

Measuring the effectiveness of bus exterior advertising 2023 November 15, 2023

Professor Kara Chan, School of Communication, Hong Kong Baptist University & Qiqi Li, PhD student, School of Communication, Hong Kong Baptist University



Duration of study: 3 weeks

Data collection period: October 23-28, 2023

Altogether 42 students worked on this course-based research project in seven groups. The findings were presented here.

As one of the most often used public transports in Hong Kong, buses carried 3.47 million passengers per day on average in 2022 (Transport Department, 2022). The bus body/exterior advertising is often taken as an important medium of Out-of-Home (OOH) advertising for reaching mass audiences in Hong Kong.

Students taking the course “PRAD3046 Audience measurement and engagement” in the first semester of the 2023/24 academic year at Hong Kong Baptist University conducted an empirical study on bus advertising. The survey methodology was similar to previous studies examining the effectiveness of OOH advertising. Students work in seven groups to test the bus body advertisements selected by the instructor. Altogether we measure ad awareness of 10 bus body advertisements and brand recognition of two bus body advertisements (brand names of these two advertisements were edited out in the measurement). Some of the advertisements were supplied by Bravo Media.

All the groups used the same online questionnaire to collect data. Professor Kara Chan, the course instructor, designed the questionnaire. Research ethics was obtained before data collection. Quota sampling was adopted based on age and sex as follows:

	Male	Female
Age 18-29	10	10
Age 30-49	10	10
Age 50-69	10	10
Total	30	30

Students distributed the questionnaire through their social network and collect data in October 23-28, 2023. Altogether 515 respondents answered an online questionnaire. Respondents were asked to answer questions about their awareness of ten selected advertisements, whether they could identify the brand in two selected ads, how frequent they engaged with bus ads, and their attitudes toward bus ads.

Sample profile (N=515)

	Male	Female	Total
Age 18-29	85	137	222
Age 30-49	59	98	157
Age 50-69	75	61	136
Total	219	286	515

Table 1 shows the awareness of the bus ads in descending order in the ad awareness. The advertisements that had the highest awareness was the ad for “Foodpanda” (awareness: 63 percent). The lowest ad awareness was 16 percent for an ad for “Greater Bay Airline”. Ads with high awareness tended to carry user images and adopted colors with high contrast. The advertisement with the lowest awareness did not have a user image and used color with low contrast.

Regarding brand recognition for the bus ad for “Asics”, only 25 percent of respondents could recognize the brand. However, 70 percent of respondents reported they could recognize the brand “Black & White Milk” bus ad.

Respondents reported on average 4.4 out of the ten tested advertisements.

Gender difference: Only ad 4 showed gender differences in awareness. The awareness for males and females were 42% and 21% respectively ($p < 0.001$).



Ad 12 showed gender differences in brand recognition. Brand recognition for males and females were 61% and 77% respectively ($p < 0.001$).



Bus body advertisements (N=515)

Bus ads awareness

#10 Foodpanda



Awareness: **63%**

#7 Hisamitsu



Awareness: **59%**

#3 HSBC



Awareness: 57%

#5 Manulife



Awareness: 53%

#8 Didao



Awareness: 48%

#6 Nescafe



Awareness: 47%

#2 Brand HK



Awareness: 46%

#4 Kitchee



Awareness: 31% (Males: 42%; Females: 21%)

#1 AIA



Awareness: 25%

#9 Greater Bay Airline



Awareness: 16%

Brand Recognition

#12 Black & White Milk (with brand name edited out)



Percentage of recognition: **70% (Males: 61%; Females: 77%)**

#11 Asics (with brand name edited out)



Percentage of recognition: **25%**

In addition to the study of awareness of selective ads and brand recognition, all groups measured respondents' engagement with bus ads and their attitudes toward bus advertising. The results were summarized in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2. Response engagement with ad advertisements (N=515)

	No 沒有 (%)			Yes 有 (%)		
Q13. Have you ever noticed any bus advertisements in the past six months? 過去 6 個月， 你曾否注意到至少一個巴士廣告?	19			81		
Q14. Have you used QR codes of a bus ad for more information in the past six months? 過去 6 個月， 你曾經掃過巴士廣告的二維碼來取得產品資訊嗎?	92			8		
Q15. Have you discussed any bus ad with your friends or your family members? 你曾和朋友或家人討論過某一個巴士廣告嗎?	64			36		
Q16. Have you intended to purchase a product because of a bus ad? 你曾否因為看到某一巴士廣告而想購買產品?	70			30		
	Never 從不 (%)	Rarely 甚少 (%)	Sometimes 間中 (%)	Often 經常 (%)	Always 總是 (%)	Mean* 平均值
Q17. Do you pay attention to bus advertising? 你會留意巴士廣告嗎?	5.5	37.1	41.1	13.0	3.2	2.71
Q18. Can you recall the brand name of the product featured in a bus ad? 你會記得巴士廣告中的品牌名稱嗎?	8.2	37.6	42.4	9.7	2.1	2.60

Table 3. Respondents' attitudes toward bus advertising (N=454)

Questions 問題	Mean* 平均值
Bus ads helps me keep up-to-date about products and services. 巴士廣告幫助我知道有什麼最新的產品。	3.19
Bus ads is a source of information about products and services. 巴士廣告是產品和服務的訊息來源。	2.99
Bus ads tells me which brands have the features I am looking for. 巴士廣告使我知道哪個牌子的產品有我所需要的功能。	2.77
Bus ads are simple and easy to understand. 巴士廣告內容清晰易明。	3.34
Bus ads are visually stimulating. 巴士廣告提供視覺刺激和享受。	3.28
I enjoy seeing Bus ads. 我欣賞巴士廣告。	3.24
Bus ads are creative. 巴士廣告很有創意。	3.13
Bus ads are interesting and lively. 巴士廣告生動有趣	2.93
Bus ads that use rich colors catches my attention. 顏色豐富的巴士廣告吸引我的注意。	3.75
Larger-than-life bus ads caught my attention. 比產品真實尺寸更大的巴士廣告吸引我的注意。	3.47
Bus ads with celebrities catches my attention. 使用名人偶像的巴士廣告吸引我的注意。	3.63
Bus ads advertised by government departments catches my attention. 有關政府的巴士廣告吸引我的注意。	2.49

*5-point scale 1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree

References

Transport Department. (2022). *Annual Transport Digest 2022*. Retrieved from Transport Department: https://www.td.gov.hk/mini_site/atd/2022/en/section5-1.html