

THE EFFECTS OF PICTURES
ON PERCEPTION OF
CORPORATE IMAGE

BY

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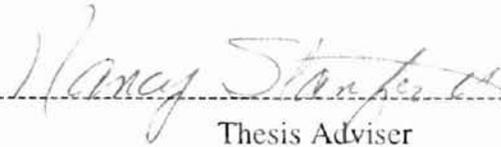
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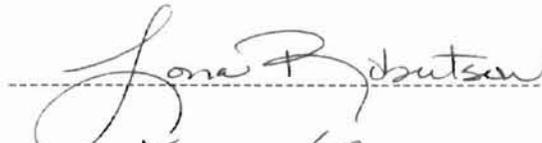
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Rather than serve as a statement of job openings in newspapers, today's recruitment advertising increasingly takes on the traits and philosophies of product advertising. Competitive markets make it necessary for human resource professionals to view the recruitment function as a marketing strategy. The growth of Total Quality Management and customer care programs encourage human resource managers to view employees as "internal customers" (Collins & Payne, 1991; Glassman & McAfee, 1992; Van & Lucas, 1990). It has become necessary to apply marketing techniques to the process of Human Resource Management including the design of recruitment campaigns (Martin, 1987; Palkowitz & Mueller, 1987; Stoops, 1981, 1984). Many high technology companies have taken the lead in design of recruitment campaigns by embracing the vehicles and philosophies commonly used in consumer product advertising. Recruitment advertising is now recognized as a mass media communication tool -- a platform for the transmission of organizational messages (Kennedy, 1977; Mathews & Redman, 1994; Stoops, 1984). Through recruitment advertising, organizations may enhance corporate identities as well as create favorable images of themselves among the target audience --

the prospective employees. Given the importance of recruitment advertising, there is a surprising lack of research dealing with the executional elements (elements related with the way information is presented and the context in which it is presented in ads; i. e., the communicator, music, color etc.) which may make recruitment ads effective. This study investigates one such element, the effect of *visual stimuli* (pictures) on the perception of recruitment companies.

Recognizing the importance of recruitment advertising, many companies have gone into the market place seeking private advertising firms to develop recruitment ads. However, investments in recruitment ads are not equally distributed across industries. According to a 1987 survey (Palkowitz & Mueller, 1987), 84 percent of the recruitment ads produced by top advertising agencies are for engineering and technical positions in high-tech companies. Ironically, consumer goods companies, which are usually regarded as the preeminent marketing experts, are among the worst players at positioning their “products” (jobs or companies) in the marketplace (Palkowitz & Mueller, 1987). A causal observation of job fairs held on campuses showed that consumer goods companies hold little cachet among diverse job-hunting graduates.

What these consumer goods companies possibly fail to realize is that the ineffectiveness of their recruitment campaigns may be associated with their negative images perceived by young graduates. Being involved with company image studies for many years, Bruce (1991) pointed out that ineffective advertising or a simple lack of advertising to the target audience may cause the negative images of the companies. He indicated that a positive image enhances a company’s recruitment efficiency whereas a negative image may destroy the company. Just like advertising for high involvement

consumer products, a good recruitment ad not only can increase direct responses, but also can generate a positive image in a prospective employee's memory that could be retrieved at time of need.

To create effective recruitment ads, a company needs to apply marketing philosophies and techniques to recruitment advertising. It is well known that brand recognition and loyalties form in the late teens and early twenty's (Oberlink, 1986). Similarly, it can be argued that companies may benefit from creating a positive image among the future employee pool early on. By incorporating information about the company into recruitment advertising on campus, an organization may successfully influence young graduates' perceptions of the organization's image and thus increase its recruitment effectiveness in the long run.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

Recruitment advertising is a valuable way for companies to project a positive corporate image or overcome a negative corporate image. Just like product ads, recruitment ads are aimed to create enough awareness and interest so that the prospective employees will search for more information. Recruitment ads may also create positive images of the companies, which may be stored for future retrieval. As yet little is known concerning which executional elements are effective in recruitment ads and how they may affect corporate images. This study was designed to investigate one such element: whether and how the visual elements (pictures) in recruitment ads can influence potential job candidates' perception of corporate images. To achieve this overall purpose, the

following objectives were established:

1. Investigate the impact of a picture in a recruitment ad on formation of the overall attitude toward a recruitment company (corporate image).
2. Investigate the impact of a picture in a recruitment ad on formation of company-attribute beliefs.
3. Investigate the impact of a picture in a recruitment ad on formation of the attitude toward the ad (ad image).
4. Investigate the relationship between the attitude toward the ad and the overall attitude toward a recruitment company.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study.

H1: There is a significant difference between the corporate image generated by a recruitment ad with a picture and that generated by an ad without a picture. A more positive corporate image would be expected for the ad with a picture than for that without a picture.

H2: There is a significant difference between the company-attribute belief set generated by a recruitment ad with a picture and that generated by an ad without a picture. More positive beliefs would be expected for the ad with a picture than for an ad without a picture.

H3: There is a significant difference between the ad image generated by a recruitment ad with a picture and that generated by an ad without a picture. A more

positive ad image would be expected for the ad with a picture than for an ad without a picture.

H4: There is a significant relationship between the ad image generated by a recruitment ad and the corporate image of a recruitment company. The ad image is a useful predictor of the corporate image.

Assumptions and Limitations

This study was based on acceptance of the following assumptions:

1. It is assumed that the college students sampled will answer truthfully to the testing instruments.

2??It is assumed that female and male college undergraduates are similarly affected by recruitment ads and thus have similar perceptions of image of companies.

3??It is assumed that college undergraduates in different majors are similarly affected by recruitment ads and thus have similar perceptions of image of companies.

Limitations of the study that were acknowledged by the researcher is that subjects are limited to students in a midwestern university who attended summer classes; therefore, the data should not be generalized to the general public. Limitations of this study also included the limited number of ad executional elements. In addition, limitation is also caused by the simplified method employed to measure the studied variables.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions of terms are furnished to provide clear meanings of terms used in this study.

Attitude – “The sum total of man’s inclination and feelings, prejudices or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats and convictions about a specific topic” (Thurstone, 1959, p.216). It is often expressed as the attitude toward a certain object, i.e., a brand.

Corporate Image -- A person’s overall attitude toward a company. That is, the set of meanings by which a company is known and through which he or she describes, remembers and relates to it. It is the net result of the interaction of a person’s beliefs, ideas, feelings and impressions about the company (Dowling, 1986).

Ad Image – A person’s overall attitude toward an ad. More specifically, it is one’s predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to the ad during a particular exposure occasion (Lutz, 1985).

Image Dimension – Classifications of all thoughts people have about a company in their evaluation of the company. Thoughts concerning similar aspects of the company’s performance are grouped together, i.e., managerial philosophies.

Belief – An emotionally neutral cognition or a “knowledge” that an individual holds about an object in the environment – that is, “the things a person knows to be true from his or her own point of view, consisting of the facts about the object as (s)he sees it at a given point of time” (Bennett & Kassarijian, 1972, p.76).

Company-attribute Beliefs -- expressed as the subjective probability that a company has some certain attributes related to its characteristics and performance.

Intended Belief -- the particular belief concerning company-attributes that ad creators intend to create or reinforce through the advertising stimuli (Yi, 1990).

Cognitive Process of Attitude Formation and Change -- evaluative responses of the cognitive type which generate thoughts or ideas about the attitude object (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993)

Affective Process of Attitude Formation and Change -- evaluative responses of the affective type which consist of feelings, moods, emotions, and sympathetic nervous system activity that people experience in relation to attitude object (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

Organization of Study

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter II provides a review of the literature relating to this study. The review covers previous research on effectiveness of recruitment advertising, the concept, the measurement and the impact of corporate image as well as attitude formation and change. Product advertising studies are also included with the focus on effects of pictures on attitude formation and change. In Chapter III, the research methodology is introduced, which includes the design and execution of the main experiment as well as study measurements and data analysis. Chapter IV provides a manuscript prepared for submission to Journal of Management. Finally, Chapter V presents discussion of the findings, conclusion, implications and limitations of this study,

along with recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of literature is divided into four main sections. The first section concerns recruitment advertising, particularly, the impact of visual elements in ads on the effectiveness of recruitment advertising. The second section concerns corporate image, the concept as well as its dimensions and impacts on people's perception and behavior. The particular groups of people discussed in this study are current and prospective employees, to whom companies intend to declare themselves as attractive organizations. The third section of literature review concerns attitude formation and change primarily from a marketing and product advertising perspective. Discussions focused on what are the causal determinants of overall attitude toward the advertised brand. The last section concerns the effects of pictures in product ads on peoples' attitudinal responses. Studies on whether pictures can affect brand attitudes and through what mechanisms they affect brand attitudes are discussed.

Recruitment Advertising

Although the principles underlying the field of recruitment advertising are recognized to be an analogue to those employed in product advertising, the effectiveness

of most recruitment advertising activities remains seriously in doubt. This is because there is no common body of knowledge in the field. Rather, “a plethora of conjectures, opinions, assumptions, and contentions, many of which are contradictory and wholly inconsistent with one another, exists in its stead.” (Belt & Paolillo, 1982, p.105). The situation was reported no more favorably in later studies -- “Logic seems to evade the creation and placement of recruitment advertising” (Resnik, 1991, p.43). As a result, the field of recruitment advertising remains one where trial and error approaches appear to be practiced.

Two empirical studies investigated the effectiveness of recruitment advertising. Bruno (1973) focused on participants’ demographic factors (i.e., gender, and age) in relation with their perception of recruitment ads. In the study, each of the demographic groups, which varied in age, gender and academic classification, participated in a 2 (company) \times 2 (ads with reader oriented messages vs. ads with company oriented messages) factorial experiment. A reader oriented message emphasized the reader view point by using personal pronouns “you” and “your”, whereas a company oriented message emphasized the company view point by using the company’s name and pronoun “we” and “our”. Results showed that perception of advertising writing style appears to be a function of age and gender. Although no particular type of message was preferred by any age group, younger respondents between the ages of 17 and 22 demonstrated the greatest degree of sensitivity toward the writing style of the message (the standard deviation of mean values representing the preference of message for this group was much higher than that for older age groups). Male students found ads with reader-oriented messages more

desirable, whereas female students showed no significant preference for ads with either type of message.

The second study investigated how advertising effectiveness could be influenced by two independent variables: corporate image of the advertiser and degree of specificity of the candidate sought in recruitment ads (Belt & Paolillo, 1982). The effectiveness of recruitment ads was measured by the likelihood of reader response to the advertisements. The corporate image referred to the company's general public image. Twenty fast-food companies were ranked on the basis of each firm's corporate image. A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used in the study. The results showed that only one variable, corporate image of the advertiser significantly affected the likelihood of reader response to the recruitment ads. Better corporate images appeared to result in more reader responses.

Both studies (Bruno, 1973; Belt & Paolillo, 1982) were concerned only with the informational content of recruitment ads rather than executional elements of the ads such as graphics or pictures in ads. While numerous empirical studies have investigated the effect of visual stimulus in product advertising, there is little empirical study examining the effect of visual stimulus in recruitment advertising. Searching through all the related materials, only a few reports, usually based upon personal experience, were found (Bruce, 1993; Coss, 1968; Halcrow, 1985; Koch, 1989, 1990; Stoops, 1984). However, much disagreement occurs on the issue of whether visual elements in recruitment advertising can increase persuasion.

Some articles suggested that graphic elements in recruitment ads should be carefully considered before using them (Halcrow, 1985) or simply kept at a minimum (Koch, 1989). As a practitioner with many years of involvement in recruitment advertising activities, Bruce (1993) stated that creativity should not be the highest priority as too much creativity (in recruitment advertising) is dangerous. He indicated that good execution of ads could win recruitment advantages just as superior marketing wins the product and service race. While many articles postulated that negative effects may appear when pictures are included in recruitment ads, others took opposite views concerning the impact of graphics or pictures on the effectiveness of recruitment ads. Coss (1968) provided a complete guide on recruitment advertising to researchers and practitioners in his book. He indicated in the book that "art elements are extremely important in an ad's visual appearance and often make considerable difference in the response the ad evokes" (p. 32). He argued that there are three functions for the art elements: 1) catching readers' attention; 2) increasing their interest and 3) acting as a screening device, drawing only the attention of the specific group to which the ad is directed.

