

Public Abstract

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Title:MODEL ETHNICITY AND PRODUCT CLASS INVOLEMENT: ATTITUDE OF WHITE AMERICANS TOWARD ADVERTISEMENTS FEATURING ASIAN-INDIAN MODELS

Studies show that ethnicity of the spokespersons in advertisements play an important role in shaping attitudes and perceptions about the advertised products. Studies involving black, Hispanic and white models in ads have found race/ethnicity to impact credibility and likeability of the product and model. Factors such as product congruence and product class have also shown to impact attitudes of consumers. Although there is a lot of literature available on impact of ethnicity on attitudes of various audiences, no study has explored the effects of using Asian-Indian models in advertising on attitudes of white Americans. Also, nobody has looked at the interactive effects of ethnic advertising and product class involvement on attitudes of consumers. This study examines the impact of using Asian-Indian models in different products class ads on the attitudes of white consumers.

The experiment used three components of attitudes â€” cognitive, affective and behavioral. Measures for the cognitive component were product claim beliefs and product message credibility. Measures for the affective component were attitude toward the ad and attitude toward the model. The behavioral component was examined by measuring respondentsâ€™ intention to buy the advertised product.

To examine product class involvement, three high-involvement products (laptop, camera and cell phone) and three low-involvement products (USB flash drive, CD, headphone) were used. The hypotheses were submitted to a between-subject repeated measures ANOVA.

The study did not find any difference in the attitudes of white consumers toward advertisements featuring Asian-Indian models compared with advertisements featuring white models. Also, the study did not find any interactive effects between ethnicity and product class.

A post hoc test on gender, however, showed that white American males had a more favorable attitude toward white models than toward Asian-Indian models. Interestingly, white American females had a more favorable attitude toward Asian-Indian models than toward white models. The post hoc test also showed that males were more likely to buy products across the two product classes than females.