

Cailin Kuchenbecker, Communication and Marketing Mgmt.
Mentor: Dr. Jae Min Jung
Kellogg Honors College Capstone Project

Abstract

As female oriented companies like Dove and male oriented companies like Ram Trucks start to branch out from their mainly one sided gender markets, a trend is starting to arise; reversed gender advertisements. Reversed gender advertisements are those in which a traditionally male product is promoted to women and a traditionally female product is promoted to men. The current research conducted on reversed gender advertising indicates that matching a spokesperson's gender to the gender of the product results in higher rates of purchase intention from the audience than if the spokesperson's gender does not match the gender of the product. However, researchers have found that mis-matching the gender of the spokesperson to the gender of the product results in more memorable advertisements, showing that these types of advertisements have the potential to be successful under the right conditions (Pierce, 2001). Thus, the purpose of this study is to identify possible moderators that may affect an individual's purchase intentions of a product that was advertised in a reversed gendered way, such as an individual's cultural value, prior experience with the product or service, and whether or not they saw the advertisement in a public or private setting. An experiment will be conducted with Millennial aged college students. This study holds managerial implications by giving organizations greater insights on how to approach reversed gender advertisements in a way that minimizes the risk of consumer backlash and provides a way to keep up with competitors branching out of their main gender markets.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify possible moderators that may increase an individual's purchase intentions of a product that was advertised in a reversed gendered way, such as an individual's cultural value, prior experience with the product or service, and whether or not they saw the advertisement in a public or private setting.

Expected Contributions

- Help marketing managers expand their gender markets inexpensively and tailor media placements.
- Expands on past research on reversed gender ads by testing three new moderators

Gender of Spokesperson

- Matching the gender of the spokesperson to the gender of the product in ads results in greater positive attitudes and purchase intentions of that product than if the gender of the spokesperson does not match the gender of the product (e.g. Debevec & Iyer, 1986).
- However, Baxter, Kulczynski, and Ilicic (2015) found that even individuals who hold traditional gender role beliefs did not report negative reactions when viewing an ad which featured a male spokesperson promoting baby soap (feminine product).
- Mismatching the gender of the spokesperson and the gender of the product results in a more memorable advertisement, specifically with a male spokesperson promoting a female product (Pierce, 2001).

Gender of Product

- Products are perceived as being either masculine, feminine, or neutral and fall on a spectrum (Debevec and Iyer, 2015).
- Few products are perceived as being neutral or no gender, like toothpaste (Debevec and Iyer, 2015).
- An individual's perception that a product has a gender is an idea that is determined by the traditional product user, purchaser and the person who promotes the product (Debevec and Iyer, 2015). These perceptions are solidified after constant exposure over a long period of time, which is difficult to change (Allison, et. al., 1980).

- **Beer** (Debevec & Iyer, 1986)
- **Four Wheel Drive Trucks and Hard Liquor** (Morrison & Shaffer, 2003)
- **Golf Balls** (Pierce, 2001)
- **Pocket Knives, Tool Kits and Briefcases** (Allison, et. al., 1980)



- **Bath Soap** (Fugate and Phillips, 2010)
- **Minivans and wine** (Morrison & Shaffer, 2003)
- **Dishwashing liquid** (Debevec & Iyer, 1986)
- **Vacuum** (Pierce, 2001)
- **Bedroom Slippers, hand lotion & hairspray** (Allison, et. al., 1980)

Methodology

Normal Gendered Control Advertisements



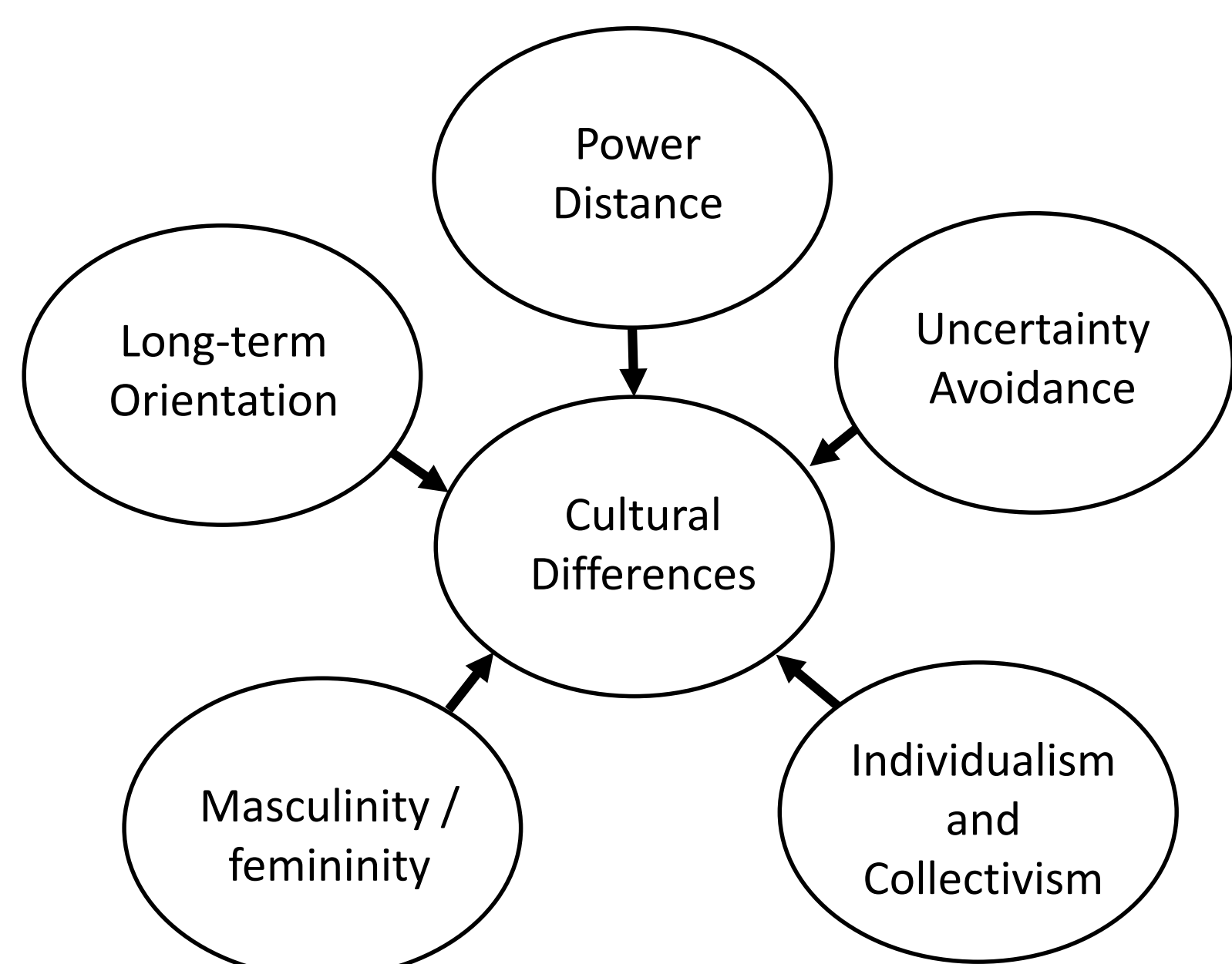
Reversed Gendered Experimental Advertisements



