

# PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES OF THE SCHLINGER VIEWER RESPONSE PROFILE (VRP)

Evidence from a Large Sample

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**ABSTRACT:** The Viewer Response Profile (VRP) scale is often used in commercial advertising research, and frequently used and cited in the academic advertising literature. This paper describes an investigation of the psychometric soundness of the Schlinger scale among a very large sample of respondents ( $N = 4,800$ ) who each view a single ad from a large set of ads. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) provides an alternative parsimonious 20-item version of the scale that is found to exhibit superior psychometric properties. Managerial and research implications are discussed and suggestions for further improvement of the scale are offered.

Advertisers in the United States spent \$128.3 billion in 2003, with network, spot, and cable television spending accounting for 38.1% of the total, some \$48.9 billion (TNS Media Intelligence/CMR 2004a, 2004b). The same source also stated that total U.S. adspend for the year increased by 6.1% in 2002 and forecasted a further 7.8% growth for 2004, confirming that advertising spending continues to represent a major expenditure for most marketers. Marketing decision makers still regard television advertising to be the most powerful medium to reach mass consumer markets, and this medium accounts for the lion's share of adspend. Despite the advances in addressable media, and a shift in spending toward these vehicles, television advertising seems to be regarded as the most effective way of fostering brand awareness. Audiences resist the temptation to leave the room during Superbowl halftime, and shows of the annual Clio awards are as eagerly awaited as blockbuster movies. Likable commercials often elicit social conversation, normally taking the form of, "Have you seen the new ABC ad?" which can increase the success of advertising campaigns significantly, especially when they are reinforced through the use of other media, such as print.

In line with the prediction made by Blattberg and Deighton (1991), the advent of addressable media has made marketing decision makers more accountable for their advertising spend-

ing. They are increasingly under pressure to justify marketing strategies, and especially advertising expenditure. Managers who commit organizational resources to advertising are required to at least demonstrate some measures of advertising effectiveness of the commercials and of the various media used. Since expenditure on television commercials remains the major component of most advertising budgets, marketing executives and ad agencies alike are compelled to defend the reasons for their actions and the outcomes achieved. This explains why consumer attitudes and reactions toward advertising have received so much attention both in the marketing and advertising literature, as well as in marketing practice. In this drive for increased accountability, several scales have been developed to measure a range of possible consumer responses to advertising, and attempts have been made to link these responses to actual purchasing behavior.

The marketing literature provides evidence of several positive outcomes resulting from advertising: Compared to consumers who are negative toward advertising, consumers who are more positive toward advertising in general will find a specific advertisement more enjoyable, acceptable, and informative (Lutz 1985); affective advertising can strengthen consumers' attitudes toward specific brands (Kirmani and Yi 1991; Ray and Batra 1983); likable advertisements are more effective in positively influencing consumer attitudes and consumer choice (Du Plessis 1994a; Walker and Dubitsky 1994). The effectiveness of ad campaigns depends very much on the ads that go to make up a campaign, and by extension, will determine the return on investment on the expenditure made to implement that campaign. Reliable and valid measures of viewers' response to advertising are therefore important weapons in the marketer's arsenal in the fight for measurable marketing productivity.

A number of measures have been proposed to measure viewers' response (Leavitt 1970; Wells 1964; Wells, Leavitt,

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