employment Status: Are you currently...?

Employed (1)

Out of work and looking for work (2)

Out of work but not currently looking for work (3)

A homemaker (4)

A student (5)

Retired (6)

Other (7)

DD7

What category best describes your annual household income?

Less than $24,999 (1)

$25,000 to $49,999 (2)

$50,000 to $99,999 (3)

$100,000 to $199,999 (4)

$200,000 or over (5)

Do not want to disclose (6)

A5Info

We would like to understand how knowledgeable you feel regarding different airlines in terms of their international economy class offering. This includes the different features and pricing of various airline brands

Please consider the following questions below

A6

Compared to other consumers, how much experience do you have with different airlines in international economy class ?

Very little experience 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	A lot of experience 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

A7

Compared to other consumers, how knowledgeable do you think you are about the various airlines in regards to their international economy class offering?

Not at all knowledgeable 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very knowledgeable 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

A8Info

We are now keen to understand your opinion on how similar or dissimilar you believe the different airline brands in the current market are from each other

Please consider the following statements

A9

In my opinion, an airline is just an airline and most brands are basically the same in international economy class

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

A11

The only difference between the major airline brands in international economy class is the price

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

A12

All major brands of airlines are basically alike in international economy class, there is little to tell them apart

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B1Info

For the next section, we will focus on one airline in the international economy class airline market – Jetstar

Could you please indicate how close you believe that each statement fits Jetstar compared to its competitors in international economy class . PLEASE NOTE: you do not have to have personal experience with the airline. It's simply your perception which may come from advertising, word of mouth or anywhere else in fact!

Again, all of your answers should be comparing Jetstar to its competitors. The main competitors in the international economy class airline market (servicing Australia) are:

B1

Please consider the following statements about Jetstar – in the international economy class market:

Compared to other competing international economy class airlines, the level of prestige that flying with Jetstar possesses is...

Extremely low prestige 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely high prestige 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B2

Compared to other competing international economy class airlines, buying a Jetstar flight would make me feel that I was being....

Extremely unpatriotic 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely patriotic 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B3

Compared to competitors' international economy class offering, I would expect the price of a Jetstar flight to be...

Very unreasonably priced 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very reasonably priced 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B4

Compared to its competitors, I believe the design of the Jetstar fleet and cabin for its international offering to be…

Extremely unattractive 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely attractive 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B5

You tell a friend that you just bought an international flight with Jetstar. The level of social status you would feel after buying a Jetstar flight rather than other airline brands is...

Low social status 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	High social status 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B6

Compared to its competitors, I think Jetstar considers its international economy class passengers to be...

Extremely unimportant 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely important 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B7

Compared to its international economy class competitors, I believe the safety of the Jetstar to be...

Extremely unsafe 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely safe 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B8

Compared with its international economy class competitors, I believe the price of a Jetstar flight would represent...

Very poor value for money 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very good value for money 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B9

Compared to other airlines, I think my encounter with the staff of Jetstar as an international economy class passenger would be...

Extremely unfriendly 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely friendly 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B10

Relative to other airlines in the international economy class category, I think Jetstar would prove to be...

*Reliability refers to its on –time performance, baggage arrival, availability of food items

Very unreliable* 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very reliable* 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B11

Compared to other international economy class airlines, my sentiment regarding Jetstar's country of origin (where it is from) is...

Extremely Negative 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely positive 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B12

Thinking about the type of customer (e.g. age, sex, income etc.) Jetstar is going after in their international economy class, I would describe Jetstar as being...

Highly non-selective in their choice of customers 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Highly selective in their choice of customers 7 (7)

Highly non-selective in their choice of customers 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Highly selective in their choice of customers 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B13

In terms of Jetstar's place in the international economy class market, it is a...

*leader refers to being first in the market to launch innovations eg. new routes, first to adopt new fleet models

Pure follower 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Pure leader* 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B14

Compared to other international airlines, I find the design of the Jetstar economy cabin and aircraft to be...

The least elegant 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	The most elegant 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B15

Compared to other airlines, I believe the guarantees offered by Jetstar as an international economy class passenger would be…

*Guarantees refers to promises regarding on –time performance, baggage arrival etc

Inferior Guarantees* 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Superior Guarantees* 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B16

Compared to other airlines out there, I think I would find the design of the Jetstar cabin and aircarft in international economy class to be

Extremely uncool 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely cool 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B17

Compared to its international economy class airlines competitors, I believe the Jetstar brand name is one that...

No-one Knows 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Everyone Knows 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B18

Compared to other international economy class airlines, I regard Jetstar as....

Not very Posh 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very Posh 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B19

Compared to other international economy class alternatives, I would imagine being a Jetstar passenger would result in....

Very unimpressive service 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very impressive service 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B20

Compared to other international economy class airlines, I believe that buying a Jetstar flight would be...

Extremely unaffordable 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely affordable 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B21

Compared to customers of other airline brands, I would imagine Jetstar international economy class passengers as being comprised of...

People with low principles 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	People with high principles 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B22

Compared to other brands, I would expect the number of routes available for Jetstar's international economy class offering to be…

Much narrower 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Much wider 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B23

Compared to competing airlines, I would expect the aesthetics (design) of the Jetstar international economy class cabin to be...

Extremely poor 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely good 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B24

Compared to its competitors I would expect the personal attention I would receive as a Jetstar international economy class passenger to be…

Extremely low 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely high 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B25

Compared to other airlines within international economy class , I consider Jetstar to be...

*dependability refers to whether you can count on nothing going wrong with the experience, for example, loss of luggage, meal availability .scale{width: 90px;}

Not very dependable* at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very dependable* 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B26

Compared to other international economy class tickets I could buy, I would expect Jetstar as a total offering to be...

Bottom of the range 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Top of the range 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B27

Thinking about what Jetstar do to attract international economy class customers (e.g. advertising, travel agent strategy) compared to other airlines, I find it...

*discriminatory refers to attracting a distinct customer group only. An example of this would be if a brand was only trying to attract senior citizens .scale

Not at all discriminatory 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely discriminatory 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B28

Thinking about the level of choice in regards to the airline's attributes, features & benefits compared to other airlines (e.g. routes, times of departure etc.), I would expect Jetstar to...

Offer no choice 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Offer great choice 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B29

Finish this sentence: Compared to Qantas, Emirates, Virgin Australia, Air New Zealand and other airline brands out there, Jetstar can be described as...

Lower class (lower end) 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Upper class (higher end) 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B30

Compared to its competitors what amount of extra features (eg. loyalty points, seat selection) would you expect to be offered with a Jetstar international economy class ticket

Very few extra features 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	A large number of extra features 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoC

The upcoming questions will ask you to consider your evaluation of the product descriptions relating to Jetstar airlines that you filled out in the previous section (section B). The questions relate to how confident you were in giving your responses in the above section (section B).

Please consider the following questions, presented on the following screens

C1

How confident are you in the answers you gave about Jetstar in section B?

Extremely unconfident 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely confident 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

C2

How certain that your answers about Jetstar in section B are accurate?

Extremely uncertain 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely certain 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

C3

How sure do you feel that if you bought a Jetstar international economy flight, your actual experience with the product would match your evaluation today?

Extremely unsure 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely sure 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoD

The following questions ask your opinion regarding how trustworthy Jetstar is as an organisation. We are interested in your opinion of Jetstar, whether you have had direct experience with the organization or not.

D2

I believe Jetstar to be extremely trustworthy in their dealings with their customers

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

D4

Overall, I believe Jetstar is always honest in its product claims

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoE

You will now be presented with different sources of information regarding Jetstar's international economy class offering. You will see a press release, newspaper advertisement, magazine advertisement, online forum, expert review (from Australian Traveller) and a customer's experience via a blog.

As a reminder to you, the main competitor airlines in international economy class are:

Please very carefully go through the information presented as it will relate to most of the remaining questions

IMPORTANT: As you read the product information imagine that you are looking to purchase an overseas airline ticket in economy class that offers the best value for money

In other words, your purchase goal is an overseas airline ticket that you believe would be described as: affordable, reasonably priced and offers superior value for money compared to all other airlines

Note that the format of the advertisements/content has been modified to enhance readability for computer screens.

{stimuli}

F1

Given the new product information seen, indicate how closely you believe that each descriptor fits Jetstar in comparison to its competitors

Compared to other competing international economy class airlines, the level of prestige that flying with Jetstar possesses is...

