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Video VS. audio as modes of promoting tourist destinations: The case of Hangzhou, China

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Video VS. audio as modes of promoting tourist destinations:

The case of Hangzhou, China

by

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Journalism and Mass Communication

Program of Study Committee:
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2013

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ABSTRACT

This study tests the effects of predominantly verbal and predominantly visual advertisements on consumers' knowledge, attribute beliefs, attitude toward the ad and toward the brand, and behavioral intentions about Hangzhou, a Chinese city being promoted as a tourist destination. An online experiment was conducted using a sample of 217 non-Chinese students who were randomly assigned to one of the two groups.

The results suggest that verbal elements showed a greater influence on the acquisition of knowledge. The visual stimulus, however, was more effective in producing more positive attribute beliefs and attitudes toward the ad and the city. It also generated higher intentions to search for more information and to visit the city.

The findings provide support to the dual component model, which posits that verbal and visual components generate attitudes toward the ad and attribute beliefs about a product that have a substantial bearing on attitude toward the brand. Attitude toward the verbal ad and attribute beliefs resulting from exposure to the visual ad significantly affected attitude toward Hangzhou as a potential city to visit. Attitude toward the visual ad and attribute beliefs developed after seeing it also were significant predictors of attitude toward Hangzhou as a destination city. Exposure to the verbal ad produced significant changes in intention to look for more information and to visit the city some day. The visual ad influenced intention to visit Hangzhou, but not the desire to search for more information about the city.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Tourism is a multi-million dollar global industry. As more and more people travel to spend their vacation away from home, they have become enamored with places that offer not the usual “tourist traps,” but those that provide a more personal touch and unique features. Thus, places that boast of regional or exotic cultural characteristics are predicted to draw the attention of travelers (UNWT, 2010). These unique places, however, face the daunting task of breaking into the roster of conventional tourist destinations and enhance their competitiveness in the world tourism market.

People the world over have always wanted to travel to China. This is especially true after the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Many find the country’s 5,000-year history irresistible. They also think the country’s 56 ethnic groups’ brilliant cultures should not be missed. China’s natural landscapes and unique forms of art lure people from home and abroad. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) ranks China third in terms of international tourist arrivals in 2010, attracting 55.67 million visitors. This figure follows only that of France (76.8 million) and the United States (59.75 million). For almost 204 million tourists to Asia and the Pacific in 2010, China was the top destination (UNWTO, 2010).

Indeed, China has so much to offer the world traveler. The historical allure of Beijing and the modern rhythms of Shanghai, however, have overshadowed smaller cities that offer other unique experiences. Among those less frequently visited is the city of Hangzhou.

Situated on China’s eastern coastal area and to the south of the Yangtze Delta,

Zhejiang province has more than 3,000 islands along its coast. It borders the modern international metropolis, Shanghai, to the northeast, which can be easily reached either by bus or by train. The province is one of the country's most densely populated, with a total area of 101,800 square kilometers (39,305 square miles) and a population of close to 55 million. Its excellent geographical location has fostered a robust and active economy (Travel China Guide, 2012).

Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang province, is known for the beautiful West Lake, located in the heart of the city, that was added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) World Heritage list in 2011. Around West Lake are historical and cultural sites, such as the tomb of General Yue Fei (hero of the southern Song Dynasty), the LingYin Temple, and the Six Harmonies Pagoda, all "must-visit" places for tourists. Hangzhou has earned a multitude of accolades. Among others, it is known as "paradise on earth," "the home of silk," "China's tea capital," and the "town of fish and rice" (Hangzhou.gov.cn, n.d.).

Despite these rich offerings, Hangzhou's fame has not spread overseas. In 2004, Google reports that few used the term "Hangzhou tourism" while using the search engine. Indeed, one of the major development objectives is to launch the city as a tourist destination. As shown in Table 1, the number of foreign tourists to the city broke the designated three million mark in 2011 (tourzj.gov.cn/zww/. n.d.). Nevertheless, compared to domestic visitors, foreign tourists, especially Europeans and Americans, have yet to be enticed to visit Hangzhou. Campaigns to boost tourism have pinpointed them as target audience segments.

Table 1. Domestic and foreign visitors to Hangzhou, 2007-2011

Year	Domestic tourists (in millions)	Rate (%)	Foreign tourists (in millions)	Rate (%)
2011	71.81	13.9	3.06	11.1
2010	63.05	23.8	2.76	19.7
2009	50.94	11.9	2.30	4.1
2008	47.73	10.5	2.21	6.1
2007	41.12	11.7	2.09	14.6

Source: Tourzj.gov.cn/zww/

In the last few years, the Hangzhou city government has launched several projects to establish Hangzhou's own image as a city of tourism and leisure with the aim to attract more visitors from overseas and stimulate economic growth. However, in terms of popularity, the city does not even come close to Shanghai and Beijing. To build the city brand, Hangzhou needs to step up its promotional efforts.

In 2006, two Hangzhou visitors, Alexandra from the U.S. and Monique from New Zealand, were invited to stay for three months. They later wrote a book titled *Hangzhou*, which introduces foreign tourists to the city. In 2010, a full-page advertisement titled "Hangzhou heats up" was featured in the *New York Times Travel Magazine* (<http://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/05/19/hangzhou-heats-up/>). In 2011, the British Broadcasting Company produced a promotional video for Hangzhou called "Come to Hangzhou—Discover the mystery of China" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfLQVHwknLk>), which has been broadcast over major TV networks in the U.S. (including Fox News, CNN, ESPN), and the biggest cities in Europe.

The task of building a brand for cities and other places is daunting. Cities are complex.

Their brands serve varied goals and target different audience segments, “which makes them much more difficult to control than conventional product brands” (Kavaratzis, 2005, p. 334).

Brand images aim to provide consumers with a clear understanding of and the proper attitudes toward the product. Kavaratzis & Ashworth (2006) say that brand image can incorporate perceptions of quality and value as well as brand associations and feelings. What is the best way to achieve these goals? Is it through text or through visuals?

Texts and visuals have their own strengths. Words have proven their power to deliver information and transmit culture and history. Visual advertising can use vivid and dramatic pictures to convey attitudes and emotions, a task that may be more difficult to achieve with the use of plain text alone. Which of these two can better extend or enlarge a city brand?

This study attempts to answer this question in the case of promoting Hangzhou as a tourist destination. Will words make people understand the real Hangzhou and goad them to search for more information about it? Will visuals create more of an emotional impact and drive them to visit? This study compares the verbal and visual modes of presenting promotional information that aim to get tourists knocking on Hangzhou’s doors. Which one will impress consumers more deeply? Which is likely to have an emotional resonance with potential visitors? Which of the two could significantly enhance people’s intention to visit the city?

The findings of this study are expected to assist the city of Hangzhou in formulating strategies meant to draw more visitors to its doorsteps. The purpose is to determine the best modes by which the city brand can be extended. Furthermore, from a long-term perspective, the findings are expected to help the tourism industry in creating more effective programs to

catch the attention of international travelers and enhance the city's competitiveness in the global tourism market.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study aims to determine the impact of ads that are predominantly visual and those that are primarily verbal in presenting messages aimed to persuade people to visit the city of Hangzhou. Previous studies that have examined the relationship between the effects of visual and verbal factors in advertisements on brand attitudes and product attribute beliefs are reviewed in this chapter. This chapter also discusses the Dual Component Model that will be used to assess the strength of these two modes of presenting tourism information. The study's research questions are outlined in the final section.

The Hierarchy of Effects Model

To explain the process of attitude formation, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) argue that a person's attitude is a function of his/her salient beliefs at a given point in time. These researchers also suggest that salient beliefs are those that primarily influence people's attitudes and later behaviors. In advertising, it has been postulated that persuasion results when people (1) become aware of a product or service, (2) hold positive attitudes about the product or service, (3) intend to purchase the produce or service, and finally, (4) buy or avail of the products and services being promoted (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, p. 396).

Thus, persuasion includes the same general constellation of dependent variables often found in communication effects studies. With varying degrees of conceptual sophistication, persuasion is usually seen as at least a four-step process involving (1) the building of awareness or knowledge, (2) the inducement of attitude change, (3) motivating individuals toward particular behaviors by generating interest or concern, and (4) effective

behavioral change (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961; Preston and Thorson, 1983).

Specific to advertising, the hierarchy of effects model has been diagrammed using a pyramid shown in Figure 1. In this schematic, advertisers first aim to fulfill lower-level objectives that are easier to accomplish such as awareness, knowledge or comprehension. Subsequent objectives may focus on moving audiences to higher levels to elicit desired attitudinal (e.g., associating feelings with the brand) and behavioral responses (e.g., trial or regular use). Thus, advertising is thought to work and follow a sequence whereby the prospect is moved through a series of stages in succession from unawareness to product purchase (Preston and Thorson, 1983).



