



THE INFLUENCE OF CONSTRUAL LEVEL ON EVALUATION OF MINIMALIST PRODUCT DESIGN



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INTRODUCTION

- Does construal level affect customers' preference for minimalist product design?
- We find that activation of high-level construal leads to more positive evaluation of minimalist product design than activation of low-level construal.

BACKGROUND

- Minimalist design refers to a design style where the design components are reduced to its necessary elements.
- Gestalt principles view reduction of unnecessary formal process as a structured whole, emphasizing holistic nature of an image during visual perception.
- Consumers in high-level construal focus on the essential features of objects and omit details. this provides an evidence that consumers in high construal level have tendency to prefer simpler product design.

METHODOLOGY

Study 1: thinking style

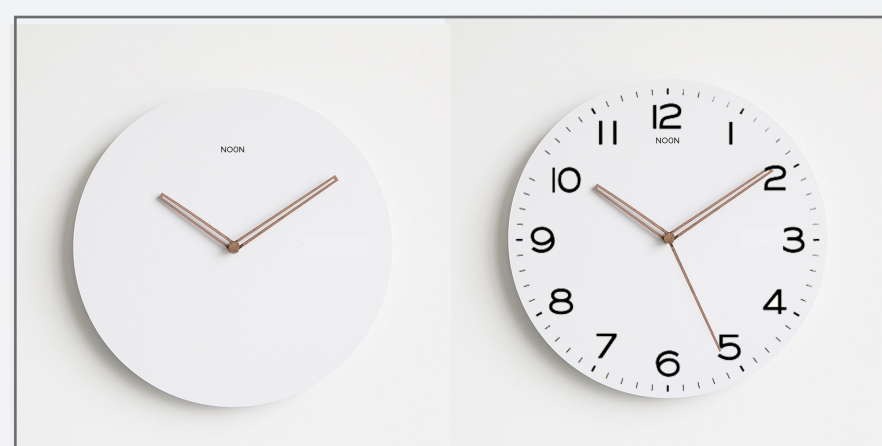


Figure 1: wall clock

Participants were asked to answer either superordinate "why" questions or subordinate "how" questions, then assigned to evaluate the wall clock.

Study 2A & 2B: shopping condition

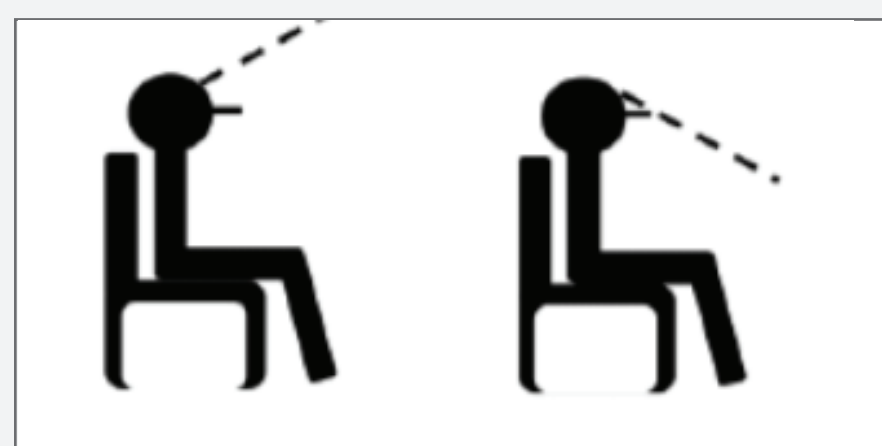


Figure 2: head movement

2A: Construal level was manipulated by head movements. In line with embodied cognition theory, upward head movements evoke high construal level, whereas downward Head movements activate low construal level. A picture of camera was depicted on either upper or lower side of the wall. Participants were then instructed to look up/down to evaluate the camera.