Extremely low prestige 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely high prestige 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F2

Compared to other competing international economy class airlines, buying a Jetstar flight would make me feel that I was being....

Extremely unpatriotic 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely patriotic 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F3

Compared to competitors' international economy class offering, I would expect the price of a Jetstar flight to be...

Very unreasonably priced 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very reasonably priced 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F4

Compared to its competitors, I believe the design of the Jetstar fleet and cabin for its international offering to be…

Extremely unattractive 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely attractive 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F5

You tell a friend that you just bought an international flight with Jetstar. The level of social status you would feel after buying a Jetstar flight rather than other airline brands is...

Low social status 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	High social status 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F6

Compared to its competitors, I think a Jetstar considers its international economy class passengers to be...

Extremely unimportant 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely important 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F7

Compared to its international economy class competitors, I believe the safety of the Jetstar to be...

Extremely unsafe 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely safe 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F8

Compared with its international economy class competitors, I believe the price of a Jetstar flight would represent...

Very poor value for money 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very good value for money 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F9

Compared to other airlines, I think my encounter with the staff of Jetstar as an international economy class passenger would be...

Extremely unfriendly 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely friendly 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F10

Relative to other airlines in the international economy class category, I think a Jetstar would prove to be...

*Reliability refers to its on –time performance, baggage arrival, availability of food items .scale

Very unreliable* 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very reliable* 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F11

Compared to other international economy class airlines, my sentiment regarding Jetstar's country of origin (where it is from) is...

Extremely Negative 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely positive 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F12

Thinking about the type of customer (e.g. age, sex, income etc.) Jetstar is going after in their international economy class, I would describe Jetstar as being...

Highly non-selective in their choice of customers 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Highly selective in their choice of customers 7 (7)

Highly non-selective in their choice of customers 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Highly selective in their choice of customers 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F13

In terms of Jetstar's place in the international economy class market, it is a...

*leader refers to being first in the market to launch innovations eg. new routes, first to adopt new fleet models

Pure follower 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Pure leader* 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F14 - F14

Compared to other international airlines, I find the design of the Jetstar economy cabin and aircraft to be...

The least elegant 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	The most elegant 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F15

Compared to other airlines, I believe the guarantees* offered by Jetstar as an international economy class passenger would be…

*(Guarantees refers to promises regarding on –time performance, baggage arrival etc

Inferior Guarantees* 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Superior Guarantees* 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F16

Compared to other airlines out there, I think I would find the design of the Jetstar cabin and aircarft in international economy class to be

Extremely uncool 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely cool 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F17

Compared to its international economy class airlines competitors, I believe the Jetstar brand name is one that...

No-one Knows 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Everyone Knows 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F18

Compared to other international economy class airlines, I regard Jetstar as....

Not very Posh 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very Posh 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F19

Compared to other international economy class alternatives, I would imagine being a Jetstar passenger would result in....

Very unimpressive service 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very impressive service 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F20

Compared to other international economy class airlines, I believe that buying a Jetstar flight would be...

Extremely unaffordable 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely affordable 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F21

Compared to customers of other airline brands, I would imagine Jetstar international economy class passengers as being comprised of...

People with low Principles 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	People with high Principles 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F22

Compared to other brands, I would expect the number of routes available for Jetstar's international economy class offering to be…

Much narrower 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Much wider 7 (7)

Much narrower 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Much wider 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F23

Compared to competing airlines, I would expect the aesthetics (design) of the Jetstar international economy class cabin to be...

Extremely poor 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely good 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F24

Compared to its competitors I would expect the personal attention I would receive as a Jetstar international economy class passenger to be…

Extremely low 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely high 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F25

Compared to other airlines within international economy class, I consider Jetstar to be...

*dependability refers to whether you can count on nothing going wrong with the experience, for example, loss of luggage, meal availability .scale{width: 90px;}

Not very dependable* at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very dependable* 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F26

Compared to other international economy class tickets I could buy, I would expect Jetstar as a total offering to be...

Bottom of the range 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Top of the range 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F27

Thinking about what Jetstar do to attract international economy class customers (e.g. advertising, travel agent strategy) compared to other airlines, I find it...

(*discriminatory refers to attracting a distinct customer group only. An example of this would be if a brand was only trying to attract senior citizens)

Not at all discriminatory 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely discriminatory 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F28

Thinking about the level of choice in regards to the airline's attributes, features & benefits compared to other airlines (e.g. routes, times of departure etc.), I would expect Jetstar to...

Offer no choice 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Offer great choice 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F29

Finish this sentence: Compared to Qantas, Emirates, Virgin Australia, Air New Zealand and other airline brands out there, Jetstar can be described as...

Lower class (lower end) 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Upper class (higher end) 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F30

Compared to its competitors what amount of extra features (eg. loyalty points, seat selection) would you expect to be offered with a Jetstar international economy class ticket

Very few extra features 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	A large number of extra features 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoG1

The questions on the next few screens will ask you to consider your evaluation of the product descriptions relating to Jetstar that you filled out in the previous section (section F). The questions relate to how confident you were in your answers to the questions in the above section (section F).

You may notice that these questions were asked earlier, however we would like to get your updated thoughts and feelings after being exposed to the product information.

Please consider the upcoming questions on the next screens

G1

How confident are you in the answers you gave about Jetstar in section F?

Extremely unconfident 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely confident 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

G2

How certain that your answers about Jetstar in section F are accurate?

Extremely uncertain 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely certain 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

G3

How sure do you feel that if you bought a Jetstar international economy flight, your actual experience with the product would match your evaluation today?

Extremely unsure 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely sure 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

G4

To what degree did the product information presented to you change your initial thoughts about Jetstar in the international economy class category. That is, the start of the survey compared to now...

My view did not change at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	My view changed entirely 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoH1

Should the need arise for you to buy an overseas economy class airline ticket and you were motivated by gaining the best value for money, please answer the following questions based on your current perceptions of Jetstar (versus competing international economy class airlines).

Remember, your purchase goal is to make an airline choice that you would described as: affordable, reasonably priced and offers superior value for money

Please consider the following questions on the next screen

H1

If I was looking to purchase a value for money overseas air ticket (economy class), it is very probable that I would fly with Jetstar

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H2

It is very likely that I would purchase a Jetstar overseas air ticket (economy class) if my purchase goal was value for money

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H3

In looking for an overseas air ticket (economy class) that offered the most superior value for money, it is very possible that I would go with Jetstar

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H4

If a friend had a need for a value for money airline to travel overseas with in economy, it is likely that I would recommend Jetstar to my friend

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoH5

Given that you have now read several product information sources/media relating to Jetstar's international economy class offering, please consider the following statements regarding your attitude towards Jetstar as a brand

	Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
I think Jetstar is a good international economy class airline brand (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My opinion of Jetstar is very favourable as an international economy class airline brand (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Jetstar has a lot to offer in the international economy class airline market (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Specifically considering your purchase goal is to buy a value for money overseas economy class airline ticket, please consider the following statements

H8

Jetstar is meaningful to me

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H9

Jetstar is appropriate for me

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H10

Jetstar is useful to me

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H11

Jetstar is valuable to me

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoH12

We are now interested in how different you perceive Jetstar to be in comparison to other airline brands overall in its international economy class offering. This should be based on your current perceptions of Jetstar and what you know about other competing airlines.

H12

From what you know about other international economy class airline brands, how distinctive is Jetstar?

Not very distinctive at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very distinctive 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H13

From what you know about other international economy class airline brands, how different is Jetstar?

Not very different at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very different 7 (7)

Not very different at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very different 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H14

How easily can Jetstar be distinguished from its competitors?

Not easily distinguished at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very easily distinguished 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoI1

This section asks you about how credible you found the product information sources and the information they contained.

I1

Not thinking just about today's exercise but more in general, please rate the following product information/media as a source of information on the following criteria:

To what extent do you find the following product information/media sources to be credible?

	Not very credible 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely credible 7 (7)
Press release (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Magazine advertisement (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Newspaper advertisement (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Expert review/Aust. Traveller magazine (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Online forum (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Customer's experience/blog (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I3

To what extent do you believe the following product information/media sources to be believable?