Figure 1. The hierarchy of effects model as applied in advertising (Preston and Thorson, 1983)

The model suggests that if the target audience is unaware of the object, the communicator's task is to build awareness (e.g., name recognition) with simple messages repeating the product name. The knowledge stage involves making audiences know much more: What are the brand's specific appeals, its benefits? In what way is it different from competitors? Who is the target market? If people already know the product, how do they feel

about it? People might like the product but not prefer it to others. In this case, the communicator must try to build consumer preference by promoting quality, value, performance and other features. The communicator can check the campaign's success by measuring audience preference before and after the campaign. A target audience might prefer a particular product but not develop a conviction about buying it. Thus, the communicator's job is to build conviction among the target audience. Finally, some members of the target audience might have conviction, but do not quite get around to make the purchase. They may wait for more information or plan to act later. In this case, the communicator must goad consumers to take the final step, perhaps by offering the product at a low price, enticing people with a premium, or letting consumers try it out so that they move closer to purchase (Barry and Howard, 1990).

Although this sequence of events has a nice logic about it, even well designed and carefully targeted advertising campaigns do not get consistent and uniform responses at each stage. For one thing, the degree to which persuasion may occur is highly dependent upon the ways by which the product has been presented for audiences' evaluation.

There are different ways of presenting products through ads. Some of these promotional pieces are highly textual in their framework; others, capitalizing on the capabilities of a medium, are primarily visual. These two modes of presenting information may produce different knowledge, attitudinal, and behavioral impacts.

Verbal Stimuli

Previous models of persuasion (e.g., Olson and Mitchell, 1975) generally hold that people's attitudes and behavior are based mainly on the verbal information they receive about

a product. Mitchell and Olson (1981) suggest that the verbal stimuli in ads draw consumers' attention and arouse beliefs. Hoegg (2006) observed that verbal cues dramatically affect preference. Ford and Smith (1987) found that verbal information affected consumers' inferences about and preference for a product.

Holbrook (1978) identifies two fundamental dimensions of verbal content crucial to advertising: factualness and evaluativeness. Factualness emphasizes "the logical, objectively verifiable descriptions of tangible product features" (p. 547). Evaluativeness, on the other hand, describes "the emotional, subjective impressions of the intangible aspects of the product" (p. 547). These two dimensions not only shape salient beliefs and brand preferences but also influence the perceived credibility of the source, confidence on the product and the source, and enjoyment that can be derived from the product.

Cognitive psychologists have long advanced that the human mind uses two primary cognitive processing systems—the analytical and the intuitive—to know and understand and that these cognitive systems are supported by a number of distinct intelligences (Sperry, 1973; Levy 1974). One of these cognitive systems is analytical in nature and relies on reason as a means of knowing. Williams (2004) calls this the rational cognitive system, which is the basis for mathematical and linguistic intelligences. The other cognitive system is synthesistic in nature and allows one to attain to knowledge directly without the need for reason. This is called the intuitive cognitive system, which is the cognitive basis for visual and musical intelligences, among others (Williams, 2004).

Holbrook and Moore (1981) claim that the verbal coding system was apt to be more detailed or analytic compared to the imagery coding system. Words have their own unique

strengths that, according to researchers, visual components cannot replace. Thus, it is said that verbal elements dominate the rational cognitive system. For example, Smith (1991) observed that inferential beliefs gained from copy appear to be stronger than those derived from pictures. According to Miniard et al. (1991), this is because when participants are more motivated to process information, verbal information has impact over and above that of pictures. Phillips (2000) adds that appropriate words help explain complex images and increase the liking for advertising.

Stafford (1996) found that verbal information had a significant positive relationship with attitudes, intention and recall when the advertising was related to the service industry. Such a relationship was not detected for visual information. This increased knowledge, then, translates to a more positive attitude and possibly higher behavioral intention to make use of the service. That is, the verbal cues served not only to describe the generic service, but also the service brand itself (Stafford, 1996). In addition, researchers (e.g., Kaufmann and Raaheim, 1973; Mitchell, 1986; Spears, 2006) claim that verbal symbols can be used as elements with which to build congruence within an ad. Words perform this function well because they have a narrower range or fewer layers of implications, which means that words can describe and explain meanings more exactly.

In many cultures, the verbal stimuli are treated as rational objects; the reason why in many contexts, books and printed journals stand for knowledge and information (Hirschman, 1986). Thus, as Hirschman (1986) suggests, consumers generally consider all-verbal advertising pieces as more utilitarian and rational than all-visual advertising. Words, therefore, are often associated with factualness and decision utility. That most information processing

models implicitly or explicitly view human behavior to be largely based on the processing and interpretation of verbal information attests to the conferred primacy of the verbal presentation.

This is perhaps why tourism promotional materials such as ebooks, printable PDFs, online guides, print travel guides and other tourist brochures are rich with text despite the need for them to show more. They tell people what is happening where and when. They describe traditions and ethos, offer travel packages, and explain why a destination suits one's getaway needs, among other functions.

Other researchers have posited other presentation factors that affect people's attitudes toward products. For instance, Mitchell and Olson (1981) suggest that the visual component of an ad may be a stronger driver of consumer evaluations.

Visual Stimuli

Visual information constitutes the oldest record of human history, used to understand and communicate human nature (Dondis, 1973). Synott (1993) observes that Western culture has a long tradition of "ocular-centrism." Indeed, studies in the field of advertising have shown that consumers recall and recognize pictures better than words (e.g., Singh & Formica, 2007).

Visuals, like text, can operate as framing devices insofar as they make use of various rhetorical tools—metaphors, illustrations, symbols—that aim to capture the essence of an issue or event graphically. Through the application of these devices, a salient idea becomes easier to understand and easier to remember than other ideas (Entman, 1991). As Gamson and Stuart (1992) argued, visuals offer "a number of different condensing symbols that suggest

the core frame” of the issue (p. 60). Visuals also help render a large amount of detail into practical frameworks that are relevant and appropriate to people’s understanding of the everyday world. In this sense, “visuals channel discursive possibilities for making sense of social phenomena; they legitimize (and thus facilitate) the grounds upon which some interpretations can be favored and others impeded” (Rodriguez and Dimitrova, 2011, p. 51).

That visuals are potent framing devices are borne by studies that have found them to be one of the first items on a news page to catch the reader’s eyes (Thorson, 1995), and may be noticed even when the accompanying story is not read (Miller, 1975). Given an array of stimuli, visuals are processed faster than others (Lamme, 2003). In fact, public criticisms of inappropriate use of photographs attest to the importance consumers place to the details found in news photos (Gordon and Lubrano, 1995). Thus, it stands to reason that the content of images is as important as the stories themselves.

Theoretical propositions also explain why images make for powerful framing tools. Following the tenets of the elaboration likelihood model, the most common uses of visuals trigger peripheral rather than central information processing so that audiences are more likely to accept the visual frame without question (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). In fact, there is evidence to suggest that when there is a conflict between textual and visual framing, visual frames often win (Grabe and Bucy, 2009). This may be due not only to the fact that visuals such as photographs seem closer to reality, but also because they have the power to create stronger emotional and immediate cues. After all, historically, seeing preceded the use of language. Because of their high attraction value, images on a page, website, or television screen often give the first impression of a story, and they are readily remembered (Rodgers

and Thorson, 2000). Thus, “how an issue is visually characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences” (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007, p. 11).

Lutz & Lutz (1977) confirmed that pictures in advertisements had a positive effect on consumers’ memory and product-related beliefs. Their findings suggest that visual information drive people to develop inferences about an advertised brand. For instance, a photo of a kitten generally communicates a sense of softness and comfort. Childers & Houston (1984) also found that visuals were superior to texts in enhancing memory.

Because tourism activities are primarily experience-based, photographs, pictures, or other symbolic images are crucial in communicating a destination’s image (Mackay and Fesenmaier, 1997). Indeed, those who study how images are deployed for tourism purposes see the increasing use of visuals in the popular media as challenging conventional tourism spaces and their associated tourist experiences (Urry, 1990 and 1994). Kim (2011) suggests that images and visual representations in the media are now the primary ways by which audiences come to understand and experience the life situation of others. Regardless of the degree of authenticity and realism of these representations, people’s perceptions of a country, a place, or a culture are more decisively influenced by visual media exposure in the absence of direct cultural contacts or experiences (Babad and Dean, 1983).

Destination Image

A destination image constitutes the beliefs, ideas and impressions a person holds about a certain place (Crompton, 1979). MacKay and Fesenmaier (1997) subscribe to a similar definition, referring to destination image as a tourist-based image (i.e., one’s subjective impressions of a place) rather than a marketer-produced image (i.e., the promoted

image of the destination) (Li and Vogelsong, 2006).