More support has been given to the positive impact of visual stimulus in recruitment by some recent studies (Bruce, 1991; Koch, 1990; Redman & Mathews, 1992; Stoops, 1984). Strong visuals are considered to be primary attention-getting hooks in recruitment advertising and unusual graphics are considered to be effective (Koch, 1990). In an attempt to synthesize what a good recruitment ad is composed of, Redman and Mathews (1992) examined the extent to which the prescriptive literature on recruitment advertising is matched by the real preferences of applicants (potential managers) for recruitment companies. He argued that graphics or pictures could attract

attention better than simple text unless all other advertisements are similarly using pictures. Like most of the research that has investigated recruitment advertising, this study focused on the information content of ads, i.e., whether or not the ads should include the information about place of work, salary and etc. The artistic and creative visual elements of recruitment ads were only briefly discussed in this study. Redman and Mathews believe that visual elements are much more difficult to detail since successful application of these elements is often “obtained by breaking the rules” (p. 30).

Although the effectiveness of recruitment advertising is an important concern for companies, far too little research has been conducted in this area. No empirical research has been directed at the effective executional elements in recruitment advertising. As a result, it remains in doubt whether the visual elements should be applied the same way in recruitment advertising as they are in product advertising.

Corporate Image

The term image appears in a variety of contexts such as brand image, store image, self-image and corporate image. Image has been recognized as a most powerful influence on the way people perceive things as well as a powerful input into how people respond to these things. Thus it should be taken as a crucial concept in shaping a firm’s marketing, advertising and communications effort.

The concept of corporate image (or company image) was born in the 1950s. As a major contributor to its development, Pierre Martineau (1958) distinguished functional meanings from emotional meanings of the corporate image. The functional meanings of

corporate images were concerned with the more tangible assets of a company such as product quality and services. The emotional meanings were concerned with subjective feelings. He argued that there is no one corporate personality because every firm has different publics to which the company addresses itself. Seven such publics -- shareholders, consumers, employees, potential customers, vendors, suppliers and neighbors -- were identified in this study. In addition, each company has many image dimensions. Another early contributor, Remus Harris (1958) divided the unidimensional concept of image into seven dimensions. These are corporate image, institutional image, product line image, product image, brand image, and consumer demand image.

Much of the research on corporate image was done in the 1970s and 1980s. Kennedy (1977) surveyed companies' internal public (employees) as well as external public (i.e., suppliers and purchasers). This investigation concerned how diverse public groups perceive a company's corporate image. The study found that various publics have different perceptions of the same company's image. The differences were presented by listing the variations in beliefs for each image dimension for the same company. For instance, the employee group appeared to be more pessimistic than other groups on some aspects of the company, such as the working conditions and top management efficiency.

Subsequent studies have confirmed that each public group is likely to have a different image of the particular company. Dowling (1986) suggested that if a firm intends to improve its image for a particular public, it is necessary to isolate the salient image dimensions for the public group of interest to the firm. He presented a model concerning corporate image formation processes and provided a set of guidelines to

modify these images. The image dimensions for the employee group were divided into three major categories according to his study: organizational culture, formal company policies and the company's media communication. Organizational culture includes managerial attitudes and philosophy, industrial relations, work related opportunities, functions of organization, personal affiliation with coworkers, reward and compensation structures, etc. Formal company policies include product information, published financial records of the firm and physical conditions.

To further the corporate image formation theory initiated in his previous study, Dowling (1993) presented a revised model that appears to be more complete. In this study, the importance of managers to coordinate all elements, which include the firm's vision, marketing communications, corporate strategy and organizational design and culture in developing corporate image, was emphasized. These two studies suggest valuable methods and procedures in designing the projected images as well as modifying negatively established ones.

Advertising research has shown that a company's advertising can affect the corporate image of the company (e.g., Garbett, 1983; Dowling, 1986, 1993; Koch, 1989; Martin, 1987; Stoops, 1983), and in turn, corporate image of a company can affect people's perception and behavior toward the company as well. Research has shown that corporate image of a company has strong influence on prospective employees' responses to the company. Belt and Paolillo (1982) examined organizations' images as perceived by job applicants and their responses regarding job application. Favorableness of the public image of each of 20 fast-food establishments was examined in this study. The

results of this study show that the responses to the recruitment organizations with better public images were significantly higher.

Gatewood, Gowan, and Lautenschlager (1993) studied five groups of college students who were asked to do reputation ratings on thirteen companies advertising in the College Placement Council Annual. Results of this study also indicated that corporate image is a significant predictor of applicants' initial decisions about pursuing contact with recruitment organizations. In addition, results revealed that corporate image was related to recruitment ad image, that is, the image associated with its recruitment message. The better the image of a recruitment ad, the better the image people have of a recruitment company.

Prior studies on corporate image are consistent with general image studies in that image about an entity has a powerful influence on people's response toward the entity. Positive images generated by recruitment ads will increase the prospective employees' initial job decision. If the corporate image of a recruitment company is proven to be influential to a prospective employee's perception of the company and his or her initial job decision, ways to manipulate the company's recruitment advertising so as to create a positive corporate image is an important issue. The challenge to a recruitment company is to find these ways.

Attitude Formation and Change

In the area of advertising, there are two basic arguments that make attitude formation and change an important issue. One is that a consumer's postcommunication behavior is controlled by his/her attitudes toward products and product alternatives; the other is that advertisements can be manipulated to affect those attitudes, which is the main interest of this study.

The concept of *attitude*, regarded as the most distinctive and indispensable concept in social psychology (Allport, 1935), has been the focus of development in social psychology since the 1920s. Recent studies in social psychology as well as marketing have reached a widespread agreement to view attitude as a global and relatively enduring (i.e., stored in long-term memory) evaluation of objects, issues, or persons (e.g., Ajzen, 1987; Cooper & Croyle, 1984; Fazio, 1986). It is also widely held that attitudes are formed through cognitive, affective and behavioral processes (e.g., Breckler, 1984; Greenwald, 1968; Insko & Schopler, 1967; Triandis, 1971; Zanna & Rempel, 1988). Though experiences from past behavior have been found to directly affect attitudes toward objects (Bem, 1972), the focus of this study is the effect of advertising on attitude formation. Hence only the cognitive and affective processes will be discussed.

An extensive exploration of the cognitive approach in attitude formation and change emerged during the 1960s and 1970s. The cognitive process, which generates an individual's evaluative responses (i.e., thoughts or ideas about the attitude object), regards humans as rationale beings who systematically utilize the information available to them. A number of cognitive based theoretical models of the attitude construct were formulated

by studies in social psychology. There are two categories of theories - combination theories and process theories. Combination theories (Anderson, 1971, 1981a, 1981b; Fishbein, 1963, 1967; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; McGuire, 1960a, 1960b, 1960c; Wyer, 1970, 1974; Wyer & Carison, 1979; Wyer & Goldberg, 1970; Wyer & Hartwick, 1980) provide mathematical descriptions of how people combine or intergrate the various information available to them. Process theories (Chaiken, 1980; Eagly & Chaiken, 1975; Greenwald, 1968; Kelley, 1972; McGuire, 1968, 1972; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b; Sherif & Sherif, 1967) provide verbal descriptions of particular mechanisms or processes involved in changing attitudes.

A major difference between these two categories is that the process theories attempt to explain the mechanisms which influence people's tendencies to accept information while ignoring how people *integrate* items of information with one another and with their prior cognitions to form beliefs and attitudes. In contrast, the combination models carefully describe how people integrate the information they have accepted while giving less consideration to the psychological processes underlying acceptance itself.

Among the combination theories, perhaps Fishbein's model of attitude (Fishbein, 1963, 1967; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) presents the clearest theoretical explanation of the causal basis of attitudes. It specifies the relationship between the set of *salient beliefs* (expressed as the subjective probability that an attitude object has some certain attributes) about an object and an overall *attitude* toward the object. The algebraic model of attitude is expressed as follows:

$$\sum_{i=1}^n b_i e_i = A_o$$

Where b_i is the belief i (salient belief) about attitude object o , e_i is the evaluation of attribute i expressed as the value of the attribute i ; n is the number of salient beliefs and A_o is the overall evaluation toward the object o expressed as the attitude toward o . This model proposes that “a person’s attitude is a function of his salient beliefs at a given point of time”(Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 222). A means of estimating the belief-attitude relationship is formed as a result of the mechanism described in this model.

Although the model does not indicate whether causation flows from beliefs to attitudes or vice versa, nor does it “state” that beliefs are the sole determinant of attitudes, the basic proposition is that beliefs determine attitudes and any changes in attitudes must be mediated by changes in those salient beliefs. The model has developed a number of implications for measuring advertising persuasiveness. For instance, effective advertising stimuli must affect consumers’ product beliefs first in order to affect their brand attitude. Subsequently, considerable research on advertising effect was stimulated by Fishbein’s model (e.g., Holbrook, 1978; Lutz, 1975, 1977; Lutz & Swazy, 1977; Mazis & Adkinson, 1976; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Olson & Mitchell, 1975). These studies demonstrated that exposure to effective ads would not only bring about changes in product beliefs, but also corresponding changes in brand attitude or attitude toward purchasing products.

Many studies in psychology and marketing were directed at the statistically significant association between the brand attitude and the index of the attitude ($\sum b_i e_i$), particularly, the relationship between the brand attitude and the product attribute beliefs (e.g., Cronen & Conville, 1975a, 1975b; Kaplan & Fishbein, 1969; Smith & Clark, 1973; Wilkie & Pessemer, 1973). Overall, moderately high or high correlation between brand

attitude and product attribute beliefs were found (e.g., Cronen & Conville, 1975a, 1975b; Fishbein, 1963; Fishbein & Coombs, 1974; Hackman & Anderson, 1968; Iaccard & Fishbein, 1975; Smith & Clark, 1973).

Concerns remain about the correctness of details of Fishbein's equation, specifically, whether the evaluative content of beliefs is described appropriately ($\sum b_i e_i$). Arguments exist on methodological issues concerning the scaling of the beliefs and evaluations (e.g., Hewstone & Young, 1988; Sparks, Hedderley, & Sheperd, 1991). Discussions also focus on the adequacy of Fishbein's model, in which a multiplicative composite of two variables are used as a predictor of attitude (e.g., Bagozzi, 1984; Evans, 1991). Although research efforts have been directed at modifying Fishbein's basic model and determining whether those modifications are empirically better than the basic one, rules for selecting one model over another are still ambiguous.

In the domain of process theories of attitude formation and change, the *Elaboration Likelihood Model* (ELM) of persuasion introduced by Petty and Cacioppo (1980, 1981, 1986a, 1986b) provides an extended view of persuasion. Compared with Fishbein's theory, the ELM incorporates the idea that people may form attitudes on bases other than their evaluation of attribute beliefs. In particular, it specifies the *conditions* under which persuasion should be affected by message-related thinking (i.e., forming salient beliefs). The ELM also postulates that alternative *peripheral* mechanisms appear when these *conditions* are not met. Two qualitatively different routes to persuasion are specified. When the elaboration likelihood is high (i.e., a person's motivation and ability to scrutinize a message are high), and a person's involvement level is high, he/she uses a *central route* to process the information in the message. Intense message-related thinking

is generated and the person's attitude is formed or changed by active comprehension and evaluation of the message arguments in this condition. In contrast, when the elaboration likelihood is low, the *peripheral route* is taken whereby attitudes are more likely to be derived from relatively simple associations between stimulus and attitude objects. In this condition, stimuli serve as peripheral cues, which refers to any variable capable of affecting persuasion without affecting argument scrutiny (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Extensive cognitive elaboration does not occur.

A renewed interest in affective processes of attitude formation and change occurred in the 1980s (e.g., Gardner, 1985; Lutz, MacKenzie, & Belch, 1983; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Moore & Hutchinson, 1983; Park & Young, 1986). In contrast to cognitive processes that emphasize the rational, evaluative or attitudinal judgments about an object, affective processes emphasize the impact of the individual's emotion-like states that he/she experiences during object exposure. Specifically, it refers to the evaluative responses that consist of feelings, moods, emotions, and sympathetic nervous system activity that people experience in relation to attitude objects.

The affective approach to attitude formation and change in product advertising studies suggested an alternative to Fishbein's beliefs-cause-attitude model. Two articles (Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Shimp, 1981) implied that an attitude toward a concept may be formed (or changed) without the corresponding formation of salient beliefs about the concept (or changes in those beliefs). Instead, it may be mediated by the *overall attitude toward the ad*, an affective construct defined as a "predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion" (Lutz, 1985, p. 46). Subsequent research has provided accumulated

evidence about the substantial relationship between attitude toward the ad and brand attitude (e.g., Cox & Locander, 1987; Gardner, 1985; Gresham & Shimp, 1985; Homer, 1990; Lutz, MacKenzie, & Belch 1983; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986; Madden, Allen, & Twible, 1988; Muehling, 1987; Park & Young, 1986).