	Not believable at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely believable 7 (7)
Press release (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Magazine advertisement (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Newspaper advertisement (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

	Not believable at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely believable 7 (7)
Expert review/Aust. Traveller magazine (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Online forum (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Customer's experience/blog (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoI4

Given what you knew about Jetstar coming into today, we are now interested in how credible or believable you find the possible alternate points of difference for Jetstar's international economy class offering, against its competitors

I4

Jetstar offers superior reliability its international economy class passengers compared to its competitors

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Not at all believable (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Highly believable
I find this very hard to accept (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	I find this very easy to accept

I5

Jetstar offer superior value for money for its economy international offering compared to its competitors

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Not at all believable (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Highly believable
I find this very hard to accept (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	I find this very easy to accept

I6

Jetstar does not offer any real main difference for its international economy class passengers compared to other airlines

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Not at all believable (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Highly believable
I find this very hard to accept (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	I find this very easy to accept

I7

How familiar were you with the Jetstar product communication you saw today?

It was extremely unfamiliar - I've never seen them before today 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	It was extremely familiar - I've seen them before today 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoI8

The aim of the next questions is to understand your thoughts and feelings of the various Jetstar product information pieces, especially in terms of how clearly and consistently the messages communicated the main point of difference of Jetstar's international economy class offering

I11

Was the main point of difference for Jetstar easy to understand in the various product information/media sources you saw?

Not very easy at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very easy 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I12

Was the main point of difference for Jetstar clearly communicated in the various product information/media sources you saw?

Not very clear at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very clear 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I12a

Did the various product information/media sources you saw convey a clear image for Jetstar?

Not very clear at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very clear 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I8

How consistently did the different product information/media sources depict Jetstar?

Extremely inconsistent 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely consistent 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I9

Did the different product information/media sources represent Jetstar in a similar manner?

Not similar at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very similar 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I9a

Did the various product information/media sources match each other in what they suggested about Jetstar?

Did not match at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Matched perfectly 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I14

Overall, to what degree do you feel that the product information given to you (number of sources and depth of information) was adequate for you to determine what the main difference of Jetstar compared to its competitors?

Extremely inadequate 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely adequate 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I15

Overall, how knowledgeable do you feel you are regarding the main difference offered by the competing airlines of Jetstar in their international economy class offering?

Not very knowledgeable 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very knowledgeable 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I16

How much mental effort was required for you to take in all the product information you saw?

Low level of effort 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	High level of effort 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I17

Thinking about all the product information sources/media you saw, how would you describe your feeling and attitude towards the product information as a whole?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Unpleasant (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Pleasant
Negative (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Positive
Bad (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Good

InfoJ1

In this section we would like to learn a little more about you

Firstly, considering your nature or your personality in everyday life, to what extent do you agree with the following statements

J1

I think I have more self-confidence than most people

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J2

I think I have a lot of personal ability

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J3

I am more independent than most people

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J4

Security is an important concern in my life

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J5

Life is so uncertain that one must continuously be on the alert so as not to be caught at a disadvantage

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J6

It is important to consider opposing views when making personal and social decisions

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J7

I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J9

I only think as hard as I have to

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J11

The notion of thinking abstractly is not appealing to me

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J16

I dislike it when a person's statements could mean different things

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J17

I feel uncomfortable when someone's meaning or intentions are unclear to me

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J18

I feel uncomfortable when I don't understand the reason why an event occurred in my life

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J19

When I am confused about an important issue, I feel very upset

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J20

Even after I have made up my mind about something, I am always eager to consider a different opinion

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J21

When considering most conflict situations, I usually see how both sides could be right

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J22

When thinking about a problem, I consider as many different opinions on the issue as possible

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J23

I always see many possible solutions to problems I face

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoJ24

The upcoming questions will ask you about your own air travel experience

J24

What was the last airline you flew with?

Air New Zealand (1)

Qantas (2)

Emirates (3)

Virgin Australia (4)

Jetstar (5)

Cathay Pacific (6)

United (7)

British Airways (8)

Air Asia (9)

Thai Airways (10)

Other - please specify (11)____________

J25

What cabin class did you fly in last?

Economy (1)

Business (2)

First (3)

J25a

How often did you fly internationally in economy class last year?

None (1)

Once (2)

Twice (3)

3 – 5 times (4)

6 – 10 times (5)

11+ times (6)

J28

When you made you last airline selection for overseas travel (in economy), how important were each of the following goals in choosing which airline to select?

Note: If you haven't ever flown overseas, please consider the question in terms of a future purchase

	Not very important 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely important 7 (7)
Top of the range (airline selection based on it being top of the range and/or can be described as upper class, high status, prestigious, posh) (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Service (airline selection based on impressive service, personal attention, friendliness and a brand that considers its customers to be important) (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Value for Money (airline selection based on it being of reasonable price, value for money and provides affordability) (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Reliability (airline selection based on level of dependability, reliability, safety and guarantees) (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Attractiveness (airline selection based on cabin's good aesthetics and attractiveness, and one that can be described as cool and/or elegant) (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Selectivity (to be part of a customer base that is selective & unique in nature) (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Country of Origin (to select an airline that provides patriotism & a positive sentiment regarding its country of origin) (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The Brand Name (product selection based on a well-known brand name and/or being the leader in the market and the provision of extra features, choice & a wide range of models) (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

L1

What do you think this research is about?

That is all the questions we have for you today.

Before you finish, we would like to ask for any feedback or suggestions you have on our online survey. Any comments are appreciated and will help us to improve our future surveys.
Please answer in the textbox given below.

{if completion time is too short}

Too fast! Survey quality check failed.

Our quality checks show your survey response time was too short.

This means your answer won't be part of the final survey results. Consequently, you will not receive payment for this activity. Rushed surveys show you didn't read the questions before answering them. This practice goes against company's Terms of Service. In your next activities, please take the time to read the questions and answers them honestly.

Appendix 10: Expert panel stimuli pre-test for experiment 2

Expert panel members:

Name	Occupation
Dr Jasmina Ilicic	Senior Lecturer in Marketing, Monash University Australia
Professor Alain d'Astous	Professor in Marketing, HEC Montréal
Dr David Waller	Senior Lecturer in Marketing, University of Technology Sydney
Dr Anurag Hingorani	Senior Lecturer in Marketing, University of Technology Sydney
Dr Ali Basharat	Assistant Professor in Marketing, Daniels College of Business

Sample questionnaire:

Dear XXX,

Firstly, I appreciate your time in gaining your expert opinion on the following stimuli, which I will be using in my PhD experiment.

The stimuli relate to various sources of information that a consumer may consult pre-purchase (advertisement x 2, press release, online forum, friend's experience and an expert review) and relate to the brand Miele, specifically Miele's latest W1 washing machine.

My PhD topic relates to positioning, that is, the unique value proposition a product offers amongst its competitors. What I am interested in, is gathering your opinion on what each stimulus is communicating in terms of the *positioning* of Miele's W1 washing machine (if any position at all).

Of course you may already have an idea of what you believe Miele's W1 stands for or simply what Miele as a brand stands for, but may I ask that you put this to the side and judge each stimulus without this pre-conception. That is, regardless of what you may think Miele stands for, what position is the communication piece portraying??

I will ask you to evaluate each piece using a pre-determined positioning typology.

This should take 20 minutes of your time. Should you have any questions please contact me on Anne-Maree.Orourke@uts.edu.au. If you could get this back to me by Wednesday the 15th of June, that would be great.

Thanks again. I appreciate your help in making my PhD output stronger.

Regards,

Anne-Maree O'Rourke

PhD Candidate, Marketing
University of Technology Sydney

Instructions:

Please judge the stimuli attached in the email on the following product positions.

