COVID-19: Do PSA and news messages resonate with consumers? Why or why not? If yes, what emotions are elicited and how do they differ across various demographic & psychographic groups?

The neuroscience tools we employ at Marketing Brainology allow us to capture and measure immediate reactions to various COVID-19 communication. We are able to collect scientific data that illustrates emotional engagement with relevant content curated specifically for this research, including measuring the personal impact of various messaging and communication vehicles/media on defined consumer and target audience segments.

We are looking at how consumers' brains respond to various types of stimuli. Test content includes PSAs by The Ad Council and CDC, as well as a cross-section of news stories presented in video montages from CBS & NBC reports highlighting messages from celebrities (CBS) and showcasing the efforts of front-line medical and emergency personnel (NBC).

Insights from our proprietary study will show specifically how our brains respond to COVID-19 messaging, including important variations in responses among different consumer segments. We will share best practices for creating messaging around subject matter similar in nature to COVID-19 based on communication triggers that most effectively engage and emotionally resonate with consumers. Ultimately, our research will provide actionable learning(s) and recommendations to help companies, brands, industry organizations and Public Health agencies create optimized messaging for future campaigns.

Research Objectives
- Evaluate emotional reaction to COVID-19 messages, especially key sensory & informational elements
  - Understand specific reaction to different types of COVID-19 messages:
  - Assess respondent conscious & nonconscious (emotional) reaction to each message (interviews, EEG, eye-tracking)
  - Assess how audio vs. music (sound), visual imagery (sight) communicated in different formats, along with other visual cues.

- Isolate impact of each COVID-19 message delivered thru various communication measures
  - Measure differences in various social-demographic groups
- Develop ways to measure emotional engagement & how that influences stated assessments and potential reaction to messaging

Research Objectives

This study combines several **Neuroscience tools,** including EEG and in-person eye-tracking, along with **in-depth interviews (IDI)** with all respondents.

Methodology:

Respondents were recruited for this COVID-19 study based on their past participation in Marketing Brainology's Consumer Advisory Panel. These respondents already had baseline EEG (resting brain waves) data for us to compare to. Each respondent came into Marketing Brainology's Neurolabs in Plano, Texas individually or with another family member. They each saw a variety of content related to COVID-19 lasting 16 minutes, and then were asked questions about the content.

Neuroscience portion:

Using eye-tracking and EEG (16-sensor) and webcam, we captured test subjects' neurological responses to (relevant) content viewed in video form.

In-depth Interviews (IDI):

Immediately following the neuroscience testing, we conducted one-to-one on-camera interviews to elicit respondents' verbal feedback about the COVID-19 messaging, their initial reaction to the COVID-19 content overall and reasons why they liked/disliked each of the various messages presented. Each respondent was also asked how they personally were handling the COVID-19 crisis and specifics about their current situation (working from home, going to work, the type of work they are currently doing (essential, non-essential), etc.

Sample size: n=24

Recruited Sample:

1.   Mix of ages (Gen Z, Gen Y, Gen X, & younger Baby Boomers)
    a.   Matures & Older Baby Boomers were excluded from study given their personal safety risk
2. Half male, half female (at least 12 men)

Timeline:

Weeks 1   Fielding/data collection (2-3 testing days)
Weeks 2-3   Data coding analysis and early report generation
Week 4   Report Out

Analytics will include:

- **Key Areas of Interest for Visual Communication**
    o   Each area of interest will include all consumers
        ▪   Data will be analyzed by key segments of population (male/female, demographic targets/segments)
    o   All areas of interest will include: Eye fixations (denoted by size of circle), Order seen, and what was seen (and not seen)

- **Emotional Connection using EEG** (Identify millisecond by millisecond emotional connection to COVID-19 content being exposed by respondent. We will identify what content is connecting more with which demographic/segment.

Meet your Team:

Michelle Adams, Ph.D. has a unique educational and professional career. She has an extensive business background, and is a Ph.D. who stays well connected to the most recent academic research & leading- thought leaders. She founded Marketing Brainology 8 years ago to better measure consumer and shopper behavior and nonconscious thinking.

She worked for Frito-Lay & PepsiCo for 10 years; running the SMART Learning Center which conducted sophisticated research experiments that drove major initiatives thru-out PepsiCo. As VP of Customer Strategy and Shopper Insights, she consulted senior leaders from PepsiCo's top retailers, including 7-Eleven. As President of Marketing Brainology, she speaks and consults across the globe on NeuroScience, NeuroMarketing, and Influencing positive change within organizations, including retailers and CPG.

Jane Lilliston, MS in Applied Cognition and Neuroscience, has both business and educational background that gives her exceptional crossover in working with both adults and children in the learning process. She is the former Executive Director of a multi-generation educational program, where she leveraged extensive training experience and grant writing expertise to grow this nationally recognized organization. Her background in neuroscience developed her research interest addressing how the human brain makes choices and mobilizes through different phases of brain mapping.

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