One explanation for the relationship between the attitude toward the ad and the brand attitude is based on the classical conditioning approach (Staats & Staats, 1967). The process of classical conditioning can be briefly described as follows: whenever an unconditioned stimulus (US), such as a picture, spontaneously evokes a positive or negative feeling, the systematic pairing of US and the conditioned stimulus (CS), such as a brand, causes a transfer of the feeling from the US to the CS (Allen & Madden, 1985; Zajonc, Pietromonaco, & Bargh, 1982). Thus, through classical conditioning, people can be led to form attitudes toward a brand without any conscious consideration of brand attributes, but through the emotion-like responses evoked by the ad (Allen & Shimp, 1990; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Gorn, 1982; Stuart, Shimp, & Engle, 1987).

The ELM from Petty and Cacioppo provides another theoretical basis to explain the relationship between attitude toward the ad and brand attitude. Some studies interpret the relationship between brand attitude and product attribute belief as a representation of the central route and the relationships involving attitude toward the ad as a representation of the peripheral route (Droge, 1989; Lutz, 1985; MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986). These studies postulated that peripheral processing, represented by the mediation effect of attitude toward the ad on brand attitude, takes place only when individuals respond less to the content than to incidental factors of an exposure. In other words, the mediation effect of the attitude toward the ad on brand attitude occurs when individuals do not actively

process the product-related information in ads. Exceptions to this theory are expressed by other studies which proposed that attitude toward the ad should influence brand attitude regardless of whether persuasion takes a central or a peripheral route (Miniard, Bhatla, & Rose, 1990; Gardner, 1985; Mittal, 1990; Muehling, Laczniak, & Stoltman, 1991).

Recent research has shown that decomposing the attitude toward the ad into cognitive and affective components can yield even better understanding of how attitude toward an ad influences brand attitude (Burton & Lichtenstein, 1988; Celuch & Slama, 1995; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Madden, Allen, & Twible, 1988; Miniard, Bhatla, & Rose, 1990; Mitchell, 1986). The results of these studies are consistent with previous studies in that the attitude toward an ad should affect brand attitude regardless of whether persuasion takes a central (high involvement level) or peripheral route (low involvement level). In addition, they provide a better explanation for why the effect takes place regardless of the involvement levels.

To summarize, past research in social psychology and marketing has confirmed that brand attitude is mediated by attitude toward the ad as well as brand-related cognition (i.e., forming product attribute belief). In other words, both the attitude toward the ad and the product attribute belief are significant predictors of brand attitude.

Picture Effect

Previous research on the inclusion of pictures in product advertisements is composed of two broad categories. In the first, the effects of pictorial messages on memory are examined and in the second, the effects of pictures on consumer attitudinal

responses are analyzed. Studies have reported that pictures are often remembered better than words in a wide variety of memory tasks. This picture-superiority effect (expressed as the superior memorability of pictures over words) on memory is shown by research in both cognitive psychology (e.g., Alesandrini, 1983; Craik & Lockhart, 1972; Craik & Tulving, 1975; Goodman, 1980; Lutz & Lutz, 1977; Nelson, 1979; Pavio, 1969, 1986) and marketing (e.g., Childers & Houston, 1984; Edell & Staelin, 1983; Houston, Childers, Heckler & Susan, 1987; Kisiiecus, 1982; Lutz & Lutz, 1977; Shepard, 1967; Starch, 1966). The dominant explanation for the superiority effect of pictures on memory focuses on the pictures' ability to evoke visual imagery. The encoding, storage, and retrieval of information process involves two independent but related memory systems associated with imaginable and verbal coding of to-be-remembered information, and arousal of both verbal and imaginable codes would be expected to lead to better retention than that of a single code. Because the greater numbers of memory codes for pictures act as multiple retrieval routes, the picture superiority effect is formed.

Although the memory effect is important due to the impact of internal information throughout the consumer decision process, the focus here is with consumer attitudinal responses. A long history of evidence beginning with a classic experiment by Staats and Staats (1957) has demonstrated that favorably evaluated words about the object can positively reinforce attitudinal responses toward the object.

The empirical study of visual reinforcement in ads began about two decades ago. Rossiter and Percy (1980) investigated the relationship between visual elements in ads and postcommunication attitude toward the advertised brand. They postulated a "dual loop" theory, which indicated that visual content in an ad could directly affect one's

brand attitude through his or her visual imagery process (a visual loop). To test this theory, subjects were exposed to print ads with a constant portion that contained three copy points shown with either a large or small picture. Brand attitude was found to be significantly more positive when the picture was large. They interpreted the mediating effect of the picture towards brand attitude as a result of direct affect transfer in classical conditioning. Although their studies confirmed that visual content can be manipulated to affect brand attitude, the possibility was raised that visual effect may operate through the mediation of product beliefs. However, only product-directed thoughts were collected in this study and no measure of product beliefs was taken.

Mitchell and Olson (1981) empirically tested the possibility suggested by Rossiter and Percy (1980). In Mitchell's and Olson's study, each subject was shown four ads for four hypothetical brands of facial tissues. The ads contained only one element (a picture or verbal claim) and the brand name. Ads containing a drawing of a kitten (without verbal message) were found to yield the most favorable beliefs in terms of brand softness. The study indicated that manipulation of pictures in product advertisements may create a favorable brand attitude through generating favorable product beliefs. In addition to this, the study also suggested pictures may affect brand attitude through other mechanisms since including the attitude beliefs index ($\sum b_i e_i$) as a covariant did not completely remove the effects of a picture on brand attitude. However, the effects of a picture on brand attitude were no longer significant after removing both the effects of attitude beliefs and the effects of attitude toward the ad. To conclude, Mitchell and Olson argued that the attitude toward an ad could also directly mediate the brand attitude as a result of classical conditioning mechanism.

To further understand the effect of a picture, Mitchell (1986) investigated the internal mechanisms through which pictures mediate brand attitude. Two factors were used in this research: picture-type (negative, neutral and positive) and product. ANOVA results indicated that the picture-type manipulation resulted in a significant main effect on the initial brand attitude. More specifically, when involvement level is high, the more positive the picture included in an ad, the more favorable brand attitude will be formed. Consistent with an earlier study (Mitchell & Olson, 1981) in that a picture in a product ad may affect brand attitude through affecting product attribute beliefs, this study concluded that even in a high involvement condition, a picture in an ad may affect brand attitude.

Although the mediation effects of pictures in ads on people's attitudinal responses have been confirmed by research as well as advertising practice numerous times, evidence exists to suggest that in certain situations, verbal-only material is not any less persuasive than the combination of verbal and pictorial material in ads. Taylor and Thompson (1982) reviewed studies on the persuasive impact of pictorially illustrated messages versus nonpictorially illustrated messages. Two published studies (Manis, Dovalina, Avis, & Cardoze, 1980; Gottlieb, Taylor, & Ruderman, 1977) were presented in this review which examined the effects of photographs in ads which contained the same information as the verbal message. According to these two studies, evidence that pictures enhance the persuasibility of information was weak. Another study (Kisielius & Sternthal, 1984) postulated that high image pictures (pictures that are very rich in visual cues) may stimulate the cognitive elaboration of information relatively unfavorable to the message position, and thus they inhibit the formation of a favorable attitude toward the brand. Findings of this study showed that verbal information alone yield a more

favorable attitudinal judgment than verbal information accompanied by pictorial analogues (the picture conveying the same meanings as the verbal copy).

The incongruence of the picture effect in literature was further investigated and conditions under which the picture effect is retained or eliminated were studied. While Kisielius and his colleague (1984) inferred that the less positive brand attitudes are the result of more counterarguments derived from the pictures in the ads, no measures of the intervening process were conducted. It is possible that the less positive brand attitude resulted from negative evaluations of the pictures themselves. Mitchell (1986) tested this possibility empirically in his study. He argued that picture type (positive, neutral and negative) may be according to these two studies a factor that influences the effectiveness of a picture on postcommunication attitude and this factor takes effect through affecting attitude toward the ad.

Another possibility suggested by Edell and Staelin (1983) was that different information processing occurs depending on picture and verbal message congruency. Edell and Staelin compared framed pictures (message including verbal material equivalent in content to the picture), unframed pictures (messages consisting of only picture) and exclusively verbal content in terms of subjects' recall and attitudinal response. A $3 \times 3 \times 3$ Latin-square design was used with the following factors: structure of the varied portion of the ad (verbal, pictorial unframed, and pictorial framed); content of the varied message (objective, subjective, and characterization); and product class advertised. The results from ANOVAs indicated that there were no significant differences between the pictorial framed ads and the verbal-only ads on any of the measurements taken, including product attribute beliefs and brand attitude. Edell and

Staelin concluded that when a picture in an ad is framed, it is processed more like the verbal material in the absence of the picture. Only product-directed thoughts that occur during message processing were measured as the antecedents of postcommunication product attitudes, and none of the product attribute beliefs were measured.

Yi (1990) studied the picture-verbal relationship in ads and its association with the picture's impact on brand attitude. In this study, visual stimuli were manipulated through either inclusion or noninclusion of a picture, which implied intended attributes. An *intended attribute* here refers to the particular attribute of the product that advertisers intend to change. Since this intended attribute is not declared directly by the verbal portion of the ad, the visual elements (pictures) are only related to the verbal content, rather than equivalent. Results show that the belief strength for intended attributes was enhanced by ads with pictures suggesting these attributes. Based upon Fishbein's attitude theory, the study concluded that pictures, which are related to the verbal content rather than equivalent to the verbal content, could enhance positive brand attitude.

Besides the fact that the picture type as well as the relationship between picture and verbal content in ads may influence the effectiveness of the pictures in moderating brand attitude, the involvement level of the subjects during message processing may also moderate the impact of pictures. To test these hypotheses, Miniard and his colleagues (Miniard, et al., 1991) used 2 (involvement: high or low) X 2 (claims: stronger or weaker) X 2 (picture: attractive or unattractive) factorial design. Results support the moderating role of involvement in picture-based persuasion, as suggested by ELM. Specifically, the results from Study I (lower involvement condition) revealed that pictures, which served as peripheral cues, influenced postcommunication attitudes. When the involvement

condition was increased to a higher level as it was in Study II, compatible with the findings from other studies (Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Yi, 1990), the results showed that pictures conveying product-relevant information also influenced brand attitude. The study found that for pictures that act as peripheral cues, their impact declines as involvement level of audiences increases. In contrast, for relevant pictures, the impact became stronger as the involvement level increased.

Prior research has found that pictures in ads have impact on postcommunication product attitude. However, examinations of the process responsible for picture-based persuasion have primarily focused on the traditional antecedents of postcommunication brand attitudes, such as the product directed thoughts and product attribute beliefs. Studies have also shown that attitude toward the ad can positively affect brand attitude without affecting product attribute beliefs. Manipulation of a picture in an ad may generate a favorable attitude toward the ad and thus a favorable brand attitude may be developed in the end.

Summary of Review of Literature

This selected review of literature has looked at the effectiveness of recruitment advertising as well as the concept of corporate image, its definition, dimensions and impact. Corporate image is a powerful input into prospective employees' perception of recruitment companies. It also strongly affects prospective employees' direct responses toward these companies. The relationship between the effectiveness of a company's recruitment advertising and the corporate image of the recruitment company was shown

to be strong. Unfortunately, not enough attention has been given to this important relationship. Studies on effectiveness of recruitment advertising focused on verbal information in ads rather than executional elements in ads. As a result, the effects of pictures in recruitment advertising remain in doubt.

The review of literature also looked at a strong theoretically based area, product advertising research. To better understand the effects of pictures on attitude formation and change, the review began with a general discussion on studies concerning attitude formation and change, followed by a review on effects of pictures in product advertising. Prior research has confirmed that pictures in ads can affect people's postcommunication attitudes. Specifically, the attitude toward the advertised product may be affected by pictures either through influencing product attribute beliefs, or through influencing the overall attitude toward the ads. The studies in product advertising have helped to establish the theoretical basis for research on the following questions: Does a picture in a recruitment ad affect a potential employee's perception of the company's corporate image? Does it affect his or her beliefs on the company attributes and his or her image of the ad? What is the relationship between one's image of the ad and his or her perception of the company's corporate image? The potential implications of such research are very important for advertising practice. The inclusion of pictures in print recruitment ads adds substantial cost to advertising production and media placement. Such research would offer a basis for anticipating whether those costs are justified or unnecessary.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether and how visual stimuli (pictures) in a recruitment ad affects corporate image of a recruitment company as perceived by prospective employees. The study may result in recommendations for companies in regard to improving their corporate image in recruitment markets through effective advertising on campus.

