



The impact of Janus fit brand extensions on perceived brand innovativeness

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ABSTRACT

This research addresses “Janus fit” brand extensions: extensions that are perceived to have both “fitting” and “unfitting” associations vis-a-vis the parent brand. One pre-experiment and three main experiments show that when a brand introduces a Janus fit brand extension, it is perceived to be more innovative than when it introduces either a traditional high fit extension or a low fit extension. The effects are mediated by surprise feelings. Specifically, the high brand innovativeness ratings obtained by the Janus fit extensions are explained by the fact that they elicit moderately high surprise feelings in consumers, instead of low surprise feelings (as high fit extensions) or excessively high surprise feelings (as low fit extensions). The Janus fit extensions can also be seen to evoke a “Eureka surprise experience”: an initial feeling of surprise, followed by a sudden realization that the brand extension after all makes sense for the brand in question.

1. Introduction

Brand extensions (i.e., new products introduced by an existing brand in a product category that is new for the brand) impact brand image, since brand image refers to consumers’ knowledge about a given brand and since brand extensions constitute new information about the brand (Michel & Donthu, 2014; Milberg, Cuneo, Silva & Goodstein, 2023; Salinas & Pérez, 2009).

One brand image-related goal that companies typically have when launching brand extensions is to reinforce the brand’s image as an *innovative* or *pioneering* brand, in particular (Aaker, 1996; Brown, 1998; Gürhan-Canli & Batra, 2004; Keller, 2003). A smartly executed brand extension can indeed reinforce the brand’s innovativeness or pioneering image¹ among consumers, even if the brand extension product itself was not—objectively speaking—highly innovative, let alone “new to the world” (cf. Garcia & Calantone, 2002). For instance, by launching the e-book reader Nook in 2010, the book retailer brand Barnes & Noble was able to reinvigorate itself as an innovative brand—even though Barnes &

Noble was objectively a late-mover in the market, coming after Amazon’s Kindle (2007) and Sony’s Reader (2009). Likewise, Apple has been able to maintain its image as an extremely innovative, pioneering brand through regular brand extensions, even if its brand extension products *per se* have not always been pioneering or highly innovative in their respective markets. For instance, Apple did not introduce its smartwatch Apple Watch until 2015, when Samsung, Sony, Microsoft, and others had already had similar smartwatches in the market for years.²

Despite the fact that in practice, many companies hence want to boost their brands’ innovativeness image by launching brand extensions, academic research on this matter is, surprisingly, almost nonexistent. As a rare exception, Chun et al. (2015) studied how different kinds of brand extensions—ones with ordinary benefits vs. ones with “innovative” benefits—induced positive “spillover effects” on consumer evaluations of the parent brand. However, while focusing on consumers’ *general* evaluations of the parent brand, even Chun et al.’s study (2015) did not examine how different kinds of brand extensions affected consumer perceptions of the *innovativeness* of the parent brand. To address

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¹ Hereinafter, we use the terms “perceived innovativeness of a brand,” “a brand’s innovative image,” and “a brand’s pioneering image” interchangeably as synonyms, referring to the extent to which consumers perceive the brand to be innovative, pioneering, or early-mover compared to competitors in the same product/service categories.

² In a similar vein, Apple launched its video content service Apple TV+, ostensibly as a “me-too” product, as late as in 2019, years later than Netflix, HBO, and Disney. Note, however, that this is not to say that new products such as Apple Watch or Apple TV+ would not have included some innovative elements in terms of technology or user experience compared to competitors, or that just launching these products as brand extensions (with or without innovative elements) would have been, alone, sufficient for Apple to maintain its innovative brand image.

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this gap, this study asks as its research question: Can the type of brand extension influence consumer perceptions of the parent brand's innovativeness, such that certain type(s) of brand extensions are perceived more (vs. less) innovative for a given brand—even though the degree of innovativeness of the brand extension product per se remained approximately the same?

In examining this question, the present research focuses on the perceived innovativeness effects of brand extension types that differ in terms of perceived *fit* between the brand extension product and the parent brand. The present conceptual framework concurs with recent research (Deng & Messinger, 2022) in underlining that brand extension–parent brand fit is not a unidimensional construct, as traditionally assumed (cf. Mathur, Malika, Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2023; Gerrath & Biraglia, 2021; Pontes & Pontes, 2021; Yuen, Nieroda, He & Park, 2021). Yet, the present approach advances the multi-dimensionality argument even further, positing that it is not only relevant to pay attention to the degree of perceived fit between the parent brand and the brand extension product, but also to the degree of perceived “unfit” between the two. To this end, the present approach classifies brand extensions in terms of both perceived fit and perceived unfit, considering each of these two as separate, multi-dimensional constructs.

The present empirical studies focus on examining the perceived innovativeness of brands in launching one of three types of brand extensions, each conceptualized in the dual terms of “fit” and “unfit”. The first type is a traditional “near” or “high-fit” brand extension (Mathur, Malika, Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2023), which scores high on perceived fit with the parent brand, and low on perceived unfit. The second type is a traditional “far” or “low-fit” extension (Gerrath & Biraglia, 2021), which has a low perceived fit and high perceived unfit. In contrast, the third brand extension type considered presently is new to the literature. The third type features—somewhat paradoxically—both high fit and high unfit with the parent brand, at the same time. Due to this paradoxical nature, such brand extensions are presently labeled to have a “Janus-faced fit” (or “Janus fit”, in short) with the parent brand. In practice, a “Janus fit” brand extension product is defined as one that has several features that fit well with the parent brand's current brand image, but also many features that do not fit well with it.

When it comes to the research question, the present research hypothesizes that for a given brand, it is the “Janus fit” brand extensions that are likely to be perceived as most innovative or pioneering. This hypothesis is based on psychological (e.g., Meyer et al., 1991; Shen, Yuan, Liu & Luo, 2016; Topolinski & Reber, 2010) and marketing theory (Shams, Alpert & Brown, 2015) related to consumer feelings of surprise. Specifically, it is theorized that to make the brand to be perceived as innovative, the brand extension product must create a certain degree of surprise feelings in consumers. Based on this theorization, a traditional high-fit brand extension, which is unlikely to create much surprise feelings at all, is unlikely to lead to high perceptions of brand innovativeness. At the other extreme, a traditional low-fit extension may elicit so strong surprise feelings that consumers get confounded, and thus do not view the brand's innovativeness very positively, either. In contrast, we hypothesize that Janus fit brand extensions elicit an optimal level (and type) of surprise feelings in consumers, and thereby lead to highest brand innovativeness perceptions.

In present research, a pre-experiment followed by three main experiments confirm the above main hypothesis. The pre-experiment initially shows that the innovativeness image of a given brand (i.e., Samsung) is higher in case the brand launches a Janus fit brand extension, *versus* a case when the same brand launches a traditional high fit extension. The first main experiment replicates the result of the pre-experiment with another brand (Apple), while also adding a traditional low-fit brand extension to the comparison as well as testing the level of surprise feelings as the mediating variable to the effects. The second main experiment replicates the results of the first one, in a correlational setting. Finally, the third main experiment confirms the results by utilizing an alternative measure of surprise feeling: a “eureka

surprise experience.” In such a eureka experience, the consumer's initial surprise feeling about a given brand extension is balanced out as the consumer realizes that the brand extension actually makes good sense, after all, for the brand in question. Thus, Experiment 3 shows that the positive effect of a Janus fit brand extension on perceived brand innovativeness can also be explained by the fact that such an extension elicits a eureka surprise experience in consumers.

The present research contributes to three areas of literature. First, it extends the literature on brand extensions' spillover effects on consumers' parent brand evaluations (Buil, Chernatony & Hem, 2009; Martinez & Pina, 2010; Mathur, Jain & Maheswaran, 2012). For this literature, the present research shifts the focus from brand extensions' general spillover effects to their spillover effects on parent brands' perceived innovativeness in particular. Second, the present research adds to recent literature adopting a multi-dimensional conceptualization of “fit” between brand extensions and parent brands (cf. Deng & Messinger, 2022). For this literature, the present results demonstrate that not only is it worthwhile to measure the fit between a brand extension product and the parent brand in a multi-dimensional manner, but a multi-dimensional measure of “unfit” is also relevant and needed—at least when studying the effects of brand extensions on perceived brand innovativeness. Third, the present research also contributes to product innovation literature (e.g., Garcia & Calantone, 2002; Shams, Alpert & Brown, 2015) by demonstrating that perceived brand innovativeness is not solely determined by the degree of innovativeness of the new products, per se, that the brand introduces. Rather, a new product's degrees of fit and unfit with the brand are key determinants of how innovative the brand is perceived to be, when launching the product. Managerially, the findings of the present research suggest that managers who want to improve the perception of their brand as being innovative should focus on introducing brand extension products that simultaneously have several elements that fit well with the brand's current image, and ones that do not fit well.

2. Conceptual background

2.1. Literature on brand extensions' spillover effects on parent brands

A brand extension refers to a new product (or service) launched by an existing brand in a product category that is new for the parent brand (Loken & John, 1993; Miniard, Jayanti, Alvarez & Dickson, 2018; Peng, Bijmolt, Völckner, & Zhao, 2023; Völckner & Sattler, 2006). The vast majority of research on brand extensions has focused on consumer evaluations of the brand extension product itself (e.g., Gierl & Huettl, 2011; Sunde & Brodie, 1993). Only a few brand extension studies have addressed—let alone focused on—the effects that brand extensions have on consumer attitudes *toward the parent brand* that launches the brand extension (Keller & Sood, 2003). In alignment with past research (Balachander and Ghose, 2003; Chun et al., 2015), the present research refers to these effects (i.e., the effects of a brand extension on the parent brand) as “spillover effects of brand extensions.”

The table in Appendix A summarizes earlier studies on brand extensions' spillover effects on the parent brand. Most of the extant research on brand extensions' spillover effects has focused on consumers' overall attitudinal or affective evaluations of the parent brand (incl. brand evaluation, brand attitude, brand quality perception, brand engagement, brand preference/choice) as the outcome variable. Some studies have also addressed brand extensions' spillover effects on qualitative brand associations, such as certain brand personality dimensions (e.g., Mathur, Jain & Maheswaran, 2012), brand beliefs (e.g., Loken & John, 1993; Sheinin, 2000), brand associations (e.g., Chun et al., 2015), or brand image dimensions (e.g., Martinez & Pina, 2010). However, to our knowledge, there are no prior studies that would have addressed brand extensions' spillover effects on perceived *innovativeness* of the parent brand, as the focal outcome variable. Even the above-mentioned study by Chun et al. (2015), which included product

innovativeness as a predictor or moderator variable, did not assess the effect of product innovativeness on perceived parent brand innovativeness.