Most scholars agree that there are two main distinctive dimensions related to destination image (DI): rational and emotional. The rational dimension stands for the knowledge or beliefs existing in consumers' brains about a destination. Scholars have proposed that the more knowledgeable about a place the person is, the more favorable the image in the person's mind (Baloglu, 2001; Crompton, 1979). The emotional dimension refers to consumers' subjective view about a destination (Engel, Blackwell and Miniard, 1986). Baloglu and MaCleary (1999) see DI as a relativistic and dynamic construct, finding a high correlation between the rational or cognitive and emotional or affective dimensions, with cognition dominating the two elements.

Text applied to the promotion of destination images have been traditionally examined using content analysis (e.g., Portia et al., 2006; Volo, 2004). Researchers have, for example, determined the frequency of occurrence of certain concepts, words, or people in textual materials (e.g., McNicol, 2004). Some have sorted out words and phrases and categorized them according to themes (e.g., Cai, 2002). Many have taken a closer look at textual data by using qualitative techniques to identify and describe the presence of holistic, affective and unique images (Baloglu & Love, 2005; Grosspietsch, 2006).

Image analysis in tourism studies is not as prevalent as textual analyses. However researches, drawing from cultural studies, social cognition and social psychology, have benefitted from the more interpretive nature of imagery analysis. Some have used elicitation techniques to convert participants' responses to visual stimuli to a scale format and subsequently applied quantitative techniques of image measurement and other approaches,

including the Q-methodology (Deward et al., 2007) and collage techniques (e.g., Prebsen, 2007).

Tourism also has long been promoted through films. In this case, tourists are enticed to visit a place as a result of it being featured on television, video, DVD or the cinema (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006). Scholars suggest that destinations with strong, positive images are more likely to be considered and chosen in the travel decision process (Goodrich, 1978; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). Destination image has an important role in the various models of travel decision making developed to date (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989, as cited by Charlotte & Ritchie, 2003).

The Dual Component Model

Research on the information processing of visual and verbal components of ads has focused on the mediating role of attitude toward the ad on the communicative process. Based on Fishbein's attitude theory (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), attitude formation and change is decided by belief formation and belief change. This theory states that verbal information can create product attribute beliefs that lead to brand attitudes. Applying this theory, Mitchell and Olson (1981) have suggested that visual and emotional effects of advertising may be mediated by the consumer's evaluation of the ad, and that this attitude toward the ad may have an independent effect on attitude toward the brand. They found that attitudes toward the brand may be influenced not only by product attribute beliefs when the advertisements contain affect-laden photographs. They observed that differences in attitudes created by the advertisements were eliminated by a second construct—attitude toward the ad. Therefore, product attribute beliefs and attitude toward the ad appear to affect attitudes toward the brand.

The results of this study (Mitchell & Olson, 1981) also indicated that both visual and verbal elements contributed to the formation of attitudes toward the advertisement and to product attribute beliefs both of which had an influence on brand attitudes. For example, a photograph of a lovely cat next to a brand of tissue may make people think the product is softer than others of a different brand, a specific product attribute belief. How the verbal and visual element is evaluated (positively or negatively), therefore, affects attitude toward the ad, which subsequently influences brand attitude.

Mitchell (1986) refined this study to focus more on the effects of visual components. In an exploratory study, he showed subjects four advertisements for four different products. The advertisements included a sunrise scene (regarded as a positive image), a photograph of a wildcat (regarded as negative), and an abstract picture (regarded as neutral) paired with text that is about 50 words in length. A fourth stimulus contains only text. After the advertisements were shown in random order, subjects were asked to respond to three questionnaires that measured brand attitude, attitude toward purchasing and using the brand, and belief strength. The subjects were also asked to evaluate the products and the ads. Mitchell (1986) found that the ads with affect-laden photographs and accompanying copy had a significant effect on brand attitude but had no influence on purchase intention. The results confirmed that the ad with the positive image created the most favorable attitudes while the ad with the negative photograph produced the least favorable attitudes. This finding suggests that visual and verbal stimuli are able to differentiate brands with the same product attributes. Mitchell observed that affect-laden photographs had significant effects on attitude toward the ads.

The researcher concluded that visual information drives people to develop inferences about the advertised brand. These inferences, in turn, help form and change beliefs about the brands. He also posited that the same effects may be derived from the use of verbal stimuli. This led Mitchell to propose the Dual Component Model shown in Figure 2.

Although the model assigns important roles to visual or verbal stimuli, it does not explain the differential effects of visual and verbal factors on brand building. In the case of destination branding, do people find ads that promote a place more persuasive when they are presented in visual or in textual ways? In the face of limited resources, should destination managers invest more on promotional products that are low in visuals and high in textual narratives? Do ads that visually display the place more likely to entice people to visit a non-traditional destination than an ad that offers information mainly by using text? This study addresses these pragmatic concerns.

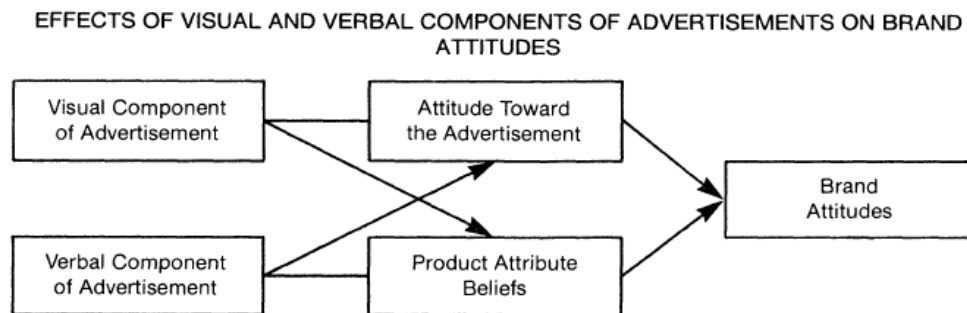


Figure 2. A conceptual framework of the Dual Component Model (Mitchell, 1986)

Research Questions

Considering the foregoing literature, this study poses the following hypotheses:

H1: Those exposed to the highly visual ad and those exposed to the primarily verbal ad will differ in their attitudes toward the ad.

H2: Those exposed to the highly visual ad and those exposed to the primarily verbal

ad will differ in their attribute beliefs about Hangzhou as a tourist destination.

H3: Those exposed to the highly visual ad and those exposed to the primarily verbal ad will differ in their knowledge about Hangzhou as a tourist destination.

H4: Those exposed to the highly visual ad and those exposed to the primarily verbal ad will differ in their attitudes toward Hangzhou as a tourist destination.

H5: Those exposed to the highly visual ad and those exposed to the primarily verbal ad will differ in terms of their intention to search for more information about Hangzhou.

H6: Those exposed to the highly visual ad and those exposed to the primarily verbal ad will differ in their intention to visit Hangzhou.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This study aims to test the ability of two modes of presenting destination tourism information (verbal vs. visual) to enhance people's attitudes toward the ad, their attribute beliefs about Hangzhou as a tourist destination, and their knowledge, attitudes toward, and intention learn more about and visit Hangzhou some day.

To gather data, an online experiment using a random sample of Iowa State University students as participants was conducted. This method was selected because (1) the study required a sizeable sample given the variables under investigation; (2) the online system had high image-carrying capacity that enables the high-resolution presentation of the experimental stimuli (a video clip and an audio clip); (3) the self-administered questionnaire the participants completed after exposure to the stimuli gave them the flexibility to take some time to watch or hear and internalize the experimental treatment, (4) and young people had constantly shown a preference for messages delivered online.

The Sample

The study population was composed of non-Chinese students officially registered in the university during the 2012 fall semester. College students were selected as the sample because their exposure to courses that offer international and multicultural perspectives might have made them curious about places to visit, and because of their willingness to travel so as to be exposed to different cultures. As shown in the literature review, Hangzhou had identified the goal of attracting foreign tourists; thus, the study solicited the evaluations of students who are not from China. Only those who were 18 years old or older were asked to

participate in the study.

Given these parameters, a random sample of students and their email addresses were obtained from the Registrar's Office. The selected students received an alert email describing the study and its purpose, and asking for their participation. One week after sending the alert email, an introductory email was distributed, this time with a link to the survey website that houses the questionnaire. The email provided them with an informed consent document that details their rights as experiment participants, including the right to withdraw from the study at any point without negative consequences, the right to refuse to answer questions that made them feel uncomfortable, and the right to be informed of the study's results. They were told that their answers and any personal information they provided would be kept confidential and would be used only for reporting purposes.

The study planned to recruit 200 participants (100 for each condition). To encourage participation, the names of those who returned their completed questionnaire were included in a drawing for an authentic gift from China. Fifteen respondents were randomly selected to receive this incentive.

The study made use of Opinio 6.6, a web-based survey system that allowed multi-user support and random branding. Therefore, those who decided to do the survey were automatically randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions—a group that received the video ad, and a group that was exposed to a verbal ad about the city of Hangzhou.