The first stage of this research is to review the literature related to effectiveness of recruitment advertising and the concept, measurement and impact of corporate image as well as the literature related to attitude construct and effects of pictures in product advertising.

The second stage of this research consists in obtaining information needed to build an instrument for the experiment. The selection of a sample as experimental subjects and the design of experimental ads are discussed, together with the introduction of pretests for the experimental ads.

The third stage is a brief description for the procedures of the main experiment and the last stage is the discussion of study measurement and the methods used for data analysis.

Development of Experiment

Recruitment Company

Two fictitious recruitment companies, namely Colonna Corp. and Mere Corp. (multiple stimuli), were created for the purpose of stimulus sampling in the experiment (Fontenelle, Phillips & Lane, 1985). Stimuli sampling requires two different companies be used in the ads so that possible significant effects caused by idiosyncratic properties of a single stimulus may be avoided. Rather than using existing companies' names or the names of any familiar things, the creation of two fictitious companies were used to avoid biases that influence subjects' responses toward the experimental ads.

The Experimental Ads

The independent variable in this study was the presence or absence of a picture in the recruitment ads. Four full-page color print recruitment ads were created as the target ads for the main experiment, two of them with pictures and two without (See Appendix B). Two fictitious companies were used for stimulus sampling purpose. Each company was advertised in two different types of ads, picture type and non-picture type of ads. The target picture used in this experiment was selected in pretest so as to ensure it conveys the meaning of intended attributes about the recruitment companies in most the positive way. The intended attributes refer to the particular company-attributes that this experiment intended to create and reinforce in the minds of subjects. These particular attributes indicate that the company has a friendly working environment and the job being offered is challenging and fun. The picture selected for the main experiment was pretested to

ensure that it conveyed the meaning of intended attributes and was congruent with the verbal message.

The verbal claims in all the experimental ads remain identical. They primarily expressed five attributes concerning the performance and features of the companies as follows: 1) recognized as a fast growing organization with great opportunities for an individual's professional advancement; 2) recognized as the best quality product/service provider among all retail companies; 3) possessing a friendly working environment and encouraging team work; 4) providing interesting and challenging jobs; and 5) providing continuous employee training.

Pretest

A sample of 13 students from a retailing class was used as the subjects for the pretest. It included a pretest for the visual stimulus (picture) and a pretest for the verbal content in the experimental ads.

Visual Stimuli Pretesting. The goal in visual stimuli pretesting was to select a single color picture, which clearly conveyed the meaning of the most important intended attributes about recruitment companies. In addition, the selected picture must be highly positive in terms of receiving high scores from the pretest subjects in a designed evaluation scale of appropriateness and attractiveness.

First of all, the level of importance for each company attribute selected from prior research (Kennedy, 1977; Dowling, 1986) needed to be determined. By ranking the importance of each attribute, the subjects were exposed to these typical attributes about a

recruitment company concerning its performance. It was expected that the subjects would partially apply them later on in their evaluation of pictures. For instance, subjects would be asked to write down any ideas each picture implied about a recruitment company. To accomplish this step, the subjects were asked to select the five most important attributes of nine provided for a recruitment company and rank them from one to five, with one indicating the most important attribute and five the least important attribute (See Appendix A-I). The results showed that providing a friendly working environment and encouraging mutual respect and cooperation in work/management as well as providing interesting, exciting and challenging jobs were considered to be the two most important attributes of a recruitment company.

Then three groups of color pictures were rated. The candidate pictures were grouped into scenic pictures, sports pictures and retail-associated pictures. The subjects were first informed that the pictures about to be presented to them were selected from companies' recruitment ads. Each picture was shown and subjects were required to write down the ideas that came to mind concerning a recruitment company. A sports picture showing people rafting in Colorado River was identified to be better in expressing the meanings of the two most important attributes (providing interesting, exciting and challenging jobs and providing a friendly working environment, and encouraging mutual respect and cooperation in work/management) than any other pictures used in the pretest.

As they viewed each picture, the pretest subjects were also asked to rate the appropriateness and the attractiveness of this picture. A seven-item Likert scale from disagree (1) to agree (7) was employed. The statements for these items were: 1) this picture stimulates positive feelings; 2) this picture creates a good impression of the

company; 3) this picture is relevant for recruitment advertising of a retail company; 4) the picture is attention catching; 5) the picture is interesting; and 6) the picture is impressive. The results indicated that the picture of rafting was among the three most positive pictures collected for the pretest. Therefore, this picture was considered to be appropriate for the main experiment of this study.

Verbal Content Pretesting. The goal in verbal content pretesting was to ensure that the verbal message of the target ads would be understood and interpreted correctly by their readers. To do this, the pretest subjects were presented with the total verbal body of the ad that would be used for the main experiment. They were encouraged to ask questions if any confusion appeared in their understanding of the ad. They were also encouraged to answer questions related to the meaning of sentences and phrases used in the ads voluntarily. The results showed that the verbal message was generally appropriate for the main experiment with only a few corrections needed.

Execution of Experiment

Subjects

The subjects were 90 students who enrolled in lower division undergraduate courses in a midwestern university in the summer of 1997. Among them 34 were males and 56 were females. They voluntarily participated in the experiment during class and were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions. Only one subject was a graduate student and the majority was under 24 years of age (80%). They represented a

potential future market for the experimental recruitment companies. It was expected that, as young undergraduate students, the subjects would exhibit a reasonably low level of experience and knowledge about job searching as well as employer evaluation.

Execution

The subjects were assigned at random to read one of the four experimental ads, that was, an ad with or without a picture from one of the two fictitious companies. Forty-six of the subjects received ads with pictures and forty-four received ads without pictures. Among the subjects who received picture ads, 24 of them received ads representing Mere Co. and 22 received ads representing Colonna Co. Among the subjects who received ads without pictures half of them received ads representing Mere Co.; and the other half of them received ads representing Colonna Co. They were instructed to view the ads first and then complete the questionnaire without consulting others. Prior to viewing the ads, they were required to fill out consent forms. As a rationale for the experiment, subjects were told that the basic purpose of the study was to investigate their perceptions of recruitment companies and recruitment ads. The experiment lasted approximately fifteen minutes.

Study Measures and Data Analysis

Measures of Dependent Variables

Dependent variables in this study include corporate image, company-attribute

beliefs and ad image. They were measured by subjects' responses to related questions on 7-point scales from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Corporate Image. The concept of corporate image in this study represents an overall attitude one holds toward a recruitment company. Referencing indexes of brand attitude employed in many product advertising studies, this study developed an index for corporate image that was composed of four evaluative items. Subjects were asked to complete four questions related to their overall attitudes toward each recruitment company (corporate image) on a 7 point scale as follows: 1) this company is favorable to me; 2) overall this is a good company; 3) this is an attractive company to job seekers and 4) this company makes a good impression on me. The sum scores of the four items derived from responses to above questions fall in a range from 4 to 28 with the higher scores indicating a more favorable perception of corporate image.

Company-attribute Beliefs. The definition of corporate image implies two ideas, the first is that Fishbein's attitude theory can be applied to study attitude formation and change in recruitment advertising; the second is that in the study of recruitment advertising based upon Fishbein's theory, product attribute beliefs in previous studies are replaced by company attribute beliefs. A group of image dimensions discussed in previous studies (Kennedy, 1977; Dowling, 1986) were selected to make up the index for the attribute beliefs of the new products - recruitment companies.

The index as a group of measures tapped attribute beliefs for each recruitment company, more specifically, the belief strength of each company related attribute. The

subjects were asked to indicate the likelihood that the advertised company possesses the following attributes: 1) providing interesting, exciting and challenging jobs; 2) providing a friendly working environment and encouraging mutual respect and cooperation in work; 3) providing good compensation and benefits to employees; 4) is recognized as having an effective and efficient upper management; 5) providing high quality products and services to consumers; 6) providing continuous training to its employees; 7) is recognized as a fast growing company with great opportunities for personal career advancement; 8) is recognized as a highly competitive company in its industry and financially strong; and 9) is caring about its community and society at large. Responses were on 7-point scale and scores from negative questions were reversed coded. The sum score of all evaluative items (negative and positive items) for company-attribute beliefs falls in a range from 15 to 105 points with the higher score indicating more positive beliefs.

Ad Image. This set of measures involves the subjects' overall attitudes toward the ads. Since multi-item scales are considered to be more reliable (Holbrook & Batra, 1987), a four-item index (dislike – like, negative – positive, bad – good, unfavorable -- favorable) was used to assess the ad images. The inter-item reliability was 0.99 (Holbrook & Batra, 1987), indicating very high internal consistency for this measure. The sum score of the four items representing ad image falls in a range from 4 to 28 with the higher score indicating a more favorable perception of ad image.

Other Data Collected For Study

Demographic information about each subject was collected, such as gender, age, college enrolled in, etc., as well as job application and work experience. In addition, the attitudes of the subjects toward participating in the study were also collected as reference for evaluating the accuracy of data.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical procedure of one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the following three hypotheses:

- ◆ There is significant difference between the *corporate image* generated by a recruitment ad with a picture and that generated by an ad without a picture. A more positive attitude would be expected for the ad with a picture than for the ad without a picture (H1).
- ◆ There is significant difference between the *company-attribute belief set* generated by a recruitment ad with a picture and that generated by an ad without a picture. More positive beliefs would be expected for the ad with a picture than for the ad without a picture (H2).
- ◆ There is significant difference between the *ad image* generated by an ad with a picture and that generated by an ad without a picture. A more positive image would be expected for the recruitment ad with a picture than for the ad without a picture (H3).

ANOVAs were used to detect the impact of picture manipulation on all the dependent variables in this study, which included corporate image, company attribute

beliefs and ad image. Corporate image was represented by the sum scores of four relevant items (See Appendix C-I) and company-attribute beliefs index was represented by the sum scores of fifteen relevant items (See Appendix C-II). The ad image was represented by the sum score of four relevant items (See Appendix C-III).

A regression analysis was used to test the last hypothesis:

- ◆ There is a significant relationship between the *corporate image* of a recruitment company and the *ad image* generated by a recruitment ad. The ad image is a useful predictor of the corporate image (H4).

Corporate image was regarded as a criterion variable and the ad image as the independent variable in this regression analysis.

CHAPTER IV

MANUSCRIPT

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**THE EFFECTS OF PICTURES ON PERCEPTION
OF CORPORATE IMAGE**

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Abstract

While marketing research suggests that manipulation of pictures in product advertising may affect consumers' postcommunication attitude, little is known about the effect of pictures in recruitment advertising. Since recruitment advertising increasingly takes on the traits and philosophies of product advertising, it is necessary to provide an empirical foundation for this practice. This study was aimed to empirically investigate the effects of pictures in recruitment advertising on people's postcommunication attitude. The results showed that manipulation of pictures in ads affects people's perception of corporate images and attribute beliefs of the recruitment companies. It also affects their perception of ad images. In addition, the company-attribute beliefs as well as the ad image are important antecedents of the corporate image of a recruitment company. Implications and limitations of this study are discussed along with the recommendations for future research.

Introduction

To attract qualified job candidates, many companies are now applying the vehicles and philosophies commonly used in consumer product advertising to their innovative design of recruitment ads. Rather than serve as a statement of job openings in everyday newspapers, recruitment advertising is recognized as a mass media communication tool -- a platform for the transmission of organizational messages (Kennedy, 1977; Mathews & Redman, 1994; Stoops, 1984). Through recruitment advertising, a company may enhance its corporate identity as well as create a favorable image among the target audience -- the prospective employees. The favorable image of a recruitment company in prospective employees' memories may cause their direct responses toward the company; or simply be retrieved in future at time of need. Given the importance of recruitment advertising, there is a surprising lack of research dealing with the factors that may make recruitment ads effective. This study investigates one such factor, the visual stimulus (picture), and its impact on people's perception of a recruitment company.

Review of Literature

Recruitment Advertising and Corporate Image

Although the principles underlying the field of recruitment advertising are regarded to be analogues to those employed in product advertising, the effectiveness of most recruitment advertising activities remains seriously in doubt. Two empirical studies (Bruno, 1973; Belt & Paolillo, 1982) investigated the effectiveness of recruitment advertising. Both studies were concerned with the verbal part of recruitment ads, such as

the way that the message was written (reader-oriented vs. company-oriented) and the degree of specification concerning job-related information. Despite the fact that visual elements (i.e., graphics or pictures) in product advertising have been of vital concern, little empirical study in recruitment ads has been directed toward them. It was suggested that negative effects may occur when including pictures in recruitment ads, and thus graphic elements in recruitment ads should be carefully considered before using them (Halcrow, 1985; Koch, 1989). It was also suggested that visual elements can act as attention-getting hooks in recruitment ads just as those in product ads do (e.g., Bruce, 1991, 1993; Redman & Mathews, 1992). Although the effectiveness of recruitment advertising is an important concern for companies, far too little research has been conducted in this area. As a result, it remains in doubt whether visual elements should be applied in the same manner in recruitment advertising as they are in product advertising.

