

Can You Hear the Difference? Accent Recognition and Brand Evaluation among Hispanic Consumers

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Background

Approximately 65.2 million individuals identify as Hispanic or Latino in the United States, accounting for around 19.5% of the total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). This population has a significant influence as consumers. The U.S. Latino GDP report showed that the total economic output of Latinos reached a record of \$4.1 trillion in 2023 (Melancon, 2023). This positions the population economy as the fifth largest in the world. Therefore, making sure that ads are culturally resonant is critical. However, advertising efforts are still lacking when it comes to authentic cultural representation (Aziz, 2024). Though research has been conducted on Hispanic consumer behavior, the research on the representation of authentic accents is limited. The present study aims to address this gap by exploring perceptions of Hispanic Gen Z consumers with regards to Spanish-speaking actors in advertisements. Specifically, we want to understand whether consumers from different acculturation levels perceive Spanish accents as authentic, and their attitudes toward the ad and the brand based on this.

Next steps

- Develop survey instrument
- Complete and submit IRB approval
- Begin participant recruitment

Literature Review

Social Identity Theory (SIT) posits that individuals base their self-concept on the groups that they consider they belong to, and identify with similar others that they see in mediated messages (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Similarly, Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) posits that communication styles are closely tied to identity, with individuals adjusting how they communicate to maintain identity ties (Zhang & Giles, 2018). Though some studies have explored the role of Spanish use on Hispanic advertising authenticity, research specifically focusing on accents remains limited. The purpose of this study is to explore Hispanic Gen Z consumer perceptions of Spanish accents in advertisements with regard to attitude toward the brand and ads.



Research Questions

RQ1: Can consumers recognize the presence of spoken accents in advertisements?

RQ2: Do consumers perceive Spanish accents in advertisements as authentic?

RQ3: What attitudes do consumers have toward the advertisement and the brand based on their perception of the authenticity of the Spanish accent?



Methods

- Survey
 - Original questionnaire developed based on a thorough literature review, on the Qualtrics platform.
- Sample
 - Gen Z Hispanic consumers with different levels of acculturation
 - Recruitment through convenience sampling

References

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