



Do ethnic cues improve advertising effectiveness for ethnic consumers?

Huda Khan *, Richard Lee, Larry Lockshin

School of Marketing, University of South Australia, North Terrace, Adelaide 5000, Australia



ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 24 November 2014

Revised 12 June 2015

Accepted 2 July 2015

Available online 22 July 2015

Keywords:

Ethnic cues

Advertisement likeability

Brand likeability

ABSTRACT

This research investigates how the presence of ethnic cues in advertisements may influence ethnic consumers. Although past research has established the advertising effectiveness of ethnic cues particularly using the race of models as a cue, none have discussed the effectiveness across different types of ethnic cues. Yet, consumers may process visual and textual cues differently. Drawing on the elaboration likelihood model, we argue that the use of ethnic visual and textual cues in advertising may engender different outcomes. The results show that the presence of ethnic cues increases the likeability of advertisements and brand likeability for ethnic consumers. Visual cues are more effective than textual cues in enhancing advertisement likeability, but both cue types are just as effective for increasing brand likeability. The type of products (generic versus ethnic) makes no significant difference to advertising effectiveness for ethnic consumers. Academic and managerial implications are identified and discussed.

Crown Copyright © 2015 Published by Elsevier Ltd on behalf of Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy. All rights reserved.

CHINESE ABSTRACT

本研究调查了广告中的少数族裔元素对少数族裔消费者有何种影响。尽管过往研究已建立，尤其在使用人种模型时的少数族裔元素广告的有效度，然而，这些研究均未讨论不同种类族裔元素的有效度。另外，消费者或会对少数族裔的视觉元素和文字元素有不同的解读。借鉴详尽可能性模型，我们认为在广告中使用少数族裔视觉元素和文字元素可能会造成不同的结果。研究结果显示，使用少数族裔元素会增进少数族裔对广告及品牌的喜爱度。在增进广告喜爱度方面，视觉元素较文字元素更有效，但在增进品牌喜爱度方面二者有效度相同。产品种类（大众型或族裔型）对少数族裔消费者的广告有效度差别不大。研究对学术及管理方面的启示进行了确认和讨论。

Crown Copyright © 2015 Published by Elsevier Ltd on behalf of Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy. All rights reserved.

Huda Khan is a PhD candidate at the University of South Australia and currently working on packaging and consumer behaviour research. Previous experiences include lecturing and tutoring Marketing courses and worked on marketing research projects for Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science.

Dr Richard Lee teaches consumer behaviour and internet marketing with the University of South Australia. Prior to academia, Dr Lee spent more than 10 years managing the marketing functions of IT companies in Asia. His research interests are in consumer behaviour including consumer nationalism, country-of-origin effects and social influences.

Larry Lockshin is Professor of Wine Marketing and Head of the School of Marketing at the University of South Australia. He has published over 100 academic articles mainly on consumer choice behaviour for wine, winery strategy, and effects of packaging on consumer purchase.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +61 8 83029333; fax: +61 8 83020442.

E-mail address: huda.khan@mymail.unisa.edu.au (H. Khan).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2015.07.001>

1441-3582/Crown Copyright © 2015 Published by Elsevier Ltd on behalf of Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction and background

The emergence of ethnic minority populations in developed Western countries poses both an opportunity and a challenge to marketers. Take Australia for example, as expansionary migration policies lead to its population increasing from about seven million at the end of Second World War to over 23 million by 2013, the culturally diverse population has origins in over 200 nations (DIAC, 2013). Census data also show that the population growth continues to be driven by migration from Asia, particularly China (ABS, 2013). This in turn has fuelled Australia's expanded economic and cultural links with Asia, as epitomised by the recent "Australia in the Asian Century" white paper (<http://asiancentury.dpmc.gov.au/>). Against this backdrop, this study focuses on ethnic Chinese in Australia, as this is the largest ethnic Asian group in Australia. On the one hand, the sizeable ethnic Chinese population represents a potentially lucrative segment. On the other, marketers need to understand how best to deliver effective propositions to these consumers.

Targeting ethnic identities for effective marketing communication remains a crucial challenge for marketers (Arnett, 2002). As a locus of cultural effects, ethnicity can shape ethnic consumer behaviour (Cleveland et al., 2011; Moschis and Ong, 2011). Numerous studies have explored, primarily in Western contexts, consumption behaviour across various ethnic groups in consumer decision-making and brand loyalty (Dimofte et al., 2010; Laroche et al., 1998; Saegert et al., 1985; Verbeke and López, 2005). However, due to the diversity in ethnic dimensions including race, religion and language, marketers encounter difficulties in using mass media strategies to target ethnic consumers (Cui, 1997; Cui and Choudhury, 2002). This contention is supported by research that suggests that compared to mainstream consumers, ethnic consumers differ in their consumption patterns, media usage patterns and perceptions of marketing activities targeted at them (Cleveland et al., 2012; Crockett, 2008; Gerlich and Gopalan, 1993; Lavin, 1996; Mokhlis, 2009; Quellet, 2007; Webster, 2011).

