THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS ON PERCEIVED ATTRACTIVENESS OF PRINT ADVERTISEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

An attempt has been made in the present study to find out the influence of socio-economic status on the perceived attractiveness of textile print advertisements. Sixty University students belonging to high, middle and low socio-economic status class, 20 in each, were shown nine commonly appearing textile print advertisements and were asked to rate the attractiveness of their different structural features such as colour combination, model, copy, background and trade mark on a seven-point semantic differential scale. ANOVA and CRs were used in analyzing the data. The results indicate that socio-economic status has a significant impact on the perceived attractiveness of various features of the advertisements.

INTRODUCTION

A good advertisement has to attract the attention of the viewer, arouse his interest, create a desire for the product and induce confidence in the product or services it projects and at least to persuade him towards the consumption of the same. Obviously this can be accomplished only through increasing the attention seeking values of advertisement by ingeniously manipulating the structural features with which it is designed. These features are bound to vary in perceived attractiveness in tune with the viewers' unique motives, feelings, temperaments, attitudes and expectations in life, (Hattwick, 1950). Evidences can be documented in this line. Attractiveness or attention seeking qualities of advertisements are influenced by audience gender and social differences (Madden and

Weinberger, 1982). Gutman (1982) found that efficacy of film advertisements depends on the demographic makeup, attitudes and preferences of the audience. Differences in status, community and sex (Baker and Churchill, 1977) are found to influence the attractiveness of the models used in the advertisements. There is no direct study linking socio-economic status, in most part, determine the individuals motives, temperaments, attitudes and expectations, it is indispensible for advertising men to understand the Psychological principles that govern the attention seeking properties of consumers of different socio-economic classes. The purpose of the present study is to investigate this aspect, in print advertisements.

METHODOLOGY
Sample
Sixty University students of both sex ages ranging from 18 to 24years were randomly selected from the University of Calabar.

Materials
1. Socio-economic rating scale (Narayana Rao.1977), was used in classifying the subjects into high, middle and low socio-economic status classes, using a modified scoring procedure.

2. Nine commonly appearing textile print advertisements of the size 27 x 42cms were selected based on a preliminary in popular magazines over a period of a year. These advertisements project textile products for both Men and Women, namely, suiting and lace. Four of them project suiting and five laces.

3. A seven point semantic differential scale was used to measure the perceived attractiveness of each structural feature. The reliability of the scale using test-retest method was in the order of 0.96 to 0.99.

PROCEDURE
Socio-economic rating scale was administered to the sample in small groups of 30 in each and students were classified into high, middle and low using 33 percent as cut off point. Random method was used in eliminating students from each group and the cell frequencies were equalized to 20. Advertisements, mounted on a black card board, were shown to the participants one by one in a random order and they were instructed to rate each structural feature in each advertisement on the seven point rating scale. For each feature the added scores of all nine advertisements were treated with ANOVA and were further treated with critical ratios (Garrett, 1979).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The mean, standard deviations and 'F' ratio for the SES groups in the five different structural features are given in table 1. The 'F' ratio for colour combination, model and background are significant statistically. The individual mean comparisons for these features were made using critical ratio and are presented in table 2. Figure I shows the means and standard errors of the three SES groups in all the five structural features.

Table 1:   Means, Standard Deviation and 'F'ratios for structural features on Perceived attractiveness

SES GROUPS

Feature		High	Middle	Low	'F' Ratios	P (df:2, 177)
Colour Combination	M	80.12	63.18	62.93		
					7.83	0.01
	S.D	25.47	2060	20.08		
Model	M	57.51	45.48	50.00		
					5.31	0.01
	S.D	18.71	13.66	15.95		
Copy	M	50.09	48.63	45.53		
					0.439	NS
	S.D	2169	18.52	17.91		
Background	M	9183	73.01	75.41		
					4.06	0.01
	S.D	29.73	26.45	24.84		
Trademark	M	33.79	39.22	34.13		
					0.94	NS
	S.D	20.26	17.66	16.34		

N for each mean, 20 x 9 = 180, NS = not significant.