As further visible in Appendix A, approximately half of the studies addressing the spillover effects of brand extensions on parent brand evaluations focus on the spillover effects of brand extension–parent brand fit, in particular (for instance, Mathur, Malika, Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2023). Similar to general brand extension studies, which have found that a higher perceived fit between the brand extension product and the parent brand tends to lead to higher product evaluations for the brand extension product (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Pontes & Pontes, 2021), brand extension spillover studies have found that a higher perceived fit also tends to lead to higher overall evaluations for the parent brand (Buil, Chernatony & Hem, 2009). However, whether this is also the case for perceived brand innovativeness (i.e., whether a higher perceived fit of the brand extension leads to a higher perception of brand innovativeness) remains an unstudied question thus far.

2.2. Literature on multidimensional conceptualizations of perceived fit

Indeed, ever since early brand extension studies (e.g., Aaker & Keller, 1990; Keller & Aaker, 1992; Park, Milberg & Lawson, 1991), the concept of “perceived fit” has been the most widely studied predictor of consumers’ evaluations of both the brand extension products and of the parent brand (Appendix A). In general, these studies have assumed that consumers form their perceptions of fit mostly by assessing the similarity, congruence, or match between the product category of the brand extension product and parent brand’s previous product categories (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Chun et al., 2015; Keller & Aaker, 1992). Another common dimension of fit that consumers have been shown to assess is the abstract “brand concept fit.” The brand concept fit refers to whether the perceived nature of the extension product as a prestige-oriented vs. functionally-oriented product is similar or congruent with the perceived nature of the parent brand (Park, Milberg & Lawson, 1991; Ahn & Sung, 2012).

Beyond these most common dimensions of fit (similar product categories; similarly prestigious vs. functional nature), consumers can also pay attention to any other brand-specific associations (Broniarczyk & Alba, 1994) when evaluating the perceived similarity and, thereby, fit between a brand extension product and the parent brand. As noted by psychological theory, such similarity associations may reflect a wide variety of taxonomic as well as thematic similarities (Estes, 2003; Guest, Gibbert, Estes, Mazursky & Lam, 2016). In taxonomic similarity, the brand extension product and the parent brand are perceived to share some common features. This is the case, for instance, in the above examples of a shared product category, or shared prestigious vs. functional nature, between the brand extension product and the parent brand’s earlier products (see also Johnson, Tian & Lee, 2016). In thematic similarity, in turn, the similarity arises from a certain feature of the brand extension product serving in a complementary role vis-a-vis a certain feature of the parent brand. As an example, the brand extension product may be perceived as thematically similar to the parent brand if the extension product can be used, in a complementary fashion, in the same usage context or situation as where the brand’s earlier products are commonly used.

Based on this notion, a recent study proposed a “multidimensional” conceptualization of perceived fit (Deng & Messinger, 2022), wherein consumers are seen to assess the fit between a brand extension product and the parent brand on six dimensions (see also Keller, Sternthal & Tybout, 2002): *functionality*-based fit (i.e., taxonomic similarity of the basic functions of the extension product and those of the brand’s other products); *usage occasion*-based fit (i.e., thematic similarity of the basic usage occasions of the extension product and those of the brand’s other products); *feature*-based fit (i.e., taxonomic similarity of the basic attributes of the extension product and those of the brand’s other products); *image*-based fit (i.e., taxonomic similarity of the abstract associations

related to the extension product [e.g., prestige, price] and those related to the brand); *resource*-based fit (i.e., thematic similarity of the skills and abilities that the production of the extension product vs. the brand’s other products is perceived to require); and *market*-based fit (i.e., thematic similarity of the target market and customers of the extension product and those of the brand’s other products).

Similar to Deng and Messinger’s (2022) conceptualization, the present research considers multiple dimensions based on which consumers assess brand extension–parent brand fit. As detailed in Appendix B, all six dimensions of Deng and Messinger (2022) are covered in the present conceptualization, even though there are minor differences in the sub-dimensions of each dimension. However, whereas Deng and Messinger (2022) estimate only one formative measure of fit as a summative outcome of a weighted regression of the six dimensions, our conceptualization and measure rely on a count-based calculation of the degree of fit and, in parallel, degree of unfit.

Indeed, in Deng and Messinger’s model, the degree of unfit would be an arithmetic reverse of the degree of fit (i.e., if the factor score for fit was, e.g., +2 on a scale of –3 to +3, the score for unfit would be –2). In the present measurement, for the “fit count”, we instead sum up the number of sub-dimensions (out of 20 sub-dimensions) on which the consumer rates the brand extension as having an unambiguously high perceived fit (e.g., ratings 6–7 on a scale from 1 to 7). Likewise, for a separate “unfit count,” we sum up the number of sub-dimensions on which the consumer rates the brand extension to have a low perceived fit (e.g., ratings 1–2 on a scale from 1 to 7). Subsequently, taking a mean of the individual consumers’ “fit count” and “unfit count”, respectively, across a sample of consumers allows us to characterize any brand extension as “high fit” (i.e., high mean fit count, low mean unfit count), “low fit” (i.e., low mean fit count, high mean unfit count), or “Janus fit” (i.e., high mean fit count, high mean unfit count).

Further, it is worth noting that in the scoring of Deng and Messinger (2022), a brand extension needs to score relatively high values on most fit dimensions (and no low values on almost any fit dimension), to represent high fit. In contrast, in the present conceptualization, a brand extension may have a high fit score (if it scores a high value on a number of sub-dimensions of fit), independent of whether it has a low or high unfit score. That is, very low values on certain sub-dimensions of fit will count towards a high unfit score for the extension, but this does directly affect or take down the high fit score. In this sense, our conceptualization bears some resemblance to that of Michel and Donthu (2014), who recognize that when considering two sub-dimensions, a brand extension can have a high “consistency” with the parent brand on one sub-dimension, while having a low consistency on the other.

2.3. Literature on moderate levels of perceived fit

The new type of brand extension identified in present research—the Janus fit brand extension—is defined as scoring high on many sub-dimensions of fit, while simultaneously scoring low on many other sub-dimensions. Given that elements of both high fit and unfit are hence present in such brand extensions, a question that arises is whether such a brand extension is any different from brand extensions that earlier research has referred to as extensions of “moderate” fit/similarity (Su, Monga & Jiang, 2021) or incongruence (Maos & Tybout, 2002) vis-à-vis the parent brand. The main difference between the present Janus fit brand extensions and the moderate fit brand extensions discussed in previous research lies in the fact that previous research has conceptualized the moderate fit extensions through one singular fit dimension only, whereas the present conceptualization relies on 20 sub-dimensions of fit and unfit. That is, previous research has conceptualized moderate fit extensions as those that obtain medium (not high, not low) scores either (i) regarding the perceived similarity of the extension product category with the product categories that consumers associate with the brand (Hernandez, Wright & Affonso, 2019), or regarding (ii) perceived overall fit, consistency, or appropriateness between the extension

product and the parent brand (Miniard, Alvarez & Mohammed, 2020; Su, Monga & Jiang, 2021).

In contrast, the present Janus fit extension is defined by the fact that it obtains high (not medium or low) scores on a number of sub-dimensions of fit as well as low (not medium or high) scores on a number of other sub-dimensions of fit. Thus, for instance, an extension that obtains medium scores on all the present 20 sub-dimensions of fit would not be classified as Janus fit extension, but it would be classified as moderate fit extension in terms of the previous research (ii). On the other hand, an extension that scored a high value on (i) perceived similarity between the extension's product category and the brand's product categories would be classified a high fit extension (not a moderate fit extension) in terms of previous research—but if the extension simultaneously obtained a low fit score on a number of other dimensions, it would likely be classified as a Janus fit extension in the present framework (assuming that the extension also has a few other high-fit sub-dimensions than product category similarity).

Most of the extant research on moderate fit extensions has addressed their effects on consumer evaluations of the extension product (e.g., Fedorikhin, Park, & Thomson, 2008; Kovalenko, Sorescu & Houston, 2022; Miniard, Alvarez & Mohammed, 2020; Su, Monga & Jiang, 2021). Only a few studies (see Appendix A) have addressed the spillover effects of moderate fit extensions on consumer evaluations of the parent brand (Keller & Aaker, 1992; Kim, Lavack, & Smith, 2001; Loken & John, 1993; Ng, 2010). In both these research streams, the moderate fit extensions have tended to lead to higher evaluations of the brand extension product and/or of the parent brand, in comparison with either low fit extensions or high fit extensions. In the present research, when examining whether the Janus fit extensions lead to higher perceptions of the parent brand's innovativeness, we also check whether the Janus fit extensions are indeed different, in empirical terms, from traditional moderate fit extensions.

2.4. Hypothesis development

The present research derives its hypotheses from psychological theory on consumers' mental schemas (Wagoner, 2013), as well as on feelings of surprise that consumers may experience when encountering new objects or information that partially conflicts with pre-existing schemas (Meyer, Reisenzein & Schützwohl, 1997). In psychology, schemas refer to the categorization of knowledge in human minds that helps make sense of the world around and, thereby, influence individuals' beliefs and behaviors (McVee, Dunsmore & Gavelek, 2005; Neumann & Kopcha, 2018). As noted by prior consumer research, an individual consumer can be considered as holding or possessing a brand-specific schema for all the brands the consumer is familiar with (Braun, 1999). That is, all knowledge about a given brand, as acquired through prior experiences with the brand or its marketing (Halkias, 2015), is stored and processed according to a schema specific to that brand. Consequently, when consumers encounter new brand-related stimuli, such as a new product introduced by the brand, they assess the perceived consistency of the new stimulus vis-à-vis the schema of the brand stored in their minds (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Chun et al., 2015; Keller & Aaker, 1992).

By definition, a new brand extension product represents some new information vis-à-vis a consumer's mental schema pertaining to that brand. As such, all brand extensions are, at least to some extent, "schema-discrepancy events" (Meyer, Reisenzein & Schützwohl, 1997), and the novel, schema-discrepant information will elicit at least some feelings of surprise in the consumer (Meyer, Niepel, Rudolph & Schützwohl, 1991; Silva, 2009). Logically, brand extensions that have a lower fit with the parent brand, and hence represent more discrepant information vis-à-vis the existing brand schema, will lead to greater feelings of surprise. Correspondingly, brand extensions that have a higher fit with the parent brand, thus being more congruent with the existing brand schema, will lead to lesser feelings of surprise. From the

perspective of the present research question, a question that remains is how the greater vs. lesser feelings of surprise are associated with perceived brand innovativeness. This is not a trivial question, as feelings of surprise related to brand extensions could lead to either positive or negative effects, depending on the exact outcome under study (Eklund & Helmfalk, 2022).