Experimental Stimuli

Information about Hangzhou as a tourist destination was provided in two ways: the

visual mode and the verbal mode. The visual mode of presenting tourism information was represented by a video titled “Come to Hangzhou—Discover the mystery of China” essentially an advertising piece that enjoined people to visit Hangzhou. The ad, which had been broadcast over major TV networks in the U.S. and the biggest cities in Europe, introduced Hangzhou as a tourist destination. Besides the natural beauty and historic attractions such as the Grand Canal and the ancient temples, the one-minute-long video also emphasized Hangzhou’s rich arts and cultures, including traditional painting, calligraphy, opera, fairs, and medicine. It can be retrieved from the website <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfLQVHwknLk>. Representative still photographs from the video are shown in Appendix A.

The verbal mode of presenting tourism information was represented by a predominantly verbal ad that features what Hangzhou has to offer. Like the video, it was highly descriptive of the city’s history, people, and major attractions. It was one and half minutes in length. This audio script for the verbal ad is reproduced in Appendix B.

After exposure to one of the two stimuli, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire that was divided into seven parts. The first part aimed to measure peoples’ attitudes toward the advertisement they had just seen using semantic differential scales. The second part aimed to ascertain the participants’ attribute beliefs about Hangzhou as a tourist destination after exposure to the stimulus also by using semantic differential scales. The third part aimed to tap people’s knowledge about Hangzhou after exposure to the video or verbal ad. The fourth part measured their attitudes about Hangzhou. The fifth part tapped their behavioral intentions, specifically their intention to visit the city in the future and their

intention to search for more information about the city. The sixth part measured if participants could recognize the right images/statements that were shown or mentioned in the ad to which they were exposed. Part seven of the questionnaire collected basic demographic information (age, gender, race, and educational level).

Pretest

The experimental stimuli and the questionnaire were pretested on a convenience sample of 30 American college students. The objectives of the pretest were to (1) determine the reliability of the indices developed, (2) solicit suggestions for questionnaire organization and wording, (3) determine whether respondents understood the instructions and what were being asked, and (4) ascertain how long it took to complete the questionnaire.

Dependent Variables and their Measure

This study had six dependent variables. These were (1) attitude toward the ad, (2) attribute beliefs about Hangzhou, (3) knowledge about Hangzhou, (4) attitude toward Hangzhou, (5) intention to seek for more information about Hangzhou, and (6) intention to visit the city.

Attitude toward the advertisement was measured by asking participants to rate the advertising piece they had just seen on five semantic differential scales with response options ranging from 1 to 7. These items were anchored on the bipolar adjectives (1) bad/good, (2) dislike/like, (3) poor technical quality /good technical quality, (4) not useful/useful to potential tourists, and (5) offers no new information/highly informative. The responses to these items were summed and averaged as a measure of the index attitude toward the ad.

High scores indicated high evaluation of the ad. The reliability and internal consistency of

this and the other succeeding indices developed in this study were determined by computing for Cronbach's alpha.

2. *Attribute beliefs* refer to a person's notions or beliefs about an object's characteristics. In this case, the referent of these attitude beliefs is the city of Hangzhou. This variable was measured by asking participants to rate Hangzhou as a tourist destination based on ten semantic differential scales with response options ranging from 1 to 7. These items were anchored on the bipolar adjectives (1) happy/sad, (2) cheerful/gloomy, (3) active/tranquil, (4) pleasant/unpleasant, (5) quiet/loud, (6) modern/traditional, (7) attractive/boring, (8) natural/artificial, (9) Open and flexible social structure/closed and rigid social structure, and (10) unique/general. The responses to these items were summed and averaged as a measure of the index attribute beliefs about Hangzhou. High scores indicated high intensity of attribute beliefs.

To cross-check attribute belief, participants were asked to open-endedly write about what they learned about Hangzhou from the ad they have just seen.

3. *Knowledge* refers to a person's acquaintance or familiarity with Hangzhou gained from exposure to one of the two ad versions. To measure this variable, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: I learned a lot about this city after seeing the ad. The response options to this item ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

To cross-check or validate knowledge, participants were asked some recall questions to see if they could remember what they had just seen.

4. *Attitude toward Hangzhou* refers to people's evaluation or judgment of Hangzhou's

worth or value as a tourist destination. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with the statement, “I feel positively toward this city.” Here, the response options also ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

5. *Intention to search for more information* about Hangzhou refers to people’s propensity to look for other information sources to learn more about Hangzhou. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree with the statement, “I would search for more information about this city” to which the response options ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

6. *Intention to visit* Hangzhou refers to people’s inclination to visit this city some day. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree with the statement, “I would like to visit this city some day.” Again, the response options ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study tests the effects of predominantly verbal and predominantly visual advertisements on consumers' attitude toward the ad, their attribute beliefs about the city of Hangzhou, and their knowledge of, attitudes toward, and intentions to search for more information about and to visit Hangzhou in the future. To gather data, an online experiment was conducted using a random sample of non-Chinese students at Iowa State University as participants.

A total of 217 participants who were randomly assigned to one of the two groups returned their completed questionnaire. One hundred and six saw the visual or video ad while 111 were exposed to its verbal or audio counterpart.

Table 2 summarizes the participants' demographic characteristics. As expected of a college student sample, most were 18 to 30 years old, almost evenly split between males and females. A large majority were Caucasian students pursuing bachelor's degrees. For both groups, the proportional distribution of age, gender, race and education level were just about the same.

Participants were asked if they knew a lot about Hangzhou before seeing any of the two ad versions. The results, shown in Table 3, indicate that they were not very aware of and knew very little about the city prior to exposure to the ad. Specifically, 70.27% of those who saw the visual ad strongly disagreed they knew a lot about Hangzhou before seeing it; 71.31% of those exposed to the verbal ad said the same.

Asked how they evaluated the ad they saw, those who saw the visual ad rated it higher

in terms of attractiveness, quality, and usefulness (Table 3). The verbal ad, however, was seen as more informative.

Table 2. The demographic characteristics of the sample

	Primarily verbal (audio) (n=111)		Primarily visual (video) (n=106)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Age				
18-30	104	95.41	99	94.29
over 30	5	4.59	6	5.71
Gender				
Female	55	49.55	53	50.96
Male	56	50.45	51	49.04
Race				
White	95	86.36	91	85.85
Black or African American	1	0.91	1	0.94
Asian	9	8.18	5	4.72
Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1	0.91	0	0.00
Native American	0	0.00	0	0.00
Latino/Latina	1	0.91	6	5.66
Other	3	2.73	3	2.83
Education				
Some high school	0	0.00	0	0.00
High school graduate	5	4.50	5	4.72
Some college	72	64.86	68	64.15
College graduate	17	15.32	15	14.5
Vocational school graduate	0	0.00	2	1.89
Post graduate	17	15.32	16	15.09

Table 3. Evaluation of the ad

Predominantly verbal	n	Mean	Std. dev.
Bad/Good	135	3.90	1.384
Dislike/Like	135	3.87	1.318
Poor quality/Good quality	135	3.55	1.320
Not useful/Useful	136	4.24	1.431
Offers no new information/ Highly informative	135	5.50	1.292
Predominantly visual	N	Mean	Std. dev.
Bad/Good	118	5.53	1.138
Dislike/Like	117	5.44	1.235
Poor quality/Good quality	117	5.80	1.139
Not useful/Useful	116	4.42	1.280
Offers no new information/ Highly informative	117	3.69	1.511

The semantic differential scales were anchored on the response options 1=lowest to 7=highest

Testing the Attitude, Knowledge and Behavioral Intention Effects

Attitude toward the ad. The first hypothesis posits that those exposed to the highly visual ad and those exposed to the primarily verbal presentation would differ in their attitude toward the ad. To measure the latter, five semantic differential scales were used with response options ranging from 1 (the most negative rating) to 7 (the most positive rating). These items were anchored on the bipolar adjectives (1) bad/good, (2) dislike/like, (3) poor quality/good quality, (4) not useful/useful, and (5) offers no new information/highly informative. The responses to these items were averaged separately for the verbal and visual stimuli. The computed indices demonstrated high reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha visual=.785; Cronbach's alpha verbal=.716).

The results of an independent samples t-test suggest a significant difference between the two groups ($t = -6.19$; $df = 248$; $p = .000$) in terms of participants' attitude toward the ad. That is, as shown in Table 4, a more positive attitude toward the ad resulted from exposure to the visual stimulus ($M = 4.99$; $SD = .93$) than to the verbal presentation ($M = 4.21$; $SD = 1.05$). Thus, H1 was supported.

Attribute beliefs about Hangzhou. The second hypothesis tested the difference between the two groups in terms of attribute beliefs developed about Hangzhou. Fishbein (1963) define attribute beliefs as the knowledge a consumer holds about objects, their attributes, and their benefits. To measure attribute beliefs, ten semantic differential scales were used with response options ranging from 1 (the most negative rating) to 7 (the most positive rating). The responses were anchored on the bipolar adjectives (1) sad/happy, (2)

gloomy /cheerful, (3) tranquil/ active, (4) unpleasant/ pleasant, (5) loud/ quiet, (6) traditional/ modern, (7) boring/ attractive, (8) artificial/ natural, (9) closed and rigid social structure/ open and flexible social structure, and (10) general/ unique. The responses were averaged to form verbal and visual attribute belief indices (Cronbach's alpha visual=.789; Cronbach's alpha verbal=.836) and the difference between the two groups on this variable was tested using independent samples t-test.