For each stimulus (labeled with a code at the top, such as PR1) please choose ONE position for which you think the stimulus MOST represents. There is also a 'NIL' option should you feel that the stimulus doesn't portray any of the 8 positions. In other words, please tick or write 'Y' for one option in each row below *(scoring table is on next page)*

Positions explained with items:

- Top of the range – Upper class, top of the range, status, prestigious, posh
- Service – Impressive service, personal attention, consider people as important, friendly
- Value for Money – Reasonable price, value for money, affordability
- Reliability – Durability, warranty, safety, reliability
- Attractiveness – Good aesthetics, attractiveness, cool, elegant

- Selectivity – High principles, non-selective, non-discriminatory (all relate to the brands' consumer base)

- Country of Origin – Patriotism, positive sentiment re. country of origin

- The Brand Name - Well-known brand name, leaders in the market, extra features, choice, wide range

- NIL – The stimulus does not portray a product position

Scoring Table:

	Top of the range	**Service**	**Value for money**	**Reliability**	**Attractiveness**	**Selectivity**	**Country of origin**	**The Brand name**	**Nil**
PR1									
PR2									
PR3									
PR4									
PR5									
PR6									
NP1									
NP2									
NP3									
NP4									
NP5									
NP6									
MAG1									
MAG2									
MAG3									
MAG4									
MAG5									
MAG6									
FOR1									
FOR2									
FOR3									
FOR4									
FOR5									
FOR6									
ER1									
ER2									
ER3									
ER4									
ER5									
ER6									
FEX1									

FEX2									
FEX3									
FEX4									
FEX5									
FEX6									

PR = Press Release; NP = Newspaper Ad; MAG = Magazine Ad; FOR= Online Forum; ER = Expert Review; FEX=Customer's Experience

Further questions – a little about your brand familiarity

On a scale from 1 to 7 where 1= *very unfamiliar* and 7 = *very familiar* how familiar were you with the Miele brand coming into this task? 5

Independent from this task, do you feel that you know what Miele as a brand stands for? 1 = *I have no idea* and 7 = *I have a very clear idea* 3

Comments – If you have any thoughts, suggestions or comments on any of the stimuli, please feel free to express it here:

Thank you !

- Top of the range – Upper class, top of the range, status, prestigious, posh
- Service – Impressive service, personal attention, consider people as important, friendly
- Value for Money – Reasonable price, value for money, affordability
- Reliability – Durability, warranty, safety, reliability
- Attractiveness – Good aesthetics, attractiveness, cool, elegant
- Selectivity – High principles, non-selective, non-discriminatory (all relate to the brands' consumer base)
- Country of Origin – Patriotism, positive sentiment re. country of origin

- The Brand Name - Well-known brand name, leaders in the market, extra features, choice, wide range

Appendix 11: Selected stimuli for experiment 2

Press Release: ***CODE: PR1***

Miele

June 2016

The Miele W1 Washing Machine – our new *prestige* front loader

Miele is excited to announce that our new Prestige W1 front loader washing machine – bringing class and status to one of the most neglected rooms of the house when it comes to fitting, the laundry.

We are proud to say that the Prestige Miele W1 Washing machine has independently just been awarded the *Top of the Range appliance of the year* award for 2016.

Certain features of the W1 washing machine are exclusive to Miele. This includes PowerWash which actually suggests the best program for your laundry round and a feature that eliminates wrinkles from even your fine clothing, including silks and merino wool.

The W1 washing machine was also built with longevity in mind – just as you would expect from a top of the range appliance!

Given the higher-end price tag, the Miele W1 is targeting luxury-seekers instead of pure value-conscious consumers. So if you are after a front loader that will fit into your classy home, the new Miele W1 is for you! Available from Miele Experience Centers and David Jones stores nationally.

Press Release: ***CODE: PR2***

Miele

June 2016

Miele W1 Washing Machine – our new *value for money* front loader

Miele is excited to announce that we have added our best value for money option yet to our existing front loader washing machine range. The W1 makes Miele accessible to all Australians

We are proud to say that the Miele W1 washer has independently just been awarded the *Best value appliance of the year* award for 2016.

There are several value-adding features of the MieleW1. These include PowerWash for quick cycles and an energy rating that is the highest in the front loader market. This can save you hundreds of dollars off your energy bill.

The W1 Miele washing machine was also built with longevity in mind ensuring that your up-front investment lasts longer!

Given the affordable price tag, the Miele W1 is targeting value-conscious consumers instead of pure luxury-seekers. So if you are after a front loader that provides great value, the new Miele W1 is for you! Available at The Good Guys nationally or via appliancewarehouse.com.au.

<u>Press Release</u>: ***CODE: PR3***

June 2016

Miele

Miele W1 Washing Machine – our new front loader option

We are announcing the launch of the W1 front loader washing machine.

Measuring 85cm(h) x 59.6cm(w) x 64.3cm(d) and available in white (only), you won't be disappointed with the W1 front loader.

It will transform your dirty laundry into clean clothes

The W1 is available from appliance stores nationally.

Newspaper advertisement: *CODE: NP4*

Introducing Miele's W1…

…a new front loader option in washing machines

Visit your local appliance dealer today

Newspaper advertisement: ***CODE: NP5***

The new Miele W1 front loader washing machine offers incredible value like no other

… & with a 5 star energy rating, the value continues once it gets into your laundry….

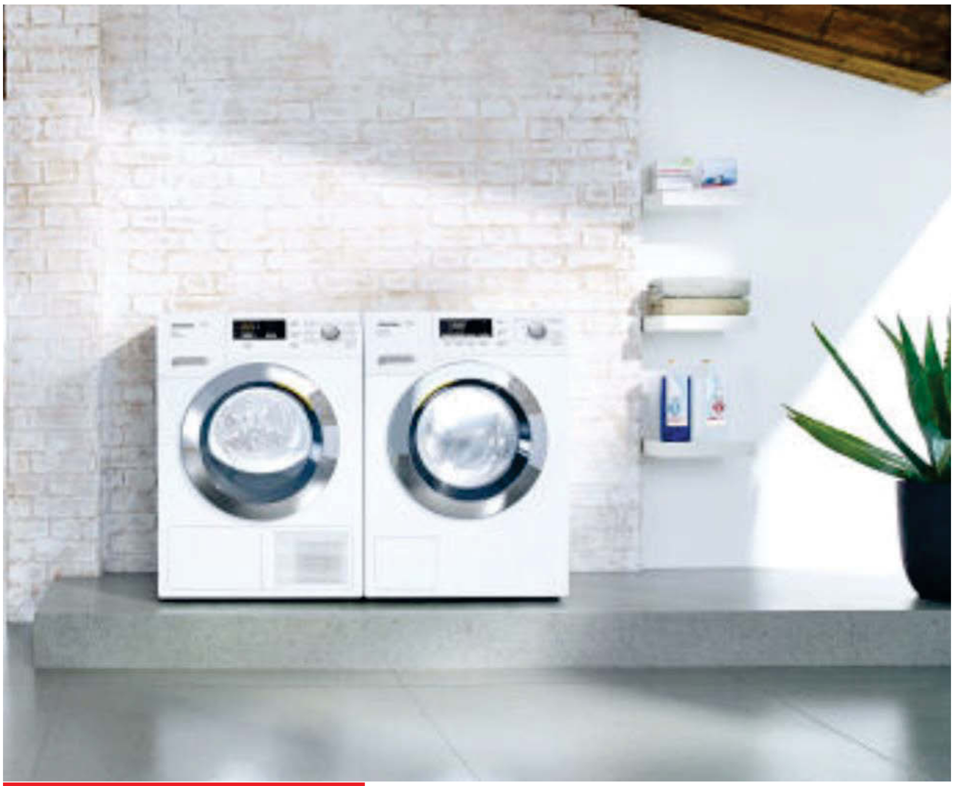
Miele

Now available at The Good Guys nationally or via appliancewarehouse.com.au. RRP $1,400

Newspaper advertisement: ***CODE: NP6***

A classy home is only complete when it has the top appliances, right?

Introducing the new prestigious W1 front loader washing machine by Miele



Miele

Now available at David Jones and Miele Experience Centres nationally.

RRP - $3,000.

Magazine advertisement: ***CODE: MAG 4***

Miele's W1 front loader washer

The icon of status. The epitome of quality.

Miele

To see our top of the range appliances, visit one of our Miele Flagship stores or David Jones nationally. RRP $3,000

<u>Magazine advertisement</u>: ***CODE: MAG5***

The W1 front loader.

Our new washing machine in the Miele range

Visit your local appliance dealer today

Magazine advertisement: ***CODE: MAG6***

Miele's new $1,400 economic W1 front-loader…

…Bet you are gobsmacked at just how reasonably priced it is!