The concept of corporate image (or company image) was born in 1950s. It refers to the set of meanings by which a company is known and through which people describe, remember and relate to it. More specifically, it is the net result of the interaction of a person's beliefs, ideas, feelings and impressions about the company (Dowling, 1986). Operationally, it refers to a person's overall attitude toward the company.

Corporate image of a recruitment company has a strong influence on prospective employees' responses to the company. Studies showed that positive images generated by recruitment ads will increase the prospective employees' initial job decision (Belt & Paolillo, 1982; Gatewood, Gowan, & Lautenschlager, 1993). Not only can corporate image affect the public's perception of and behavior toward the firm, but the firm's

advertising can affect the corporate image as well (e.g., Garbett, 1983; Dowling, 1986, 1993). Dowling (1986) suggested that if a firm intends to improve its image for a particular public, it is necessary to isolate the salient image dimensions for the public group of interest to the firm. In his model (1986, 1993) concerning the projection of positive corporate images, marketing communications (advertising) were regarded as important means of creating positive corporate images or modifying negative ones.

Effects of Pictures in Product Advertising

Previous research on the effects of pictures in product advertising is composed of two broad categories; first, the effects of pictures on people's memories; the second, the effects of pictures on people's attitudinal responses. The latter is the interest of this study. This section begins with an overview of the attitude construct and a discussion of various causal determinants of attitudinal responses, followed by a discussion of the effects of pictures on attitudinal responses.

The concept of attitude is regarded as the most distinctive and indispensable concept in social psychology (Allport, 1935). Recent studies in social psychology as well as marketing have reached a widespread agreement to view attitude as a global and relatively enduring (i.e., stored in long-term memory) evaluation of objects, issues, or persons (e.g., Ajzen, 1987; Cooper & Croyle, 1984). A person's attitudinal response includes cognitive, affective and behavioral responses. As this study is concerned with advertising's effect on formation and change of attitude, only the cognitive and affective responses will be discussed.

Cognitive responses refer to an individual's evaluative responses that generate thoughts or ideas about the attitude object. The cognitive approach to the attitude construct regards humans as rationale beings who systematically utilize information available to them. Perhaps among all the cognitive approaches, Fishbein's model of attitude (Fishbein, 1963, 1967; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) presents the clearest theoretical explanation of the causal basis of attitudes. It specifies the relationship between the set of salient beliefs about an object (expressed as the subjective probability that an attitude object has some certain attributes) and an overall attitude toward the object. The algebraic model of attitude is expressed as follows:

$$\sum_{i=1}^n b_i e_i = A_o$$

Where b_i is the belief i (salient belief) about attitude object o ; e_i is the evaluation of attribute i expressed as the value of the attribute i ; n is the number of salient beliefs and A_o is the overall evaluation toward the object o expressed as the attitude toward o . This model proposes that "a person's attitude is a function of his salient beliefs at a given point of time" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 222). It implies an underlying logic that beliefs determine attitudes and any changes in attitudes must be mediated by changes in those salient beliefs.

The model has a number of implications for measuring advertising persuasiveness and it stimulated considerable research on advertising effect. Many studies in psychology as well as marketing have demonstrated that exposure to effective ads would bring about changes in product beliefs and corresponding changes in brand attitude or attitude toward purchasing products (e.g., Cronen & Conville, 1975a; Fishbein & Coombs, 1974;

Hackman & Anderson, 1968; Iaccard & Fishbein, 1975; Smith & Clark, 1973).

A second cognitive approach to the attitude construct is Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1980, 1981, 1986). Different from Fishbein's theory, the ELM incorporates the idea that people may form attitudes on bases other than their evaluation of attribute beliefs. In particular, it specifies the low elaboration conditions under which attitudes are more likely to be derived from relatively simple associations between stimulus and attitude objects. Extensive cognitive elaboration does not occur. This indicates that attitudes may be formed on bases other than the evaluation of attribute beliefs specified in Fishbein's model.

In contrast to the cognitive approach that emphasizes the rational evaluative or attitudinal judgments about an object, the affective approach emphasizes the impact of an individual's emotion-like states experienced during object exposure. Studies (Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Shimp, 1981) concerning the attitude formation and change in product advertising imply that an attitude toward a product may be formed (or changed) without the corresponding formation of salient beliefs about the product (or changes in those beliefs). Instead, an attitude may be mediated by the overall attitude toward the ads. The overall attitude toward the ads is considered to be an affective construct. Lutz (1985) defined it as a "predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion" (p. 46). Research has provided accumulated evidence concerning the substantial relationship between the attitude toward the ad and brand attitude (e.g., Cox & Locander, 1987; Gardner, 1985; Gresham & Shimp, 1985; Lutz, MacKenzie, & Belch 1983; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Park & Young, 1986). These studies suggest an alternative to Fishbein's beliefs-cause-

attitude model.

One explanation for the relationship between attitude toward the ad and brand attitudes is based on the classical conditioning approach (Staats & Staats, 1967). It is described in marketing research as follows: When an unconditioned stimulus (US), such as a picture, spontaneously evokes a positive or negative feeling, the systematic pairing of US and the conditioned stimulus (CS), such as a brand, causes a transfer of the feeling from the US to the CS. Thus, through classical conditioning, people may form attitudes toward a brand without any conscious consideration of brand attributes, but through the emotion-like responses evoked by the ad.

The ELM provides another theoretical basis for explaining the relationship between attitude toward the ad and brand attitude. Studies (Lutz, 1985; MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986) postulated that the mediation effect of attitude toward the ad on brand attitude occurs only when individuals do not actively process the product-related information in ads. Exceptions to this theory are expressed by other studies which proposed that attitude toward the ad should influence brand attitude regardless of whether individuals actively process the information in ads (e.g., Gardner, 1985; Mittal, 1990; Muehling, Laczniak, & Stoltman, 1991). In general, past research in both marketing and social psychology has found that the attitude toward the ad has a positive effect on the attitude toward the brand.

The empirical study of visual reinforcement in ads began about two decades ago. It investigated the relationship between the visual elements in ads and an individual's postcommunication attitude. Rossiter and Percy (1980) postulated a "dual loop" theory, which indicated that visual content as well as verbal content in an ad could directly affect

a consumer's brand attitude. The visual content affected the brand attitude through the consumer's visual imagery process. They interpreted the mediating effect of the picture towards brand attitude as a result of direct affect transfer in classical conditioning.

In Mitchell and Olson's study (1981), ads containing a picture of a kitten (without verbal message) were found to yield the most favorable beliefs concerning brand softness. Consistent with Fishbein's attitude theory, the study showed that manipulation of pictures in ads may create favorable brand attitudes through generating favorable product beliefs. In addition, the study suggested that pictures may also affect brand attitude through other means, that is, pictures may affect brand attitude through directly affecting the attitude toward the ad as a result of the classical conditioning mechanism.

This was confirmed by a subsequent study conducted by Mitchell (1986). Two factors were manipulated in this research: picture-type (negative, neutral and positive) and product. ANOVA results indicated that the picture-type manipulation resulted in a significant main effect on the initial brand attitude. Specifically, when an individual's involvement level is high, the more positive the picture included in an ad, the more favorable brand attitude will be formed. Consistent with an earlier study (Mitchell & Olson, 1981), Mitchell's study concluded that, even in a high involvement condition as well as in a low involvement condition, pictures have an affect on brand attitude.

However, there is evidence that in certain situations, verbal-only material may not be any less persuasive than pictorial material in ads (e.g., Taylor & Thompson, 1982). These studies found that adding photographs containing the same information as the verbal message did not result in a significant difference in persuasive effects than when the information was conveyed only in writing. Kisielius (1982) postulated that pictures

could stimulate the cognitive elaboration of information relatively unfavorable to the message position, and thus inhibit the formation of a favorable attitude toward the brand. The incongruence of the picture effect in literature was further investigated and conditions under which the picture effect is retained or eliminated were studied. One conjecture is that a less positive brand attitude may result from a negative evaluation of the pictures themselves. Mitchell (1986) found that picture type (positive, neutral or negative) may be a factor that influences the effect of a picture on attitudinal responses. Edell and Staelin (1983) studied framed pictures (message including verbal material equivalent in content to the picture) and unframed pictures (messages consisting of only a picture). When a picture in an ad is framed, it is processed more like the verbal material in the absence of the picture. They concluded that there were no significant differences between the pictorial framed ads and the verbal-only ads.

Based upon Fishbein's attitude theory, Yi (1990) studied the effects of pictures on the intended attribute (some particular attribute that the advertisers intend to change). Yi found that belief strength for intended attributes was enhanced by ads with pictures that suggested these attributes. The study concluded that pictures that are related to, rather than equivalent to, the verbal content may enhance positive brand attitude through enhancing brand beliefs.

The ELM model also helps in clarifying the conditions under which the picture effect takes place. It was found that the involvement level of the participants during message processing may moderate the impact of pictures (Miniard, Bhatla, Lord, Dickson, & Unnava, 1991). Compatible with the results reported by Mitchell and Olson (1981) and Yi (1990), Miniard et al. contend that pictorial stimuli conveying product-

relevant information may affect brand attitude by affecting brand beliefs. This effect increases as the involvement level increases. However, for pictorial stimulus that acts as peripheral cues, impact declines as the involvement level of the audience increases.

Research in product advertising has found that pictures in ads have an impact on postcommunication product attitudes. Studies in product advertising have shown that an attitude toward an ad can positively affect postcommunication product attitudes without affecting product beliefs. Manipulation of pictures in an ad may generate a favorable attitude toward an ad and thus a favorable brand attitude may be expected in the end.

Research Purpose and Hypotheses

This study investigated the effect of pictures in recruitment advertising; more specifically, how pictures affect people's perception of the corporate image of recruitment companies. Past research has shown that pictures can be manipulated to affect people's postcommunication attitude toward an advertised product. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H1: There is a significant difference between the corporate image generated by a recruitment ad with a picture and that generated by an ad without a picture. A more positive corporate image would be produced by the recruitment ad with a picture than by the ad without a picture.

Prior research in product advertising postulates that pictures in ads may affect the overall attitude toward an advertised product, either by influencing the product attribute beliefs, or by influencing the overall attitude toward the ads. Since the *product* being advertised in a recruitment ad may be viewed as a recruitment company, people's *overall*

attitude toward the product can be viewed as people's overall perception of a recruitment company (corporate image of the company). An examination of Fishbein's attitude theory is conducted, where product beliefs are replaced by company attribute beliefs. Studies in both attitude theory and product advertising have helped to establish the theoretical basis for developing the following hypotheses:

H2: There is a significant difference between the company-attribute belief set generated by a recruitment ad with a picture and that generated by an ad without a picture. More positive beliefs would be generated by the recruitment ad with a picture than by the ad without a picture.

H3: There is a significant difference between the ad image generated by a recruitment ad with a picture and that generated by an ad without a picture. A more positive ad image would be expected for the recruitment ad with a picture than for the ad without a picture.

H4: There is a significant relationship between the corporate image of a recruitment company and the ad image generated by the recruitment ads. The ad image is a useful predictor of the corporate image.

Method

Pretest

A sample of 13 students from a retailing class in a midwestern university participated in the pretest. The pretest included visual stimulus pretesting and verbal content pretesting.

The goals in visual stimuli pretesting were to: 1) select a single picture that clearly conveyed the meaning of the most important company-attributes positively; and 2) select a picture receiving the best overall attitude in terms of being the most appropriate and attractive picture among all candidate pictures.

The whole procedure basically included two steps. First was to determine which attributes were the most important attributes of a recruitment company. The subjects were asked to select the five most important company-attributes and rank them in numerical order (See Table1). Then the subjects were shown three groups of color pictures (scenic, sports and retail-related pictures) and were told that these pictures were selected from companies' recruitment ads. As they viewed each picture, they were first asked to write down their ideas that came to mind concerning the particular recruitment company using this ad. Then they were required to rate the appropriateness and the attractiveness of this picture on a 7-point Likert scale. The final results of the visual pretesting indicated that a picture showing people rafting better expressed the meanings of the most important company-attributes as well as receiving more favorable overall attitude from the pretest subjects than almost all other pictures collected for the pretest.

