

The Consequences of Beautiful Products: Sacredness, Awe, and Forgiveness

Web Appendix

STUDY 1

Participants were exposed to a “flaw” in their cell phones by reading the following scenario:

“Now imagine that you are in the middle of a phone call with a friend when -- The call drops, the screen on your phone goes black, and you are unable to restart it. You even try to charge the battery just to be sure that is not the problem. However, the phone is **completely dead** and you are unable to do anything about it.”

Supplementary Analysis

Given that Apple has made the beauty of its products a central component of its positioning strategy, we reasoned that if Apple products are perceived to be more beautiful than other brands, they should also be more likely to be forgiven. Accordingly, Apple owners in our sample ($N = 80$) rated their phones as more beautiful than other brand owners ($N = 119$) ($M_{\text{Apple}} = 5.15$ vs. $M_{\text{Others}} = 4.38$; $F(1, 197) = 12.75, p = .001$). A one-way analysis of variance with brand owners as a between subjects factor (Apple vs. Others) revealed that Apple owners were indeed more likely to forgive the brand after the flaw relative to the owners of other brands ($M_{\text{Apple}} = 4.57$ vs. $M_{\text{Others}} = 3.71$; $F(1, 197) = 13.49, p = .001$). The same ANOVA controlling for overall impressions ($F(1, 194) = 28.59, p < .001$), perceived effort ($F(1, 194) = .08, NS$), and quality ($F(1, 194) = 3.22, p = .074$), showed the same effect of brand owners on forgiveness ($F(1, 194) = 7.74, p = .006$).

STUDY 2

1. **Beautiful_baseline condition:** “Imagine that a new bakery just opened in the neighborhood. One morning, you decide to stop by and try it out. You order a regular vanilla cupcake at the average market price. After you wait a few minutes, the employee brings out the cupcake pictured below:
2. **Non-beautiful_baseline:** “Imagine that a new bakery just opened in the neighborhood. One morning, you decide to stop by and try it out. You order a regular vanilla cupcake at the average market price. After you wait a few minutes, the employee brings out the cupcake pictured below:
3. **Beautiful_low effort:** “Imagine that a new bakery just opened in the neighborhood. One morning, you decide to stop by and try it out. You order a regular vanilla cupcake at the average market price. After you wait a few minutes, the employee brings out the cupcake pictured below... While waiting for your cupcake, you learn a great deal about the work involved in making each cupcake at this bakery. You are quite surprised by how little effort is actually required for each cupcake. The small time commitment, the simple set of tools, and the basic techniques associated with each step were all fascinating to finally understand.”
4. **Non-beautiful_high effort:** “Imagine that a new bakery just opened in the neighborhood. One morning, you decide to stop by and try it out. You order a regular vanilla cupcake at the average market price. After you wait a few minutes, the employee brings out the cupcake pictured below... While waiting for your cupcake, you learn a great deal about the work involved in making each cupcake at this bakery. You are quite surprised by how much effort is actually required for each cupcake. The large time commitment, the

complex set of tools, and the intricate techniques associated with each step were all fascinating to finally understand.”

High Beauty vs. Low Beauty cupcake



STUDY 3

All participants read the following: “You are walking to work one morning and notice that a new café has just opened in the neighborhood. Since you've never heard of it, you decide to go online and read some reviews. Take a moment to read the reviews about the new café below”.

Café Reviews

★★★★★ Han Z. 4/11/2017

This gem of a café just opened in the neighborhood – real espresso maker, they grind their own high quality beans, and put a lot of love and dedication in everything they do. Stop by if you haven't already!

★★★★★ Jamie A. 4/4/2017

Incredible coffee shop. All the drinks are amazing, probably the best I've had in this area, brewed from the highest quality beans. Definitely recommend.

★★★★★ James C. 3/28/2017

Very good coffee and reasonable prices (all drinks are between \$2-5) given their super high quality. Will come back!

★★★★★ Vince T. 3/21/2017

Excellent products, good prices - \$3.50 for that high quality cappuccino was a steal. You will not be disappointed - definitely a keeper.

★★★★★ Andy L. 2/28/2017

This new coffee shop is probably the best coffee I've had in the world - and I've had A LOT of coffee! The espresso is top notch and their baristas are unreal. Their drip coffee is unique, and both their cappuccinos and macchiatos are absolute perfection. Super high quality, rightly priced, what more do you want? So excited this just opened in my neighborhood!

