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DESIGNING PERSUASIVE VOICEOVER NARRATION IN CROWDFUNDING VIDEOS

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Keywords: video marketing, persuasion, voice, voiceover, crowdfunding

Description: Across four studies (real-world datasets and controlled experiments), we find that consumers who heard a persuasive message voiced by multiple narrators (vs. one narrator) would be more receptive to the new product in crowdfunding videos and video ads.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consider two product videos. In one video, multiple narrator voices sequentially describe the features of a new product. In another video, a single narrator voice convey the same product message. Does the number of voices narrating a message affect consumers' processing of the message and subsequent behavior? If so, is the effect disruptive or facilitative? In this research we examine these questions in the context of video marketing, which have become increasingly prevalent and important in consumer decision making.

We posit that in broadcast videos, consumers who heard a persuasive message voiced by multiple narrators (vs. one narrator) would be more receptive to the new product, due to increased consumer attention and processing. Our rationale is as follows: Consumers' cognitive resources are constrained, thus they deliberate on features which capture their attention (Lynch and Srull 1982). Research has shown that a voice change can involuntarily capture attention (Cherry 1953). When a new narrator's voice carries on an ad message, there should be a momentary increase in consumers' attention and processing of the next piece of spoken message that might not have been processed otherwise. The enhanced processing of the message would increase the persuasive appeal of the product.

Method And Data

We employed a multi-method approach, including experimentation, natural language processing, text mining, and machine learning. We test our predictions in four studies (plus validation and replication studies), including large-scale, real-world datasets (with more than 11,000 crowdfunding videos and more than 1,600 broadcast ads) and controlled experiments (with over 2,200 participants). Study 1 examines the hypothesized effect using a dataset we collected from Kickstarter, a leading crowdfunding platform for innovations, with consequential dependent measures. We processed the video data using machine learning, text mining, and natural

language processing; we then related video and project characteristics to consequential dependent measures in the crowdfunding context. Whereas Study 1 observes consumers' responsiveness to product videos in crowdfunding, Study 2 examines the effect using real-world online video advertising from international (English-based) markets. It thereby generalizes the effect to another context of importance for marketing practice: video advertising. The next two studies are controlled experiments to further test our conceptualization underlying the effect—that it is driven by enhanced cognitive attention and processing. Study 3 tests for the effect when consumers have varied processing resources. Study 4 investigates the effect as a function of consumers' dispositional differences in cognitive processing.

Summary of Findings

First, we find that the measured effect size has consequential, economic implications in a real-world marketplace. In Study 1, our results show that for each additional voice in the project video, the average project sees an increase of (1) about \$12,795 in pledged amount (a 39% increase), (2) 118 customers supporting the project (backers) (a 38% increase), and (3) 1.6% probability that the project is successfully funded (a 6.5% increase). In Studies 1 and 2, the hypothesized effect is consistently moderated by the rate at which the spoken ad message was delivered. Given that faster speech rate disrupts cognitive processing (Moore et al. 1986), the results are consistent with the notion that the effect is driven by enhanced processing. Study 3 finds that the effect is moderated by consumers' processing resources and is more pronounced when consumers have the capacity to process the ad message. Study 4 shows that the effect applies mainly to consumers who tend to enjoy and engage in cognitive endeavors.

Statement of Key Contributions

Voice-based marketing communications are becoming increasingly popular and important to consumer decision making in the modern marketplace. However, research on the effect of sound and narrator's voice on consumer behavior remains fairly under-researched (cf. Krishna and Schwarz 2014; Dahl 2010). We aim to contribute to the sensory marketing and consumer behavior literatures by identifying and showing a novel design element—the number of voices narrating a marcomm message—can systematically affect consumer behavior. Moreover, we aim to contribute to practice by offering concrete recommendations on voiceover narration for marketing practitioners (e.g., brand/marketing managers, media designers) and architects of the consumer information environment (e.g., UX designers, entrepreneurs) to consider in designing persuasive marketing communications using video marketing.

References are available upon request.