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Beyond Vicary's fantasies: The impact of subliminal priming and brand choice[☆]

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Abstract

With his claim to have increased sales of Coca Cola and popcorn in a movie theatre through subliminal messages flashed on the screen, James Vicary raised the possibility of subliminal advertising. Nobody has ever replicated Vicary's findings and his study was a hoax. This article reports two experiments, which assessed whether subliminal priming of a brand name of a drink can affect people's choices for the primed brand, and whether this effect is moderated by individuals' feelings of thirst. Both studies demonstrated that subliminal priming of a brand name of drink (i.e., Lipton Ice) positively affected participants' choice for, and their intention to, drink the primed brand, but only for participants who were thirsty. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: Subliminal priming; Advertisement; Goals

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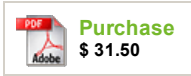
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