On the whole, the background has high perceived attractiveness value followed by colour combination. Trade mark is rated as least attractive. Model and copy occupy the middle position in attractiveness. The differences between groups show that colour combination has high attraction value for high SES groups than middle and low. In background and model high SES group has scored high followed by low and middle groups.

Generally, the features in any advertisement can be classified into two. Arousing features, which serve to catch the attention of the viewer by arousing his emotions. Informing features, which serve to inform the viewer about the product or services and the company or the organization that gives the product or services. In the present, study, the background, colour combination and the model can be considered as arousing features while the copy and trade marks are informing features. The results show that arousing features have attracted the attention of viewers more than the informing features.
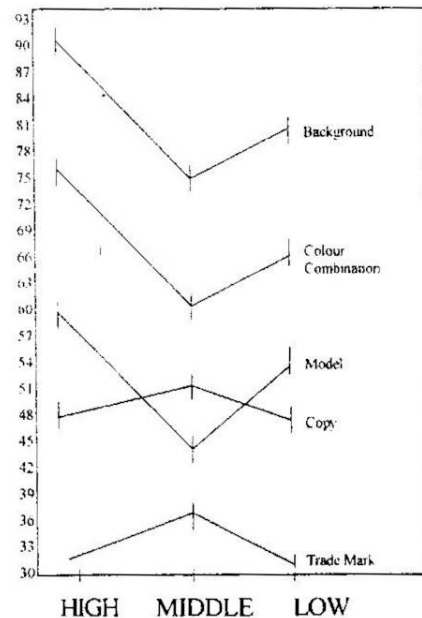

Fig.1 MEAN AND, STANDARD ERRORS ON PERCEIVED ATTRACTIVE ON FIVE STRUCTURAL FEATURES FOR HIGH, MIDDLE AND LOW SES GROUPS

Table 2   Mean differences and CRs between High, Middle and low SES groups on perceived attractiveness.

Groups	Mean differences	CRs	P
Colour combination			
High Vs. Middle	16.94	13.03	0.05
High Vs. low	17.19	13.22	0.01
Middle Vs Low	0.19	0.15	NS
Model			
High Vs middle	12.03	12.93	0.01
High Vs low	7.51	8.07	0.01
Middle Vs. Low	4.52	4.86	0.01
Back Ground			
High Vs. Middle	18.73	19.11	0.01
High Vs Low	16.42	16.75	0.01
Middle Vs. Low	2.31	2.35	0.05

The stimuli that have such properties,as, bright colours, complexity, uncertainty, richness, conflict, directly stimulate the ascending reticular activation system located in the mid brain which control and modulate the arousal properties of the organism and gets immediate attention from the organism (Berlyne, 1961; Lynn, 1966). The background materials, and colour combination have arousal properties and it is natural that they have attracted the viewers more than other features.

It is interesting to note that high SES group is more attracted towards arousing feature than middle and low. And among the later two groups, low class is more attracted towards arousing features. It is possible that high class subjects are more status conscious and give more importance to the richness of the advertisement than product or services it projects. Informing features may not be so important for them as they have resources to buy and experiment varieties of products.

Following high class, low class stand in their attraction values towards arousing features. Probably the low class subjects may be emotionally unstable and are easily activated by stimuli that have arousing properties.

Alternatively, the low class, since their means and resources are very limited or not well managed cannot experience and enjoy the richness in life.

Hence, as a defence, they may indulge in day-dreaming rich life and in the process, are easily attracted by any stimuli which arouse feeling of richness and well-being.

Middle class, on the other hand, tend to show less attractiveness towards arousing features. Probably, they are utility oriented and in addition to arousing features, they also give importance to informing aspects. Though statistically not significant, the position of middle class in copy and trade mark suggest this. To copy, they have assigned more value than low class and to trademark than low and high classes.

CONCLUSION

Finally we may conclude that, the arousing feature attract the viewers more than informing features. While the high and low class are more attracted towards arousing features, the middle class also show a favourable tendency towards informing features.

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