When it comes to the specific outcome of perceived brand innovativeness, a past qualitative study found that consumers associate innovative brands with surprising products (Shams, Alpert, and Brown, 2015). Based on this, it can be expected that brands that introduce brand extension products that elicit greater feelings of surprise, will be generally perceived to be more innovative. However, excessive feelings of surprise may also backfire, and break this general pattern. Indeed, a prior study observed that brand extensions with *very low fit* with the parent brand generated most feelings of surprise but did not obtain the most favorable overall evaluations from consumers (Meyers-Levy, Louie, and Curren, 1994).

The present research essentially extends the above observation to consumer perceptions of brand innovativeness. Specifically, we anticipate that at very high levels of surprise feelings elicited by low fit brand extensions, the normally positive undertone of surprise feelings is likely to obtain negative connotations of confusion and bizarreness, which will likely undermine consumer evaluations of brand innovativeness (Meyer, Niepel, Rudolph, & Schützwohl, 1994). In contrast, we further anticipate that the Janus fit brand extensions are also likely to elicit high levels of surprise, but not excessively high, or not so high that negative connotations of confusion and bizarreness would take place. This is because although consumers will be surprised by the many dimensions of the brand extension that are unfitting to the brand (reflected in the high "unfit score"), they will still be able to partially accommodate the brand extension with the existing brand schema due to the fact that the Janus fit extension also features many dimensions that are fitting well fit the parent brand (simultaneously high "fit score"). Accordingly, despite the surprising nature of the Janus fit brand extension, consumers are likely to perceive it to make sense (instead of being confusing and bizarre), which will lead to more favorable perceptions of brand innovativeness (compared to low fit brand extension). Analogously, a recent study indicated that consumers may respond favorably to brands when their values have simultaneously both congruence and incongruence with a consumer's own personal values (Michel, Torelli, Fleck & Hubert, 2022).

To summarize the above discussion, we pose the following hypotheses:

H1: When a brand launches a Janus fit brand extension, it will be perceived as more innovative than when the brand launches either (a) a high fit extension or (b) a low fit extension.

H2: The relationship between brand extension types and perceived brand innovativeness is mediated by surprise feelings elicited by the extension, such that perceived innovativeness will be highest when the surprise feelings are moderately high (as in a Janus fit extension) as opposed to low (as in high fit extension) or very high (as in low fit extension).

3. Overview of the studies

3.1. Pre-experiment and three main experiments

To formally test the hypotheses, we designed and conducted a Pre-experiment as well as three main experiments online. The Pre-experiment focused on experimentally comparing a traditional high fit brand extension with the focal type of brand extension: the Janus fit extension. To keep the Pre-experiment simple, it focused only on the main effects of these two extension types (hypothesis H1a), excluding the third extension type, low fit extension (H1b). The Pre-experiment did not assess the mediating effect of surprise feelings, either.

Moreover, to keep the parent brand constant, both fictitious extensions that were presented to participants in the Pre-experiment had the same parent brand: Samsung. The high fit extension presented to participants was a fictitious, new car navigator device from Samsung (called Samsung Navigator). The Janus fit extension, in turn, was a fictitious, new video-streaming service focused on physical and sports training material (called Samsung Gym).

Augmenting the Pre-experiment, the main Experiment 1 had three aims. Specifically, Experiment 1 sought to (i) replicate the findings of the Pre-experiment on Janus fit and high fit extensions in the context of another parent brand (Apple); (ii) include the third type of brand extension (low fit) to compare all the three types of brand extensions (both H1a and H1b); and (iii) include a measure of the key mediating variable (feelings of surprise) to test hypothesis H2. In Experiment 1, the Janus fit and high fit extension products presented to the participants were the same as in the Pre-experiment (high fit: Apple Navigator; Janus fit: Apple Gym). As the low fit extension product, participants were presented with a fictitious, new domestic renovation tool from Apple, called “Apple Drill.”

Experiment 2, in turn, had the following four aims. First, it (i) aimed to complement the experimental study design of the other studies with a correlational design. Second, Experiment 2 aimed (ii) to take into account the fact that there may be considerable variance across individual consumers in the perceptions related to a given brand extension, as well as in the feelings of surprise elicited by the extension (i.e., some individuals are likely to be more surprised by a particular brand extension from a given brand than others). Third, Experiment 2 (iii) pursued further evidence of the role of surprise feelings, by examining the correlations in individual-level variance of surprise feelings elicited by the brand extension and perceived brand innovativeness. Fourth, (iv) to improve the generalizability of the results, and to avoid just utilizing one Janus fit extension product (Apple/Samsung Gym) in all studies, Experiment 2 addressed another fictitious example of a Janus fit extension. That is, the Janus fit extension presented to the participants in Experiment 2 was a new low-cost online taxi booking platform, fictitiously introduced by Apple/Samsung.

Finally, Experiment 3 sought to (i) replicate the main findings of Experiment 1 on a larger sample size; (ii) control for whether priming participants with information about previous brand extensions by the brand would change the results obtained in Experiment 1; and (iii) test the mediating effect of surprise feeling by using an alternative measure of surprise feeling that consumers could experience: the eureka surprise experience. When it comes to (i) replicating the main findings of Experiment 1, Experiment 3 also aimed (iv) to check whether the results hold even if the questionnaire itself did not include questions about the 20 sub-dimensions of brand extension–parent brand fit. In Experiment 1 (as well as Pre-experiment and Experiment 2), those questions may have primed the respondents to think in a particular way about the questions related to the outcome variables, potentially creating demand effects.

Table 1 below presents an overview of the Pre-experiment and three Experiments.

3.2. Manipulation checks

The Pre-experiment, Experiment 1, and Experiment 2 included a manipulation check to confirm that the fictitious brand extension products presented in the experiments were of the presumed type. Notice that such a manipulation check was not included in Experiment 3, because all the three brand extension stimuli included in Experiment 3 had already been manipulation checked in Pre-experiment and Experiment 1.

To conduct the manipulation checks, the present research used a multi-dimensional, count-based calculation approach to perceived fit, as described above (see section 2.2.). Specifically, participants rated the similarity vs. dissimilarity of the extension product vis-à-vis the parent brand along 20 sub-dimensions, on a 7-point scale each (1 =

Table 1
Overview of the present studies.

	Sample size	Parent brand	Brand Extension Types			Manipulated variables	Mediating variable	Hypothesis tested
			High-fit	Janus-fit	Low-fit			
Pre-experiment	103	Samsung	Yes (car navigator device)	Yes (gym video-streaming)	-	Brand extension type	-	H1a
Experiment 1	153	Apple	Yes (car navigator device)	Yes (gym video-streaming)	Yes (drill-screw-driver)	Brand extension type	Surprise feelings	H1a; H1b; H2
Experiment 2	95	Apple; Samsung	-	Yes (taxi ordering platform)	-	Parent brand name	Surprise feelings (individual feeling as predictor)	H2 (indirect correlational evidence)
Experiment 3	713	Apple	Yes (car navigator device)	Yes (gym video-streaming)	Yes (drill-screw-driver)	Brand extension type; Priming with prior brand extensions; Surprise	Eureka surprise experience	H1a; H1b; H2alt

“Completely different” ... 4 = “Partly the same, partly different”... 7 = “Exactly the same”; see Appendix B for the sub-dimensions). For each respondent, we then calculated a count-based “unfit count” by counting the number of dimensions for which their response was 1 (“Completely different”) or 2 (“Quite different”) and a “fit count” by counting the number of dimensions for which their response was 6 (“Quite the same”) or 7 (“Exactly the same”). With the 20 sub-dimensions counted in, the maximum value for both count scores for each individual was 20, and the minimum value 0. Based on the individual-level fit count and unfit count, we also calculated a “fit–unfit difference” score as the difference of an individual’s fit count and unfit count for a given brand extension (running, arithmetically, from -20 to +20).

Subsequently, we calculated the mean fit and unfit counts, and the mean fit–unfit differences across all the participants exposed to a particular brand extension. By comparing these mean scores with each other and the mean scores of other brand extensions, we could then assess whether the manipulated brand extensions were of the presumed type (i.e., high fit, Janus fit, or low fit). The results of these manipulation checks are reported in the results sections of the respective studies below.

3.3. Control test of product innovativeness

Our overall research question was: “Can the type of brand extension influence consumer perceptions of the parent brand’s innovativeness, such that certain type(s) of brand extensions are perceived more (vs. less) innovative for a given brand—even though the degree of innovativeness of the brand extension product per se remained approximately the same?” Therefore, in addition to conducting the pre-experiment and the three main experiments, we conducted a “control test” to verify that the extension products presented to the participants in the studies would not, *per se*, differ in perceived innovativeness. That is, the control test would confirm that any effects on perceived parent brand innovativeness would be due to differences in brand extension–parent brand fit rather than to differences in the innovativeness of the extension products themselves.

The control test was run on a separate sample (n = 33) of MTurk participants, who were not taking part in the main studies. The control test employed a within-subject design, wherein all the control test participants responded to questions about each of the extension products included in the main studies. The order in which the extension products were shown to individual participants was randomized. The questionnaire did not mention any particular brands (like Samsung or Apple) when introducing the products, in order to make the participants focus on the products per se, not on any brand information. The test questions were related to the newness of the products’ benefits (“How new are the benefits of this [product name] compared with competitors existing in the market?”, 1=“Very old”...7=“Very new”); overall novelty (“How novel would you say this new [product name] is?” 1 = “Very non-novel” ... 7 = “Very novel”); and usefulness of the products’ benefits (“How useful are the benefits of this new [product name] compared with competitors existing in the market?”, 1= “Very un-useful” ... 7 = “Very useful;” all three items were adapted from Chun et al., 2015). [Table 2](#)

Table 2
Control test of perceived innovativeness of products included in main studies.

	Product novelty overall	Benefit newness	Benefit usefulness	Pre-exp.	Exp. 1	Exp. 2	Exp. 3
Navigator (car navigator device)	M = 4.88; SE = .28	M = 4.97; SE = .26	M = 5.39; SE = .24	✓	✓	(only one extension studied, Taxi)	✓
Gym (gym video-streaming)	M = 4.85; SE = .28	M = 4.91; SE = .28	M = 5.42; SE = .23	✓	✓	(only one extension studied, Taxi)	✓
Drill (drill-screw-driver)	M = 5.09; SE = .25	M = 5.00; SE = .21	M = 5.70; SE = .21		✓	(only one extension studied, Taxi)	✓
F test statistic, p value	F(2, 64) = .79 p = .460	F(2, 64) = .08 p = .923	F(2, 64) = 1.99 p = .144				

Notes. The results on the extension product included in Experiment 2 (taxi platform, Taxi) are not included in the table, because Experiment 2 had a correlational design and only one extension product (Apple/Samsung Taxi) was presented to the respondents.

presents the results of the control test, showing that the extension products presented in the present experimental studies did not differ in terms of perceived product innovativeness.