Furthermore, studies have shown that how consumers process information may shape their behaviour (Heckler and Childers, 1992; Houston et al., 1987; MacInnis et al., 1991). Indeed, it is well established within ethnic marketing studies that ethnic cues in advertisements uniquely convey messages to and influence the behaviour of targeted ethnic groups (Brumbaugh, 2009; Grier and Deshpandé, 2001; Grier et al., 2006). However, these studies mainly focus on visual cues, such as the race of the models in the advertisements, despite arguments that visual and verbal cues require different cognitive processing and may engender different outcomes (MacInnis and Jaworski, 1989; Mueller et al., 2010; Sojka and Giese, 2006). For example, Brumbaugh (2002) argues that the schematic model of ethnicity in memory is activated in response to different cues in the environment, and once the model is activated it shapes the individual's attitude and behaviour differently. As the effectiveness of textual and imagery cues is yet to be explored in ethnic marketing, this study poses two questions to extend this relatively nascent research stream. If ethnic cues in advertising influence ethnic consumers' perceptions of the advertisement and the advertised products:

- 1 How does the influence differ between textual and visual cues?
- 2 How does the influence differ between an ethnic and a generic advertised product?

Besides extending research in ethnic marketing, the study will guide marketers in developing marketing communication strategies to target ethnic consumers particularly in Western countries with large ethnic populations. The findings will enable marketers to determine under what conditions to use, or not use, different ethnic cues in advertisements targeting ethnic consumers.

2. Conceptual development

2.1. Ethnic identity, ethnic consumers and ethnic cues

Ethnic identity depicts the incorporation of ethnicity in one's self-concept and social identity (Cleveland et al., 2011). Research has established that ethnic identity is not just based on one's physical characteristics, but also on the psychological prominence or salience of how one feels as being ascribed to one's ethnic group at a given point in time. Shelton and Sellers (2000) found that in distinctive situations where ethnic consumers were in the minority, they interpreted events in terms of their heightened ethnic identity. The notion that self-identity is relative to situational contexts is also consistent with social distinctiveness theory (McGuire and Padawer-Singer, 1976), which concerns how individuals' distinctive traits are more salient to the individuals compared to common

traits. Hence, people in a crowded room tend to notice others of similar ethnicity, particularly in situations where they are the numerical minority.

Ethnic minority subcultures exist in many multicultural societies due to immigration patterns (Reardon et al., 1997). In this study, we define ethnic consumers as consumers who are ethnic minorities in their host country. Although they play a vital role in multicultural societies, ethnic consumers as a group have yet to gain much attention in mainstream marketing research (Burton, 2000; Emslie et al., 2007; Jamal, 2003). However, there has been growing interest in this area because of mass migration particularly into Western societies (Jamal and Chapman, 2000; Solomon et al., 2012). Within the context of this research, ethnic Chinese consumers form a major ethnic minority group in Australia due to its size and continued growth (ABS, 2013).

Research suggests that ethnic cues in advertisements are effective because ethnic consumers notice and respond to cultural cues in advertisements (Appiah, 2004; Brumbaugh, 2002; Dimofte et al., 2003; Koslow et al., 1994; Torres and Luna-Nevarez, 2012). Ostensibly, the cues work by raising the salience of ethnic consumers, allowing them to identify distinctively with the advertised products, and to help develop favourable responses towards the advertisements and products and to increase purchase intention (Brumbaugh, 2002; Butt and de Run, 2011; Chang, 2014). For example, Green (1999) showed through an experiment that relative to weak identifiers of their own ethnicity, strong identifiers generally had a more positive attitude towards the advertisement and the advertised products when the advertisement featured a model of same ethnic background. Deshpandé and Stayman (1994) found that ethnic consumers considered a spokesperson of their own ethnic background more credible and were more interested in the advertised products. Similarly, a recent study on ethnic cues in advertising suggests that for Chinese consumers, congruent images (Chinese ethnic models) are more likely to elicit positive responses than incongruent ones (Caucasian models) (Cui et al., 2012). In sum, these studies using consumers across different ethnic backgrounds show that ethnic consumers' needs and preferences vary according to their ethnicity (Appiah and Liu, 2009).

In contrast to the visual cues in the above studies, language effects have also been studied as a tool for reaching ethnic consumers. For instance, Koslow et al. (1994) contend that Hispanics are sensitive to their culture and respond favourably to Spanish language advertisements. Another experiment tested the effectiveness of ethnic language for targeting ethnic groups (Chinese, Malay and Iban) in Malaysia and revealed that ethnic consumers respond unfavourably to the advertisement in a language that was incongruent with their ethnic background (De Run, 2005). Table 1 highlights key studies regarding the use of ethnic cues particularly visual cues in an advertising context and their influence on ethnic consumers.

Given the substantial amount of literature pointing to the importance of ethnic cues in advertising and its influence on ethnic consumers, we first provide a baseline hypothesis:

H1. In targeting ethnic consumers, advertisements with ethnic cues are more effective than those without ethnic cues.

For this and all subsequent hypotheses, we operationalise advertising effectiveness as the extent that respondents like a viewed advertisement.

As evident in Table 1, these studies primarily use a single cue, such as race as a visual cue, to determine advertising effectiveness. None have compared the effectiveness of visual imagery versus textual cues. Yet, cues with ethnically associated visual images and language can dictate different consumption patterns and ethnic consumers' responses towards advertisements (Cleveland et al., 2012; Cui et al., 2012). Therefore, it is important to consider the effects

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1026925>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1026925>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)