Miele

Check out the value from Miele by visiting The Good Guys stores nationally or appliancewarehouse.com.au

__Online Forum__: ***CODE: FOR4***

'Homeone' is an online community where people hold conversations about various topics to do with home building and renovation, including appliance choice. Members are everyday people. The following thread relates to washing machines

Jane_1980 *Hi Everyone, I need a new washing machine and I am thinking about Miele's new W1? Anyone own one? What are the main advantages of this washing machine over others? HELP!*

JohnnyBoy I've got the new Miele W1 and it's all about VALUE! The price is pleasantly affordable for how long it lasts and the energy saving is pretty awesome in the long run. It actually made a real impact on my electricity bill which is impressive! ☺

MrSmith_8 I agree with *JohnnyBoy.* I bought the Miele W1 last month and in the end it was between the newest models from Electrolux, Bosch and Miele. I didn't care about how it looked or luxury, just SAVING MONEY. The Elextrolux is dirt cheap but you're lucky if it lasts a couple of years. The Miele W1 stood out in being reasonably priced for its ongoing value. If you want prestige and top of the range per se – go for Bosch

DomesticGoddess My sister in law has the Miele W1….and wow! I was shocked at the value she got. She says the loads are actually much quicker – who doesn't want a cheaper energy bill??!!!

J.Johnson @Jane_1980 - Go into your local appliance retailer and check out the decent value of the new W1 for yourself. It's awesome value for how long you will have this appliance for. I'm happy with what the new Miele W1 offers for the super fair price I paid for it!

BigMouth55 Agreed….the real advantage of this appliance is value! It might not be the absolute highest end from what's available in the market…but you get a lot for what you pay for

Online Forum: ***CODE: FOR5***

homeone
home building and renovation

'Homeone' is an online community where people hold conversations about various topics to do with home building and renovation, including appliance choice. Members are everyday people. The following thread relates to washing machines

Jane_1980 *Hi Everyone, I need a new washing machine and I am thinking about Miele's new W1? Anyone own one? What are the main advantages of this washing machine over others? HELP!*

JohnnyBoy I've got the new Miele W1 and I never thought I would pay as much as I did for a washing machine….but when you want utter LUXURY you have to pay for it, right?! I love the Miele-exclusive feature that means your clothes are actually wrinkle free - everything about it is top-notch really ☺

MrSmith_8 I agree with JohnnyBoy. I bought the Miele W1 last month and it's a top of the range appliance for sure. Other brands just can't compete if it's prestige and class you are after in your home. Even the latest Bosch washer doesn't compare in terms of luxury. I mean if you are after the best value possible, go with someone like Electolux and if you want PRESTIGE, go with Miele!

DomesticGoddess My sister-in-law has the new Miele W1....and wow! The main advantage would be luxury. She's the type of person that has to have the best of everything though…even her washing machine!!

J.Johnson Miele @Jane_1980 – Go into your local appliance retailer and check out the class of the W1 for yourself. Just make sure your credit card has a high limit! And lets face it – it's pretty much that 'posh feeling' that you are actually paying for with a Miele. But I wanted to be proud of my laundry when guests come over as I am with other rooms in the house and now I am!

BigMouth55 Agreed…from what I know the real advantage is that it's a very high-end appliance. Don't think that it offers the most value but it is upper class all the way…and that's what you are paying for

<u>Online Forum</u>: ***CODE: FOR6***

homeone

home building and renovation

'Homeone' is an online community where people hold conversations about various topics to do with home building and renovation, including appliance choice. Members are everyday people. The following thread relates to washing machines

Jane_1980 *Hi Everyone, I need a new washing machine and I am thinking about Miele's new W1? Anyone own one? What are the main advantages of this washing machine over others? HELP!*

JohnnyBoy I've got the Miele W1 and what I paid for it was about AVERAGE compared to other brands. Some were like in the very low hundreds and some were in the thousands of dollars! The machine is OK ☺

MrSmith_8 I agree with JohnnyBoy. I bought the Miele W1 last month and while it ain't a bad machine but its really hard to find what makes it special. This washing machines is made in the same location as most, offers the same warranty as its nearest rival and to be honest even looks the SAME. I spent a while comparing it to the latest Electrolux and Bosch before purchasing – but there was nothing between them!

DomesticGoddess My sister-in-law has the new Miele W1**.** The advantage? It washes your clothes. LOL. In all seriousness, not sure there is a real advantage!!

J.Johnson @Jane_1980 - Go to an appliance retailer and try and compare…good luck in finding a difference…I'd give it a 5 out of 10. Hard to say what the true advantage of the washing machine is over other brands. I mean I can't see any difference with it and other washing machine brands I've previously had.

BigMouth55 Agreed…from what I know, it's really hard to find a major advantage. But you know, I don't think its a bad machine either. I mean it's a washing machine, does it have to be the best at something?

<u>Expert Review:</u> ***CODE: ER1***

Please find our independent review of Miele's latest W1 washing front loader washing machine conducted by James McKinnon, chief laundry appliance tester at Choice Magazine

Miele's latest W1 performed average on all dimensions tested and while it's certainly not the worst front loader on the market it's not the best either. There wasn't an area where Miele stood out in comparison to its rivals. Fisher & Paykel remains our *top of the range pick* with Simpson leading the charge in terms of *value for money*

<u>Choice's summary of Miele's W1:</u>

Value for money

Top of the Range

Service

Reliability

Attractiveness

Country of origin

The brand name

Expert Review: ***CODE: ER2***

Please find our independent review of Miele's W1 latest washing front loader washing machine conducted by James McKinnon, chief laundry appliance tester at Choice Magazine

Miele has surprised us with its latest W1 washing machine in terms of pushing the envelope in long-term affordability. When it comes to **value for the money**: the initial cost for what you get, ongoing repair cost and energy use, Miele's W1 has come out in front, beating rivals Simpson and Fisher & Paykel. If you are willing to compromise on a little luxury for amazing value, then Miele's new W1 is for you.

Choice's summary of Miele's W1:

Value for money

Top of the Range

Service

Reliability

Attractiveness

Country of origin

The brand name

Expert Review: ***CODE: ER3***

choice

Please find our independent review of Miele's W1 latest washing front loader washing machine conducted by James McKinnon, chief laundry appliance tester at Choice Magazine

Miele's latest W1 front loader is clearly a high end front loader. Posh, fine, status. Miele's new W1 comes with the fairly hefty price tag you would imagine for a **top of the range** appliance, compared to major rivals such as Simpson and Fisher & Paykel. However our evaluation shows that the Miele W1 is in a class of its own compared to its competitors, so if you are driven by luxury over absolute value, than this is the front loader for you!

Choice's summary of Miele's W1:

Top of the Range

Value for money

Service

Reliability

Attractiveness

Country of origin

The brand name

Customer's Product Experience: ***CODE: FEX4***

Felicity Xuereb recently bought the latest Miele W1 front loader and decided to share her experience on her well-read personal blog

So my old washing machine finally broke down last week and it was time to shop for a new washing machine. I had decided to pay a bit more this time and get the best! I went into David Jones and spoke to a lovely sales man called Connor who helped me compare the latest front loaders from Miele, LG and Panasonic. However straight up he said If you want the top of the range, you have to go Miele. It's no contest. So I looked at Miele's W1. Connor explained all the features of the WI such as its TwinDos and PowerWash which are exclusive to Miele. It didn't come cheap though. It's also the most expensive from all the options there. But if I wanted value I would go for the LG. I was after luxury! And I could easily picture the classy appliance in my newly renovated laundry. In fact, here is a pic of it in my laundry when it got to my home!!!!

Customer's Product Experience: ***CODE: FEX5***

Felicity Xuereb recently bought the latest Miele W1 front loader and decided to share her experience on her well-read personal blog

So my old washing machine finally broke down last week and it was time to shop for a new washing machine. I really can't afford a new one at the moment (talk about bad timing) so I wanted an affordable option that also gave me value. I went into Bing Lee and spoke to a lovely sales man called Connor who helped me compare the latest front loaders from Miele, LG and Panasonic. However straight up he said If you want value for money you have to go with Miele's W1. It's no contest. Connor explained all the cost-saving features of the WI such as its Energy Efficiency rating (best on the market) and PowerWash which meant faster and more economical loads. So the cost of the machine over the long run was looking really appealing. The actual price tag was bearable too, given how long the Miele W1 should last for. In fact, here is a pic of it in my laundry when it got to my home!!!!

Customer's Product Experience: ***CODE: FEX6***

Felicity Xuereb recently bought the latest Miele W1 front loader and decided to share her experience on her well-read personal blog

So my old washing machine finally broke down last week and it was time to shop for a new washing machine. To be honest, I wasn't really sure what I was after. I went into Harvey Norman and spoke to a lovely sales man called Connor who helped me compare the latest front loaders from Miele, LG and Panasonic. I asked about the difference of the Miele W1 to the others in terms of luxury, reliability and service, he said It's pretty much the same as many of the others to be honest. So I decided to look at the price tag and wow, the difference is minor. In terms of looks, there was nothing that made the W1 particularly unique. There really wasn't much to help me decide. In the end I chose the Miele W1 as it seemed like a good all-rounder. In fact, here is a pic of it in my laundry when it got to my home!!!!

