



ASSOCIATION FOR CONSUMER RESEARCH

Labovitz School of Business & Economics, University of Minnesota Duluth, 11 E. Superior Street, Suite 210, Duluth, MN 55802

'Do I Know You?': Constraints on the Recognition of the Celebrity Endorser

Geraldine R. Henderson, The University of Texas at Austin

Jerome D. Williams, The University of Texas at Austin

'Do I know you?': constraints on the recognition of the CELEBRITY ENDORSER Geraldine R. Henderson, University of Texas at Austin Jerome D. Williams, University of Texas at Austin Carol M. Motley, Howard University We explore a celebrity recognition framework in which the ability to recognize other-race faces is based upon not only the race of the viewer relative to the celebrity, but also the amount of exposure/familiarity the viewer has had with others who are of the same race as the celebrity. The other-race-effect is pertinent for marketing researchers to understand because it has significant implications for not only multicultural celebrity facial recognition in advertising, but also for other marketing-related issues, including customer service, direct marketing, and personal selling.

[to cite]:

Geraldine R. Henderson and Jerome D. Williams (2006), "'Do I Know You?': Constraints on the Recognition of the Celebrity Endorser", in *NA - Advances in Consumer Research* Volume 33, eds. Connie Pechmann and Linda Price, Duluth, MN : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 305-306.

[url]:

<http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/12277/volumes/v33/NA-33>

[copyright notice]:

This work is copyrighted by The Association for Consumer Research. For permission to copy or use this work in whole or in part, please contact the Copyright Clearance Center at <http://www.copyright.com/>.

virtual world. Our participants argue that blogs can be personalized in various ways to reflect the blogger's identity and can constitute a medium through which individuals carry their real-life self to the virtual world. The instrumental reasons, on the other hand, are reflected in instances such as the use of instant messenger to discuss schoolwork with classmates and the use of blogs to organize and maintain a record of daily activities.

Consumers' *need for connectedness* emerged as the central theme which motivates the use of different communication mediums. Our findings suggest that participants use different technologies to connect with their existing friends, family members, new people and communities of interest. In doing so, they cultivate their existing relations, bond with friends, meet new people and become members of broader communities.

The data also reveals that there are two main factors guiding consumers' selection of specific communication technologies. These are *structural properties* of a particular technology and the *level of intimacy* in social relationships. Informants describe their choice of a particular medium in terms of its convenience in communicating and maintaining contact with others. Convenience of different forms of communication technologies stems from their inherent properties. For instance, participants view instant messaging as suitable for maintaining contact with friends. The structural properties of instant messaging allows participants to create a 'buddy list' composed of their community of friends and to engage in different levels of participation ranging from active conversations to merely observing others. Consumer discourses also reveal that participants act quite intuitively in their selection of different modes of on/off line communication technologies available to them based on *intimacy in relationships*, *intimacy of content* as well as the *interplay between intimacy and structural properties*.

Both the nature and the intimacy of relationship determine the appropriateness of the medium. Participants easily delineate among "family", "friends", and "acquaintances". They use different communicative mediums depending on whom they want to communicate with. For instance, some young consumers communicate with email and instant messenger at the start of a relationship, then as the relationship progresses they use communication mediums such as phone. The subject matter of conversation is also found to affect the selection of a particular communication medium. For example, participants use online chat for impersonal conversations, while they prefer using the phone for more personal conversations. Finally, there is interplay between intimacy and structural properties which provides a sense of control and empowerment to participants. For example, they maintain several email accounts not only to channel different kinds of information, but also to differentially communicate with other individuals depending on the level of intimacy in the relationship.

We contribute to the existing literature by illustrating the ways in which intimacy in social relationships influence and guide young consumers' use of communication technologies. Overall as consumers' relations with social actors in their lives move along the continuums of impersonal to personal and distant to intimate, the use of particular technological products also changes. Consumer narratives reveal the role of technology in mediating social and personal relationships. These accounts highlight how technology usage shapes and structures, and in turn is shaped and structured by consumers' relationships. This study has implications for consumer research. Due to changing communication patterns, marketers should consider the role of communication technologies in enabling different patterns of information exchange. These exchanges have implications for diffusion of product information. Given that this is an ongoing study, further work is anticipated to extend the findings.

A Blind Mind's Eye: Perceptual Defense Mechanisms and Aschematic Visual Information

S. Adam Brasel, Boston College
Philip Zimbardo, Stanford University
George Slavich, University of Oregon

This research reports on an eyetracker experiment exploring aschematic perception in visual processing. While eighty percent of those exposed to an urban image containing a woman committing suicide fixated on the woman, only thirty-five percent reported seeing her. Another thirty-five percent reported schema consistent items in her place and were three times as likely to insert other false schematic items into image recall. Schematic responders were also partially protected from the negative affect the image created. These findings suggest that people ignore aschematic stimuli due to top-down cognitive frameworks that transform images between sight and memory, rather than changing the visual search pattern itself.

'Do I Know You?': Constraints on the Recognition of the Celebrity Endorser

Geraldine R Henderson, The University of Texas, Austin
Jerome D. Williams, The University of Texas, Austin
Carol M. Motley, Howard University

We explore a celebrity recognition framework in which the ability to recognize other-race faces is based upon not only the race of the viewer relative to the celebrity, but also the amount of exposure/familiarity the viewer has had with others who are of the same race as the celebrity. The other-race-effect is pertinent for marketing researchers to understand because it has significant implications for not only multicultural celebrity facial recognition in advertising, but also for other marketing-related issues, including customer service, direct marketing, and personal selling.