4. Pre-experiment

4.1. Method

Participants: A total of 103 participants from Amazon MTurk participated in the Pre-experiment with complete answers ($M_{age} = 35.7$ years; 40.8 % females). To ensure high-quality, we rejected responses with a suspicious pattern, specifically those (n = 4) who answered with one and the same response value to all the consecutive questions about the 20 sub-dimensions of perceived fit.

Design and procedure: As noted above, the Pre-experiment had a two-cell, between-subjects design: High-Fit Extension (Samsung Navigator) vs. Janus Fit Extension (Samsung Gym). That is, the participants were randomly assigned to read a description of one of these two extensions.

In the experiment material, the participants were first asked about their opinions about Samsung’s brand. This was to make participants’ parent brand-related thoughts and attitudes more salient before presenting them with the fictitious brand extension by Samsung. Next, the extension product was introduced to the participants. Appendix C reproduces the detailed product descriptions. After this, the participants were asked to rate the perceived fit of the extension product for Samsung along the 20 sub-dimensions of fit (Appendix B). On the final pages of the questionnaire, the participants answered questions about the dependent variable (perceived innovativeness of the brand) as well as filler questions regarding the brand and the brand extension, and questions about their demographics and other background characteristics.

Measures: To measure the dependent variable, i.e. the perceived brand innovativeness, we asked the participants to rate how early (or pioneering) vs. late (or follower) they thought the focal brand, Samsung, was in introducing the particular brand extension to the market: “As far as you know, is Samsung among the first ones to launch a product like this to the market (i.e., a car navigator device)?” (1 = “The last one”... 7 = “The first one”). Another alternative would have been to just ask “how innovative the new product is” or “how innovative Samsung’s new product is.” However, the question about the pioneering status of the brand, compared to competitors, was chosen as the focal measure, because participants could have mistaken the “how innovative...” questions to mean how new or innovative the product is for Samsung as a brand (instead of how innovative/pioneering the product is for the entire market or product category).

4.2. Results

Manipulation check: The mean “fit count” (see [section 3.2](#)) for Samsung Gym was $M_{Fit\ count} = 4.84$ and the mean “unfit count” was $M_{Unfit\ count} = 4.46$. These numbers indicate that out of the 20 sub-dimensions of perceived fit, the participants rated the Gym, on average, to represent a high fit for Samsung on 4–5 dimensions, while representing a low fit

(or high *unfit*) on 4–5 dimensions as well. The corresponding numbers for Samsung Navigator were $M_{\text{Fit count}} = 6.04$ and $M_{\text{Unfit count}} = 3.04$, meaning that, on average, participants saw Navigator to be highly fitting for Samsung on up to six dimensions but unfitting only on three dimensions.

Whereas there are no absolute levels of mean “fit count” or “unfit count” that could be considered to be threshold values for high vs. low fit and unfit scores, we relied on the mean “fit–unfit difference” (see section 3.2) to conclude the manipulation check. The mean fit–unfit difference for Samsung Gym was $M = 0.38$, while it was $M = 3.00$ for Samsung Navigator. These (i) two mean ratings differ statistically significantly from each other ($F(1, 101) = 6.92, p < .01$). Moreover, the (ii) former is not significantly different from value 0 (indicating zero difference) ($p > .05$), while the (iii) latter is positive and different from 0 ($p < .0001$). Based on these three observations (i–iii), the manipulation was concluded to have been effective: Samsung Gym was perceived, on average, to be a Janus fit extension, while Samsung Navigator was rather perceived to be a traditional high fit extension.

Test of hypotheses: Regarding the dependent variable—perceived brand innovativeness—a one-way ANOVA reveals that perceived brand innovativeness differed significantly between Janus Fit Extension (Samsung Gym) and High Fit Extension (Samsung Navigator) ($F(1, 101) = 4.081, p = .046$). Specifically, a pairwise comparison (Fig. 1) shows that Samsung was perceived to be significantly more pioneering when introducing the former extension ($M_{\text{Janus fit}} = 4.80$) than when introducing the latter extension ($M_{\text{High fit}} = 4.13; p < .05$). These results support hypothesis H1a. That is, as expected, perceived brand innovativeness is higher for a Janus fit extension than for a traditional high fit extension.

4.3. Discussion

The results of the Pre-experiment suggest that the brand extension–parent brand fit has a significant influence on perceived brand innovativeness. In particular, the results show that when a given brand introduces a Janus fit brand extension—a new product which has both a high count of dimensions which fit well with the brand, and a high count of *unfitting* dimensions—, consumers perceive the brand to be more innovative than when the brand introduces a conventional high fit brand extension. This was shown to be the case even if the extension products *per se* did not differ in perceived innovativeness (see section 3.3).

As its main limitation, the Pre-experiment did not measure the hypothesized (H2) role of surprise feelings in mediating the effect of brand extension types on the perceived innovativeness of the brand. Furthermore, while only including Janus fit vs. high fit extensions, the Pre-

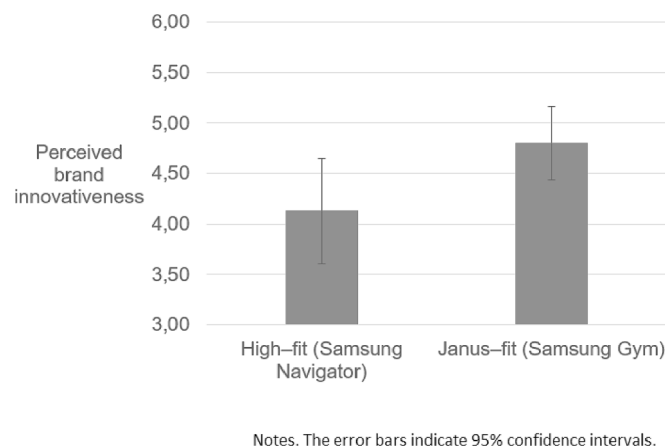


Fig. 1. Pre-experiment results: A brand is perceived to be more innovative when introducing a Janus fit brand extension than when introducing a traditional high fit extension.

experiment did not consider low fit extensions hypothesized in H1b.

5. Experiment 1

5.1. Method

Participants: For Experiment 1, we obtained 153 complete responses from participants on Amazon MTurk ($M_{\text{age}} = 37.6$ years; 43 % females). As in the Pre-experiment, we rejected the suspicious responses of participants ($n = 21$) who answered all to fit dimension questions with one and the same response value.

Design and procedure: Experiment 1 had a three-cell between-subjects design. Specifically, the two extension products included in Pre-experiment (Janus Fit Extension [Gym] and High Fit Extension [Navigator]) were also included in Experiment 1—now only presented with Apple as the parent brand, instead of Samsung. In addition, Experiment 1 included a third condition, Low Fit Extension, presenting the participants with a new drill–screwdriver tool from Apple, called “Apple Drill.” The brand extensions’ detailed descriptions can be found in Appendix D.

Measures: Experiment 1 used the same question for the dependent variable as the Pre-experiment. For measuring the hypothesized mediating variable, feeling of surprise, the questionnaire included two questions adapted from Chun et al. (2015): “How surprised are you to hear that Apple would be introducing a product like [brand extension name] to the market?” (1 = “very surprised”... 7 = “very unsurprised”); “How unexpected would it be for Apple to introduce [brand extension name]?” (1 = “very unexpected”... 7 = “very expected”); both two scales were reverse-coded before the analyses, such that higher ratings indicated higher surprise feelings). Cronbach’s alpha for this two-item measure was satisfactory, at .69.

5.2. Results

Manipulation checks: The manipulation checks of whether the treatment brand extensions were perceived as Janus fit (Apple Gym), high fit (Apple Navigator), and low fit (Apple Drill), respectively, were conducted in the same way as in Pre-experiment. As in the Pre-experiment for Samsung, the mean fit counts for Apple Gym and Apple Navigator were relatively high ($M_{\text{Gym, Fit count}} = 5.26; M_{\text{Navigator, Fit count}} = 7.23$). Similar to the Pre-experiment, the mean unfit count was also high for Apple Gym ($M_{\text{Gym, Unfit count}} = 4.78$), while being relatively low for Apple Navigator ($M_{\text{Navigator, Unfit count}} = 2.94$). For the third extension, Apple Drill, the mean fit count was, in contrast, relatively low ($M_{\text{Drill, Fit count}} = 4.08$), whereas its mean unfit count was relatively high ($M_{\text{Drill, Unfit count}} = 6.88$).

As in the Pre-experiment, the formal manipulation check was performed with the fit–unfit difference score related to the three brand extensions. An omnibus ANOVA confirmed that the mean fit–unfit difference differed significantly for Apple Gym, Apple Navigator, and Apple Drill ($F(2, 150) = 20.76, p < .0001$). Specifically, the mean fit–unfit difference for Apple Gym was not significantly different from 0 ($M_{\text{Gym, Fit–unfit difference}} = 0.48, p > .05$), while being positive and different from 0 for Apple Navigator ($M_{\text{Navigator, Fit–unfit difference}} = 4.28, p < .001$). This supports the notion that Apple Gym was indeed a Janus fit extension and Apple Navigator a high fit extension for Apple. In contrast, the mean fit–unfit difference for Apple Drill was clearly negative and different from 0 ($M_{\text{Drill, Fit–unfit difference}} = -2.80, p < .05$). This clearly negative score, which is also statistically significantly different from the scores of Apple Gym and Navigator, supports the conclusion that Apple Drill was perceived as a low fit extension. Thus, the manipulations can be concluded to have been effective in Experiment 1, too.

Tests of hypotheses: A one-way ANOVA reveals that the perceived brand innovativeness differed significantly across the three experimental treatment conditions overall ($F(2, 150) = 5.649, p < .01$). Specifically, in the condition where Apple was launching a Janus Fit

Extension (Apple Gym), Apple was perceived as more innovative and pioneering ($M_{Gym} = 5.18$) than in conditions where it was launching Low Fit Extension (Apple Drill) ($M_{Drill} = 4.00$; difference with Gym significant at $p = .001$) or High Fit Extension (Apple Navigator) ($M_{Navigator} = 4.47$; $p = .04$). Thus, H1a–b were supported.

