

Executive Summary

Who Would Like to be Treated Fairly? Utilizing the Entitativity and the Singularity Concept for Creating Effective Advertisements to Promote Fair-Trade Products

By *Tanja Steinhart* and *Heribert Gierl*

When retailers create advertisements, web sites, and product packaging to promote fair-trade products, they first should consider the fact about whether the needy farmers and workers belong to the targeted consumers' ingroups or outgroups. When the producers of the products live in the consumers' country, when the producers have the same cultural background as the consumers, and when the consumers easily can recognize numerous additional commonalities with the producer, an ingroup condition is likely to exist. When needy farmers and workers living in developing countries are the producers of fair-trade products, an outgroup condition is likely to exist.

When the needy producer belongs to the consumer ingroup, we recommend depicting one single producer in the advertisement and describing her/his fate in more detail to make her/him "identifiable." Identifying information could consist of her/his name, her/his fate, and her/his personal benefits from participating in the fair-trade program. The retailers should refrain from depicting of a low-entitativity group of needy producers. Images are low in entitativity when two or more persons are depicted which only exhibit a low amount of commonalities (e. g., do not belong to the same family, have a different appearance, and do not have further similarities than working together to produce the product or its ingredients). The disorder of locating the depicted persons in the image is also a source of low entitativity.

When the needy producer belongs to the consumers' outgroups, we recommend either depicting a low-entitativity group or needy farmers and workers or providing a lot of information that makes the depicted persons identifiable. We suggest avoiding images that show one single needy producer or a high-entitativity group of needy producers without additionally providing a large amount of information that makes the individual or group identifiable.

These findings on the effect of entitativity and singularity could also be beneficial to create advertisements of charity organizations that contain appeals to increase the willingness to donate and to design the packaging of the products belonging to family brands. When donation appeals aim to support ingroup members, the designers of ads should rely on the existence of the single-identified-victim effect. This means, that people evaluate other needy persons favorably when an individual is depicted and a large amount of identifying information is provided. When designers create packaging of products belonging to a favorable family brand, the design of all of these products should possess numerous commonalities.