

THE COMPARISON OF PUBLIC SERVICE ADVERTISING STYLE BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE: A PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

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Abstract: Advertisement is one important tool in the process of selling a product or recruitment process. Civil service is one of the sectors that need to use advertisement to get the attention of the public. This research aimed to compare the form of a poster advertisement for the recruitment of police personnel between Malaysia and Singapore. This study used observation technique for collecting data. Data were gathered at LRT station, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) and MRT stations, Singapore; where posters were analyzed to compare to advertising and motivation theory. Result shows that the Singapore Police recruitment advertising has a clearer and better message than Malaysia's. This is due to urgent needs of police personnel and also because it is extremely tough to attract people to join the police force in Singapore. Therefore, the Singapore Police produced advertisements that interest teenagers and young people to participate in the Singapore Police Force.

Keywords: *Police job advertisement interesting and creative, the urgent needs of the police force, the ads that appeal to young people.*

1. Introduction

The American Marketing Association (AMA), which represents marketing professionals in the United States and Canada, defines marketing as the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives. Effective marketing requires that managers recognize the interdependence of such activities as sales and

promotion and how they can be combined to develop a marketing program (Belch & Belch, 1984). Advertising and promotion play an important role in the exchange process by informing consumers of an organization's product or service and convincing them of its ability to satisfy their needs or wants (Belch & Belch, 1984).

The focus of market-driven companies or organizations is on developing and sustaining *relationships* with their customers. This has led to a new emphasis on relationship marketing, which involves creating, maintaining, and enhancing long-term relationships with individual customers as well as other stakeholders for mutual benefit (Belch & Belch, 1984).

2. Memories and Cognitive Process

For consumers to remember information, they need to encode, store and then retrieve it. Our memory is generally thought to consist of three types: sensory stores, STM and LTM, even though some researchers call for a more complex conceptualization.

According to the encoding specificity hypothesis, consumers will recall previously learned information better if the environment in which they are trying to remember resembles the one where they learnt it. Interference can happen when stimuli are similar in nature and this can be combated by repeatedly exposing consumers to a marketing message.

Repetition can aid memory, as can the use of good visual stimuli, especially if the message is aimed at older consumers. Without memory, consumers

would not be able to learn about products and services on offer. There are different theoretical frameworks for studying learning, including behavioural, cognitive and social approaches. Behavioural learning emphasizes observable behavioural outcomes, cognitive learning focuses solidly on mental processing and social learning theory puts the spotlight on how people observe others in social settings. All three approaches shed some light on how marketing campaigns might be structured in order to enhance consumer learning.

Memory is an active mental system that receives, stores, organizes, alters and recovers information (Baddeley, 1990). Memories are personal records of past experiences which can help us to learn new information, affect how we perceive stimuli (Palmeri & Gauthier, 2004), and at times, guide our behaviour (Dougherty, Gronlund, & Gettys, 2003).

For consumers to remember information, they need to encode, store and then retrieve it. Our memory is generally thought to consist of three types: sensory stores, STM and LTM, even though some researchers call for a more complex conceptualization. According to the encoding specificity hypothesis, consumers will recall previously learned information better if the environment in which they are trying to remember resembles the one where they learned it. Interference can happen when stimuli are similar in nature and this can be combated by repeatedly exposing consumers to a marketing message.

The process of encoding, storage and retrieval (when information is remembered) suggests that our minds function in a similar fashion to a

computer. When encoding information, the consumer transforms the stimuli they encounter into a representation that can be stored in memory. At this stage it is important that they fully recognize and understand the stimuli they have encountered. If the stimuli are ambiguous, the consumer may find it difficult to make sense of the information and consequently fail to store it in their memory. After having encoded the information, the consumer then stores the information in their memory so that it can later be retrieved when they need to access it. Retrieval of product information (or any other type of information) starts with the activation of a node. A node is a particular piece of information that has been stored in long-term memory. When the node is activated, it is transferred from long-term memory to short-term memory so that a person becomes conscious of the product-related information.

2.1 Sensory store

The sensory stores allow us to store information received through different input modalities (i.e. vision, touch, smell, taste, and hearing) for very brief periods of time. The information lingers for some time after the end of stimulation, enabling the individual to extract the most important features for further analysis. It has been found that visual information decays within approximately 0.5 seconds (Sperling, 1960) while auditory information lasts for around 2 seconds (Darwin, Turvey, & Crowder, 1972).