★★★★★ Alex R. 2/20/2017

Just stopped by at this new café – their cappuccino is out of this world! Paid \$3.50 for it and boy was that worth it! The bold taste of the coffee paired with the frothy, smooth milk was truly stellar. Super appropriate prices given the incredible quality.

Participants then read: “Since the reviews are all very positive and most mornings you stop somewhere to buy a cappuccino, you decide to stop at the new café and try it out. You enter the café and notice a sign saying they use the highest end beans to brew all their coffees. You order a regular cappuccino and pay \$3.50. After you wait a few minutes, the barista hands you the cappuccino pictured below.” Participants in the high beauty condition then saw a cappuccino with beautiful foam art, while those in the low beauty condition saw a cappuccino with plain foam.

High Beauty vs. Low Beauty cappuccino



STUDY 4

First, all participants read the following scenario: “Imagine that you want to buy yourself a new watch. You go online to start browsing for options. After searching on several different websites, the watch pictured below captures your attention.” Depending on condition, participants then viewed a watch that was either high or low in beauty.

High Beauty vs. Low Beauty Watch



Next, participants in the high and low beauty conditions read: “After looking at the watch for a bit, you decide to buy it. You add it to your cart, pay for it and receive a confirmation e-mail stating your delivery date.” Participants in the low beauty + surprise condition instead read: “After looking at the watch for a bit, you decide to buy it. You add it to your cart, and a message pops up, informing you that since you are a new customer, you will receive 30% off your purchase. You pay for it and receive a confirmation e-mail stating your delivery date.”

Failure: “Now, imagine that you have received the watch and that it looks exactly as it was pictured on the website. After three days of wearing the watch, however, you notice that the watch has stopped running.”

Items from the Perceiving Sacredness in Life Scale (Doehring et al. 2009)

- I see the sacred in all of life
- I feel reverence for all living things
- I see each person, each leaf, each raindrop, all of creation harboring a spiritual presence
- Sacredness shows itself in a variety of ways in my life
- I find sacredness in the everyday of life
- I perceive the presence of the divine reflected through all creation
- I sense a divine spark in living things
- There are things, ideas, or actions in life that I experience as sacred
- I see each creature as a sacred part of the web of life

Reference: Doehring, Carrie, Ann Clarke, Kenneth I. Pargament, Alice Hayes, Dean Hammer, Markos Nickolas, and Patricia Hughes (2009), "Perceiving sacredness in life: Correlates and predictors," *Archive for the Psychology of Religion*, 31(1), 55-73.

STUDY 5

First, all participants read the following scenario: “Imagine that you want to buy yourself a new watch. You go online to start browsing for options. After searching on several different websites, the women’s (men’s) watch pictured below captures your attention.” They were then shown a picture of either a woman’s or man’s watch (depending on the participant’s gender), manipulated between subjects as being either high or low beauty.

High Beauty vs. Low Beauty, Women’s (left) & Men’s (right) watches



Next, participants were randomly assigned to one of the following “corporate values” manipulations. In the “in sync” condition, participants learned from the company’s website that it “honors several causes that you hold near and dear to your heart—things that represent the values that are most sacred to you. On various issues, including healthcare, education, religion and same-sex marriage, the company’s values are completely in-sync with your own.” In the “out of sync” condition, participants learned that the company “disdains several causes that you hold near and dear to your heart—things that represent the values that are most sacred to you. On various issues, including healthcare, education, religion and same-sex marriage, the company’s

values are completely out of sync with your own.” In the neutral condition, participants were told that they looked at the company’s website; they did not receive any additional information.

Failure: “Now imagine that you have received the watch. The watch works fine. Unfortunately, however, there is a noticeable crack on the watch face. You call the company and are told that in order to address the issue, you'll need to send the watch back to the company.”

Values manipulation check questions:

- To what extent do you think this company has strong morals?
- To what extent do you think this company's sacred values are in line with your own?
- To what extent do you think this company understands what is sacred in the world and what is not?
- To what extent do you think this company respects the values that are sacred to you?

STUDY 6

All participants first read the following scenario (identifying city and university information has been redacted): “A local [city] candy store, The Sweet Life, is now partnering with [University] and the [Behavioral Lab] to spread greater awareness of its products on [University] campus and the greater [city] area, while learning more about consumers. As part of this effort, The Sweet Life has delivered one of their best products to us and would appreciate you taking the time to sample their candy.” The candy store was fictitious and served as a cover story for the actual products participants sampled.

High Beauty vs. Low Beauty Packaging