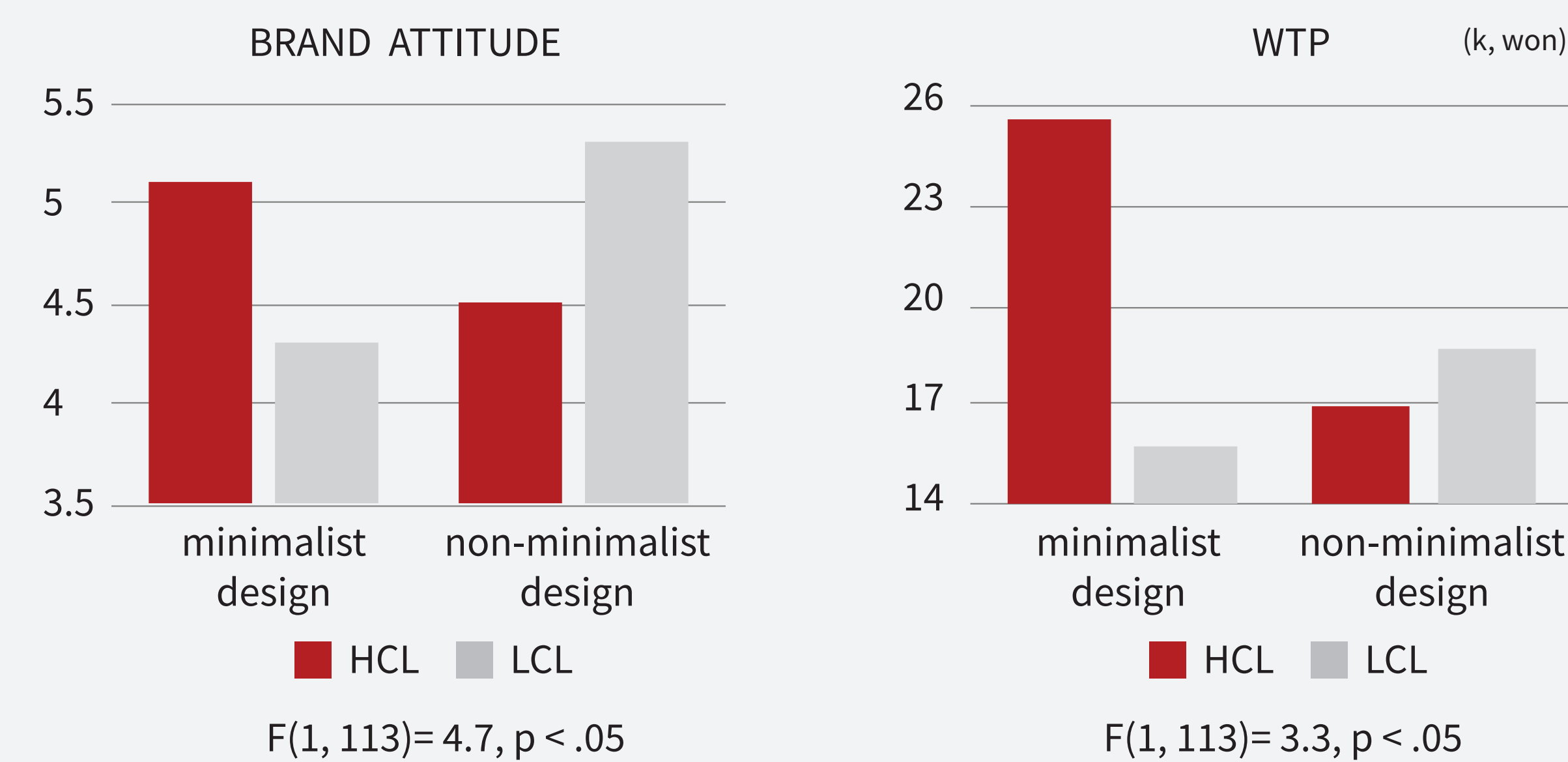


Figure 3: wristwatch

2B: Participants were assigned to a condition of buying a present for either a close friend or a distant friend, then assigned to evaluate the wristwatch.