The results (Table 4) show a significant difference between the two groups in terms of attribute beliefs ($t=-6.039$; $df=233$; $p=.000$). That is, the predominantly visual presentation ($M=4.98$; $SD=.78$) produced more positive and stronger attribute beliefs about Hangzhou than its predominantly verbal counterpart ($M=4.35$; $SD=.81$). Thus, H2 was supported.

To validate attribute beliefs, participants were asked to write down what specifically they had learned about Hangzhou from the ad they saw. They were asked: What unique characteristics of Hangzhou (that were different from those of Beijing and Shanghai) did you learn from the ad? For both ads, most generally thought Hangzhou was historical, traditional, peaceful, and rural. Many who saw the verbal ad provided general ideas about the place (e.g., "It has a lot of history"), but also listed details (e.g., "It is one of the seven ancient capitals of China," "It was made important by trade of silk, ivory, and jade." "There are many traditional aspects about it, such as Buddhism, tea farms, and the arts"). This suggests that the verbal ad provided more information that audience members were able to process and recall later. On the other hand, the video ad showed mostly generalized scenes, allowing people to arrive at the conclusion that the city has experiences and sights to offer that are far different from those of the conventional tourist destinations in the country (i.e., Beijing and Shanghai). Thus,

it can be said that although the verbal stimulus did a better job of implanting specific attribute beliefs about Hangzhou, the visual ad produced stronger attribute beliefs.

Knowledge about Hangzhou. The third hypothesis aims to determine the difference between the two groups in terms of perceived knowledge gain. Knowledge gain was measured by a single Likert-scale item: I learned a lot about this city after seeing the ad. The response options to the item ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The results of another independent samples t-test, shown in Table 4, suggest that the verbal ad ($M=3.23$; $SD=.85$) produced more knowledge gain than the video ad ($M=2.29$; $SD=.91$). The influence of the verbal stimulus on knowledge gain is thus greater than that of the visual stimulus ($t=8.018$; $df=221$; $p=.000$). Thus, H3 was supported.

To validate the knowledge measure, a separate recall question asked the participants if they could remember the facts and/or images that had been said and/or shown in the ad to which they were exposed. For those who saw the verbal ad, the relative frequency of choosing the correct facts ranged from 25.4% to 31.85%. Many correctly recalled the fact that “Hangzhou, one of China’s oldest cities, was settled about 5,000 years ago,” and that “Hangzhou’s traditional medicines and its architecture are a national treasure.” Seventy-nine of the 108 participants who were exposed to the verbal ad correctly remembered these two statements of fact. Thirteen incorrectly said that they recalled hearing the statement “Hangzhou is the economic hub of eastern China” perhaps because the verbal ad mentioned that “the Grand Canal that used to connect Hangzhou to Beijing made the city a hub of communications.”

For those who saw the visual ad, the relative frequency of choosing the correct images

ranged from 30.5% to 34.4%, which was higher than the rate of correct recall by verbal ad viewers. The image showing Hangzhou's most revered temple was recalled the most (by 97 of 105 participants who saw the visual ad). Many were able to correctly remember three images shown in the visual stimulus. Seven incorrectly recollected having seen the fourth image, shown in Figure 3; only one erroneously remembered the fifth. Thus, the error rate for the very visual ad was smaller than that of the verbal ad, suggesting that although audience members learned more from the verbal ad, they recalled pictures better than they did words.

Figure 3. The most erroneously recalled image.



Attitude toward Hangzhou. The fourth hypothesis posits a difference between the two groups in terms of their attitude toward Hangzhou following exposure to the ad. To measure attitude toward the city, a Likert-scale item was asked: I feel positively toward this city. The response options to the item ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The results of another independent samples t-test shown in Table 4 indicate a significant difference between the two groups with respect to the attitude they formed about Hangzhou ($t = -4.504$; $df = 220$; $p = .000$). Again, those who saw the visual stimulus demonstrated a more positive attitude toward this destination city ($M = 3.94$; $SD = .61$) than

those who saw the verbal ad ($M=3.54$; $SD = .68$). H4, therefore, was supported.

Intention to search for more information. Did exposure to the two types of ad produce differences in participants' intention to search for more information about Hangzhou as proposed in H5? The participants were asked the extent to which they agree that they "would search for more information about this city." Here, the response options ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The t-test results (Table 4) suggest that those who watched the visual ad demonstrated a higher propensity to search for more information about Hangzhou compared to those who were exposed to the verbal ad. Again, H5 was supported.

Intention to visit. The last hypothesis aims to determine whether there is a difference between the two groups in terms of intention to visit Hangzhou in the future. The participants were asked the extent to which they agree that they "would like to visit this city some day" using response options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The t-test results outlined on Table 4 ($t= -2.887$; $df=225.471$; $p=.004$) indicate that those who saw the visual ad reported a higher propensity to visit Hangzhou ($M=3.68$; $SD=.85$) compared to those who saw the predominantly verbal ad ($M=3.32$; $SD=1.05$), and that this difference was significant.

Table 4. Summary of results of independent samples t-tests comparing the two groups in terms of the six dependent variables

	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference
1. Attitude toward the ad	-6.190	248	.000	-.78093	.12615
2. Attribute beliefs about Hangzhou	-6.039	233	.000	-.63080	.10445
3. Knowledge about Hangzhou	8.018	221	.000	.94385	.11772
4. Attitude toward Hangzhou	-4.504	220	.000	-.47657	.08696
5. Intention to search for more information	-3.578	227	.000	-.44243	.12365
6. Intention to visit	-2.887	225	.004	-.36190	.12534

Testing the Dual Component Model

In the dual component model proposed by Mitchell (1986), attitudes about the brand formed through advertising are hypothesized as having two determinants: (1) the product attribute beliefs the ads developed among consumers, and (2) consumers' attitude toward the advertisement. Thus, according to this model, individuals may form inferences about the advertised brand, which lead to the attitudes they hold about the ad and the beliefs about the attributes of the advertised product based on visual and verbal information presented. These inferences may result in the formation or change of beliefs about the advertised brand. These propositions follow those of Mitchell and Olson (1981) who suggested that attitudes toward a brand are mediated by an individuals' attitude toward the advertisement and the product attribute beliefs developed after exposure to an ad.

Thus, for both groups, the influence of attitude toward the ad and attribute beliefs on attitude toward Hangzhou was ascertained by conducting simple regression tests. The findings, shown in Table 5, indicate that attitude toward the verbal ad [$R^2=.147$, $F(1, 109)=18.813$, $p=.000$] and attribute beliefs resulting from exposure to the same ad [$R^2=.342$, $F(1,109)=56.594$, $p=.000$] had a significant influence on attitude toward Hangzhou as a

potential city to visit. On the other hand, attitude toward the visual ad [$R^2=.121$, $F(1,103)=14.192$, $p=.000$] and attribute beliefs developed after seeing the visual ad [$R^2=.135$, $F(1,106)=16.480$, $p=.000$] also were significant predictors of attitude toward Hangzhou as a destination city. The results, therefore, indicate the capability of both verbal and visual components to generate attitudes toward the ad and attribute beliefs that have a substantial bearing on attitude toward the brand (i.e., Hangzhou).

Table 5. The influence of attitude toward the ad and attribute beliefs about Hangzhou on attitude toward Hangzhou

Independent variable	R	R square	Std. error of the estimate	F	Sig.
Attitude toward the verbal ad	.384	.147	.63519	18.813	.000
Attribute beliefs (Verbal)	.585	.342	.55755	56.594	.000
Attitude toward the visual ad	.348	.121	.57976	14.192	.000
Attribute beliefs (Visual)	.367	.135	.57536	16.480	.000

Additional Analysis: Influence on Behavioral Intentions

Extending the dual component model, the present study also set out to determine whether attitude toward the ad and attribute beliefs have a bearing on behavioral intentions. The results of simple regression tests show that attribute beliefs generated by the verbal ad [$R^2=.161$, $F(1,103) = 19.733$, $p=.000$] and the visual ad [$R^2=.138$, $F(1,107) = 17.070$, $p=.000$] significantly influenced intention to visit. Did attribute beliefs affect intention to seek for more information? The results show that attribute beliefs developed from exposure to the verbal ad [$R^2=.084$, $F(1,112) = 10.214$, $p=.002$] also had a significant impact on intention to search for more information. This influence on intention to look for more information, however, was not detected among those who saw the visual ad [$R^2=.030$, $F(1,106) = 3.273$, $p=.073$].

