

THE CREDIBLE BRAND MODEL: THE EFFECTS OF IDEOLOGICAL CONGRUENCY AND CUSTOMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY ON MEDIA AND MESSAGE CREDIBILITY

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ABSTRACT

This study proposes and tests the credible brand model (CBM), a model that explicates the processes by which media audiences make credibility judgments about media outlets and their products. The primary postulate of the CBM is that media audiences' perceptions of the media credibility of a media outlet, and by extension the message credibility of its news stories, are dependent on their perception of the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) of the media outlet and the ideological congruency between their personal worldview and the worldview of that media outlet.

A survey was conducted to test the hypotheses and answer the research questions associated with this model. The survey probed respondents' ideological congruency with two media brands (Fox News Channel and CNN) and their perceptions of the media credibility and brand equity of the media outlets.

The data showed strong support for the CBM. The confirmatory model evaluation conducted with Structural Equation Modeling revealed a strong fit between the data and the hypothesized model, with normed fit index (NFI = 0.93), comparative fit index (CFI = 0.96), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA = 0.06). In addition, the CBM was a better fit with the data than an alternative model (NFI = 0.88, CFI = 0.92, and RMSEA = 0.08).