

**Cultural Intelligence and the Role of Age in Advertising Effectiveness with
Diverse Models: The Case of Gen-Y, Baby Boomers,
and Models with Disabilities**

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Abstract

This study introduces cultural intelligence (CQ) as an individual difference variable to help explain differences in acceptance of images of diversity in advertising. Specifically, we examine Gen-Y (26-41) and Baby Boomers (58-76) to assess preferences for ads with models with a physical disability as presented by sitting in a wheelchair versus not in a wheelchair. CQ is measured to assess its impact on the process and subsequent variations in attitudes toward the ad, brand, and purchase intention. A U.S. sample ($n = 153$) was recruited and randomly assigned to a 2 (Age Cohort: Gen-Y vs. Baby Boomer) x 2 (Disability: wheelchair vs. control) between-subjects factorial design. Findings showed Gen-Y demonstrating higher levels of cultural intelligence than Baby Boomers, which led to more favorable attitudes toward the ad, brand, and purchase intentions. These effects were absent for Baby Boomers. Theoretical advances and implications for advertisers are discussed.

Keywords: Advertising messaging; generational cohort theory; age; minorities; disability; cultural intelligence; diversity