Appendix 12: Main study data collection instrument for experiment 2

My name is Anne-Maree O'Rourke and I am a PhD student at University of Technology Sydney. My supervisor is Associate Professor Francois Carrillat.

The purpose of this online survey is to understand your opinions and purchase behavior for different brands of washing machines.

It should take approximately 25 minutes.

You can stop completing the survey at any time without consequences. However please note that full payment is only received from Pure Profile for complete responses in accordance with their policy.

The data gathered from this survey will be published in a form that does not identify you.

If you have concerns about the research that you think I can help you with, please feel free to contact me on (02) 9514 9818

If you would like to talk to someone who is not connected with the research, you may contact the Research Ethics Officer on 02 9514 9772 or Research.ethics@uts.edu.au and quote this number: 2015000547.

Q1a

When did you last purchase a washing machine (if ever)?

Never (1)

Within last year (2)

1-3 years ago (3)

Over 3 years ago (4)

Thank you for participating in our survey today.

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey.

Thank you for considering our survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

Please click NEXT > to submit your survey...

Q1b

Do you currently own or have you ever owned the following washing machine brands?

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Fisher & Paykel (1)	❍	❍
LG (2)	❍	❍
Electrolux (3)	❍	❍
Miele (4)	❍	❍
Simpson (5)	❍	❍

Thank You!

Thank you for participating in our survey today.

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey.

Thank you for considering our survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

Please click NEXT > to submit your survey...

C1

The following questions relate to how important the purchase of a washing machine would be to you

How important would it be for you to make the right choice of washing machine?

Not at all important 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very important 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

C3

In making your selection of washing machine, how concerned would you be about making the right choice?

Not at all concerned 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very concerned 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Thank You!

Thank you for participating in our survey today.

Our client requested that we speak to a certain sub-section of the population. To do this we usually ask a few screening questions at the beginning of the survey. In this instance you were not eligible for the survey.

Thank you for considering our survey. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will be able to offer them to us via our online surveys in the future.

Please click NEXT > to submit your survey...

Q1d

Are you aware of the Miele brand? (ie. You have heard of it)

Yes (1)

No (2)

Q1e

Do you feel that you know what the Miele brand stands for in the washing machine category?

I have no idea what the Miele brand stands for 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	I have an extremely clear idea of what the Miele brand stands for 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q1f

Overall do you like the Miele brand?

I really don't like this brand 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	I really like this brand 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q1g

How familiar are you with the Miele brand?

Extremely unfamiliar 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely familiar 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q1h

Now, thinking about the Miele brand within the washing machine category, to what extent do you agree with the following statements

	Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
I think Miele is a good washing machine brand (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I think Miele makes very useful washing machines (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My opinion of Miele is very favourable as a washing machine brand (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q1i

Have you ever owned a Miele branded appliance?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Q1ia

Which one(s).

Dryer/Tumbler (1)

Cooktop (2)

Oven (3)

Rangehood (4)

Dishwasher (5)

Refrigerator (6)

Freezer (7)

Vacuum Cleaner (8)

Other (9)____________

Q1j

How much personal experience do you have with Miele branded appliances?

No experience at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	A lot of personal experience 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

DD1

Are you...

Male (1)

Female (2)

DD2

Where do you currently live?

Sydney (1)

Melbourne (2)

Brisbane (3)

Adelaide (4)

Hobart (5)

Perth (6)

Other (7)

DD3

Is your address classed as...

Metro (1)

Regional (2)

DD4

What is your postcode?

(1) ________________________________

DD5

What is your age?

18-24 years old (1)

25-34 years old (2)

35-44 years old (3)

45-54 years old (4)

55-64 years old (5)

65-74 years old (6)

75 years or older (7)

Do not want to disclose (8)

DD6

Employment Status: Are you currently...?

Employed (1)

Out of work and looking for work (2)

Out of work but not currently looking for work (3)

A homemaker (4)

A student (5)

Retired (6)

Other (7)

DD7

What category best describes your annual household income?

Less than $24,999 (1)

$25,000 to $49,999 (2)

$50,000 to $99,999 (3)

$100,000 to $199,999 (4)

$200,000 or over (5)

Do not want to disclose (6)

A5Info

We would like to understand how knowledgeable you feel regarding washing machines as a product category. This includes the different types, brands, features and pricing of washing machines available in the market

Please consider the following questions below

A6

Compared to other consumers, how much experience do you have with different washing machines?

Very little experience 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	A lot of experience 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

A7

Compared to other consumers, how knowledgeable do you think you are about the washing machines currently available in the market?

Not at all knowledgeable 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very knowledgeable 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

A8Info

We are now keen to understand your opinion on how similar or dissimilar you believe the different brands of washing machines in the current market are from each other

Please consider the following statements

A9

In my opinion, a washing machine is just a washing machine and most brands are basically the same

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

A11

The only difference between the major brands of washing machines is the price

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

A12 - A12

All major brands of washing machines are basically alike, there is little to tell them apart

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B1Info

For the next section, we will focus on one product in the front loader washing machine market – a Miele branded front loader Washing Machine.

Could you please indicate how close you believe that each statement fits the Miele washing machine compared to its competitors. PLEASE NOTE: you do not have to have personal experience with the product. It's simply your perception which may come from advertising, word of mouth, store promotions or anywhere else in fact!

Again, all of your answers should be comparing Miele to its competitors. The main competitors in the front loader washing machine market are:

B1

Please consider the following statements about the Miele front loader washing machine:

Compared to other competing brands of washing machine, the level of prestige that the Miele front loader possesses is...

Extremely low prestige 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely high prestige 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B2

Compared to other competing brands of washing machine, buying a Miele front loader would make me feel that I was being....

Extremely unpatriotic 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely patriotic 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B3

Compared to competitors' washing machines on the market, I would expect the price of a Miele front loader to be...

Very unreasonably priced 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very reasonably priced 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B4

Compared to its competitors, I believe the design of the Miele front loader washing machine would be...

Extremely unattractive 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely attractive 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B5

You tell a friend that you just bought a Miele front loader. The level of social status you would feel after buying a Miele rather than other washing machine brands is...

Low social status 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	High social status 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B6

Compared to its competitors, I think Miele considers its customers of front loader washing machines to be...

Extremely unimportant 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely important 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B7

Compared to its competitors, I believe the safety of the Miele front loader washing machine to be...

Extremely unsafe 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely safe 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B8

Compared with its competitors, I believe the price of the Miele front loader washing machine would represent...

Very poor value for money 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very good value for money 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B9

Compared to other washing machines brands, I think my encounter with the staff of Miele would be...

(*the encounter with Miele staff may occur by visiting the Miele store or dealing with staff on the Miele customer care line, for example)

Extremely unfriendly 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely friendly 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B10

Relative to other washing machines, I think a Miele front loader would prove to be...

Very unreliable 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very reliable 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B11

Compared to other washing machine brands, my sentiment regarding Miele's country of origin (where it is made) is...

Extremely Negative 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely positive 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B12

Thinking about the type of customer (e.g. age, sex, income etc.) Miele is going after for their front loader washing machines, I would describe Miele as being...

Highly non-selective in their choice of customers 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Highly selective in their choice of customers 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B13

In terms of Miele's place in the front loader washing machine market, it is a...

(*leader refers to being first in the market to launch innovations)

Pure follower 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Pure leader* 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B14

Compared to other washing machines, I find the design of the Miele front loader washing machine to be...

The least elegant 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	The most elegant 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B15

Compared to other washing machines, I believe the warranty of the Miele front loader to be...

Inferior Warranty 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Superior Warranty 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B16

Compared to other front loader washing machines out there, I think I would find the design of the Miele to be

Extremely uncool 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely cool 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B17

Compared to its washing machine competitors, I believe the Miele brand name is one that...

No-one Knows 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Everyone Knows 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B18

Compared to other washing machines, I regard the Miele front loader washing machine as....

Not very Posh 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very Posh 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B19

Compared to other washing machine alternatives, I would imagine being a Miele front loader customer would result in....

Very unimpressive service 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very impressive service 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B20

Compared to other washing machines, I believe that buying a Miele front loader would be...