STUDY 1

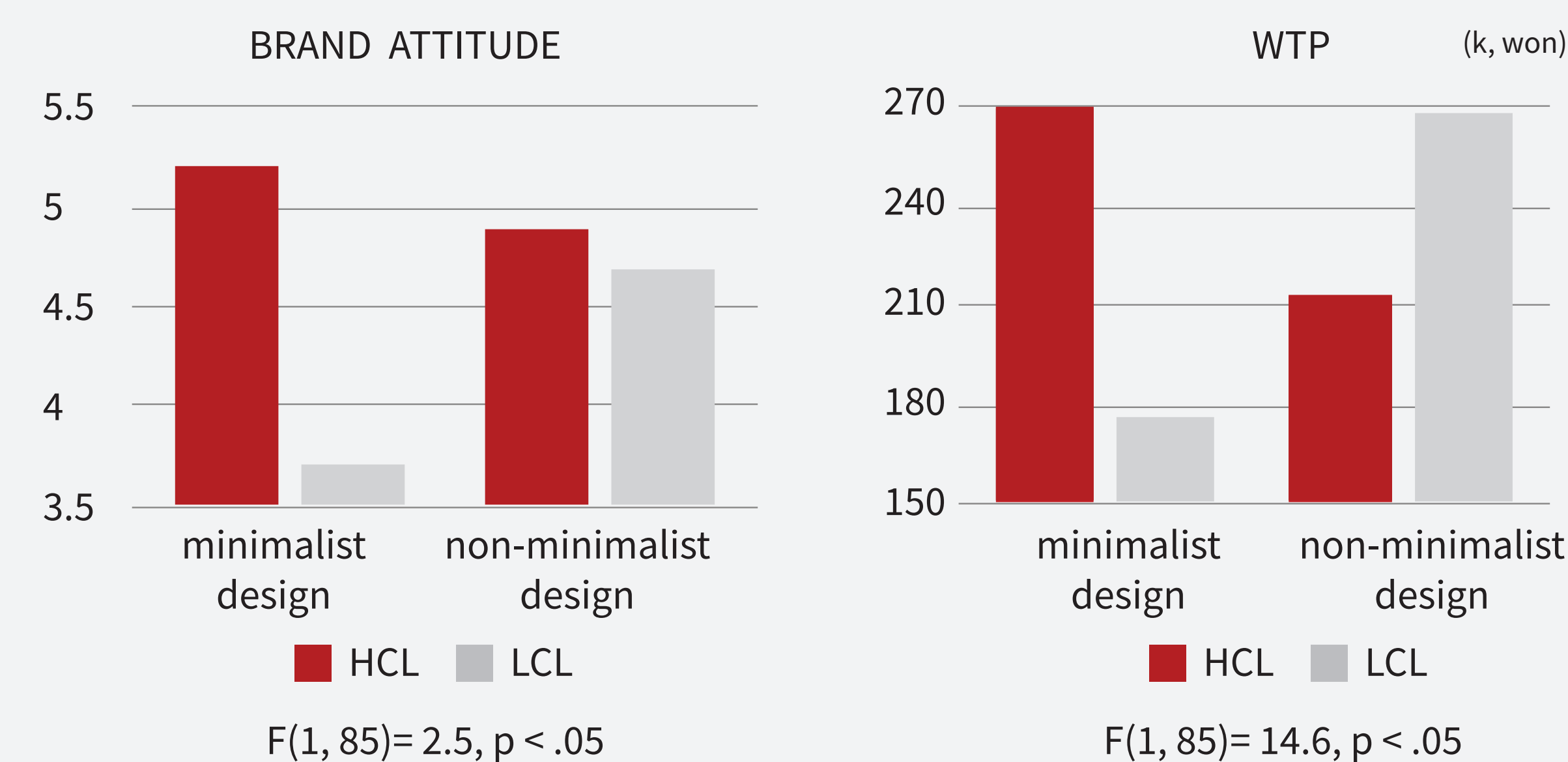
- N= 114
- Design: 2 (Thinking style: why vs. how) x 2 (Product design: minimalist vs. non-minimalist) between-participants



- Result: participants who answered superordinate "why" questions (rather than subordinate "how" questions) evaluated minimalist product design more positively.