The goals of the verbal content pretesting were ensure that the company-attributes described by the verbal message in the experimental ads would be understood and interpreted correctly by readers. They were presented with the total verbal body of the ad. To determine if the message was easy to comprehend correctly, the subjects were encouraged to raise questions if they had any difficulties in understanding the ads. Meanwhile, they were required voluntarily to answer questions about what was the meaning of certain phrases and sentences used in the ads. The results of the verbal

pretesting showed that providing interesting and challenging jobs and providing a friendly working environment, encouraging mutual respect and cooperation in work/management, were considered to be the two most important attributes. Also, the message appeared to be appropriate for the main experiment with only a few corrections needed.

Table 1 About Here

The Experimental Ads

The independent variable in this study was the presence or absence of a picture in the recruitment ads from two fictitious retail companies. Multiple stimuli were created for the purpose of stimulus sampling (Fontenelle, Phillips, & Lane, 1985). Stimulus sampling requires two different companies be used in the ads so that possible significant effects caused by idiosyncratic properties of single stimulus may be avoided. Rather than using the existing companies' names or the names of any familiar things, the creation of two fictitious companies may avoid prior biases that may influence postcommunication attitude toward the experimental ads.

Four full-page print recruitment ads were created as the experimental ads, two with pictures and two without. The target picture used in this experiment was selected to convey the meaning of the most important attributes about the recruitment companies, that is, the company has a friendly working environment and the job being offered is challenging and fun. The picture used for the main experiment was pretested to ensure it conveyed these attributes and is congruent with the verbal message. The verbal claims in

all experimental ads remain the same.

Dependent Variables

Dependent variables in this study included corporate image, company-attribute beliefs and image of the ad. They were measured by the participants' response to related questions on 7-point unipolar scales from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Specifically, they were the sum scores of related evaluative items in the indexes.

Corporate Image. The concept of corporate image in this study represents an overall attitude a prospective employee holds toward a recruitment company after they are exposed to recruitment ads. Similar to the index for brand attitude employed in many previous studies, the index for corporate image developed for this study composed of four evaluative items as the followings: 1) this company is favorable to me; 2) overall this is a good company; 3) this is an attractive company to job seekers and 4) this company makes a good impression to me.

Company-attribute Beliefs. The index for company-attribute beliefs was composed of items chosen from previous corporate image studies (Kennedy, 1977; Dowling, 1986). This group of items tapped attribute beliefs for each recruitment company, more specifically, the belief strength of each company related attribute. These attributes were also pretested before it was employed in the main experiment (See Table 1). The subjects were asked to indicate the likelihood that the advertised company possesses some attributes. The sum score of fifteen evaluative items were used as the measure of the company-attitude beliefs.

Ad Image. This measure involves the participants' overall attitudes toward the

ads. Since the multi-item scale is recognized to be more reliable, a four-item scale (dislike/like, negative/positive, bad/good, unfavorable/ favorable) previously developed by Holbrook & Batra (1987) was used to assess the ad images. The inter-item reliability for this scale was 0.99, indicating high internal consistency for this measure. The sum score of the four items was used to represent the ad image.

ANOVAs were used to detect how the manipulation of pictures may affect those dependent variables, which were corporate image, company-attribute beliefs and ad image. A regression analysis was used to detect the relationship between the ad image generated by the recruitment ad, and the corporate image of a recruitment company.

Subjects and Procedures

A total of 90 (male = 34 and female = 56) students enrolled in undergraduate level courses in a midwestern university participated in the study. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions, that is, an ad with (N= 44) or without (N= 46) a picture from one of two fictitious retail companies. They were instructed to view the recruitment ad and then complete the questionnaire without consulting others. As a rationale for the experiment, subjects were told that the basic purpose of the study was to investigate their personal perceptions of recruitment companies advertised by the ads. As a part of the future market for recruitment companies, the subjects were mainly undergraduate students and eighty percent of them were under 24 years of age. It was expected that they would exhibit a reasonably low level of experience and knowledge about job searching as well as employer evaluation. The experiment lasted approximately fifteen minutes.

Results

Data related to the three dependent variables (corporate image, company-attribute beliefs and ad image) were collected and entered into a 1×2 (picture vs. no picture) Analysis of Variance. Regression analysis was also employed to examine the relationship between these variables. Results are as follows:

Picture Effect on Corporate Image

H_1 was tested by examining the effect of a picture in a recruitment ad on a company's corporate image. The corporate image was measured as the sum score of four evaluative items (See Appendix C-I). The average score for ads with pictures is higher ($M = 21.61$, $S.D. = 3.64$, $N = 46$) than that for non-picture ads ($M = 19.86$, $S.D. = 5.42$, $N = 44$). A significance level of 0.10 was selected prior due to the small sample size. Results from ANOVA (See Table 2) revealed that picture manipulation has an effect on the corporate image ($F(1,88) = 3.24$, $p = 0.075$). To conclude, a recruitment ad with a picture may positively increase the corporate image of a recruitment company. Thus, H_1 was supported.

Table 2 About Here

Picture Effect on Company-Attribute Beliefs

H_2 was tested by examining the effect of a picture in an ad on company-attribute beliefs. Company-attribute beliefs were measured as the sum score of fifteen evaluative items (See Appendix C-II). The average score for ads with pictures ($M = 82.54$, $S.D. =$

10.87) is considerably higher than that for non-picture ads ($M = 75.16$, $S.D.=13.18$). The results from ANOVA (See Table 3) agrees with previous product advertising research (Mitchell, 1986; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Yi, 1990) in that picture manipulation has a significant effect on attribute beliefs ($F(1,88) = 8.44$, $p = 0.0046$). In other words, the belief strength for company-attribute beliefs was positively enhanced in ads with pictures rather than in ads without pictures. To summarize, manipulation of pictures in recruitment ads may positively enhance company-attribute beliefs. Thus, H_2 was supported.

Table 3 About Here

Moreover, congruence with Yi's study (1990), the results from this study also indicated that the inclusion of the picture in recruitment ads may enhance intended beliefs (See Table 4). The intended beliefs in this study were the beliefs on particular attributes suggested by both the picture and the verbal copy of the experimental ad. The particular attributes (intended attributes) about a recruitment company (providing interesting and challenging jobs and providing a friendly working environment, encouraging mutual respect and cooperation) were regarded as the two most important attributes in the pretest. The results showed that the picture had a strong effect on intended beliefs ($F(1,88) = 7.43$, $p = 0.0078$). In other words, the belief strength on the intended attributes were greatly enhanced by adding the picture to the ads. Since the intended attributes are part of the global company attributes declared by the verbal copy of the ads, it is reasonable to think the picture effect on company attribute beliefs

operated at least partially through its effect on intended beliefs.

Table 4 About Here

Picture Effect on Ad Image

H₃ was tested by examining the effect of a picture on ad image (overall attitude toward the ads). The results from ANOVA (See Table 5) show that the mean score of the ad image for ads with pictures (M = 21.09, N = 46, S.D. = 5.14) was significantly higher than that for ads with no pictures (M = 17.39, N = 44, S.D. = 6.47). Thus, H₃ was supported [F(1,88) = 9.06, p = 0.0034]. The results agree with previous research in that manipulation of pictures in ads may affect people's overall attitude toward the ads (Mitchell, 1986; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Yi, 1990).

Table 5 About Here

Effects of Ad Image and Company-attribute Beliefs

H₄ predicted a significant positive relationship between the ad image and the corporate image of a recruitment company. This hypothesis was tested using the correlation between the ad image and the corporate image. Other possible variables relevant to corporate image such as company attribute beliefs and intended beliefs were also tested. The correlation analysis (See Table 6) reveals that ad image is significantly correlated with corporate image ($r^2 = 0.5682$) and that consistent with Fishbein's theory of attitude, the company-attribute belief set is also correlated with corporate image ($r^2 =$

0.6020). There is a higher correlation between corporate image and company-attribute beliefs than the correlation between corporate image and ad image.

Table 6 About Here

Ad image was also tested as the independent variable while corporate image was as the dependent variable in the regression model. The results (See Table 7) showed that ad image was a significant predictor for corporate image. In conclusion, the results of this study support the postulations from previous studies on product advertising (Lutz, 1985; Mitchell, 1986; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Shimp, 1981) that the ad image and the attribute beliefs (i.e., company-attribute beliefs) are important antecedents of the overall attitude toward the advertised product (i.e., corporate image). Thus H₄ was supported.

Table 7 About Here

Summary and Implications

This study extends the current research on recruitment advertising by examination of visual stimuli (pictures) in ads. It provides an empirical basis to understand how the pictures in recruitment ads influence people's attitudinal responses. Specifically, the results provide an empirical explanation for the mediating effects of a picture in a recruitment ad and the mediating effect of the ad image as well as that of the company-attribute beliefs on the overall image of a recruitment company.

The study indicated that positively evaluated pictures in a recruitment ad could positively affect corporate image of a recruitment company. This is consistent with results from product advertising research in that manipulation of pictures can positively affect people's post communication attitude (Miniard et al., 1991; Mitchell, 1986; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Rossiter & Percy, 1980; Yi, 1990). This study also indicated that positively evaluated pictures have strong effects on people's beliefs about the recruitment companies and their images of the recruitment ads. More favorable beliefs may be generated as well as a better ad image when positively evaluated pictures are included in the recruitment ads.

Consistent with Fishbein's attitude theory, the results of this study show that the company-attribute belief set has strong mediating effects on corporate image and it is a useful predictor of the corporate image. However, contrary to Fishbein's theory's major assumption as it is operationally interpreted in most product advertising research, the results of this study indicate that the product attitude belief set ($\sum b_i e_i$) is not the sole mediator of attitude formation. The findings support the suggestions from other researchers (Mitchell, 1986; Mitchell & Olson, 1981, & Yi, 1990) in studies on picture effects in product advertising. In addition to the mediating effect of attribute belief, the overall attitude toward the advertisements (i.e., ad image) also has a significant effect on the formation of the overall attitude toward the advertised product (i.e., a recruitment company). In other words, the ad image is another significant predictor of the corporate image. To conclude, the mediating effect of a picture in an ad on the corporate image of a recruitment company operated through its effect on the company-attribute beliefs as well as the image of the ad.

The results have important implications for the development of recruitment advertising strategy. For instance, to improve people's overall image of the recruitment company so as to attract more candidates, the company may try to enhance the positive beliefs about particular attributes of the company when designing recruitment ads, or simply associate the company with positively evaluated visual stimuli (pictures). It may turn out to be an effective strategy in the design of corporate recruitment campaign.

Limitations and Recommendations

The attribute belief set in this study was the sum scores of the pre-selected attributes. These scores indicate the subjective evaluation on how likely it is that a recruitment company possesses certain attributes. The importance of each of these attributes was assumed equal. The nine company attributes used in this study were selected from two major studies on corporate image (Kennedy, 1977; Dowling, 1986; 1993). However, no empirical study has been conducted on the importance of each company attribute when forming attribute beliefs. It is recommended a parallel study be conducted where pretests can be used to rate the importance of each company attribute and the results from it can be applied to calculate a more proper index of the company-attribute beliefs.

Moreover, the company attributes are more complex and rich in nature compared to product attributes. This is due to the complexity of a company's attributes and the diverse concerns from the candidates when evaluating future employers. The dimensions that compose the company attribute set may vary from one person to another. By using a unified company attribute set selected from previous studies (Kennedy, 1977; Dowling,

1986, 1993), generalizations of the results of the study are limited. Additional research is needed to generate a better understanding of the composition of company-attribute belief sets. In general, the company-attribute belief index is far more complicated than that of product attribute beliefs. However, in order to enhance internal validity in this study, the test advertisements contained much less information than actual recruitment ads generally do.

Limitations of this study also included the limited number of ad executional elements. In particular, the picture used for main experiment was regarded as a positive picture in the pretest. It not only aroused a general positive feeling among readers, but also conveyed the meanings of the most important attributes of a recruitment company. Thus the picture was expected to enhance the positive beliefs about the advertised companies by implying positive company attributes. Whether the picture enhanced positive beliefs about a company by implying the positive attributes only or by creating a positive feeling in general as well was not addressed in this study. The practical reason for further study in this area is to investigate which types of pictures are most effective when they are applied to recruitment advertising.

Finally, the limitations of this study involved using a convenience sample, which was drawn from a midwestern university. It is also an unbalanced sample that consisted of 60% of females and 40% of males. No analysis was conducted on the influence of gender on their responses toward psychologically oriented variables (i.e., ad image). In addition, the experiments were conducted in normal classrooms and were conducted at the beginning of the classes. Additional research is needed to replicate and extend the present study through the use of other samples, alternative types of ads as well as

laboratory settings.