The regression results also show that attitude toward the verbal ad [$R^2=.112$, $F(1,116)=14.614$, $p=.000$] had a significant effect on intention to search for more information about Hangzhou. The same, however, was not observed about the effect of attitude toward the visual ad [$R^2=.021$, $F(1,105) =2.304$, $p=.132$] when it comes to its influence on intention to search for more information. This finding suggests the power of the verbal stimulus to influence cognitions, including people's motivations to learn more about this destination city. Indeed, the verbal presentation created more attribute beliefs and helped participants develop an attitude toward the ad that seemed to have provided people with greater incentives to find out more about the place.

The results also show that attitude toward the verbal [$R^2=.077$, $F(1,103)=8.536$, $p=.004$] and the visual ad [$R^2=.078$, $F(1,105) =8.828$, $p=.004$] heightened people's intention to visit Hangzhou in the future, a finding that echoes the influence of attribute beliefs. This suggests that although the visual stimulus may not have compelled people to learn more about Hangzhou, they were successfully in enhancing their desire to see the place some day. A summary of the results of this extended analysis are shown on Table 6.

Table 6. The influence of attitude toward the ads and attribute beliefs on behavioral intentions

Independent variable	Dependent variable	R	R square	Std. error of the estimate	F	Sig.
Attribute belief (Verbal)	Intention to visit	.401	.161	.84217	19.733	.000
Attribute beliefs (Visual)		.371	.138	.79513	17.070	.000
Attribute belief (Verbal)	Intention to seek for more information	.289	.084	.87787	10.214	.002
Attribute belief (Visual)		.173	.030	.86914	3.273	.073
Attitude toward the verbal ad	Intention to search for more information	.334	.112	.93257	14.614	.000
Attitude toward the visual ad		.147	.021	.88605	2.304	.132
Attitude toward the verbal ad	Intention to visit	.277	.077	.87926	8.536	.004
Attitude toward the visual ad		.278	.078	.81470	8.828	.004

Extending the dual component model to take into consideration the impact of attitude toward Hangzhou (the brand) on behavioral intentions, two simple regression tests were conducted. The results, shown in Table 7, suggest that for those who watched the predominantly verbal ad, attitude toward Hangzhou significantly predicted intention to search for more information [$R^2=.074$, $F(1,104) = 8.252$, $p=.005$] and intention to visit [$R^2=.240$, $F(1,98) = 30.887$, $p=.000$]. However, among those who saw the predominantly visual ad, attitude toward Hangzhou had a significant impact on intention to visit [$R^2=.147$, $F(1,108) = 18.622$, $p=.000$], but not on intention to search for more information [$R^2=.006$, $F(1,107) = .645$, $p=.424$].

The results with respect to the influence of attitude toward Hangzhou between those

who viewed the verbal and those who saw the visual ad were almost identical to the impact of attribute beliefs and attitude toward the ad on the two behavioral intentions. For all three constructs, the visual ad failed to show a significant impact on intention to search for more information.

Table 7. The influence of attitude toward the Hangzhou generated by exposure to the two types of ad on behavioral intentions

Independent variable	Dependent variable	R	R square	Std. error of the estimate	F	Sig.
Attitude toward Hangzhou (Verbal)	Intention to search for more information	.271	.074	.87783	8.252	.005
	Intention to visit	.490	.240	.79685	30.887	.000
Attitude toward Hangzhou (Visual)	Intention to search for more information	.077	.006	.89516	.645	.424
	Intention to visit	.383	.147	.78765	18.622	.000

Summary of Results

In summary, the results of the t-tests suggest that verbal and visual elements have different functions in advertising. In this case, verbal elements seemed to have a greater influence on the acquisition of knowledge or resulted in greater cognition, helping people recall more specific information about the place being promoted. However, the visual stimulus was more effective in producing more positive attribute beliefs and attitudes about the ad. The visual was also more successful in eliciting more positive attitudes about Hangzhou. Based on the t-test results, compared to its verbal counterpart, the predominantly visual ad also produced higher intentions to search for more information about this relatively lesser-known tourist destination and greater intention to visit the city some day.

A series of simple regression tests was conducted to confirm the proposition of the dual component model that attitude toward the ad and attribute beliefs have a bearing on attitude toward the brand or, in this case, the city of Hangzhou. The findings indicate that attitude toward the verbal ad and attribute beliefs resulting from exposure to the visual ad had significantly affected attitude toward Hangzhou as a potential city to visit. Attitude toward the visual ad and attribute beliefs developed after seeing the visual ad also were significant predictors of attitude toward Hangzhou as a destination city. The results provide support to the dual component model, which posits that verbal and visual components generate attitudes toward the ad and attribute beliefs about a product that have a substantial bearing on attitude toward the brand.

Extending the dual component model to determine whether behavioral intentions were affected by attitudes developed toward Hangzhou, the results indicate that exposure to the more verbal ad produced significant changes in intention to look for more information about the city and to visit it some day. The predominantly visual influenced intention to visit Hangzhou, but not people's desire to search for more information about the city.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This study compares the predominantly verbal and predominantly visual modes of promoting the city of Hangzhou as a destination for international tourists. Testing the impact of the two treatments on the usual roster of potential communication effects, the results indicate that the verbal ad had a stronger effect on knowledge gained about the city among an audience of college students. In short, the verbal presentation was more successful in enhancing cognitions. However, the visual ad showed a more robust influence on attribute beliefs about the city, attitude toward the ad, attitude toward Hangzhou. The visual ad also demonstrated greater sway on two behavioral intentions: intention to search for more information and intention to visit the city. In other words, the visual stimuli more strongly influenced attitudes and behavioral intentions; the verbal ad had a greater impact on cognitions.

It can be said, therefore, that the verbal ad provided more information and greater detail that enhanced participants' understanding of the target city. However, the predominantly visual ad heightened audience members' curiosity about this relatively unfamiliar city, thereby creating more positive attribute beliefs and attitudes that subsequently enhanced intentions to learn more about it and to visit the city some day. In short, the findings indicate that the visual stimuli were more persuasive. This may be partly attributed to the fact that the participants recalled pictures better than words, echoing the findings of Singh & Formica (2007).

The Dual Component Model suggests that both verbal and visual ad components are

likely to lead to more favorable attitudes toward the ad and in promoting product attribute beliefs. Consequently, these two outcomes are expected to result in more positive attitudes toward the brand being promoted (in this case, the city of Hangzhou). Testing these hypotheses, the findings suggest that the participants' attitude toward both ads had a significant impact on attitude toward Hangzhou, with attitude toward the verbal ad and attitude toward the visual ad contributing 15% and 12% of the variance in attitude toward the city, respectively.

Attribute beliefs resulting from exposure to the two types of ads also had a significant effect on attitude toward Hangzhou, with verbal attribute beliefs contributing 34% and visual attribute beliefs accounting for 14% of the variance in attitude toward the destination city. Thus, the findings offer additional evidence that attribute beliefs and attitude toward the ad are significant predictors of attitude toward the city regardless of the way the ad has been presented. It is important to note that the verbal presentation produced attribute beliefs that contributed more toward the shaping of participants' attitude toward Hangzhou compared to the visual ad.

Implication of the Findings to Theory

Fishbein's attitude theory (1963) posits that attribute beliefs are the only mediators of attitude formation and change. The findings of this study echo those of Mitchell and Olson (1981) who, after exposing subjects to simple advertisements that contained either a verbal claim or visual information, observed that product attribute beliefs mediated attitude formation. These authors also found that another variable, attitude toward the advertisement, also mediated brand attitudes and purchase intentions.

Further analyses were conducted to determine the separate impact of attribute beliefs and attitude toward the ad on behavioral intentions. The results show that attribute beliefs and attitude toward the ad developed following exposure to both types of ad significantly influenced intention to visit. Attribute beliefs following exposure to the verbal ad and attitude toward the verbal ad also significantly predicted intention to search for more information. The same result was not detected, however for the impact of attribute beliefs and attitude toward the visual ad on intention to learn more about the city of Hangzhou. This provides more evidence about the power of the verbal component to enhance knowledge gain, including people's motivations to search for more information about a destination city.

Did attitude toward Hangzhou affect behavioral intentions? The findings show that exposure to the verbal ad produced significant changes in intention to find out more about the city and to visit it some day. The visual presentation influenced intention to visit Hangzhou, but not intention to search for more information. Thus, an expanded dual component model that takes behavioral intentions into consideration can be proposed in Figure 4. Future studies should be able to validate these results.