STUDY 2A

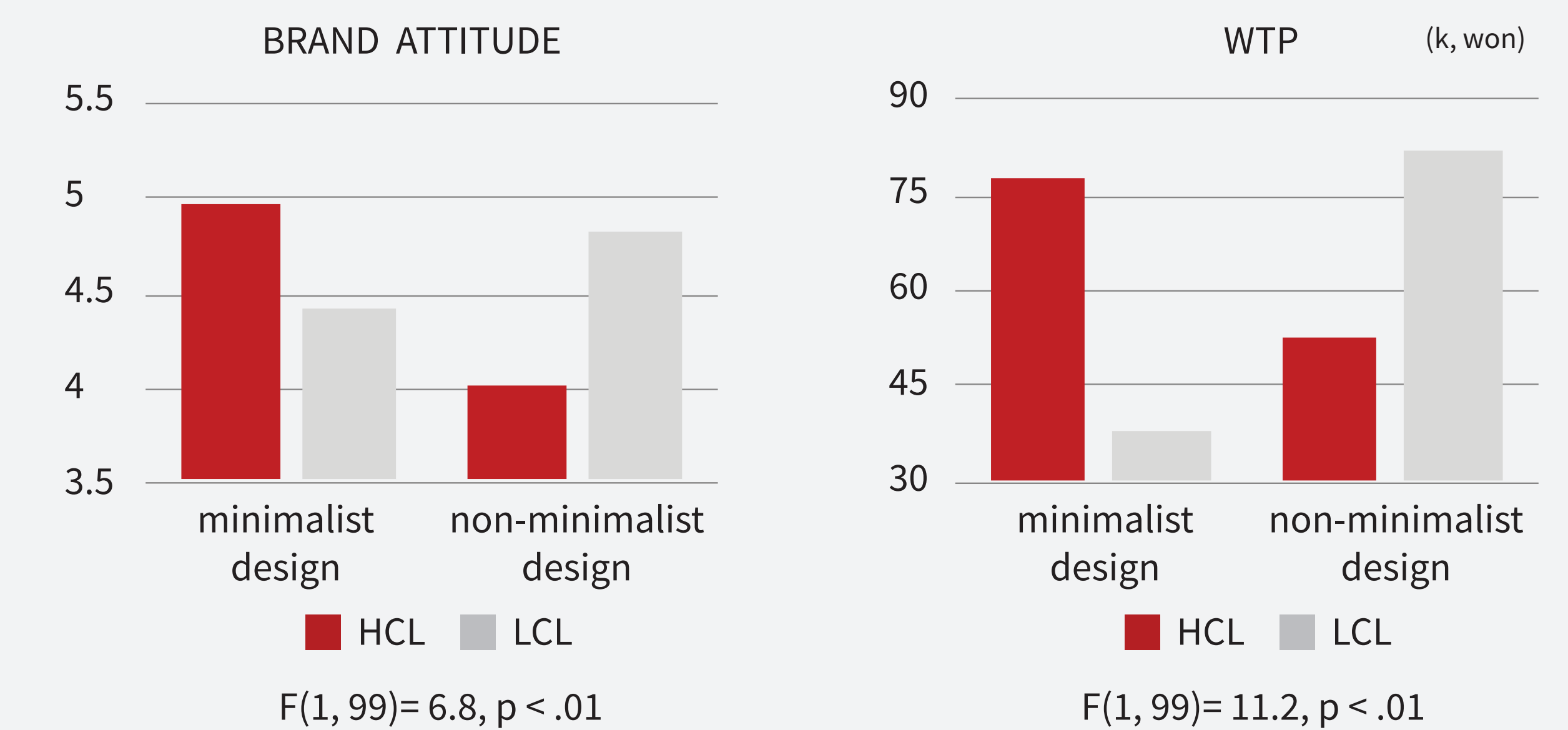
- N= 86
- Design: 2 (Head movement: looking up vs. looking down) x 2 (Product design: minimalist vs. non-minimalist) between-participants



- Result: participants who were looking upward (rather than looking downward) evaluated minimalist product design more positively.

STUDY 2B

- N= 100
- Design: 2 (Social distance: socially distant vs. socially close) x 2 (Product design: minimalist vs. non-minimalist) between-participants



- Result: participants who were buying the product for a distant friend (rather than for a close friend) evaluated minimalist product design more positively.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

- Two studies demonstrate an association between consumer responses and product design by identifying how consumer's construal level can influence evaluation of minimalist product design.
- Study 2A and 2B have practical implications: strategies for locating minimalist products on store shelves and offerings based on consumers' purchase occasion.

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