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# The relative impact of corporate reputation on consumer choice: beyond a halo effect

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## ABSTRACT

Previous work suggests that corporate reputation generates a 'halo effect' where products from companies with better reputations are more likely to be chosen. We argue that corporate reputation plays a more expansive role, proposing that consumers will be less price-sensitive to offerings endorsed by companies with good reputations and that it moderates the marginal utility of product features with high clarity. We also propose that an individual's knowledge of a company increases the likelihood its products will be purchased. Using a choice model incorporating an individual SEM-based reputation measure, we find support for these hypothesised effects in the context of television choices. The results suggest that corporate reputation warrants more attention by marketing managers to increase preferences for their products through these mechanisms.

KEYWORDS:

Corporate branding

marketing management

corporate social responsibility (CSR); ethics

corporate reputation

consumer choice

marketing strategy

marketing management

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Paul F. Burke is Associate Professor and ARC Research Fellow at the University of Technology Sydney. His work focuses on choice modelling and ethical consumption. He has published in the International Journal of Research in Marketing, Research Policy, Journal of Product Innovation & Management, International Business Review, European Journal of Marketing, Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Operations Management and Tourism Analysis.

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Grahame Dowling is Professor at UTS School of Business. His research, relating to corporate reputation and marketing, has been published in Strategic Management Journal, MIT Sloan Management Review, Californian Management Review, European Management Review, Journal of Marketing and Journal of Consumer Research. His latest book is Winning the Reputation Game.

## Edward Wei

Edward Wei is Senior Research Associate at UTS from which he received his PhD. He also holds a Masters of Business from QUT and a Bachelor of Economics from University of International Business & Economics (UIBE), China. Edward has worked with various companies, including AC Nielsen, as a quantitative analyst, operations and survey manager. He has published in journals such as Design Science, Agenda, and Energy Policy.

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