The Role of Self in Evaluation of Advertisements with Highly Attractive Models

Rajani Ganesh Pillai, University of Central Florida

Yun-Oh Whang, University of Central Florida

Judy Harris, University of Central Florida

Media, whether it is print, television or even the Internet, is flooded with advertisements for products and services endorsed by sources that are highly attractive. Marketers targeting their products towards women often use highly attractive sources in their advertisements in an effort to increase the ad's effectiveness (Bower 2001). Marketing literature provides evidence of the positive effects of using highly attractive sources on consumers' evaluations of both the product and the ad (Baker and Churchill 1977; Kahle and Homer 1985; Kamins 1990; Solomon, Ashmore and Longo 1992). However, researchers have been divided in their support for the effectiveness of the use of highly attractive sources in advertisements. For example Bower (2001), Cabellero and Solomon (1984), and Cabellero, Lumpkin, and Madden (1989) have documented the negative effect of using highly attractive sources in advertisements. These studies suggest that such negative effects are due to social comparison, feelings of inadequacy and/or jealousy (Bower 2001, Richins 1991). The research presented here furthers existing literature in this area by investigating the cognitive process underlying the formation of negative attitudes toward advertisements using highly attractive sources.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: It has been suggested that the use of attractive sources in advertisements may result in more favorable attitudes toward the product advertised—either by serving as peripheral cues when elaboration likelihood is low or by providing information central to the merits of the argument when elaboration likelihood is high (Kahle and Homer 1985, Puckett, Petty, Cacioppo, and Fisher 1983; see also Petty, Unnava and Strathman 1991 for a review). Here, we examine how the use of attractive sources in advertisements may result in more negative attitudes by influencing the extent of elaboration itself. Specifically, we draw upon theories of self-concept (e.g., Grub and Grathwohl 1967), comparison and dissatisfaction (e.g., Richins 1991), dual process models of processing (e.g., Chaiken 1980; Petty and Cacioppo 1986), and preference-inconsistent information processing (e.g., Jain and Maheswaran 2000) to suggest that the relative gap between consumers' perceptions of their own attractiveness and that of the source influences the extent of processing, and thus whether consumers will process the message claims in the advertisements or use attractiveness of the source as peripheral cue in forming attitudes. We suggest that it is not just the absolute level of attractiveness of the source that determines whether consumers form positive or negative attitude towards the advertisement, but also the gap between the perceived self-attractiveness and attractiveness of the source.

Based on this conceptualization, we propose the following hypotheses. First, the use of highly attractive sources in ads will result in a greater gap between self-attractiveness and attractiveness of the source (H_1). Further, the greater the gap between the self-attractiveness and the attractiveness of the source, the greater the processing of ad claims (H_2). Finally, in the case of a weak message, higher gaps will lead to: lower credibility of ad claims (H_{3a}), more negative evaluations of the ad (H_{3b}), and negative evaluations of the brand (H_{3c}).

METHOD: A 2 x 2 x 2 between subjects experiment was conducted with source attractiveness (high/low), message strength (strong/weak), and gender (male/female) as independent variables. The stimulus was an advertisement for a bank. Male participants viewed an advertisement with a male model and female participants viewed an advertisement with a female model. Message strength was manipulated by the text in the ad. Gap was measured as the difference between the perceived self-attractiveness of the participants and that of the source (model featured in the advertisement). The experiment yielded 213 usable responses (113 males and 100 females).

RESULTS: As hypothesized, we found that the use of highly attractive sources in the advertisements resulted in significantly greater gaps as compared to the ads using less attractive sources across male and female participants (H_1 supported). Second, we found that greater gaps between the perceived attractiveness of the self and that of the source leads to more processing of the ad claims for both males and females, as measured by a greater number of thoughts (H_2 supported). Third, we found significant effects of gap and message strength on the credibility of the ad for males but not for females (H_{3a} partially supported). The attitude toward the ad was found to be less favorable when the gap was high for males, while females were only influenced by message strength (H_{3b} partially supported). Finally, the attitude toward the brand was negatively affected by the magnitude of the gap for both males and females (H_{3c} supported).

DISCUSSION: The results of this study indicate that the use of highly attractive sources in advertisements can lead to a gap between perceived image of the self and that of the source, and higher levels of gap motivate consumers to scrutinize and process the ad claims more closely. This study also found significant effects of gap and message strength on advertisement effectiveness measures, showing that it is not the absolute level of attractiveness of the source that may determine the effectiveness of ad but the gap between the perceived attractiveness of the self and that of the source. Unlike previous research that views negative attitude toward advertisements with highly attractive sources as an affective response, this study explains the cognitive process involved in the negative attitude formation.

References

- Baker, Michael J. and Gilbert Churchill A. Jr. (1977), "The Impact of Physically Attractive Models on Advertising Evaluations," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 14 (November), 538-555.
- Bower, Amanda B. (2001), "Highly Attractive Models in Advertising and the Women Who Loathe Them: The Implications of Negative Affect for Spokesperson Effectiveness," *Journal of Advertising*, 31 (Fall), 51-63.
- Bower, Amanda; and Stacy Landreth (2001), "Is Beauty Best? Highly Versus Normally Attractive Models in Advertising," *Journal of Advertising*, 30 (Spring), 1-13.
- Cabellero, Marjorie J. and Paul J. Solomon (1984), "Effects of Model Attractiveness on Sales Response," *Journal of Advertising*, 13 (1), 17-23.
- Cabellero, Marjorie J., James R. Lumpkin, and Charles S. Madden (1989), "Using Physical Attractiveness as an Advertising Tool: An Empirical Test of the Attraction Phenomenon," *Journal of Advertising Research*, 29 (August), 16-22.