2.2 Short-term memory (STM)

Short-term memory (STM) is a system for storing information for brief periods of time and it has a limited capacity (but not as limited as the sensory stores). It deals with the information that is currently being

processed (Cathrine, 2010). When people are presented with more information than the STM can deal with, they tend to more readily recall information that was either presented at the beginning or at the end. This is known as the order effect (McCrary & Hunter, 1953). Glanzer and Cunitz (1966) demonstrated the order effect when they presented their participants with a list of words and asked them to recall the words in any order they liked. The findings demonstrated that participants generally recalled the first (*primacy effect*) and the last (*recency effect*) few words especially well. From this, they concluded that the primacy effect occurred because the first few words had, through rehearsal, already entered long-term memory. The recency effect occurred because the last few words were still held in short-term memory at the time of recall, but the words in the middle of the list were lost from memory because they were replaced by the later words. This clearly has implications for advertisers and marketers in that they ought to present the information they hope that consumers will remember first or last in their marketing messages, although this will necessarily depend on the amount of information presented.

2.3 Long-term memory (LTM)

Unlike STM, long-term memory (LTM) does not have a limited capacity – it is essentially infinite – and once our memories have reached the long-term store, they are there for a very long period of time, perhaps forever (Cathrine, 2010). The structure of LTM is like a massive integrated spider's web. Each consumer-related piece of information that is stored is also directly or indirectly linked to other pieces of information also stored in LTM so that they form an associative network (Anderson, 1983, 1993).

Table 1. The differences between short-term and long-term memory (Catherine, 2010)

Properties	Short-term memory	Long-term memory
Capacity	Seven items plus or minus two	Unlimited
Duation	Eighteen seconds	Permanent
Information loss	Rehearsal failure	Retrieval failure
Coding	Acoustic (connected to sound)	Semantic (connected to meaning)

2.4 Implicit memory

Previously, consumer-related research has mainly focused on the effects of explicit memory ('when performance on a task requires conscious recollection of previous experiences', Graf & Schacter, 1985, p. 501) upon consumer behaviour. However, this gradually changed, especially during the past 15 years, when researchers realized that implicit memory ('when performance on a task is facilitated in the absence of conscious recollection', Graf & Schacter, 1985, p. 501) can play an equally important role. Implicit memory tasks are commonly used in decision-making processes, meaning that consumers are often unaware of what influenced their product choice. The assumption that there is a clear distinction between explicit and implicit memory is becoming more apparent in research focused upon consumer memory and it has been suggested that implicit tasks are more effective when it comes to measuring the impact of advertising (e.g. Lee, 2002) and that it may be more long-lasting than explicit memory (Finlay, Marmurek, & Morton, 2005). One study that demonstrates the difference between implicit and explicit memory was conducted by Jacoby, Kelley, Brown and Jasechko (1989). They found that new unfamiliar names presented to participants can be mistakenly identified as

famous names 24 hours later. The most likely reason for this finding is that the names would later be familiar to the participant, and this familiarity would be confused with fame. However, if subjects were told at the outset that all

the names were newly constructed, they later judged the names as non-famous. This effect has also been found to work with brand names (Holden & Vanheule, 1999).

Marketers can use a number of different techniques to ensure that their products and services are more likely to be remembered by consumers. Such techniques involve continuously repeating marketing messages, and use of pictures (Catherine, 2010).

2.5 Repetition

Repeatedly exposing consumers to marketing stimuli can increase the likelihood of recalling them (e.g. Unnava & Burnkrant, 1991) as well as strengthen associations between specific attributes and brand names (Burke & Srull, 1988). Repeated exposure works best when consumers have little or no involvement with the stimuli they are exposed to, as repetition then increases the likelihood of moving information from STM to LTM (Krugman, 1965). Consumers are also much more likely to believe the messages they are repeatedly exposed to when they are not motivated to scrutinize the message content (Hawkins & Hoch, 1992).

Additionally it has also been found that repetition is not as effective in improving memory performance when competitive interference occurs due to the similar nature of other messages that people are exposed to just

before or after the intended target stimulus (Burke & Srull, 1988). One way of dealing with interference, in order to make repetition more effective, is to make use of cues that are unique in some way so that consumers cannot confuse them with other marketing stimuli (Keller, 1987).

2.6 Pictorial cues

Pictorial stimuli are more likely to capture attention which explains why most consumers tend to look at visual stimuli before they look at the text that often accompanies the picture (Kroeber-Riel, 1986). When information is presented using visual stimuli, it is more likely to be recognized at a later time (Childers & Houston, 1984). This suggests that when consumers have been exposed to advertising that incorporates pictures, the product advertised will be more easily remembered at the point of purchase, provided that the right cues are in place (such as a point-of-purchase display using similar imagery to an ad) to trigger recall. Additionally making use of pictures that have deeper meaning and are of a slightly complex nature can also ensure that they will be remembered just as well by older consumers (e.g. Park, Royal, Dudley, & Morrell, 1988).

