Dr. Haeran Jae

Haeran Jae Ph.D. is an associate professor of Marketing in the VCU School of Business. She is a native of South Korea and an alumna of the University of Kentucky and Florida Gulf Coast University. Dr. Jae’s research centers on marketing communication with low-literate consumers.

Dr. Haeran Jae’s research project may help low-literacy consumers make better – and in some cases, life-saving – choices. It was born in a familiar place.

“I was walking through the grocery store and I saw a bottle of fabric softener with a picture of a mother and baby on the label. But when I read the back of the bottle, I saw the words, ‘Do not use on children’s sleepwear,’” says Dr. Jae, noting that the fabric softener contains a chemical that breaks down the flame-retardant required in children’s sleepwear.

This inconsistency between image and wording piqued the interest of Dr. Jae, whose research focuses on marketing communication with low-literacy consumers. The significant role pictures play in consumer decision making is well established. Dr. Jae’s current research extends knowledge in this area by suggesting that pictures in print advertisements may potentially degrade low-literacy consumers’ purchase decisions, especially pictures that are emotionally appealing.

Dr. Jae believes that this research will enable companies and policy makers to enact more effective labeling guidelines, possibly including more icons to convey warnings and safety precautions.

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