How Gender and Recognition Level of a Model on Chinese Online Shopping Mall Banner Advertisement Impacts Advertising Effectiveness

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1. Introduction

In 2014, the number of internet users in China reached approximately 61,800,000, the largest number of users in the world, and continues to steadily increase. Therefore, clothing sales through integrated online shopping malls is also increasing, as well as the importance of internet advertisements as an efficient marketing strategy to reach the huge number of internet users.

Advertisements in traditional media, such as TV, newspapers, and magazines, have typically used famous people in advertisements (Shim Sang Yoon, 1995[1]; Kim Jung Ha, Lee Sang Bong, 1998[2]), in order to increase the awareness, understanding, and trust of a product (Kang Ho Sung, 1993[3]), since affinity with famous advertisement models, such as celebrities and sports stars, greatly affects people's attitudes towards a brand or a product (AhnGwang Ho, et. al., 2005[4]; Lee Jong Eun, 1998[5]).

Since Chinese companies have typically showed a lack of interest regarding the effect of banner advertisement in shopping mall websites. Thus, famous models who can demand a high salary were not used for banner advertisements. However, with the sudden rise of online shopping malls, the importance of banner advertisements that link to the product page has become clear, and the need for a comprehensive identity between the model's image and the product and brand has increased. Thus, famous models are started to be used for banner advertisements on the internet.

Due to this change, it is important to identify whether the effectiveness of using famous models in traditional media also applies to shopping mall website banners, such as creating an increase in awareness, comprehension, and trust of a product. At the same time, it is important to see if the website users' and models' gender have any effect on each other.

2. Research Methodology

[Table 1] Definition of the variables

Variable	Explanation	Source
Recognition Level of Model	Definition: To what extent the user knows about the model or their level of fame. Models are divided into celebrity models and non-celebrity models according to the recognition level of the model (Lee Jong Pil (2002)[6]) Evaluation: Questions were developed and seven questions were chosen with answers measured on a scale of 1 to 5.	HeoJeong Ho (2012)[7], Jo Yoon Min (2013)[8], Kim Young Min (2014)[9]
Attributes of Model	Evaluation of the model's characteristics Evaluation: In addition to Percy and Rossiter'sVisCAP method wherein the model's personality variables, such as reliability (professionalism, objectivity), attractiveness (affinity, familiarity), and visibility, a total of seven other characteristics were added, such as prestige, reliability, professionalism, attractiveness, familiarity, affinity, and visibility.	Percy &Rossiter （1992）[10]
Click Intention	Definition: The actual action and intention to click internet advertisements Evaluation: Questions were developed and two questions were chosen with answers measured on a scale of 1 to 5	Jeong Ho (2010)[11], Shin Dong Hee, Jang Woo Seong (2010)[12]
Level of Trust in Brand	Definition: The customer's trust of a company or brand and the confidence regarding the quality of a product. Evaluation: Nine questions were selected with answers measured on a scale of 1 to 5	Suh Gab Sul (2012)[13], Hong Wang Moon (2011)[14]

The banner for "ME & CITY", a clothing fashion brand that sells both male and female clothes, was positioned on the center of the screen on Taobao.com (淘宝, www.taobao.com), a famous Chinese online shopping mall website. The banner used both celebrity and non-celebrity models.

celebrity models		non-celebrity models	
male	female	male	female

Figure 1.Stimulus

Celebrity advertisement models were chosen from the male and female celebrities who were selected as influential by 'Renminwang (人民网)' in 2013, and four types of experimental banners were made (two to measure recognition level × two to measure gender). The research subjects were composed of 96 university students living in Shanghai.

3. Results

[Table 2] Descriptive Statistics (I.V= Recognition of the model ,D.V. = Advertising Effectiveness)

		N	Mean	SD.	Sig
preference of the banner model	celebrity models	192	3.41	.78	.000
	non-celebrity models	192	2.43	.80	
click intention	celebrity models	192	3.34	.92	.000
	non-celebrity models	192	2.87	1.03	
brand reliability	celebrity models	192	3.38	.76	.000
	non-celebrity models	192	2.68	.72	

The analysis results regarding the preference of the banner model, click intention, and brand reliability based on the recognition level of the model show that celebrity models have a higher preference (+1.02), click intention (+0.45), and level of trust (+0.47) compared to non-celebrity models. This is in line with study results that show that the recognition level of the model affects the affinity towards an advertisements on TV or printed advertisements, and also shows that it a model's recognition level is a direct motive that causes interactions, such as click intention.

The results of analysis on the preference of the banner model, click intention, and brand reliability show that there was no significant difference in preference of the model (p=.803), click intention (p=.074), or level of trust (p=.478) based on the user's gender. There was also no significant difference regarding the preference of the model (p=.417) or level of trust (p=.214). in the brand based on the gender of the model.

[Table 3] Descriptive Statistics (I.V=Gender of Model ,D.V. = Click Intention)

	model	N	Mean	SD.	Sig
click intention	female	192	3.21	1.05	.034
	male	192	3.01	.94	

However, there was a significant difference regarding click intentions (p=.034), which showed that there was a higher click intention towards a female model than a male model.

[Table 4] Descriptive Statistics (I.V=Gender of Model x Gender of User ,D.V. = brandreliability)

	model	user	N	Mean	SD.	Sig
brand reliability	female	female	110	3.21	.81	.021
		male	82	2.95	.93	
	male	female	110	2.91	.75	
		male	82	3.04	.76	

On the other hand, there was no significant differences regarding the interaction between the user's gender and the model's gender in the area of preference of the model (p=.112) and click intention (p=.214). However, in the area of reliability, there was a statistically significant difference (p=.021), which shows that both male and female users thought that models who were the same gender as the user were more reliable than models of a different gender.

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