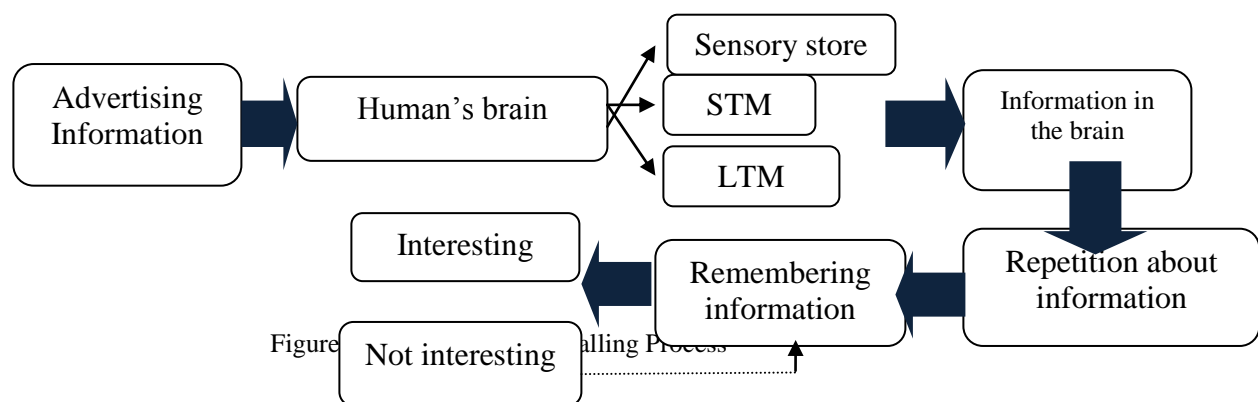


Figure 1 shows how human beings remember an advertisement. Information from advertisements is caught by human eyes, in which it will be sent to be stored in human brain. In the brain, this information is kept in sensory store, short-term memory (STM) and long-term memory (LTM). When human sees the same advertisement a few times, a process called 'repetition' takes place. This repetition strengthens human memory towards particular information. Due to repeated exposure to (and recalling of) advertisement information, interest towards the advertisement will either arouse or dissipate. If they are interested in it, they will do as the advertisement intended; buying the product or joining the group advertised. If they are uninterested, they will not react positively towards it, but the information is still there in their memory.

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3. Problem Statement

Police officer recruitment in many countries normally is less welcomed by the society, especially in developed countries. This is due to a few factors; namely lower salary than other civil servants, or entrepreneurs. To arouse people's interest, especially the young ones, advertisement is exploited in many ways. Among them is advertising through print media like poster and newspaper; or through visual like television advertisement, films and etc.

Singapore is one of the countries that are facing this problem in recruiting police force as its citizen is uninterested to join this occupation. In addition to this interest problem, Singapore has lesser number of citizens as compared to Malaysia; making the number of policemen there very limited. On the other hand, in Malaysia this problem is not this critical. It has more number of residents and its young people have high interest level to be part of the force. These differences lead to different types of advertising style in recruiting new police force in these two neighbouring countries. Hence, this study investigates how different is the advertising method employed in recruiting police officers in Singapore and Malaysia?

4. Research Objective

Objective of this research is to identify the difference in advertising method employed by Singapore and Malaysia in recruiting new police officers. The type of advertisement employed affects citizens' interest; especially young people, to join police force.

5. Methodology

This is a direct observation study concerning police officer recruitment advertisement in Singapore and Malaysia. The observed advertisement is in the form of posters.

a. Place of Study

In Singapore, this study took place at MRT Orchard Station and City Hall, meanwhile in Malaysia it was carried out at MRT KL Sentral Station and KLCC.

4.2 Type of Advertisement

This study specifically focused on posters of police officer vacancy advertisement.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1 Singapore's Police Poster Advertisement



Figure 2: Singapore's Police Advertisement Series: Integrity, Fairness, Courage

One of the advertising methods utilized in recruiting new police officers in Singapore is through creative poster. These posters highlighted various stunts of tough police officers; through beautifully captured and well coloured photos. The image created by these posters draw young people's interest to join the police force.

Singapore police advertisement is put at public places especially the underground railway station known as Mass Rapid Transport (MRT) to ensure that they will attract people's attention and interest to join the force. Most Singaporeans travel by MRT, increasing the possibility of them reaching the targeted audience.

Due to Singaporean lifestyle, in which they spent most of their time outside (they leave home early in the morning and will only return home late at night), advertising through posters is the better way compared to other advertising methods like newspapers or television. In addition, considering the frequent use of MRT among Singaporeans, this method of advertising can be considered as the most suitable one for Singapore Police Advertisement.

6.2 Singapore Police's Television Series

Other than through posters, the effort to introduce and create interest towards joining police force is created through television serial movies. One of the most popular police serials in Singapore is *Courage, Loyalty, Integrity, Fairness* (C.L.I.F 2).

