

Do birds of a feather really flock together: The effects of reliability of college lifestyles in advertisements

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Does the similarity of a source to the target market equate to effective advertising?

Introduction

- The idea that brand advertising stimulates consumer behavior is the basis for source reliability in marketing. The source of a message can have a big impact on the likelihood the message will be accepted. For a source to be effective, he or she must have at least one of two important characteristics: credibility and attractiveness. Source credibility is defined as a source's perceived expertise, objectivity, or trustworthiness. The source's attractiveness refers to the source's perceived social value- this can stem from a person's looks, personality, social status and similarity to its target audience.

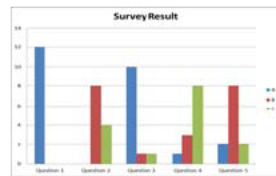
Method

- First, the authors completed a manipulation check. This process aimed to assess whether each source represented the respective lifestyle. In our procedure, we conducted background research: we studied source effects and characteristics.
- We proceeded with the main experiment. Forty participants were presented with the four ads and given a new questionnaire. Three ads used photos from the manipulation check and one ad had no source. Each ad had the same tagline: "Conquer the Day," to promote the Starbucks brand. The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions asking the participants to choose which one of the four advertisements would be more appealing to them. The responses were recorded and analyzed. For statistical method, the team converted the results into bar graphs and used Chi-Square test to represent the data and fully develop the findings.

Manipulation Check

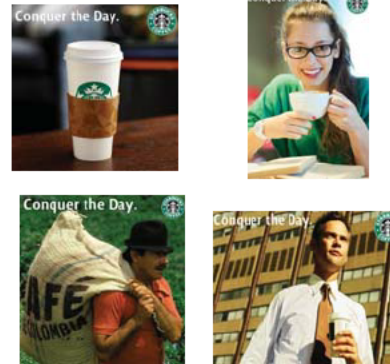
Manipulation Check Methodology

- Which photo depicts a person or persons who are most likely to be associated with education and learning?
- Which person seems most likely to be an expert in a Starbucks® product?
- Select a photo graph of a person who has friends who are likely to visit.
- Select the person representing the photo that is least likely to be both an expert in the coffee industry and someone who is likely to visit Starbucks® coffee shops.
- If I wanted to represent a person who is most likely to be both an expert in the coffee industry and someone who is likely to visit Starbucks® coffee shops, which of the four photos would I most likely choose?

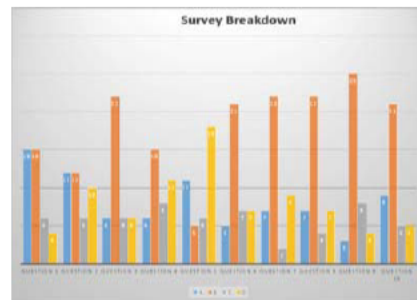


A: College Student B: Expert C: Neutral (Non-referent)

Main Experiment Stimuli: Four Print Advertisements



Main Experiment Results



A: Control Group B: College Student C: Expert D: Neutral (Non-referent)

Results – Chi-square Test

Questions	Chi-Square Statistic	Signif. cases
2 Which one of the four ads is most likely to be an expert in a Starbucks® product?	2.0	n.s.
3 Which one of the four ads is most likely to be associated with education and learning?	19.6	p < .05
4 Which one of the four ads has the most appeal to you and your friends?	.5	n.s.
5 Which one of the four ads has the most appeal to you and your friends?	10.6	p < .05
6 Which one of the four ads is most likely to be an expert in a Starbucks® product?	16.0	p < .05
7 Which one of the four ads has the most appeal to you and your friends?	21.9	p < .05
8 Which one of the four ads is most likely to be an expert in a Starbucks® product?	19.9	p < .05
9 Which one of the four ads has the most appeal to you and your friends?	31.0	p < .05
10 Which one of the four ads has the most appeal to you and your friends?	17.2	p < .05

Results

- The rule in Chi-Square analysis is that if the calculated value produces a number greater than the corresponding Chi-Square table a value at the 90% confidence level, the difference between observations cannot be due to chance. At 90% confidence and k-1, the Chi-Square value is 6.25. Here we present the calculated Chi-Square values for each question of our survey with the respective significance. Question 1 was excluded from the results because the question was similar to another question. Question 2 and 4 were not significant. This may be because the questions related to the results were very vague and did not determine why participants choose that particular source. The remaining questions all showed significant results, clearly identifying the college student as the ad most relevant to the college lifestyle and the participants themselves.

Discussion

- The results from our main experiment confirmed our hypothesis that a college student source would be most persuasive to college students. Specifically, most participants agreed that the college student ad was most reflective of the college student lifestyle. Thus, the findings showed that a college student source is most relevant to the college lifestyle and therefore, the most appropriate source for targeting college students. Therefore, our recommendation is that companies looking to target college students should use sources that represent the college lifestyle to ensure highest impact of their advertisement.

References

- Reinhard, M. A., & Messner, M. (2009). The effects of source likeability and need for cognition on advertising effectiveness under explicit persuasion. *Journal of Consumer Behavior*, 8(4), 179-191.
- Settle, R. B., & Golden, L. L. (1974). Attribution theory and advertiser credibility. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 181-185.