Hypothesis H2 further expected that the feelings of surprise elicited by the brand extension would mediate the above main effects in an inverted U-shaped manner. That is, H2 expected that a moderately high surprise feeling (elicited by Janus Fit Extension) would lead to higher brand innovativeness perceptions than low surprise feelings (by High Fit Extension) or very high surprise feelings (by Low Fit Extension). We tested this hypothesis by utilizing the overall mediation analysis approach of Baron and Kenny's (1986). In the first step of this analysis, we regressed the ultimate dependent variable, perceived brand innovativeness, on two dummy variables pertaining to the experimental conditions of Janus Fit Extension (Apple Gym) and High Fit Extension (Apple Navigator). Given these two dummies, the third condition, Low Fit Extension (Apple Drill), became the reference level in the interpretation of the results. In line with the ANOVA results above, the results of the first-step regression suggest that Janus Fit Extension had a significant positive effect on perceived brand innovativeness when compared to Low Fit Extension ($b = 1.18$, $SE = .353$, $t = 3.34$, $p = .001$), while the High Fit Extension did not have any significant effect on perceived brand innovativeness compared to Low Fit Extension ($b = .472$, $SE = .348$, $t = 1.35$, $p = .178$).

The second step of the mediation analysis regressed the mediating variable (surprise feelings) on the same two dummy variables pertaining to the treatment conditions described above. Both the Janus Fit Extension ($b = -0.79$, $SE = .26$, $t = -3.07$, $p = .003$) and High Fit Extension ($b = -1.61$, $SE = .25$, $t = -6.33$, $p < .0001$) dummy variables obtained significantly negative coefficients in this regression. This suggests that the reference treatment—Low Fit Extension (Apple Drill)—was the one eliciting the highest feelings of surprise in participants. Based on the regression coefficients, the second highest feelings of surprise were elicited by Janus Fit Extension (Apple Gym), while the lowest surprise feelings were caused by the High Fit extension (Apple Navigator). These results were in line with the expectations included in H2: a high fit brand extension elicits low surprise feelings, a Janus fit extension moderately high surprise feelings, and a low fit extension very high surprise feelings.

The last step of the regression analysis followed Baron and Kenny (1986) by adding the mediating variable, surprise feelings, into the first-step regression of perceived brand innovativeness. Because H2 expected the mediational relationship to have an inverted U-shape, this analysis included, among the predictors of the regression analysis, the quadratic term of surprise feelings, in addition to the singular term. In the analysis, the quadratic term of surprise feelings obtained a significantly negative coefficient ($b = -0.24$, $SE = 0.051$, $t = -4.70$, $p < .0001$), while the linear term became significantly positive ($b = 2.10$, $SE = 0.48$, $t = 4.39$, $p < .0001$). The former negative sign and latter positive sign together suggest that with increasing feelings of surprise, as caused by a brand extension, the perceived brand innovativeness first goes up—but at very high, or “excessive” levels of surprise, the perceived brand innovativeness decreases again.

Furthermore, both the effect of the Janus Fit Extension dummy (Apple Gym) and the High Fit Extension dummy (Apple Navigator) were reduced in significance in this last step of analysis when compared with the first step of analysis (first step: $b_{Gym} = 1.18$, $SE = .353$, $t = 3.34$, $p = .001$); third step: $b_{Gym} = .87$, $SE = 0.35$, $t = 2.53$, $p < .05$; first step: $b_{Navigator} = .472$, $SE = .348$, $t = 1.35$, $p = .178$; third step: $b_{Navigator} = .069$, $SE = .37$, $t = 0.19$, $p = .85$). Taken together, these results suggest that surprise feelings caused by brand extension partially mediate the impact of brand extension types on perceived brand innovativeness—and they do so in an inverted U-shaped manner, as visualized in Fig. 2. Thus, hypotheses H2 is supported.

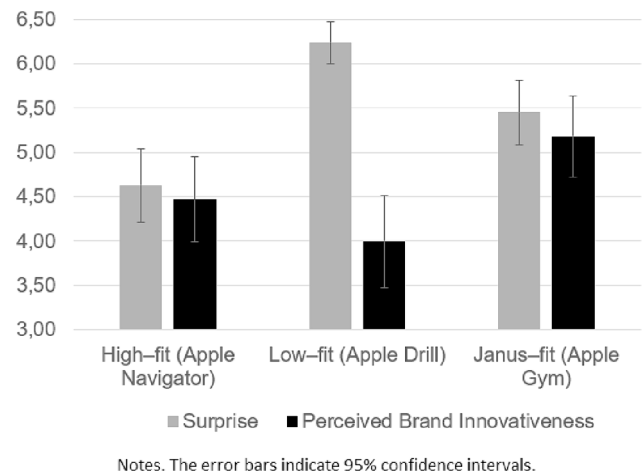


Fig. 2. Experiment 1 results: Janus fit brand extension leads to highest perceived brand innovativeness due to moderately high feelings of surprise elicited.

5.3. Discussion

The results of Experiment 1 suggest that when a given brand launches a Janus fit brand extension, consumers perceive the brand to be more innovative than when the brand launches either a traditional high fit extension or a low fit extension. The mediational analyses further confirmed that the feelings of surprise caused by the brand extension can partially explain these effects. As expected in H2, the Janus fit extension leads to higher surprise feelings than the conventional high fit extension and, therefore, higher perceived brand innovativeness. At the same time, unlike the low fit extension, the Janus fit extension does not lead to excessively high surprise feelings—which will undermine the perceived brand innovativeness in the case of low fit extensions. In other words, consumers are positively surprised by a Janus fit brand extension but not excessively surprised as they are with low fit extensions.

The fact that the Janus fit extension elicited moderately high feelings of surprise, raises the question whether such extensions are actually the same as brand extensions of moderate fit discussed in previous studies (see section 2.3 above). To control for this, we analyzed the differences of the three brand extension conditions in terms of the most commonly used dimension of fit: the similarity of the extension's product category to the brand's other product categories (i.e. sub-dimension 1, in Appendix B). In this analysis, the low fit extension (Apple Drill) was perceived to have a significantly lower similarity with Apple ($M_{Drill} = 2.62$) than either the Janus fit extension (Apple Gym) ($M_{Gym} = 4.22$, $p < .0001$) or the high fit extension (Apple Navigator). ($M_{Navigator} = 4.60$, $p < .0001$). However, the perceived fits of the latter two extensions ($M_{Gym} = 4.22$ vs. $M_{Navigator} = 4.60$) were not significantly different ($p > .05$).

Thus, according to the conventional product category similarity criterion, the present Janus fit extension does not have a less high—or moderately high—fit, when compared to the present high fit extension. This means that the present multi-dimensional, count-based measurement of fit and unfit scores is necessary for effectively distinguishing between Janus fit extensions from traditional high fit and moderate fit extensions.

6. Experiment 2

Experiment 2 sought additional evidence on the mediating role of surprise feelings by focusing on the individual-level variance in surprise feelings and perceived brand innovativeness. In other words, Experiment 2 assumed that there may be considerable variance across individual consumers in the feelings of surprise caused by a given brand extension and, thereby, in its effect on the perceived brand

innovativeness. To explore this variance across individuals, in Experiment 2 exposed participants only to one brand extension of the focal type, Janus fit extension. As such, the experiment concentrated on analyzing the individual-level variance in the surprise feelings and perceived brand innovativeness elicited by the focal extension.

6.1. Method

Participants: Experiment 2 had n = 95 qualified participants recruited from Amazon MTurk. As in the Pre-experiment and Experiment 1, we rejected the responses of participants (n = 8) who answered all the fit sub-dimension questions with the same response value.

Design and procedure: The design of Experiment 2 was mostly correlational rather than experimental. That is, Experiment 2 exposed all the participants to one and the same Janus fit brand extension product. In Experiment 2, this product was a fictitious, new online taxi booking platform (like Lyft or Uber). See Appendix E for details about how the extension product was presented to the participants.

Although the main design of Experiment 2 was a correlational survey, the survey also included an experimental replicate treatment of the parent brand for the extension products. Specifically, half of the participants were presented with a new “Apple Taxi” platform, while half of the participants were presented with a new “Samsung Taxi” platform.

Measures: Experiment 2 also had the same dependent variable measure for perceived brand innovativeness as the Pre-experiment and Experiment 1. Likewise, it used the same two-item measure for surprise feelings as Experiment 1 (Cronbach $\alpha = .61$).

6.2. Results

Check of the brand extension type: Both Apple Taxi and Samsung Taxi were perceived to have high mean fit counts ($M_{Apple, Fit\ count} = 4.16$; $M_{Samsung, Fit\ count} = 4.96$) as well as high mean unfit counts ($M_{Apple, Unfit\ count} = 5.40$; $M_{Samsung, Unfit\ count} = 4.46$), implying that both were perceived to be Janus fit extensions. This is also supported by the fact that the mean fit–unfit difference score was not significantly different from zero for either Apple Taxi ($M_{Fit-unfit\ difference} = -1.24, p = .18$) or Samsung Taxi ($M_{Fit-unfit\ difference} = .50, p = .54$), and the fact that there was no significant difference between the two mean difference scores ($F(1, 93) = 2.168, p = .156$).

Test of hypothesis H2: Consistent with the notion that both Samsung Taxi and Apple Taxi represented Janus fit extensions, an ANOVA of perceived brand innovativeness indicated that both extensions led to approximately equally high perceived brand innovativeness ($M_{Apple\ Taxi} = 4.64$ vs. $M_{Samsung\ Taxi} = 4.56$; $F(1, 93) = .069, p = .793$).

The main correlational analysis of Experiment 2 focused on

individual-level variance in perceived brand innovativeness, on the one hand, and surprise feelings, on the other hand. That is, the analysis regressed individual perceptions of brand innovativeness on the linear and quadratic terms of surprise feelings, as well as a control dummy indicating the extension product’s parent brand (Apple vs. Samsung). In line with Experiment 1, the results reveal a significantly negative quadratic effect by surprise feelings ($b_{Surprise^2} = -.18, SE = .067, t = -2.65, p = .009$) as well as a significantly positive linear effect ($b_{Surprise} = 1.90, SE = .68, t = 2.81, p = .006$). The effect of the parent brand dummy is insignificant ($b_{Apple} = .15, SE = .31, t = .49, p = .63$). Thus, those participants who were quite or moderately surprised by the taxi service brand extension (from either Apple or Samsung) tended to perceive the parent brand to be more innovative than those participants who were only a little surprised by this brand extension—as well as those participants who were extremely surprised by this kind of extension coming from Apple or Samsung. Fig. 3 illustrates this curvilinear effect by depicting the estimation of perceived brand innovativeness as a function of the level of surprise feelings elicited by the Apple Taxi and Samsung Taxi extensions.

