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Exploring the Effects of Non-traditional Narrative Video Ads on Tourism Intentions Among Viewers with and without Previous Destination Experience.

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Exploring the Effects of Non-traditional Narrative Video Ads on Tourism Intentions Among Viewers with and without Previous Destination Experience.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a storying and narrative experience that weaves multiple accounts about travel destinations, sites, and people into consumer expectations and perceptions of what is authentic in a travel experience (Chronis 2012a, Moscardo 2010, Bruner 2005). Story-telling narratives use the natural link of human experience often shared with others (Zhong et al. 2017, Mossberg 2008, McCabe and Foster 2006) and have become a helpful communication tool for understanding and promoting tourism (Zhong, Yun, Busser, and Baloglu 2017). Story-telling narration provides a valuable framework in which the destination is portrayed as believable and authentic to potential tourists (Kim and Yuon 2017).

Our research has two main objectives: 1.) to explore the influence of narrative video advertisements on perceptions of authenticity, and 2.) to determine the role of individual differences and their effects on perceptions of authenticity. Our study's two ads were specifically designed to feature attributes not commonly part of the City's authentic historical appeal. As such, the focus of the ads could be perceived as less authentic by the viewer. We examine the role of narrative story-telling in shaping positive perceptions of authenticity for advertisements that explore non-traditional tourism appeals. We further explore how the viewer's prior visits to the City influence perceptions of authenticity and subsequent ad effectiveness. The promotion of non-historic features was designed to influence repeat visits with something new to experience and potential visitors who might be more interested in non-historic experiences. Previous visitors might not be open to stories related to activities that were not necessarily related to their previous visits and find the ad less authentic but still respond to new experiences' potential.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several explanations for story-telling's effectiveness have been posited throughout the literature (Pînzaru 2012; Escalas 2004a, 2004b; Escalas, Moore, and Britton 2004). In contrast to fact-based ads, narratives use emotion-rich stories to convey the brand's values (Dessart, 2018). Kim, Ratneshwar, and Thorson (2017) offer evidence that narrative ads are more persuasive than non-narrative ads because of their ability to generate an emotive response, hedonic value, ad credibility, and perceived goal facilitation. Woodside, Sood and Miller (2008) find that tourism-related story-telling ads are effective because they link consumers to brands or destinations by vicarious participation. This is because narratives and drama re-enactments are likely to encourage vicarious participation, where fact-based advertising in this area tends to evoke argumentative forms of thinking (Woodside, Sood and Miller 2008). Story-telling and narrative ads have been especially effective for promoting tourism experiences that are cultural (Chonis 2012b, Seyfi, Hall, & Rasoolimanesh 2020). This study explores whether that effectiveness expands to non-traditional tourism appeals for a destination, such as culinary and nature-based tourism products. To date, no research examines whether narrative ads are effective when conveying messages about non-traditional tourism appeal within a destination.

The consumer's history with the destination may also be especially relevant. Stylos and Bellou (2019) and Tosun et al. (2015) both explored revisit intentions. These studies had similar findings that the memorable, experiential components of involvement, hedonism, and local culture positively affect behavioural intention to revisit the same destination, re-practice the same tourist activities, and generate positive word-of-mouth publicity. These results indicate that those who have previously visited a destination may be more likely to invest themselves in a story-telling narrative and respond more favourably through revisit intentions. This research further explores whether ad viewers with prior experience with the destination (versus no prior experience) will be open to non-traditional story-telling narratives related to activities that were not necessarily related to their previous visits and whether these story-telling narratives will lead to positive perceptions of authenticity and intent to revisit

METHODS

The current study examines data from a national online sample in which respondents viewed one of two differing online video ads produced by Explore Charleston - the Charleston, South Carolina Convention and Visitors Bureau. Data for the analysis was collected online from members of a Qualtrics panel recruited to participate in a 5-10-minute study on tourism. For inclusion, respondents had to be over 18 and previously taken an overnight trip 50 miles or more from home in the past three years. Upon passing the pre-screen assessment, participants were asked whether they had visited Charleston in the past ten years (Yes/No). Next, video authenticity perceptions were measured using the 13 items from the Becker, Wiegand, and Reinartz (2019) Authenticity Scale. This scale was designed to examine authenticity through the lenses of 1) brand essence, 2) brand heritage, 3) advertisement plot realism and 4) credibility. Identification was measured with five items directly referencing the main character. Three items were adapted from Tal-Or and Cohen (2010) and two additional items, "I identified with the main character" and "I imagined how it would be to be the main character," following Ooms, Hoeks, and Jansen (2019). Transference was measured with four items adapted from the Transportation Scale - Short form (Appel, Gnambs, Richter & Green 2015) an adaptation of the Green and Brock (Green and Brock 2000) Transportation Scale. The three areas of authenticity, identification and transference, were combined into a composite measure of ad effectiveness.

RESULTS

Data was collected from 487 respondents for the natural environment video and 249 respondents for the local food and gastronomic scene video. Between subjects analysis, comparisons indicated overall composites for the two indicated that the two ads were equally effective. Only the Authenticity Credibility variable differed significantly between the two videos, with the Food /Fine Dining video seen as somewhat less credible. Examining the between-subject effects indicated that prior visitors to Charleston reported significantly greater composite responses to both videos. Correlations with the study constructs and visitors' ratings of their experience were used to examine the perceived quality of prior experience. This analysis is for visitors only as non-visitors had no experience to rate. Prior experience ratings are positively correlated with positive ad effectiveness responses for both videos.

CONCLUSIONS

The study examined online narrative videos designed to promote new attributes to add to the historical perception of Charleston's appeal to visitors. Overall, both narrative videos produced positive equity responses. Both videos affected our brand equity response measure for viewers who had visited with prior experience. Visitors generally had a very positive experience and were thus predisposed toward the City and learning about new attractions. Non-visitors' responses to the narratives were not necessarily negative, just less positive than visitors. The overall results indicate those narrative ads are effective for promoting off primary product elements of a destination and that this effect is more substantial for viewers with prior experience at the destination.

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