Extremely unaffordable 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely affordable 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B21

Compared to customers of other washing machine brands, I would imagine Miele front loader customers as being comprised of...

People with low Principles 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	People with high Principles 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B22

Compared to other brands, I would expect the range of Miele front loader washing machines (number of models) to be...

Much narrower 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Much wider 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B23

Compared to the other washing machines, I would expect the aesthetics (design) of the Miele front loader to be...

Extremely poor 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely good 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B24

Compared to its competitors I would expect the personal attention I would receive from Miele as a front loader customer to be...

Extremely low 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely high 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B25

Compared to other washing machine alternatives, I would expect the Miele front loader to be...

Very easily broken or damaged 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very durable 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B26

Compared to other front loader washing machines I could buy, I would expect Miele as a total offering to be...

Bottom of the range 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Top of the range 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B27

Thinking about what Miele do to attract their front loader washing machine customers (e.g. advertising, retail strategy) compared to other washing machine brands, I find it...

(*discriminatory refers to attracting a distinct customer group only. An example of this would be if a brand was only trying to attract senior citizens)

Not at all discriminatory 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely discriminatory 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B28

Thinking about the level of choice in regards to the front loader's attributes, features & benefits compared to other washing machines (e.g. colour, warranty length etc.), I would expect Miele to...

Offer no choice 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Offer great choice 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B29

Finish this sentence: Compared to LG, Electrolux, Simpson, Fisher & Paykel and other front loader washing machine brands out there, Miele can be described as...

Lower class (lower end) 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Upper class (higher end) 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

B30

Compared to its competitors what amount of extra features would you expect to be offered with a Miele front loader washing machine

Very few extra features 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	A large number of extra features 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoC

The upcoming questions will ask you to consider your evaluation of the product descriptions relating to Miele washing machines that you filled out in the previous section (section B). The questions relate to how confident you were in giving your responses in the above section (section B).

Please consider the following questions, presented on the following screens

C1

How confident are you in the answers you gave about Miele in section B?

Extremely unconfident 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely confident 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

C2

How certain that your answers about Miele in section B are accurate?

Extremely uncertain 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely certain 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

C3

How sure do you feel that if you bought a Miele, your actual experience with the product would match your evaluation today?

Extremely unsure 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely sure 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoD

The following questions ask your opinion regarding how trustworthy Miele is as an organisation. We are interested in your opinion of Miele, whether you have had direct experience with the organization or not.

D2

I believe Miele to be extremely trustworthy in their dealings with their customers

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

D4

Overall, I believe Miele is always honest in its product claims

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoE

You will now be presented with different sources of information regarding Miele's latest front loader washing machine, the W1. You will see a press release, newspaper advertisement, magazine advertisement, online forum, expert review (from Choice magazine) and a customer's experience via a blog.

As a reminder to you, the main competitors in the front loader washing machine market are:

Please very carefully go through the information presented as it will relate to most of the remaining questions

As you read the product information imagine that you are looking to purchase a top of the range front loader washing machine.

In other words, your purchase goal is a washing machine that you believe would be described as: upper class, top of the range, high status, prestigious and posh

Note that the format of the advertisements/content has been modified to enhance readability for computer screens.

{stimuli}

F1

Given the new product information seen, indicate how closely you believe that each descriptor fits the Miele W1 front loader washing machine in comparison to its competitors

Compared to other competing brands of washing machine, the level of prestige that the Miele front loader possesses is...

Extremely low prestige 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely high prestige 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F2

Compared to other competing brands of washing machine, buying a Miele front loader would make me feel that I was being....

Extremely unpatriotic 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely patriotic 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F3

Compared to competitors' washing machines on the market, I would expect the price of a Miele front loader to be...

Very unreasonably priced 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very reasonably priced 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F4

Compared to its competitors, I believe the design of the Miele front loader washing machine would be...

Extremely unattractive 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely attractive 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F5

You tell a friend that you just bought a Miele front loader. The level of social status you would feel after buying a Miele rather than other washing machine brands is...

Low social status 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	High social status 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F6

Compared to its competitors, I think Miele considers its customers of front loader washing machines to be...

Extremely unimportant 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely important 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F7

Compared to its competitors, I believe the safety of the Miele front loader washing machine to be...

Extremely unsafe 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely safe 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F8

Compared with its competitors, I believe the price of the Miele front loader washing machine would represent...

Very poor value for money 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very good value for money 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F9

Compared to other washing machines brands, I think my encounter with the staff of Miele would be...

(*the encounter with Miele staff may occur by visiting the Miele store or dealing with staff on the Miele customer care line, for example)

Extremely unfriendly 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely friendly 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F10

Relative to other washing machines, I think having a Miele front loader would prove to be...

Very unreliable 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very reliable 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F11

Compared to other washing machine brands, my sentiment regarding Miele's country of origin (where it is made) is...

Extremely Negative 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely positive 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F12

Thinking about the type of customer (e.g. age, sex, income etc.) Miele is going after for their front loader washing machines, I would describe Miele as being...

Highly non-selective in their choice of customers 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Highly selective in their choice of customers 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F13

In terms of Miele's place in the front loader washing machine market, it is a...

Pure follower 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Pure leader* 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F14

Compared to other washing machines, I find the design of the Miele front loader washing machine to be...

The least elegant 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	The most elegant 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F15

Compared to other washing machines, I believe the warranty of the Miele front loader to be....

Inferior Warranty 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Superior Warranty 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F16

Compared to other front loader washing machines out there, I think I would find the design of the Miele to be

Extremely uncool 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely cool 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F17

Compared to its washing machine competitors, I believe the Miele brand name is one that ...

No-one Knows 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Everyone Knows 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F18

Compared to other washing machines, I regard the Miele front loader washing machine as...

Not very Posh 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very Posh 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F19

Compared to other washing machine alternatives, I would imagine being a Miele front loader customer would result in...

Very unimpressive service 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very impressive service 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F20

Compared to other washing machines, I believe that buying a Miele front loader would be...

Extremely unaffordable 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely affordable 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F21

Compared to customers of other washing machine brands, I would imagine Miele front loader customers as being comprised of...

People with low Principles 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	People with high Principles 7 (7)

People with low Principles 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	People with high Principles 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F22

Compared to other brands, I would expect the range of Miele front loader washing machines (number of models) to be...

Much narrower 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Much wider 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F23

Compared to the other washing machines, I would expect the aesthetics (design) of the Miele front loader to be...

Extremely poor 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely good 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F24

Compared to its competitors I would expect the personal attention I would receive from Miele as a front loader customer to be...

Extremely low 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely high 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F25

Compared to other washing machine alternatives, I would expect the Miele front loader to be...

Very easily broken or damaged 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very durable 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F26

Compared to other front loader washing machines I could buy, I would expect Miele as a total offering to be...

Bottom of the range 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Top of the range 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F27

Thinking about what Miele do to attract their front loader washing machine customers (e.g. advertising, retail strategy) compared to other washing machine brands, I find it...

(*discriminatory refers to attracting a distinct customer group only. An example of this would be if a brand was only trying to attract senior citizens)

Not at all discriminatory 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely discriminatory 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F28

Thinking about the level of choice in regards to the front loader's attributes, features & benefits compared to other washing machines (e.g. colour, warranty length etc.), I would expect Miele to...

Offer no choice 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Offer great choice 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F29

Finish this sentence: Compared to LG, Electrolux, Simpson, Fisher & Paykel and other front loader washing machine brands out there, Miele can be described as...

Lower class (lower end) 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Upper class (higher end) 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

F30

Compared to its competitors what amount of extra features would you expect to be offered with a Miele front loader washing machine

Very few extra features 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	A large number of extra features 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoG1

The questions on the next few screens will ask you to consider your evaluation of the product descriptions relating to Miele washing machines that you filled out in the previous section (section F). The questions relate to how confident you were in your answers to the questions in the above section (section F).

You may notice that these questions were asked earlier, however we would like to get your updated thoughts and feelings after being exposed to the product information.

Please consider the upcoming questions on the next screens

G1

How confident are you in the answers you gave about Miele in section F?

Extremely unconfident 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely confident 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

G2

How certain that your answers about Miele in section F are accurate?

Extremely uncertain 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely certain 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

G3

How sure do you feel that if you bought a Miele, you actual experience with the product would match your evaluation today?

Extremely unsure 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely sure 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

G4

To what degree did the product information presented to you change your initial thoughts about Miele in the front loader washing machine category. That is, the start of the survey compared to now...