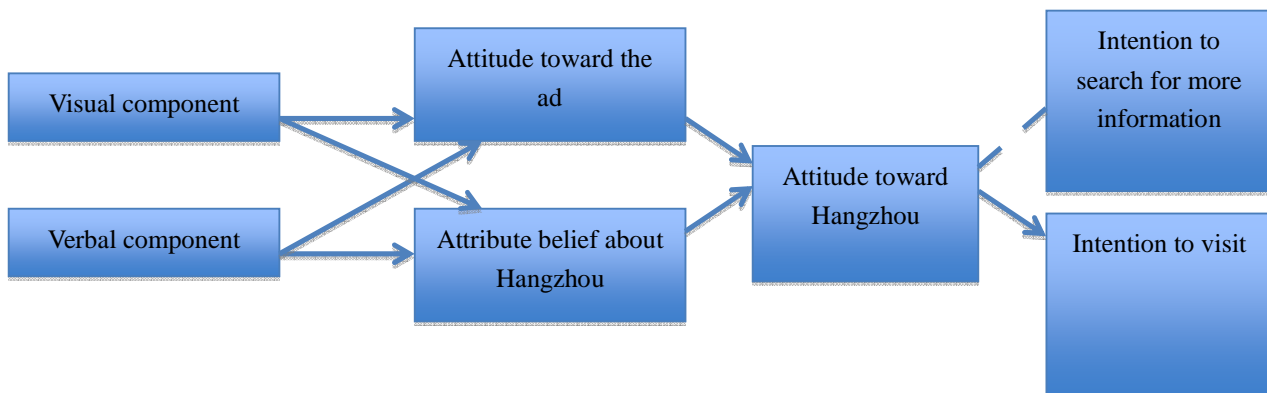


Figure 4. The proposed expanded dual component model to include influence of attitude toward Hangzhou on behavioral intentions

Implications of the Findings to Professional Practice

The results pertaining to the potential hierarchy of effects suggest that verbal and visual elements offer different advantages to advertising audiences. That the verbal component expands knowledge and cognitions while the visual component influences attitudes and behavioral intentions suggest that the impact of an ad can be considerably improved by determining the optimum combination of verbal and visual elements. The findings suggest that visual components attract attention more, making them more capable of influencing attitudes toward the ad itself and toward the product that is being promoted.

In pragmatic terms, the results suggest that advertising campaigns especially made to entice more tourists to visit a relatively unknown destination can be launched through the electronic media first (e.g., television and the Internet) to generate interest and develop positive perceptions toward a city destination. At this stage, the objective is to bring to people's attention an alternative place to visit in a country that normally draws in visitors to the economic hub, Shanghai, and to the historical and political seat, Beijing. In the second stage of the campaign, the print media such as newspapers, brochures and magazines, and the electronic media such as radio and online postings can be used for spots that will offer more information to potential visitors. At this stage, the objective is to enhance audiences' cognitions about the place and develop attitudes favorable enough for them to want to know more about the tourist destination. For example, a brand website can carry more information. The same is true for brochures, flyers, and other print supplements. Thus, good advertising campaigns can capitalize on the synergy of these two discrete components by pacing a campaign, identifying the best multi-media and verbal-visual mix at each stage, and

integrating their application within the campaign as a whole.

Recently, CNN Travel reported that the Hangzhou Tourism Commission is willing to pay people US\$5,000 to be “Dr. Hangzhou,” a tourism ambassador of sorts who will promote the city through videos, photos and feeds to various social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook. In short, Dr. Hangzhou is envisioned to be the city’s overseas tourism promotional advisor. This suggests that the city is adopting a multi-dimensional promotional strategy that will involve the increasing use of verbal and visual messages across all media, but especially the social networking sites. A phased campaign should be able to capitalize on the findings of this study to arrive at the optimum combination of verbal and visual messages for destination branding.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

There are some limitations that curtail the extent to which the findings can be applied in some situations. First, the participants were all students on a limited budget who may not be too keen on traveling as a leisure activity. Thus, their behavioral intentions may not necessarily reflect, and may not significantly correlate with, actual behavioral outcomes. The sample’s demographic characteristics were quite homogeneous in terms of age and, presumably, foreign travel experience. Future studies should test the same research questions on a more heterogeneous population.

Second, the two presentations were not the same in terms of technical quality. Indeed, some participants volunteered open-ended remarks about the predominantly verbal ad, saying that, “Higher audio quality would have pulled me in much more” and “Some visuals appear distorted.” This may have somehow affected the participants’ evaluations of and attitude

toward the verbal ad, and consequently, their attitude toward Hangzhou.

Third, some indices (e.g., attribute beliefs about Hangzhou) had a limited number of items, which may not be sufficient to capture all dimensions of multi-faceted concepts.

Although the study followed measures employed in previous studies, a single item used to measure several variables (e.g., intention to search for more information and intention to visit) is vulnerable to reliability risk.

Deeper insights about the independent and/or combined influence of verbal and visual elements can be gleaned from open-ended, unprompted, and more free wheeling responses that can be gathered through in-depth interviews and other qualitative research approaches.

Given the consistency of results, the finding that attitude toward the visual ad and attitude toward Hangzhou among those exposed to the visual ad did not have a significant bearing on intention to search for more information may be an artifact of the measurement instrument. Further studies using more stringent measures should be able to elucidate this finding of non-significance.

In this field experiment, participants could have been easily distracted by factors within the natural environment (e.g., noise and other stimuli) that could have competed for their attention. To the extent that such distractions had an impact on the evaluation of the ads, then this also could be considered a study limitation. Controlled laboratory conditions would have guaranteed participants' concentration on the experimental stimuli.

The study also failed to account for the impact of the participants' level of involvement and/or interest in China, which may have a bearing on the desire to learn more about a city that is not as well known as Beijing and Shanghai.

APPENDIX A

VISUAL MODE—STILL SHOTS FROM THE VIDEO

“COME TO HANGZHOU—DISCOVER THE MYSTERY OF CHINA”





APPENDIX B.**VERBAL MODE – AUDIO SCRIPT****HANGZHOU—DISCOVER THE MYSTERY OF CHINA**

Behind the modern city of Hangzhou is close to 5,000 years of history that has imbued it with a sense of mystery. Settled 4,700 years ago, the place gave birth to the Liangzhu civilization that flourished on jade, silk and ivory. One of the seven ancient capitals of China, Hangzhou boasts of colorful cultures that have left a rich historical heritage, architecture and unique attractions that made it “the most splendid and luxurious city in the world,” according to Marco Polo.

The Grand Canal that used to connect Hangzhou to Beijing made the city a hub of communications. Buddhism, the main religion, extols people to live in harmony with nature. At the height of the tea picking season in April, visitors enjoy the spring-scented air while sipping the imperial infusion. Traditional painters, calligraphers and engravers make Hangzhou the home to all arts.

China is also known for herbal cures. In Hangzhou, the Hu Qing Yu Tang Museum lies at the foot of Wushan hill. Its antique architecture and its traditional medicines are a national treasure.

Come to Hangzhou. Discover the mystery of China.

APPENDIX C.

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT AND SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

VISUAL AND VERBAL MODES OF PRESENTING HANGZHOU AS A

TOURIST DESTINATION

We seek your voluntary participation in this study that aims to evaluate the effects of a promotional piece about the city of Hangzhou in southeastern China. Would you please take the time to complete the online questionnaire that follows? You may skip questions or items to which you may feel uncomfortable responding.

Benefits

If you decide to participate in this study, there may be no direct benefit to you. The findings are expected to enhance scholars' understanding of how to better promote a city.

Risks

There are no foreseeable risks from participating in this study.

Costs and compensation

You will incur no cost from participating in this study. The email addresses of those who returned their completed questionnaire will be entered into a drawing for a gift from China. Fifteen participants will be awarded this prize. If you are selected, you will be asked to sign a Research Participant Receipt Form from Iowa State University to receive your gift.

Participants' rights

Your participation in this study should be completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or leave the survey at any time without penalty or negative consequences.

Confidentiality

Your responses will be kept confidential and no comments will be attributed to you or any respondent in any reports produced by the study. However, we do ask you to provide your name and email address so we can monitor our response rate and inform you of the results of the lottery drawing.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: Once data are collected, the materials will be stored in a secure server. Your email address will be erased when data collection is finished. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

Contact information

If you need further information about this study, please contact Yiren Zhou, graduate student, Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication, Iowa State University; Tel: (515)708-4877; E-mail: yiren@iastate.edu. Lulu Rodriguez, research supervisor, Greenlee School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Iowa State University; Tel: (515)294-0484; E-mail: lulurod@iastate.edu. If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the Iowa State Institutional Review Board (IRB) Administrator, (515)294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or the Director, Office of Research Assurances, (515)294-3115, 1138 Pearson Hall, Ames, IA 50011. If you would like a copy of the informed consent, you can print a copy for your records.

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Institutional Review Board
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Date: 12/6/2012
To: Yiren Zhou
144 University Village Unit F
Ames, IA 50010
CC: Dr. Lulu Rodriguez
214 Hamilton Hall
From: Office for Responsible Research
Title: Video vs. Text as Modes of Promoting Tourist Destinations: The Case of Hangzhou, China
IRB ID: 12-582
Study Review Date: 12/5/2012

The project referenced above has been declared exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b) because it meets the following federal requirements for exemption:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey or interview procedures with adults or observation of public behavior where
 - Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; or
 - Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation.