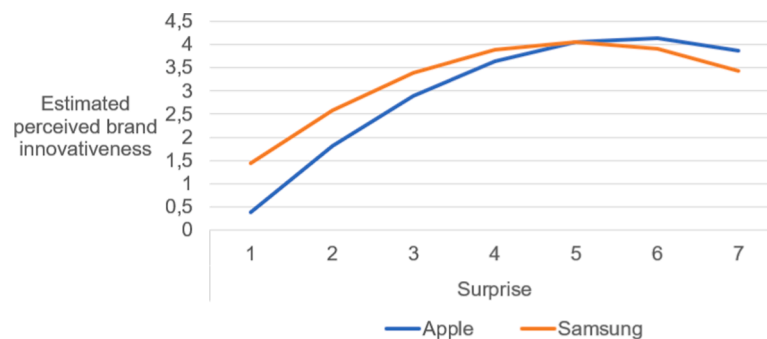
6.3. Discussion

Experiment 2 provides additional, individual-level evidence supporting the mediating role of surprise feelings when it comes to the impact of brand extensions on perceived brand innovativeness. Recognizing that the feelings of surprise elicited by any given brand extension may vary considerably across individuals, the results of Experiment 2 show that an inverted U-shaped effect of surprise feelings on perceived brand innovativeness holds not only across different types of brand extensions (for consumers’ average perceptions) but also across consumers who get different levels of surprise feelings from a given brand extension.

7. Experiment 3

7.1. Aim and hypothesis H2alt

The main aim of Study 3 was to test the mediating effect of surprise feelings by addressing an alternative concept and measure for surprise: a special type of surprise feeling, which we call “eureka surprise experience.” Specifically, we theorize that the moderately high surprise feeling elicited by the Janus fit brand extensions (in Experiments 1 and 2) can also be understood as a relatively intense, initial experience of surprise feeling, which is however soon counterbalanced by a cognitive experience suggesting that the brand extension, after all, makes good sense for the brand in question. This is why we call this type of surprise experience



Notes: The curves for Samsung and Apple are not statistically different from each other (i.e., surprise * brand interaction effect is not statistically significant in regression analysis).

Fig. 3. Experiment 2 results: Individual-level surprise feelings elicited by a Janus fit brand extension predicts perceived brand innovativeness in a curvilinear manner.

as “sense-making eureka surprise” (or “eureka surprise” in brief)—referring to Archimedes’s famous exclamation (H)eureka (“I have found it”).

Indeed, especially when consumers encounter brand extensions which elicit some surprise feelings for not being highly fitting for the brand, consumers engage in cognitive processing, trying to make sense of the brand extension (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Chun et al., 2015; Keller & Aaker, 1992). If this cognitive processing, soon after an initial feeling of surprise, leads to a sudden insight that the brand extension actually makes sense for the brand (Shen, Yuan, Liu & Luo, 2016; Topolinski & Reber, 2010), the overall experience could be characterized as an eureka surprise: suddenly “getting” that the brand extension makes sense, despite the initial feeling of surprise.

Based on the above discussion, we theorize that the moderately high level of “ordinary” surprise feeling, which was found (in Experiments 1 and 2) to mediate the effect of Janus fit brand extensions on perceived brand innovativeness can be alternatively explained by a high degree of eureka surprise experience caused by the Janus fit brand extension. In other words, after contemplating a while, consumers may find the initially surprising Janus fit brand extension to make good sense for the brand in question. In contrast to Janus fit extensions, high fit brand extensions are unlikely to elicit any eureka surprise experience, because they do not elicit ordinary surprise feelings initially, either. In turn, whilst low fit brand extensions initially elicit a high degree of ordinary surprise feeling, the associated perceptions of confusion and bizarreness are unlikely to be eliminated even when the consumer attempts to cognitively make sense of the extension. Therefore, low fit brand extensions are not likely to lead to eureka surprise experience, either. In summary, we hypothesize:

H2alt: The relationship between brand extension types and perceived brand innovativeness is mediated by an eureka surprise experience elicited by the extensions, such that perceived innovativeness will be highest when the eureka surprise feelings are high (in Janus fit extensions) rather than low (in high fit and low fit extensions).

7.2. Method

Participants: For Experiment 3, we obtained responses from 713 qualified participants on Prolific Academic ($M_{age} = 31.7$ years; 41 % females). As Experiment 3 did not include questions about the 20 sub-dimensions of brand extension–parent brand fit, no participants were excluded due to suspicious response patterns.

Design and procedure: Experiment 3 had a 3 X 2 between-subjects design: 3 Brand Extension Type (Janus Fit Extension, High Fit Extension, Low Fit Extension) X 2 Prior Brand Extension Priming (Presence vs. Absence). The former factor included the same three fictitious brand extensions as Experiment 1: Janus Fit Extension (Apple Gym), Low Fit Extension (Apple Drill), and High Fit Extension (Apple Navigator). In the Presence condition of the Prior Brand Extension Priming factor, participants were presented with a list of previous brand extensions launched by Apple in history (see Appendix F), before the current brand extension was described to them. In the Absence condition of this factor, this list was not presented.

Measures: The experiment material for Experiment 3 included the same measurement items for the dependent variable as the Pre-experiment, Experiment 1 and Experiment 2.

The key mediating variable in Experiment 3, eureka surprise experience, was measured by asking whether the participant agreed with two statements (1 = “strongly disagree”... 7 = “strongly agree”):

- “First when I read about Apple introducing the [brand extension], I thought ‘what the heck’, but after a while of thinking, it made a lot of sense to me.”

- “Although it didn’t first feel fitting/suitable for Apple to introduce something like [brand extension], it now feels like a great idea coming just from Apple.”

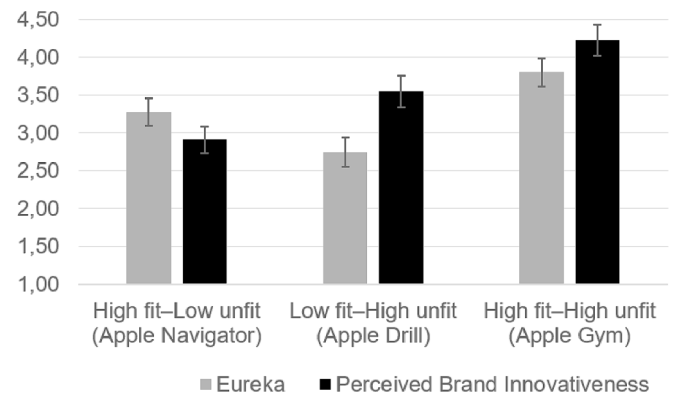
Cronbach’s alpha for this two-item measure was satisfactory, at.81.

7.3. Results

Tests of H2alt: We first conducted a two-way ANOVA of perceived brand innovativeness, across the Brand Extension Type and Prior Brand Extension Priming factors. The ANOVA revealed no significant main effect by Prior Brand Extension Priming ($F(1, 707) = .02, p = .89$), and no significant interaction effect between this factor and Brand Extension Type ($F(2, 707) = 1.87, p > .15$). More importantly, and in line with the results of Experiment 1, the main effect of Brand Extension Type was highly significant ($F(2, 707) = 42.29, p < .0001$). Specifically, pairwise t tests indicate that when introducing a Janus Fit Extension (Apple Gym), the parent brand was perceived to be significantly ($p < .0001$) more innovative ($M_{Janus\ fit, Non-primed} = 4.13; M_{Janus\ fit, Primed} = 4.33$) than when introducing a Low Fit Extension ($M_{Low\ fit, Non-primed} = 3.50; M_{Low\ fit, Primed} = 3.59$) or High Fit Extension ($M_{High\ fit, Non-primed} = 3.09; M_{High\ fit, Primed} = 2.76$). These results are in line with Experiment 1, and provide further support to H1a and H1b.

To further examine the role of eureka surprise experience as a mediating variable (H2alt), we conducted mediation analysis using PROCESS Macro (Model 4). In the mediation analysis, we included dummy variables referring to the two treatment conditions of Brand Extension Type (Janus Fit Extension, High Fit Extension) as independent variables (making Low Fit Extension the reference level). We also included a dummy variable referring to the Presence condition of the other experimental factor, Prior Brand Extension Priming, as another independent variable. The eureka surprise experience variable was specified as the mediating variable, and perceived parent brand innovativeness as the dependent variable.

The results of the mediation analysis indicate that eureka surprise experience mediates the impact of Janus Fit Extension (Apple Gym) on perceived brand innovativeness relative to the Low Fit Extension (Apple Drill) (partially standardized relative indirect effect = $+.190, 95\% CI = [.124, .266]$). High Fit Extension (Apple Navigator) also has a significant positive indirect effect on perceived brand innovativeness, compared to Low Fit Extension (partially standardized relative indirect effect = $+.096, 95\% CI = [.047, .153]$). Yet, as the aforementioned coefficient of Janus Fit Extension ($+.190$) does not fall inside the confidence interval of the latter, High Fit Extension ($CI = [.047, .153]$), the Janus Fit Extension can be considered to have a significant effect on perceived



Notes. The error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

Fig. 4. Experiment 3 results: “Janus–fit” brand extension leads to highest perceived brand innovativeness due to highest feelings of eureka surprise elicited.

brand innovativeness via eureka surprise experience vis-à-vis the High Fit Extension as well. Fig. 4 visualizes the mean perceived brand innovativeness and mean eureka surprise experience, across the conditions of Brand Extension Type. In sum, the PROCESS Macro mediation analysis as well as Fig. 4 support H2alt, in suggesting that the Janus fit brand extension elicits the highest degree of eureka surprise experience, which in turn leads to the highest perceived brand innovativeness.

7.4. Discussion

The results of the mediational analyses of Experiment 3 confirm that the mediating role of a *moderately high* degree of “ordinary” surprise feelings elicited by Janus fit brand extensions can also be understood in terms of a *high* degree of *eureka surprise experience*: while the Janus fit brand extension tends to elicit at least a moderate degree of initial surprise feelings in consumers, after a moment of contemplation, consumers “get it,” and experience that the brand extension makes good sense for the brand in question, after all.

In addition to the results on eureka surprise experience, the results of Experiment 3 also show that the impact of Janus fit brand extension on perceived parent brand innovativeness is rather stable and is not affected or confounded by whether consumers are primed with information about the past brand extension products of the brand in question.