C.L.I.F. 2 (*Courage, Loyalty, Integrity, Fairness*, or 警徽天职2) was a police procedural series produced by MediaCorp Singapore in 2013 in collaboration with the Singapore Police Force. It was broadcast from 18 February to 15 March 2013 on free-to-air MediaCorp Channel 8 and consists of 20 episodes. The drama stars QiYuwu, Joanne Peh, Li Nanxing, Rui En and Pierre Png in the main roles with a large ensemble supporting cast.

C.L.I.F. 警徽天职 was the 2nd most watched drama for 2011 with an average viewership of 924,000. The final episode attracted over 1,041,000 viewers. It also had 47,844 streams per episode, the highest average number of streams per episode on MediaCorp's Catch-Up TV portal on Xinmsn. Also, since 2011 top rated drama *Love Thy Neighbour* cannot produce a sequel, *C.L.I.F.* would have to produce a sequel. The series was also praised for the departure away from an idealised depiction of police officers and its realistic portrayal of the unseen struggles and obstacles police officers often face. In response, MediaCorp commissioned a second season, again in collaboration with the SPF, and filming began at the end of September. Most of the main cast is retained. Prior to filming, it was confirmed that Tay Ping Hui and Tracy Lee will not be returning and Rui En, Pierre Png and Li Nanxing will join the cast. *C.L.I.F. 2* is due to make its debut in February 2013 (Wikipedia, 2013).

Through these serial movies, young Singaporean's interest to join police force has shown an increased. Film is one of the most effective ways to attract young people's attention to take up policeman as their profession. Movies together with posters at public place; have made the task of advertising corps as a career, a successful effort. This happens as the police officer recruitment advertisement has reached long-term memory (LTM), due to repeated exposure to the advertisement via serial movies and posters at public places. Even though various advertising approach are applied, their effectiveness need to be re-evaluated as it relates to many other factors, namely characteristics, life concept among Singapore youth, motivation, etc.

6.3 Malaysia's Advertising

Police officer recruitment process also takes place in Malaysia. However, there is a difference between Singapore and Malaysia. One of them is Malaysia's population is much bigger than Singapore's. Meanwhile,

literature shows that young Malaysians are more interested to be policemen compared to those in Singapore. This has a very close relationship to the way this job is advertised in both countries. The difference is highlighted below:

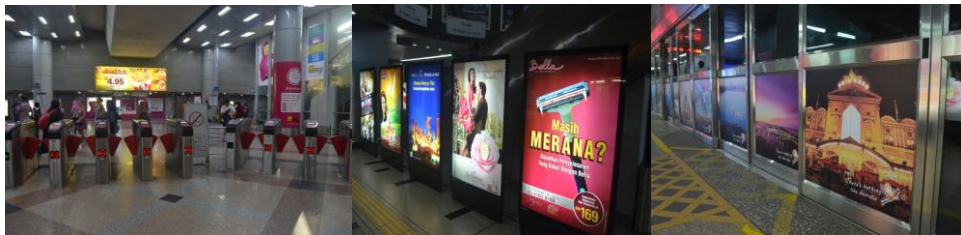


Figure 3. Advertisement in KL Sentral and KLCC LRT station

Based on observation at LRT KL Central Station and KLCC, there was no advertisement about police officer recruitment at both places. Hence, in Malaysia posters to advertise police officer vacancy post is not as popular as that in Singapore.



Figure 4. Malaysia's Police Movie and Series

Serial movies are more popular in Malaysia than in Singapore. There are many movies aired through television or cinemas which focus on Police force and other Enforcement Teams. Among them are “GerakKhas”, “Roda-roda Kuala Lumpur”, “Metro Skuad”, dan “Pasukan D6”.

One unique characteristics of Malaysian is their interest in movies. This trait is exploited by using the movies as a way to attract young generation to join police force. It is proven as an effective method, as currently recruiting new police officers in Malaysia is not as hard as it is in Singapore. This high motivation and interest might also come from their involvement in uniform bodies when they were studying at tertiary level (public universities); for instance graduate police team. This activity helped in instilling and increasing young people’s interest to join Malaysia Police Team.

7. Conclusion

Based on the observation, it can be concluded that there is a difference in terms of recruitment process in Singapore and Malaysia. In Singapore, print advertisement (posters) is more widely used compared to visual advertisement (movies); which is favoured by its neighbour, Malaysia. The different methods employed by both countries rooted in the different lifestyle lead by their people. In Singapore posters at public places is an effective advertising method as its citizen spend most of their time out of their house; meanwhile in Malaysia, movies is a good advertising medium as its people love to spend their time watching them.

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