My view did not change at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	My view changed entirely 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoH1

Should the need arise for you to buy a top of the range front loader washing machine, please answer the following questions based on your current perceptions of Miele (versus competing washing machine brands).

Remember, your purchase goal is to buy a washing machine that you believe would be described as: upper class, top of the range, high status, prestigious and posh

Please consider the following questions on the next screen

H1

If I was looking to purchase a top of the range front loader washing machine, it is very probable that I would purchase the Miele W1

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H2

It is very likely that I would purchase a Miele W1 front loader washing machine if my purchase goal was to buy a top of the range machine

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H3

In looking for a top of the range front loader washing machine, it is very possible that I would purchase the Miele W1

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H4

If a friend had a need for a top of the range front loader, it is likely that I would recommend the Miele W1 front loader to my friend

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoH5

Given that you have now read several product information sources/media relating to Miele's latest W1 front loader washing machine, please consider the following statements regarding your attitude towards Miele as a brand

H5

I think Miele is a good washing machine brand

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H6

I think Miele makes very useful washing machines

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H7

My opinion of Miele is very favourable as a washing machine brand

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoH8

Specifically considering your purchase goal is to buy a top of the range front loader washing machine, please consider the following statements

H8

The Miele W1 is meaningful to me

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H9

The Miele W1 is appropriate for me

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H10

The Miele W1 is useful to me

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H11

The Miele W1 is valuable to me

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoH12

We are now interested in how different you perceive the Miele W1 to be in comparison to other front loader brands overall. This should be based on your current perceptions of the Miele W1 and what you know about other competing front loader brands.

H12

From what you know about other front loader brands, how distinctive is the Miele W1?

Not very distinctive at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very distinctive 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H13

From what you know about other front loader brands, how different is the Miele W1?

Not very different at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very different 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

H14

How easily can the Miele W1 be distinguished from its competitors?

Not easily distinguished at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very easily distinguished 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoI1

This section asks you about how credible you found the product information sources and the information they contained.

I1

Not thinking just about today's exercise but more in general, please rate the following product information/media as a source of information on the following criteria:

To what extent do you find the following product information/media sources to be credible?

	Not very credible 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely credible 7 (7)
Press release (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Magazine advertisement (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Newspaper advertisement (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Expert review/choice magazine (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Online forum (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Customer's experience/blog (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I3

To what extent do you believe the following product information/media sources to be believable?

	Not believable at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely believable 7 (7)
Press release (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Magazine advertisement (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Newspaper advertisement (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

	Not believable at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely believable 7 (7)
Expert review/choice magazine (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Online forum (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Customer's experience/blog (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoI4

Given what you knew about Miele coming into today, we are now interested in how credible or believable you find the possible alternate points of difference for the Miele W1, against its competitors

I4

The Miele W1 is a top of the range front loader

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Not at all believable (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Highly believable
I find this very hard to accept (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	I find this very easy to accept

I5

The Miele W1 is a value for money front loader

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Not at all believable (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Highly believable
I find this very hard to accept (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	I find this very easy to accept

I6

Miele's W1 does not offer any real main difference compared to its front loader competitors

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Not at all believable (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Highly believable
I find this very hard to accept (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	I find this very easy to accept

I7

How familiar were you with the Miele product communication you saw today?

It was extremely unfamiliar - I've never seen them before today 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	It was extremely familiar - I've seen them before today 7 (7)

It was extremely unfamiliar - I've never seen them before today 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	It was extremely familiar - I've seen them before today 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoI8

The aim of the next questions is to understand your thoughts and feelings of the various Miele W1 product information pieces, especially in terms of how clearly and consistently the messages communicated the main point of difference of the Miele W1

I11

Was the main point of difference for the Miele W1 easy to understand in the various product information/media sources you saw?

Not very easy at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very easy 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I12

Was the main point of difference for the Miele W1 clearly communicated in the various product information/media sources you saw?

Not very clear at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very clear 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I8

How consistently did the different product information/media sources depict the Miele W1?

Extremely inconsistent 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely consistent 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I9

Did the different product information/media sources represent the Miele W1 in a similar manner?

Not similar at all 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very similar 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I14

Overall, to what degree do you feel that the product information given to you (number of sources and depth of information) was adequate for you to determine what the main difference of the Miele W1 compared to its competitors?

Extremely inadequate 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely adequate 7 (7)

Extremely inadequate 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely adequate 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I15

Overall, how knowledgeable do you feel you are regarding the main difference offered by the competing brands of the Miele W1?

Not very knowledgeable 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very knowledgeable 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I16

How much mental effort was required for you to take in all the product information you saw?

Low level of effort 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	High level of effort 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I17

Thinking about all the product information sources/media you saw, how would you describe your feeling and attitude towards the product information as a whole?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Unpleasant (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Pleasant
Negative (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Positive
Bad (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	Good

InfoJ1

In this section we would like to learn a little more about you

Firstly, considering your nature or your personality in everyday life, to what extent do you agree with the following statements

J1

I think I have more self-confidence than most people

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J2

I think I have a lot of personal ability

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J3

I am more independent than most people

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J4

Security is an important concern in my life

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J5

Life is so uncertain that one must continuously be on the alert so as not to be caught at a disadvantage

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J6

It is important to consider opposing views when making personal and social decisions

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J7

I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J9

I only think as hard as I have to

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J11

The notion of thinking abstractly is not appealing to me

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J16

I dislike it when a person's statements could mean different things

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J17

I feel uncomfortable when someone's meaning or intentions are unclear to me

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J18

I feel uncomfortable when I don't understand the reason why an event occurred in my life

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J19

When I am confused about an important issue, I feel very upset

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J20

Even after I have made up my mind about something, I am always eager to consider a different opinion

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J21

When considering most conflict situations, I usually see how both sides could be right

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J22

When thinking about a problem, I consider as many different opinions on the issue as possible

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

J23

I always see many possible solutions to problems I face

Strongly disagree 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Strongly agree 7 (7)
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

InfoJ24

The upcoming questions will ask you about your own washing machine history and future plans.

J24

What was the last washing machine you purchased?

Simpson (1)

Miele (2)

Bosch (3)

LG (4)

Electrolux (5)

Euromaid (6)

Fisher & Paykel (7)

Samsung (8)

Other - please specify (9)____________

J25

What type of washing machine was it?

Front loader (1)

Top loader (2)

Other - please specify (3)____________

J26

What is likely to be the next washing machine brand you purchase?

Simpson (1)

Miele (2)

Bosch (3)

LG (4)

Electrolux (5)

Euromaid (6)

Fisher & Paykel (7)

Samsung (8)

Other - please specify (9)____________

Don’t know (10)

J27

What type of washing machine is your next purchase likely to be?

Front loader (1)

Top loader (2)

Other - please specify (3)____________

Don't know (4)

J28

When you made your last washing machine purchase, how important were each of the following goals in choosing which washing machine model to buy?

Note: If you haven't ever bought a washing machine, please consider the question in terms of a future purchase

	Not very important 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Extremely important 7 (7)
Top of the range (product selection based on it being top of the range and/or can be described as upper class, high status, prestigious, posh) (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Service (product selection based on impressive service, personal attention, friendliness and a brand that considers its customers to be important) (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Value for Money (product selection based on it being of reasonable price, value for money and provides affordability) (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Reliability (product selection based on the durability, safety & reliability of the product as well as the warranty offering) (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Attractiveness (product selection based on good aesthetics and attractiveness, a product that can be described as cool and/or elegant) (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Selectivity (to be part of a customer base that is selective & unique in nature) (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Country of Origin (to select a product that provides patriotism & a positive sentiment regarding its country of origin) (7)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The Brand Name (product selection based on a well-known brand name and/or being the leader in the market and the provision of extra features, choice & a wide range of models) (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

L1

What do you think this research is about?

Survey Feedback

That is all the questions we have for you today.

Before you finish, we would like to ask for any feedback or suggestions you have on our online survey. Any comments are appreciated and will help us to improve our future surveys.
Please answer in the textbox given below.

{if completion time is too short}
Too fast! Survey quality check failed.

Our quality checks show your survey response time was too short.
This means your answer won't be part of the final survey results. Consequently, you will not receive payment for this activity. Rushed surveys show you didn't read the questions before answering them. This practice goes against company's Terms of Service. In your next activities, please take the time to read the questions and answers them honestly.