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CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recruitment advertising is now recognized as a mass media communication tool, a platform for the transmission of organizational messages. A good recruitment ad not only increases direct responses, it also generates a positive image of the company in prospective employees' memories, which could be retrieved at time of need. Given the importance of recruitment advertising, there is a surprising lack of research dealing with the factors that may make recruitment ads effective. The purpose of this study is to investigate one such factor – visual stimuli, particularly, whether and how the *visual stimuli (pictures)* influence a potential job candidate's perception of the images of recruitment companies. More specifically, the study attempted to examine the impact of a picture in a recruitment ad on formation of the corporate image of a company, formation of the attribute beliefs about the company as well as formation of the ad image itself. In addition, the study also attempted to investigate the relationship between the corporate image and the ad image. Whether or not the ad image is a significant antecedent of the corporate image was discussed.

The study involved use of experiments in a classroom setting to obtain data. The sample included 90 students who took undergraduate courses in a mid-western university. The subjects were asked questions regarding the recruitment ads they read. The questions centered on the evaluation of three dependent variables - corporate image, company-attribute beliefs and ad image. The subjects were mainly undergraduate students and

eighty percent of them were under 24 years old. As a future market for recruitment companies, they were expected to exhibit a relatively low level of knowledge on job searching and employer evaluation at their present stage.

ANOVAs were used to detect the impact of the picture manipulation on all dependent variables in this study, which included corporate image, company attribute beliefs and ad image. A regression analysis was used to test if there is a significant relationship between the corporate image of a recruitment company and the image of the recruitment ad. The antecedents of corporate image were discussed. The practical implications of the study results were suggested as well as recommendations for future studies.

The results of this study provide an empirical basis to understand how the pictures in recruitment ads influence people's attitudinal responses. Specifically, the results provide an empirical explanation for the mediating effect of pictures in recruitment ads and the mediating effect of ad image as well as that of the company-attribute beliefs on the overall image of a recruitment company.

Discussion

The Manipulation of the Picture

The picture used for main experiment was a sports picture selected in pretest from three groups of pictures (scenic pictures, sports pictures and retail-associated pictures). There are two considerations in selecting a picture for the main experiment. First, it must be one of the most positively evaluated pictures. This is because positively or negatively

evaluated pictures may create different postcommunication attitudes; and the more positive the picture included in an ad, the more favorable attitude would be formed (Mitchell, 1986).

The second consideration in selecting the picture was that the picture should convey the meaning of the most important attributes about a recruitment company (intended attributes). Studies in product advertising have been directed at the relevance of a picture in ads (whether a picture conveys issue-pertinent information). A picture can be completely redundant with claims in an ad or it conveys information not provided by the claims. Most pictures in ads, including the one used in this study, would seem to fall somewhere between these two extreme points. Pictures differing from the claims are considered to distract the formation of product-relevant thoughts (e.g., Edell & Staclin, 1983) whereas the issue-relevant pictures support the formation of favorable attitudinal judgements (Kisielius & Sternthal, 1984; Miniard, Bhatla, & Rose, 1990; Yi, 1990). It is impossible for this study to conclude how the degree of informational overlap between the ad's picture and claim would influence the postcommunication attitude because only one picture was used in the study. This question, however, can be partially addressed by examining the effect of the picture on the formation of intended beliefs. The intended beliefs refer to the beliefs on intended attributes. The results showed that the intended beliefs about a recruitment company were greatly strengthened when the picture was included in recruitment ads. Since the intended attributes were also mentioned in the verbal claims of the ads, it is reasonable to suggest that information overlap between the ad's picture and claim might influence the postcommunication attitude though affecting the intended beliefs, which are a most important part of company-attribute beliefs.

Corporate Image

The concept of corporate image in this study is an overall attitude one holds toward a recruitment company. It is similar to the concept of brand attitude in product advertising research, which refers to the overall attitude toward the advertised product. The results of this study indicate that there is a significant picture effect on corporate image. Compared to verbal only ads, recruitment ads with pictures created significantly better corporate images for the same recruitment companies. The results of the study confirmed the postulation from Mitchell's study (1986) in that the inclusion of positively evaluated pictures in ads may generate more favorable attitudes toward the advertised objects, which in this study, are the recruitment companies. In other words, the inclusion of positively evaluated pictures in recruitment ads may result in better corporate images about the recruitment companies.

It is necessary to notice that the significance of the picture effect on corporate image derived from this study is based upon a level ($\alpha = 7.5\%$) higher than normal significant level. Due to the smaller sample size, this higher level was accepted. The index of corporate image employed in this study was a modified version of the index of brand attitude used by many studies in product advertising. Therefore, it may not be the proper index for corporate image, and the actual effect of picture on corporate image may not be accurately measured.

Company-attribute Beliefs

The concept of company attribute belief is similar to the concept of product

attribute belief in product advertising research. According to Fishbein's theory of attitude, a person's attitude is a function of his salient beliefs. The set of salient beliefs make up a belief index expressed as $\sum_{i=1}^n b_i e_i$ (b_i is the belief i about the attitude object expressed as the *probability* that this object has the attribute i ; e_i is the evaluation of the attribute i expressed as the value of the attribute i ; n is the number of the beliefs). This index is the direct measurement of the overall postcommunication attitude. For this study, the company-attribute belief index was examined together with its relationship with the corporate image of a recruitment company.

A unique type of advertised "product", a recruitment company has distinguishing attribute dimensions that are of concern to its future employees. In this study, a group of image dimensions were selected from previous image studies (Kennedy, 1977; Dowling, 1986) to measure the attribute beliefs of the new advertised "products" - recruitment companies. These scores indicated the subjective evaluation of how likely it was that a recruitment company possesses some certain attributes. This measure of attribute beliefs for a recruitment company tapped only the belief strength of company-related attributes. Agreeing with previous studies of product advertising (Mitchell, 1986; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Yi, 1990), the picture manipulation had a significant effect on company-attribute beliefs. The inclusion of a positively evaluated picture in a recruitment ad may result in more favorable company-attitude beliefs about a recruitment company than exclusion of a picture in a recruitment ad.

Results of this study are consistent with Fishbein's theory of attitude that the company-attribute beliefs are found to be correlated with corporate image ($r^2 = 0.6020$).

Thus attribute beliefs are shown to be important antecedents of the overall post-communication attitude, which in this study, is the corporate image of a recruitment company. With this in mind, it is reasonable to conclude that the picture effect on the corporate image at least partially operates through the picture effect on the company-attribute beliefs. Therefore, to positively improve a company's corporate image is a matter of positively enhancing the attribute beliefs of the company.

Ad Image

The ad image refers to the subjects' overall attitudes toward the ads, which is an increasingly popular concept in recent product advertising research. It is an emotion-like construct concerning the subjective feelings about the advertisement. Two aspects about the ad image were examined in this study: whether or not pictures in ads have an effect on the image of the ad and whether or not the ad image is an significant antecedent of the corporate image.

The results of this study agree with previous research in that manipulation of pictures in ads may positively affect the overall attitude toward the ads (Mitchell, 1986; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Yi, 1990). In other words, pictures in ads have significant effects on the images of the ads. Moreover, the ad image is significantly correlated with the corporate image. Regression analysis showed that it is a significant predictor for the corporate image. These results supported the findings from previous studies on product advertising (Lutz, 1985; Mitchell, 1986; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Shimp, 1981).

Conclusions and Implications

The study indicated that positively evaluated pictures in recruitment ads may positively affect the corporate image of a recruitment company (See Figure 1). This is consistent with results from product advertising research in that manipulation of pictures in ads can positively affect people's post communication attitude (Miniard et al., 1991; Mitchell, 1986; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Rossiter & Percy, 1980; Yi, 1990). This study

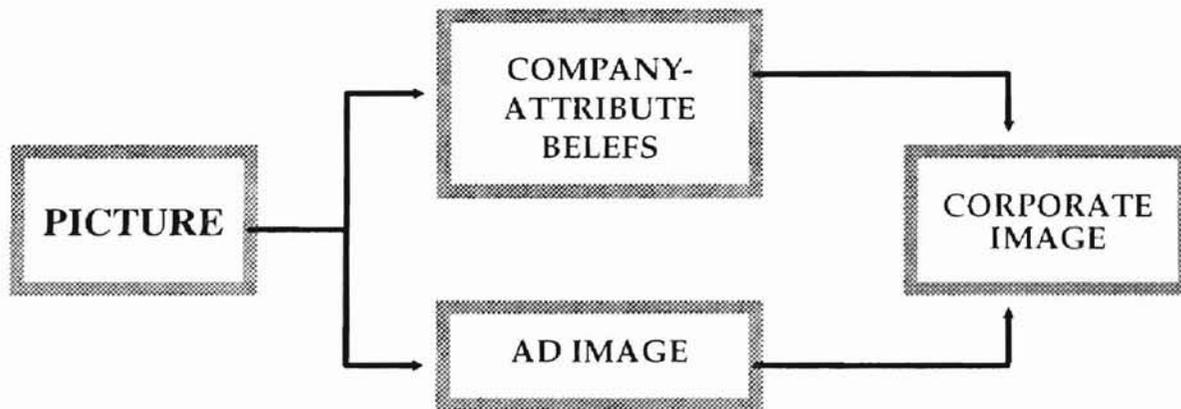


Figure 1: The Effect of Picture in Recruitment Ads

also indicates that the positively evaluated picture has strong effects on people's beliefs about the company attributes and the image of the recruitment ads. More favorable beliefs as well as better ad images can be generated when positively-evaluated pictures are included in the recruitment ads.

Consistent with Fishbein's theory of attitude, the results of this study show that the company-attribute belief set has strong mediating effects on corporate image. As one factor, it is useful in predicting people's perception of the corporate image of an advertised company. However, the results of this study contradict the theory's major assumption that the attitude belief set is not the sole mediator of attitude formation and change. They agree with the postulations suggested by other studies (Mitchell, 1986; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Yi, 1991) in product advertising research. They confirm that besides the mediating effect of attribute beliefs, the overall attitude toward the ads (i.e., ad image) also has significant effect on the formation of people's overall attitude towards the recruitment company. In other words, the ad image is another significant predictor of the corporate image. To conclude, the mediating effect of a picture in an ad on the corporate image of a recruitment company operated through its effect on the company-attribute beliefs as well as the image of the ad.

The results have important implications for developing effective strategies for recruitment advertising. For instance, in order to improve the corporate image of a recruitment company so as to attract more qualified candidates, the company may try to positively enhance people's beliefs about attributes of the company when designing recruitment ads. The company may also try to simply associate itself with positively evaluated visual stimuli (pictures) by including them in the recruitment ads.

Limitations and Recommendations

Limitations of this study included the limited number of ad executional elements. There are only a certain number of executional elements (color, style, size, etc.) that can be involved in a study. In particular, the picture selected for the main experiment was considered to be a positive picture in the pretest. It not only aroused a general positive feeling among readers, but conveyed the meanings of the most important attributes of a recruitment company as well. Thus the picture was expected to enhance the positive beliefs about the advertised companies by implying positive company-attributes. The results showed that the picture enhanced the positive beliefs about the company as it was expected. However, whether the picture enhanced positive beliefs by implying the positive attributes only or by creating a positive feeling in general as well was not addressed in this study. Further study in this area is recommended.

Limitation is also caused by the simplified method employed to measure the company-attribute belief index $\sum_{i=1}^n b_i e_i$ (b_i is the belief i about a recruitment company expressed as the *probability* that this company has the attribute i ; e_i is the evaluation of the attribute i expressed as the value of the attribute i ; n is the number of the beliefs). The company-attribute belief index in this study was calculated as the sum scores of the pre-selected attributes. These scores actually indicated the subjective evaluation on how likely that a recruitment company possessed some certain attributes. This means that the importance of each of these attributes was assumed equal when calculating the index. Nine company attributes employed in this study were selected from previous studies on corporate image (Kennedy, 1977; Dowling, 1986, 1993). No empirical study has been

conducted on the importance of each company attribute when forming attribute beliefs. It is recommended that a parallel study be conducted where pretests can be used to rate the importance of each company attribute and the results from it can be applied to calculate a more proper index of the company-attribute beliefs.

Also, company attributes are more complex and richer in nature than product attributes. In addition, there are diverse concerns among the candidates when considering future employers. The dimensions that compose the company attribute set may vary from one person to another. By using an unified company attribute set selected from previous studies (Kennedy, 1977; Dowling, 1986, 1993), generalizations of the results of the study are thus limited. Additional studies are needed to have a better understanding of the dimensions of the company attributes that are of particular concern to potential employee markets.