The determination of exemption means that:

- **You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.**
- **You must carry out the research as described in the IRB application.** Review by IRB staff is required prior to implementing modifications that may change the exempt status of the research. In general, review is required for any modifications to the research procedures (e.g., method of data collection, nature or scope of information to be collected, changes in confidentiality measures, etc.), modifications that result in the inclusion of participants from vulnerable populations, and/or any change that may increase the risk or discomfort to participants. Changes to key personnel must also be approved. The purpose of review is to determine if the project still meets the federal criteria for exemption.

Non-exempt research is subject to many regulatory requirements that must be addressed prior to implementation of the study. Conducting non-exempt research without IRB review and approval may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct according to ISU policy.

Detailed information about requirements for submission of modifications can be found on the Exempt Study Modification Form. A Personnel Change Form may be submitted when the only modification involves changes in study staff. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans Form will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review. **Only the IRB or designees may make the determination of exemption**, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

Please be aware that **approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **An IRB determination of exemption in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.**

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

VISUAL AND VERBAL MODES OF PRESENTING HANGZHOU AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

1. How do you evaluate the ad you have just seen/read? Please circle the number that comes closest to your evaluation. For example, if you think the ad was good, circle the number 7 on the scale. For each item, please circle only one number.

Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Like
Poor quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good quality
Not useful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Useful
Offers no new information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Highly informative

2. What do you think about Hangzhou as a tourist destination? Please circle the number that comes closest to the your evaluation. For each item, please circle only one number.

Sad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Happy
Gloomy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cheerful
Tranquil	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Active
Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Pleasant
Loud	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Quiet
Traditional/ Historical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Modern
Boring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive
Artificial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Natural
Closed and rigid social structure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Open and flexible social strucure
General	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unique

3. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

a. I knew a lot about this city before seeing/reading the ad.

Strongly disagree [] Disagree [] Neutral [] Agree [] Strongly agree []

b. I learned a lot about this city after seeing the ad.

Strongly disagree [] Disagree [] Neutral [] Agree [] Strongly agree []

c. In general, I feel positively toward this city.

Strongly disagree [] Disagree [] Neutral [] Agree [] Strongly agree []

d. I would search for more information about this city.

Strongly disagree [] Disagree [] Neutral [] Agree [] Strongly agree []

e. I would like to visit this city some day.

Strongly disagree [] Disagree [] Neutral [] Agree [] Strongly agree []

4. What, specifically, have you learned about Hangzhou from the ad you have just seen/read?

5. What unique characteristics of Hangzhou did you learn from the ad?

6. 6. Of the following images, which ones were shown in the ad that you saw? Please put a check mark next to the images you remember seeing.

[] a.



[] b.



[] c.



[] d.



[] e.



[] f.



7. Of the following statements, which ones were mentioned in the ad that you saw? Please put a check mark next to the statements you recall hearing.

- a. Hangzhou, one of China's oldest cities, was settled about 5,000 years ago.
- b. Hundreds of hills flank the Hangzhou shoreline.
- c. Hangzhou's traditional medicines and its architecture are a national treasure.
- d. Hangzhou is the economic hub of eastern China.
- e. Hangzhou is the home for traditional painters, calligraphers and engravers.
- f. Hangzhou is a multi-faith society.

Please tell us a little about you.

8. What is your age? _____ years

9. What is your gender?

Female Male

10. Which one of these groups would you say best represents your race?

- White
- Black or African American
- Asian
- Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Native American
- Latino/Latina

Other _____

11. What is the highest educational level you have attained?

Some high school

High school graduate

Some college

College graduate

Vocational school graduate

Post graduate education

Thank you very much for participating in this survey!

APPENDIX D
STUDY CODEBOOK

No.	Variable name	Variable label	Coding	Missing value
	ID		Enter 3-digit number	
1a	BadGood	Evaluation the ad have just seen/read	1=extremely bad 2=quite bad 3=slightly bad 4=neutral 5=slightly good 6=quite good 7=extremely good	
1b	DisLike	Evaluation the ad have just seen/read	1=extremely dislike 2=quite dislike 3=slightly dislike 4=neutral 5=slightly like 6=quite like 7=extremely like	
1c	PrGd	Evaluation the ad have just seen/read	1=extremely poor quality 2=quite poor quality 3=slightly poor quality 4=neutral 5=slightly good quality 6=quite good quality 7=extremely good quality	
1d	Useful	Evaluation the ad have just seen/read	1=extremely not useful 2=quite not useful 3=slightly not useful 4=neutral 5=slightly useful 6=quite useful 7=extremely useful	
1e	Info	Evaluation the ad have just seen/read	1=extremely no new information 2=quite no new information 3=slightly no new information 4=neutral 5=slightly informative	

			6=quite informative 7=extremely informative	
2a	SadHy	Evaluation Hangzhou as a tourist destination	1=extremely sad 2=quite sad 3=slightly sad 4=neutral 5=slightly happy 6=quite happy 7=extremely happy	
2b	GlmyChr	Evaluation Hangzhou as a tourist destination	1=extremely gloomy 2=quite gloomy 3=slightly gloomy 4=neutral 5=slightly cheerful 6=quite cheerful 7=extremely cheerful	
2c	ActTraq	Evaluation Hangzhou as a tourist destination	1=extremely tranquil 2=quite tranquil 3=slightly tranquil 4=neutral 5=slightly active 6=quite active 7=extremely active	
2d	Pleasant	Evaluation Hangzhou as a tourist destination	1=extremely unpleasant 2=quite unpleasant 3=slightly unpleasant 4=neutral 5=slightly pleasant 6=quite pleasant 7=extremely pleasant	
2e	QuitLoud	Evaluation Hangzhou as a tourist destination	1=extremely loud 2=quite loud 3=slightly loud 4=neutral 5=slightly quiet 6=quite quiet 7=extremely quiet	
2f	ModTrad	Evaluation Hangzhou as a tourist destination	1=extremely traditional 2=quite traditional 3=slightly traditional 4=neutral 5=slightly modern 6=quite modern	

			7=extremely modern	
2g	BorAttrc	Evaluation Hangzhou as a tourist destination	1=extremely boring 2=quite boring 3=slightly boring 4=neutral 5=slightly attractive 6=quite attractive 7=extremely attractive	
2h	NatArti	Evaluation Hangzhou as a tourist destination	1=extremely artificial 2=quite artificial 3=slightly artificial 4=neutral 5=slightly natural 6=quite natural 7=extremely natural	
2i	CloseOpen	Evaluation Hangzhou as a tourist destination	1=extremely closed and rigid social structure 2=quite closed and rigid social structure 3=slightly closed and rigid social structure 4=neutral 5=slightly open and flexible social structure 6=quite open and flexible social structure 7=extremely open and flexible social structure	
2j	GenUniq	Evaluation Hangzhou as a tourist destination	1=extremely general 2=quite general 3=slightly general 4=neutral 5=slightly unique 6=quite unique 7=extremely unique	
3a	Before	Knowing a lot about this city before seeing/reading the ad.		
3b	Know	Learning a lot about Hangzhou after seeing/reading the ad	1=strongly disagree 2=disagree	
3c	positive	Feeling positively toward Hangzhou	3=neutral 4=agree	
3d	Search	I would search for more information about Hangzhou	5=strongly agree	

3e	Visit	I would like to visit this city some day		
4	WhLearn	What have you learned about Hangzhou after the ad?	Open-ended string	
5	UniCha	What unique characteristics of Hangzhou	Open-ended string	
6a	Temple	which ones were shown in the ad that you saw	1=right 2=wrong 99=missing	
6b	Shanghai	which ones were shown in the ad that you saw		
6c	Opera	which ones were shown in the ad that you saw		
6d	Boat	which ones were shown in the ad that you saw		
6e	Medi	which ones were shown in the ad that you saw		
6f	Yunnan	which ones were shown in the ad that you saw		
7a	Oldest	which ones were mentioned in the ad that you saw	1=right 2=wrong 99=missing	
7b	Hills	which ones were mentioned in the ad that you saw		
7c	MediArchi	which ones were mentioned in the ad that you saw		
7d	Economic	which ones were mentioned in the ad that you saw		
7e	Art	which ones were mentioned in the ad that you saw		
7f	Multifaith	which ones were mentioned in the ad that you saw		
8	Age	Age on last birthday	99=missing, don't know, no response	
9	Gender		1=male 2=female 9=missing, don't know, no response	
10	Race	Race group	1=White 2=Black or African 3=American 4=Asian 5=Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander 6=Native American 7=Latino/Latina	

			8=Other	
11	Edu	Highest Educational level	1=Some high school 2=High school graduate 3=Some college 4=College graduate 5=Vocational school graduate 6=Post graduate education	

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