Moderator 1 Individual's cultural value

H1: Individuals who are more feminine (vs. masculine) will be more (vs. less) willing to purchase a product which was promoted through the use of reversed gendered advertisements.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (Hofstede, 1980, 2001)



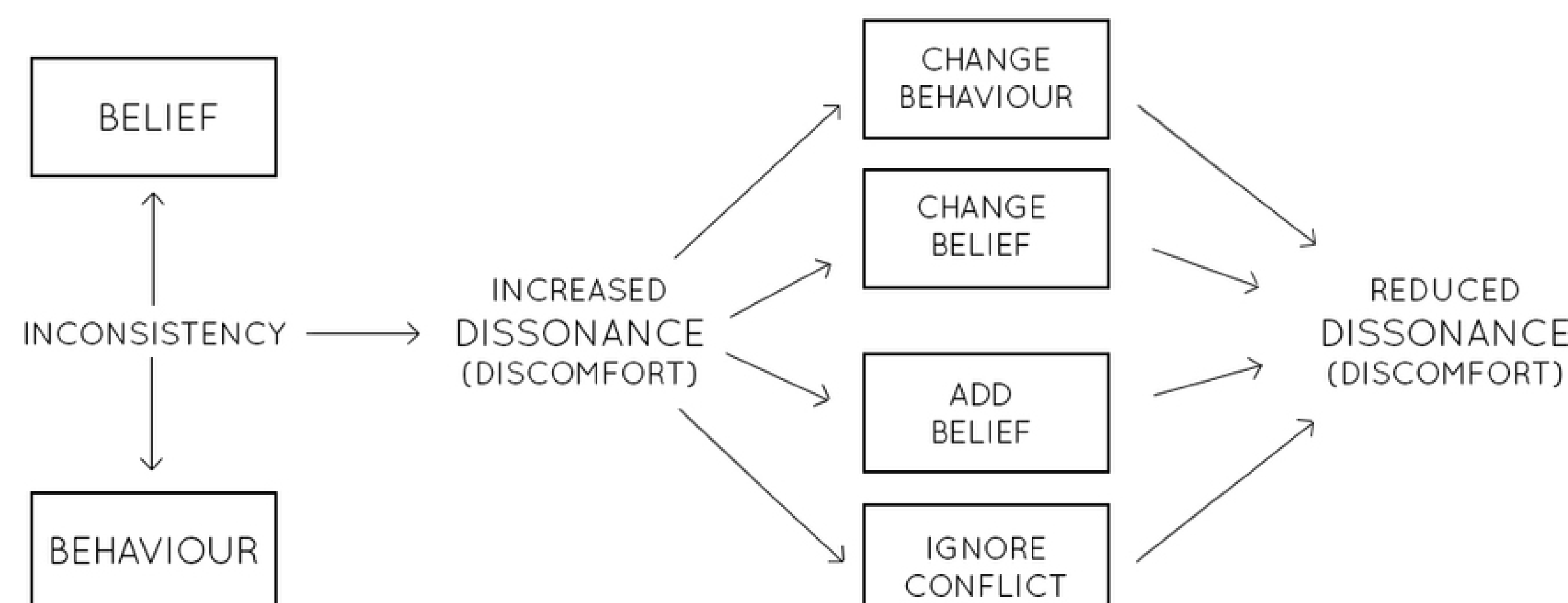
Masculinity vs Femininity (Hofstede, 1980, 2001)

- Identifies differences in the level of importance and degree of gender role patterns across cultures
- **Masculine cultures:** Have more trust in advertisements, Men- assertive & tough, Women- modest & tender
- **Feminine cultures:** Don't stress differing gender roles, have little trust in advertisements

Moderator 2 Prior Experience with Product

H2: Individuals that have prior experience with the opposite gender product (vs. no prior experience) will report higher (vs. lower) levels of product purchase intention after viewing a reversed gender advertisement.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957)



Moderator 3 Location of Viewing

H3: Individuals that view the reversed gender advertisement in a private setting (vs. public setting) will report higher (vs. lower) levels of product purchase intention as a result of the reversed gender advertisement.

Spiral of Silence Theory (Neuman, 1974)

