

# **Understanding the effect of suspicion on consumer judgement suspension: The role of uncertainty and product imagery.**

## Abstract

Prior research has explored how individuals process brand messages under a state of suspicion. Yet, consumer research has not explored thoroughly the impact of suspicion on consumer judgement suspension. In two experiments, where participants were exposed to advertisements, we investigate the effects of varying levels of consumer suspicion on judgement suspension. In experiment 1, we show that moderate levels of suspicion lead to higher judgement suspension when compared with low or high levels of suspicion.

Uncertainty towards the brand mediates the effect of suspicion on judgement suspension.

Study 2 provides further support for the above findings. It also tests and confirms the hypothesis that higher uncertainty towards the brand leads to lower product imagery, which, in turn, augments judgement suspension. These findings corroborate the influence of suspicion on judgement suspension and provide implications for advertising practitioners.