The restricted range of subjects also caused limitation of this study. First, the study involved use of a convenience sample that was drawn from a midwestern university. It did not represent the entire campus market for the United States. Also, the study included an unbalanced sample with the sample consisting of 60% of females and 40% of males. No analysis was conducted on the influences of gender on their responses toward psychologically oriented variables (i.e., ad image). For example, the sports-related picture in ads may arouse more positive feelings in male than in females and thus cause differences in their evaluation of the ad image. Moreover, the experiments were conducted in normal classrooms and were conducted at the beginning of the classes. Additional research is needed to replicate and extend the present study through the use of other samples, alternative types of ads as well as laboratory settings.

This is the first empirical study to examine picture effect in a recruitment ad. Results suggest picture manipulation in a recruitment ad may generate a better image of the advertised company through enhancing positive company-attribute beliefs as well as positive ad image. The findings not only provide references for future theoretical studies, but also present useful guidelines for practitioners in designing more effective recruitment campaigns.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
PRETEST QUESTIONNAIRES

I Visual Stimuli Pretesting

When you consider to work for a company after graduation, something about this company is very important to you. Mark the number of the **five most important ideas** from the following list.

- _____ providing interesting, exciting & challenging jobs
- _____ providing a friendly working environment and encouraging mutual respect & cooperation in work/management
- _____ providing good compensation and benefits to employees
- _____ recognized as having an affective & efficient upper management
- _____ Providing high quality products/services to consumers
- _____ providing continuous training to employees
- _____ recognized as a fast growing company with great opportunities for personal career advancement
- _____ recognized as a highly competitive company in its industry and financially strong
- _____ caring about its community and society at large

All these pictures are selected from companies' recruitment ads.

Please write down **everything** (at least the first three ideas) **the picture conveyed** to you about the company and jobs it offered. Then **rate** the picture in the following 7-item scale.

IDEAS FOR THE PICTURE

	disagree						agree
Q-1. The picture is eye-catching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q-2. The picture is interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q-3. The picture is impressive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q-4. The picture brings positive feelings to you.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q-5. The picture create a good impression about the company.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q-6. The picture is relevant to recruitment of a retail company.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

IL Verbal Content Pretesting

Please read the following recruitment ad. Circle words/ phrases/sentence you don't understand and give your best **guesses** for their meanings.

As you are examining the possibilities that now lie before you, take a hard look at Colonna Corp. It's likely we can present you with the most exciting environment to be your best.

Colonna is your type of company if ...

- * You are looking for a strong, rapidly growing company with tremendous opportunities for career-minded people.
- * You are looking for a company where you are the priority and where people join together in teams to make differences.
- * You are looking for an organization that is strong financially and offers continuous training program to seek excellency in performance.
- * You are looking for an organization which recognizes your effort and achievement and rewards them with promotions from within.

Are you the type of person who...

- * Thrives in an environment where you can make decisions and try new things.
- * Enjoy working with other people as a team, helping them as well as yourself, to succeed.
- * Enjoy a challenge and an opportunity to do the impossible.
- * Believes work isn't always serious and that "fun" should be a key ingredient for success.

If so, Colonna may be just the place for you!

COLONNA

We are an equal opportunity employer

APPENDIX B

ADS FOR MAIN EXPERIMENT



A Place to Be Your Best

As you are examining the possibilities that now lie before you, take a hard look at Colonna Corp. It's likely we can present you with the most exciting environment to be your best.

Colonna is your type of company if ...

You are looking for a strong, rapidly growing company with tremendous opportunities for career-minded people.

You are looking for a company where you are the priority and where people join together in teams to make differences.

You are looking for an organization that is strong financially and offers continuous training program to seek excellency in performance.

You are looking for an organization which recognizes your effort and achievement and rewards them with promotions from within.

Are you the type of person who...

Thrives in an environment where you can make decisions and try new things.

Enjoy working with other people as a team, helping them as well as yourself, to succeed.

Enjoy a challenge and an opportunity to do the impossible.

Believes work isn't always serious and that "fun" should be a key ingredient for success.

If so, Colonna may be just --

the right place for you!

COLONNA

We are an equal opportunity employer

A Place to Be Your Best

As you are examining the possibilities that now lie before you, take a hard look at Colonna Corp. It's likely we can present you with the most exciting environment to be your best.

Colonna is your type of company if ...

You are looking for a strong, rapidly growing company with tremendous opportunities for career-minded people.

You are looking for a company where you are the priority and where people join together in teams to make a difference.

You are looking for an organization that is strong financially and offers a continuous training program to seek excellency in performance.

You are looking for an organization which recognizes your effort and achievement and rewards them with promotion's from within.

Are you the type of person who ...

Thrives in an environment where you can make decisions and try new things.
Enjoy working with other people as a team, helping them as well as yourself, to succeed.

Enjoy a challenge and an opportunity to do the impossible.

Believes work isn't always serious and that "fun" should be a key ingredient for success.

If so, Colonna may just –

the right place for you!

COLONNA

We are an equal opportunity employer

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR MAIN EXPERIMENT

I Questions Related to Corporate Image

Based upon the ad you just saw, please circle the number that best reflects your impression about this company with "1" indicates strongly disagree whereas "7" indicates strongly agree.

- | | disagree | | | | | | agree |
|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| 1) The company is favorable to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2) This is a good company overall. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3) This is an attractive company to me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4) This company makes a good impression to me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

II Questions Related to Company Attribute Beliefs

Based upon the ad you just saw, please circle the number that best reflects your impression about this company with "1" indicates strongly disagree whereas "7" indicates strongly agree.

- | | disagree | | | | | | agree |
|--|----------|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| 1) Working in this company would be interesting and challenging | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2) The company ignores employee training | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3) Work associates in this company are friendly and cooperative with each other | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4) The company offers products/services for better value than its competitors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5) New employees in this company have little chance of personal career advancement due to its slow growth. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

- 6) This company will provide good salaries and benefits to employees. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 7) The company has a cold and hostile working environment 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 8) This company provide high quality products/services to its market. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 9) The employees can receive good training program in this company 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 10) The company's resources are poorly managed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 11) This company is concerned about its community and society at large. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 12) This company's products/services are among low price range in the market 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 13) Management in this company is competent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 14) This company is fast growing and may provide excellent opportunity for employees' personal advancement 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 15) The jobs that the company provides are dull and routine 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

III Ad Related Questions

Based upon the ad for recruitment purpose of Colonna Company, please circle the number that best reflects your feeling about the ad.

- 1) I dislike the ad 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I like the ad
- 2) The ad gives me negative feelings 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 The ad gives me positive feelings
- 3) The ad is bad 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 The ad is good

- 4) I reacted unfavorably to the ad 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I reacted favorably to the ad

IV Study Related Questions

While participating in this study, please select the answers which ever are right for you and answer the following questions

- 1) ___ The study was unenjoyable ___ The study was enjoyable
2) ___ The study was boring ___ The study was interesting
3) ___ I did not care about whether the result of this study is accurate
 ___ I care about whether the result of this study is accurate
4) ___ I did not want to be serious in participation
 ___ I wanted to be serious in participation
5) ___ I do not recommend participation by others
 ___ I recommend participation by others.
6) ___ I was very serious when answering those questions
 ___ I was serious when answering those questions
 ___ I was not serious when answering those questions

Demographic Information

We need some information about our subjects. Please answer the following:

- 1) SEX: ___ Female ___ Male
2) AGE: ___ under 20 ___ 20 to 22 ___ 22 to 24 ___ 24 or over
3) CLASSIFICATION: ___ Freshman ___ Sophomore ___ Junior
 ___ Senior ___ Graduate Student

APPENDIX D

TABLES

Table 1: Pretest for Important Company Attributes

If you consider to work for a company after graduation, something about the company is very important to you. Mark the number of the five most important ideas from the following list.

- 1 Providing a friendly working environment and encouraging mutual respect and cooperation in work/management
- 2 Providing interesting, exciting & challenging jobs
- 3 Recognized as a fast growing company with great opportunities for personal career advancement
- 4 Providing good compensation and benefits to employees
- 5 Providing high quality products/services to consumers
- Recognized as having an affective & efficient upper management
- Providing continuous training to employees
- Recognized as a highly competitive company in its industry and financially strong
- Caring about its community and society at large

Table 2: One-way ANOVA for Corporate Image

Source	df	SS	MS = SS/df	F	p
Treatment	1	68.487	68.487	3.24	0.075
Error	88	1860.135	21.138		
Total	89	1928.622			

Table 3: One-way ANOVA for Attribute Belief Data

Source	df	SS	MS = SS/df	F	p
Treatment	1	1226.3006	1226.3006	8.44	0.0046
Error	88	12779.2994	145.2193		
Total	89	14005.6000			

Table 4: One-way ANOVA table for Intended Belief Data

Source	df	SS	MS = SS/df	F	p
Treatment	1	111.1660	111.1660	7.43	0.0078
Error	88	1317.3340	14.9697		
Total	89	1428.5000			

Table 5: One-way ANOVA for Ad Image Data

Source	df	SS	MS = SS/df	F	p
Treatment	1	307.9716	307.9716	9.06	0.0034
Error	88	2990.0840	33.9728		
Total	89	3298.0556			

Table 6: Correlations Between Corporate Image
And Other Independent Variables

Variables	t	p	r ²
Company-attribute beliefs	11.54	0.0001	0.6020
Ad image	10.76	0.0001	0.5682

r² - coefficient of determination

Table 7: Regression Analysis
Between Corporate Image and Ad Image

Variables	DF	Parameter Estimated	Standard Error	T(Parameter=0)	p
Corporate Image	1	10.6631	3.4320	3.107	0.0100
Ad image	1	0.5808	0.1555	3.735	0.0033

APPENDIX E

IRB FORM AND OTHERS

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 06-09-97

IRE#: HE-97-070

Proposal Title: THE EFFECTS OF PICTURE ON PERCEPTION OF CORPORATE IMAGE

Principal Investigator(s): Nancy Stanforth, Shan He

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

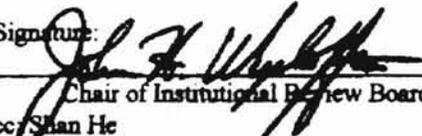
ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING THE APPROVAL PERIOD.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR DATA COLLECTION FOR A ONE CALENDAR YEAR PERIOD AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board
cc: Shan He

Date: June 10, 1997

CONSENT FORM

"I, _____, hereby authorize or direct Dr. Nancy Stanforth and Shan He to perform the following treatment or procedure:"

Each participant will view one print recruitment ad. After viewing the ad, the participant will then answer questions related to the ad, the experiment and personal demographics. The entire procedure takes about 15 minutes. The participants will be required to sign up for class bonus points but no names will be linked to individual questionnaires.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this projects at any time without penalty after notifying the project director.

Individuals wishing to inquire further about the study may contact Dr. Nancy Stanforth at (405) 744-9939, IRB Executive Secretary, 305 Whitehurst, Stillwater, OK 74078, (405) 744-5700.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: _____ Time: _____

Signed _____
(Signature of Participant)

VITA

Shan He

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

Thesis: THE EFFECTS OF PICTURES ON PERCEPTION OF CORPORATE IMAGE

Major Field: Design, Housing, & Merchandising

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Tong Ji University, Shanghai, China, with Bachelor of Science degree in Urban Planning and Design in July 1989. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Apparel Merchandising at Oklahoma State University in May 1998.

Employment: Worked as Computer Information Consultant for Computer Information Systems in Oklahoma State University from 1995-1997. Self-employed as the manager of Zhaohua Fashion store, Shenzhen, China, from 1992 to 1993. Work as real estate broker for Hauye Real Estate Development Ltd. Co., Shenzhen, China from 1991-1992. Worked as urban planner and designer for Construction Bureau of Shenzhen government, Shenzhen, China from 1989-1991.

Extra Curricular Activities: Participated in Career Day at Dallas Apparel Mart, 1996. Participated in the Fashion Show of Fashion Design Express sponsored by the Department of Design, Housing & Merchandising, Oklahoma State University and local fashion stores in Stillwater, OK, 1995. Assisting importing/exporting of clothing and general merchandises for Zhejiang Silk Ltd. Co., Chicago Branch during summer 1994. Worked part-time as interpreter for International Business Development and Multicultural Exchange Center in Shenzhen, China from 1990-1993.

Membership: Apparel Merchandising & Design Association, 1995-1997.