8. General discussion

8.1. Contributions to research

The present research mainly contributes to three streams of literature. First, the findings contribute to the literature on the spillover effects of brand extensions on parent brand evaluations. Prior research has explored a variety of spillover effects of brand extensions, ranging from the influence of extensions on parent brand evaluations in general (Chun et al., 2015; Martinez et al., 2009; Martinez & Pina, 2010; Milberg, Cuneo, Silva & Goodstein, 2023; Parker et al., 2018; Salinas & Pérez, 2009; Sood & Keller, 2012; Yuen et al., 2021), to their influence on a parent brand’s perceived personality (Diamantopoulos, Smith & Grime, 2005; Mathur, Jain & Maheswaran, 2012). However, before the present research, brand extensions’ spillover effects on perceived *innovativeness* of the parent brand, in particular, had not been examined. Yet, the present results suggest that brand extensions do impact perceived brand innovativeness as well. Specifically, the results show that Janus fit brand extensions make consumers perceive the parent brand as more innovative than the more traditional and unsurprising high fit extensions or the excessively surprising low fit extensions.

Second, the present research contributes to the literature addressing the perceived fit of brand extensions. In particular, the present framework adds to the recent research by Deng and Messinger (2022), which suggested that perceived fit should be understood as a multidimensional construct rather than as a unidimensional concept. Like Deng and Messinger (2022), the present results imply that consumers’ fit perceptions may involve an assessment of the fit (or similarity/match) between a parent brand and brand extension product on multiple dimensions. At the same time, the present framework extends Deng and Messinger’s (2022) framework by addressing perceived fit as a dual measure of degree of “fit” and degree of “unfit” across the multiple dimensions. This dual measure of fit/unfit allowed us to identify the new type of brand extension—Janus fit extension—which the traditional additive measures of overall fit have overlooked. Whereas the Janus fit vs. the high fit brand extensions may not significantly differ on a traditional overall fit measure (as used by Chun et al., 2015), they differ significantly on the presently-applied dual, count-based fit scores and unfit scores.

The fact that Janus fit brand extensions, which have both high fit and high unfit with the parent brand, were found to lead to highest perceived brand innovativeness, also support the emerging view in recent research, that it is a combination of congruity and incongruity that

impacts consumers’ responses to brands (Michel, Torelli, Fleck & Hubert, 2022; Michel & Donthu, 2014). With this finding, the present research also adds to recent studies that have found low levels of perceived fit to sometimes have certain positive effects for brands, besides the usual negative ones (Kim & Yoon, 2013; Wang & Liu, 2020).

Finally, this research contributes to the innovation literature by extending the discussion of what exactly constitutes or drives consumers’ perceptions of the innovativeness of products, brands, and companies broadly. This literature has typically defined “innovations” and “innovativeness” in general as products or services that have a certain degree of newness (e.g., new technical features or benefits) to the world, to the market, or to the product category (Atuahene-Gima, 1995; Garcia and Calantone, 2002; Sethi, Smith & Park, 2001). Marketing literature has further suggested that the innovativeness of the products launched by a brand increases the perceived innovativeness image of the brand among consumers (Shams, Brown, & Alpert, 2015). Somewhat contrasting to this, the present research shows that different products whose perceived innovativeness *per se* does not differ—and which do not even involve any aspect of actual newness to the market or product category—may have differential impacts on consumer perceptions of the brand’s innovativeness in that category.

Indeed, according to present results, the brand’s perceived role as a category innovator is significantly influenced not only by the aspects of newness in the products it introduces to the category, but also by the type of perceived fit between the brand and product. In other words, consumer perceptions of the innovativeness of brands are at least partially driven by the perceived fit between the brand and the new products the brand launches into the market, rather than only the technical and functional newness of those products. This might explain why certain brands (e.g., Apple) can continuously maintain and reinforce their image as highly innovative brands, even if the products they launch in different categories do not necessarily include much newness relative to competing brands’ products, which already exist in those categories.

8.2. Managerial implications

The results of the present research have important implications for brand managers who want to enhance their brand’s image as being innovative, and to reap the associated benefits, such as being able to place premium prices on their products and services like Apple (Davicik & Sharma, 2015). The findings suggest that to enhance consumers’ perceived brand innovativeness, managers should focus on developing products that consumers assess as having a high fit for the brand on many sub-dimensions at the same time as assessing the product to be unfit for the brand on many other sub-dimensions. For instance, such a product could have similar key features, price points, and usage situations as the brand’s current products but very different product categories, user groups, and geographical origin than the brand’s current products—or vice versa (see Appendix B for other sub-dimensions).

To facilitate the assessment of the impact of potential brand extensions on perceived brand innovativeness, brand managers can adopt the dual measurement of fit and unfit, and the logic developed in the present article to determine (based on consumer surveys) whether planned brand extensions are “high fit extensions,” “Janus fit extensions,” or “low fit extensions.” The measures can serve as predictive tools for estimating the effects that different brand extension ideas are likely to have on perceived brand innovativeness. The measures can also serve as a decision-support tool in balancing the aim to enhance perceived brand innovativeness with other aims of product development (e.g., product attractiveness, demand, revenues, margins).

As further, circumstantial evidence of Janus fit brand extensions’ impact on perceived brand innovativeness, we assessed the top 20 brands in the “Most Innovative Companies” list gathered by Boston Consulting Group (2021), in 2015 vs. 2020. According to our assessment, four out of the 20 companies on BCG’s list in 2015, introduced at

least one Janus fit brand extension during 2015–2019; and all those four companies (4 / 4 = 100 %) were able to either raise or maintain their ranking on the list until 2020 (Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, and Google). For instance, the Janus fit extensions identified by Apple and Microsoft were Apple Arcade and Microsoft Teams, respectively. In contrast, of the three other companies that introduced *other* types of brand extensions than Janus fit extensions during 2015–2019, only one (1/3 = 33 %) was able to raise or maintain their ranking by 2020. Even though this is a very small sample, and constitutes anecdotal evidence at most, the rankings imply that companies may have a higher likelihood of faring well in innovativeness rankings if they introduce Janus fit brand extensions rather than other types of brand extensions.

Although the present research did not explicitly address co-brand extensions, brand managers might also explore opportunities to develop Janus fit brand extensions by developing co-branded extension products with such brands, which have both a degree of fit and unfit with their own brand. Recent examples of recent co-brand extensions, which might represent Janus fit extensions, are the alliance between the cosmetics brand Clinique and the clothing and design brand Marimekko, as well as the collaborations between H&M and high-end designers (e.g., Karl Lagerfeld, Stella McCartney, Roberto Cavalli, Comme des Garçons etc.).

8.3. Limitations and further research

The present research is limited in three main ways. First, even if Experiment 2 focused on the variance in individual consumers’ perceptions of a given Janus-Fit brand extension, it did not explore how consumer traits or cultural attributes may influence individual consumers’ evaluations of brand extensions. Because previous research has found that the fit perceptions of brand extensions may also be influenced by consumer characteristics (de Groote, Mendini & Gibbert, 2018; Puligadda, Ross Jr. & Grewal, 2012; Su, Monga & Jiang, 2021), as well as cultural attributes (Kim & Park, 2019; Monga & John, 2007), such factors might be studied as potential moderators to the effect of Janus fit brand extensions on perceived brand innovativeness.

Second, this research did not consider whether it is more vs. less important for certain sub-dimensions of perceived fit to be “fit” or “unfit,” to make a Janus fit brand extension to have a maximal effect on perceived brand innovativeness. We invite future researchers to explore this question. Other related questions for future research are whether the salience vs. non-salience of certain brand associations (i.e., sub-dimensions of fit) (Bridges, Keller & Sood, 2000), or their central vs. peripheral nature (Michel & Donthu, 2014), plays a role in consumers’ assessments of brand extensions’ fit vs. unfit, and whether the fit vs. unfit of salient vs. non-salient brand associations differently affects perceived brand innovativeness.

Finally, the present research is limited by the fact that the experiment stimuli addressed brands (Apple, Samsung) that belong to the same product category (consumer electronics) and life cycle stage. Future research can investigate whether a brand’s category or life cycle stage influences the type of brand extensions that will enhance perceived brand innovativeness. Especially for brands or product categories that are in the introduction and growth stages of the life cycle, the schemas (and salient associations) related to the brands in consumers’ minds are not so strongly defined as for brands in the maturity and decline stage. This may lead consumers to assess the fit vs. unfit of the brand extensions of such brands somewhat differently.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Wuraola Oluwabukola Falana: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Project administration, Methodology, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Jaakko Aspasa:** Writing – review & editing, Visualization, Validation, Supervision, Project administration, Methodology, Funding acquisition, Conceptualization. **Johanna Frösén:** Writing – review & editing, Validation, Supervision, Project administration, Methodology, Funding acquisition, Conceptualization.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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Appendix A. . Overview of studies on brand extensions’ spillover effects on the parent brand

Study/reference	Parent brand evaluation studied (as DV)	Parent brand innovativeness (as DV)	Brand extension–parent brand fit as IV?	Multi-dimensional fit concept?	Moderate level of fit included?
Keller and Aaker (1992)	Brand evaluation		✓		✓
Loken and John (1993)	Brand beliefs dilution				✓
Lane and Jacobson (1995)	Stock market return				
Morrin (1999)	Brand categorization, recognition and recall		✓		
Jun et al. (1999)	Brand quality perceptions		✓		
Sheinin (2000)	Brand beliefs				
McCarthy et al. (2001)	Brand attitude and choice		✓		
Kim et al. (2001)	Brand evaluation				
Swaminathan et al. (2001)	Brand choice		✓		

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Study/reference	Parent brand evaluation studied (as DV)	Parent brand innovativeness (as DV)	Brand extension–parent brand fit as IV?	Multi-dimensional fit concept?	Moderate level of fit included?
Balachander and Ghose (2003)	Brand choice				
Swaminathan (2003)	Brand choice				
Kumar (2005)	Brand dilution		✓		
Diamantopoulos et al. (2005)	Brand personality		✓		
Pina et al. (2006)	Corporate image		✓		
Milberg and Sinn (2008)	Brand quality perceptions		✓		
Völckner et al. (2008)	Brand image (incl. various positive and negative attitudes)		✓		
Martinez et al. (2009)	Brand image (incl. various qualitative brand associations)		✓		
Hagtvedt and Patrick (2009)	Brand extendibility		✓		
Salinas and Pérez (2009)	Brand image (incl. various qualitative brand associations)		✓		
Martinez and Pina (2010)	Brand image (incl. various qualitative brand associations)		✓		
Ng (2010)	Brand dilution		✓		✓
Dens and De Pelsmacker (2010)	Brand attitude		✓		
Iversen and Hem (2011)	Brand image (incl. various qualitative brand associations)		✓		
DeRosia et al. (2011)	Confusion about a company				
Mathur et al. (2012)	Brand personality		✓		
Sood and Keller (2012)	Brand dilution		✓		
Michel and Donthu (2014)	Brand image (incl. various qualitative brand associations)		✓		
Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2014)	Brand attitude		✓		
Chun et al. (2015)	Brand evaluation; novel brand associations.		✓		
Shams et al. (2015)	Perceived brand innovativeness	✓			
Yuan et al. (2016)	Brand identity		✓		
Parker et al. (2018)	Brand attitude				
Ulrich et al. (2020)	Brand attitude		✓		✓
Yuen et al. (2021)	Brand's gender personality dilution		✓		
Gerrath and Biraglia (2021)	Brand engagement		✓		
Sedighi et al. (2022)	Brand loyalty		✓		
Jain et al. (2024)	Brand penalty				
Mathur et al. (2023)	Brand evaluation		✓		
Ye et al. (2020)	Brand attitude				
Ma and Kaplanidou (2021)	Brand equity				
Pluntz and Pras (2020)	Human brand identity of film directors				
Milberg et al. (2023)	Brand evaluations				
Chang (2020)	Brand quality		✓		
Pérez-Santamaría et al. (2019)	Brand equity of national brand				
Schmitz et al. (2023)	Parent brand feedback effects		✓		
Present research	<i>Perceived brand innovativeness</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓

Appendix B. Fit sub-dimensions

The sub-dimensions of brand extension–parent brand fit measured in the present studies are listed below, as categorized under the six thematic dimensions identified by [Deng and Messinger \(2022\)](#):

- i. *functionality*-based fit (i.e., taxonomic similarity of the basic functions of the extension product and those of the brand's other products);
 1. similarity of product/service category
 2. similarity of key functions of the product
- ii. *usage occasion*-based fit (i.e., thematic similarity of the basic usage occasions of the extension product and those of the brand's other products);
 3. similarity of use situations
 4. similarity of points of purchase/purchase channels
 5. similarity of brand extension visibility during product use
- iii. *feature-based* fit (i.e., taxonomic similarity of the basic attributes of the extension product and those of the brand's other products);
 6. similarity of key component(s)/ingredient(s)
 7. similarity of degree of functional benefits

8. similarity of degree of hedonic benefits
9. similarity of degree of symbolic benefits
- iv. *Image-based fit* (i.e., taxonomic similarity of the abstract associations related to the extension product and those related to the brand);
 10. similarity of price image
 11. similarity of geographical origin
 12. similarity of time origin
 13. similarity of brand logo visibility
 14. similarity of deliberation needed before purchase
 15. similarity of financial (or monetary) risk
- v. *resource-based fit* (i.e., thematic similarity of the skills and abilities that the production of the extension product vs. the brand's other product is perceived to require);
 16. similarity of technical/engineering skills needed
- vi. *market-based fit* (i.e., thematic similarity of the target market and customers of the extension product and those of the brand's other products).
 17. substitutability of products
 18. complementarity of products
 19. similarity of user demographics
 20. similarity of user lifestyle

The experiment materials included a questionnaire, wherein the participants were asked to rate the similarity vs. dissimilarity of the extension product presented to them, vis-à-vis the parent brand. For most of the sub-dimensions, the question was of the following format: “*Would you say that [Apple Gym] [is based on the same or different key component(s)/ingredient(s)] as [Apple’s] other products and/or services tend to be based on?*”.

For most of the questions, the responses were recorded on a 7-point scale: (1 = “Completely different,” 2 = “Quite different,” 3 = “More different than same,” 4 = “Partly the same, partly different,” 5 = “More same than different,” 6 = “Quite the same,” 7 = “Exactly the same”). As an exception, for the directional sub-dimensions (5, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16 of the above list), the question was of the format: “*Would you think that developing [Apple Gym] [required a lower or higher level of technical/engineering skills of] [Apple] as developing their other products and/or services?* For these questions, the responses were recorded on a 13-point scale:

- 1 = Many times lower [technical/engineering skills] than [Apple’s] other products/services
- 2 = Very much lower
- 3 = Much lower
- 4 = Lower
- 5 = Somewhat lower
- 6 = Slightly lower
- 7 = Equally low or high [technical/engineering skills] as [Apple’s] other products/services
- 8 = Slightly higher
- 9 = Somewhat higher
- 10 = Higher
- 11 = Much higher
- 12 = Very much higher
- 13 = Many times higher [technical/engineering skills] than [Apple’s] other products/services

The responses to these questions/dimensions were converted to the same 1–7 scale as the other questions/dimensions, with the following rules: 13 or 1 → 1 (“Completely different”); 12 or 2 → 2 (“Quite different”); 11 or 3 → 3 (“More different than same”); 10 or 4 → 4 (“Partly the same, partly different”); 9 or 5 → 5 (“More same than different”); 8 or 6 → 6 (“Quite the same”); 7 → 7 (“Exactly the same”).

Appendix C. Pre-experiment: Brand extension stimuli presented to participants

High fit brand extension

Samsung Navigator is a car navigator device with worldwide maps and GPS tracking which can be synchronized with your smartphone. Samsung provides navigation and guidance when travelling by car. It also gives you a lifetime access to downloading up-to-date maps worldwide and synchronizing them with your smartphone. Samsung Navigator is designed in California. The price for Samsung Navigator ranges from \$359 – \$499. Samsung Navigator can be purchased in Samsung Stores as well as electronics stores like BestBuy and AT&T.

Janus fit brand extension

Samsung Gym is an on-demand streaming service of online videos for physical exercise. It provides fitness programs and workout videos particularly tailored to special needs groups such as elderly and senior citizens, pregnant women or people with disabilities. Samsung Gym is available only in the U.S. The contents are developed by independent fitness and workout professionals. Samsung Gym monthly subscription is \$5.99 – \$19.99. Samsung Gym subscription can be purchased at selected gyms and sports equipment stores only.

Appendix D. Experiments 1 and 3: Brand extension stimuli presented to participants

High fit brand extension

Apple Navigator is a car navigator device with worldwide maps and GPS tracking which can be synchronized with your smartphone. Apple Navigator provides navigation and guidance when travelling by car. It also gives you a lifetime access to downloading up-to-date maps worldwide and synchronizing them with your smartphone. Apple Navigator is designed in California. The price for Apple Navigator ranges from \$359 – \$499. Apple Navigator can be purchased in Apple Stores as well as electronics stores like BestBuy and AT&T.

Janus fit brand extension

Apple Gym is an on-demand streaming service of online videos for physical exercise. It provides fitness programs and workout videos particularly tailored to special needs groups such as elderly and senior citizens, pregnant women or people with disabilities. Apple Gym is available only in the U.S. The contents are developed by independent fitness and workout professionals. Apple Gym monthly subscription is \$5.99 – \$19.99. Apple Gym subscription can be purchased at selected gyms and sports equipment stores only.

Low fit brand extension

Apple Drill has a compact design and drill head that allows the tool to be turned in angles up to 90 degrees. It is especially designed to be used to attach screws and drill holes in small spaces and corners. Thus, this tool makes it easy, for example, to assemble and drive the screws of small drawers, closets, and pieces of furniture as well as drill holes in narrow spaces. Apple Drill is designed and manufactured in Mexico. The price for Apple Drill ranges from \$599 – \$999. Apple Drill can be purchased in hardware stores.

Appendix E. Experiment 2: Brand extension stimuli presented to participants

[Apple/Samsung] Taxi provides low-cost taxi services available daily from 8:00 pm to 6:00am in seven cities in the U.S.; New York, Washington D. C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Phoenix, Chicago and Houston. [Apple/Samsung] Taxi provides a platform for local car owners, entrepreneurs and taxis to deliver their service. The price for [Apple/Samsung] Taxi starts from \$0.50 per mile of drive. Typical ride price is around \$7 – \$10 only. [Apple/Samsung] Taxi services can be purchased through [Apple/Samsung] Taxi mobile app.

Appendix F. Experiment 3: The list of previous brand extensions presented in the conditions of prior brand extension priming

During the past 50 years, Apple has launched, for instance, the following products to the market:

- Macintosh (desktop computers)
- Newton (personal digital assistants PDAs)
- Macbook (laptop computers)
- iPod (portable music playing device)
- iPad (tablet computers)
- iPhone (smartphones)
- Apple Watch (smart watches)
- Apple Homepod (smart loudspeakers)
- Apple TV+ (video streaming service)
- Apple Arcade (video game subscription service)

Appendix G. Experiment 2: Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Janus fit (Apple Taxi)	0.47	0.50	N/A								
2. Janus fit (Samsung Taxi)	0.53	0.50	-1.00**	N/A							
3. Fit count	4.58	2.82	-.14	.14	N/A						
4. Unfit count	4.91	4.36	.11	-.11	-.36**	N/A					
5. Fit-unfit difference	-0.33	5.97	-.15	.15	.73**	-.90**	N/A				
6. Perceived overall fit	4.26	1.76	-.09	.09	.46**	-.40**	.51**	.84			
7. Perceived product category similarity	3.62	2.10	-.15	.15	.56**	-.67**	.75**	.44**	N/A		
8. Surprise feelings	5.66	1.35	-.03	.03	.11	.27**	-.15	.02	-.19	.61	
9. Perceived brand innovativeness	4.60	1.55	.03	-.03	.28**	-.38**	.41**	.63**	.38**	.11	N/A

Note. M and SD are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. The diagonal shows the Cronbach’s alphas for multi-item measures. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Appendix H. Variable operationalizations/measures

<i>Dependent variables</i>		
Variable	Items	Cronbach’s alpha
Perceived brand innovativeness	As far as you know, is [Brand name] among the first ones to launch a product like this to the market (i.e., [brand extension product])? 1 = The last one 2 = Among the very last ones 3 = Among late ones 4 = Not early, not late 5 = Among early ones 6 = Among the very first ones 7 = The first one	N/A (single-item)
<i>Mediating variables</i>		

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Dependent variables		
Variable	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Surprise feeling (adapted from Chun et al., 2015)	How surprised are you to hear that [Brand name] would be introducing a product like [Brand extension name] to the market? • 1 = Very surprised... 7 = Very unsurprised (reverse-coded) How unexpected would it be for [Brand name] to introduce [Brand extension name]?" • 1 = Very unexpected... 7 = Very expected (reverse-coded)	Experiment 1: α = .69 Experiment 2: α = .61
Eureka surprise experience (developed by present authors)	First when I read about [Brand name] introducing the [brand extension product], I thought 'what the heck', but after a while of thinking, it made a lot of sense to me. • 1 = Strongly disagree... 7 = Strongly agree Although it didn't first feel fitting/suitable for [Brand name] to introduce something like [brand extension product], it now feels like a great idea coming just from [Brand name] • 1 = Strongly disagree... 7 = Strongly agree	Experiment 3: α = .81

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