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## Advertising in the Aging Society

### Understanding Representations, Practitioners, and Consumers in Japan

Michael Prieler and Florian Kohlbacher

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Michael Prieler is Associate Professor of Communication in the School of Communication at Hallym University, South Korea. Before this, he worked and studied for several years in Japan. His research focuses on media representations of gender, race/ethnicity, and older people, and has been published in numerous books and international journals.

Florian Kohlbacher is Associate Professor of Marketing and Innovation in the International Business School Suzhou (IBSS) at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) in Suzhou, China, and the Founding Director of the XJTLU Research Institute on Ageing and Society (RIAS). He is also an adjunct fellow at the Institute of Contemporary Asian Studies (ICAS) at Temple University, Japan Campus.

#### About the book

Population aging is a powerful megatrend affecting many countries around the world. This demographic shift has vast effects on societies, economies and businesses, and thus also for the advertising industry. *Advertising in the Aging Society* presents insights from a large-scale content analysis as well as questionnaire surveys among advertising practitioners and consumers in Japan. As the most aged society in the world, Japan lends itself as particularly suitable to study the implications of population aging. This book shows that older people, and especially older women, are highly underrepresented in advertising and are generally portrayed in stereotypical, albeit not necessarily unfavorable ways. This is despite the fact that advertising practitioners have a generally positive view towards using older models, even though only for an older target audience. Finally the book explore how both younger and older consumers perceive the representation of older people in advertising as stereotypical and partly negative, and are willing to boycott companies portraying older people negatively.

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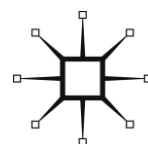
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## Endorsements

"Japan is leading the way in terms of demographic change. Prieler and Kohlbacher are leading the way in terms of academic research on advertising in an aging society. I congratulate them on filling an important gap in the literature on older consumers and advertising research."

**George Moschis, Alfred Bernhardt Research Professor of Marketing and the founding director of the Center for Mature Consumer Studies (CMCS) at Georgia State University**

"*Advertising in the Aging Society* presents a refreshing and rare combination of theory-driven, data-rich research complete with clear implications for advertising practice. After analysis of nearly 3,000 television advertisements, 185 advertising practitioners' survey responses, and 1,834 audience surveys, the authors provide insightful advice regarding the effects, effectiveness, and ethics of portraying 'silver' citizens in advertising. Scholars and practitioners within Japan and beyond will find the research and conclusions to be interesting and valuable. The approach is a model for conducting multi-method research within a cultural context - content, creators, and consumers are all examined within one volume. The book is a first in what should be a growing body of knowledge about our oldest audience."

**Michelle R. Nelson, Associate Professor of Advertising, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

"This book, focusing on advertisers and their mature audiences, unpacks the complex relationship between the sources and targets of marketing in a rapidly aging society. That it does so in Japan, a country on the leading edge of this demographic transition, makes it a prescient account of what the remainder of the world might expect. The picture painted by the empirical results is a mixed one - progress is being made but lagging behind the demographic reality of accelerated population aging. These contributions make the book a valuable addition for media, gerontology, and cultural scholars, as well as the purveyors of messages to older consumers."

**Merril D. Silverstein, Marjorie Cantor Professor of Aging Studies, Syracuse University**

"Japan is the most advanced of rapidly aging societies, but local advertisers seem to have mostly missed the memo. Maybe wisdom really does come with age, for it is commonly accepted that aging consumers have more wealth, leisure time, interest in travel and the wherewithal for romance (and that other thing) than their juniors, yet shallow stereotyping continues in advertising. *Advertising in the Aging Society* is a well-constructed antidote for this marketing myopia, using Japan as the tutorial for other maturing markets, and may well accelerate the careers of those advertising practitioners who open their eyes to the insights within."

**Bob Kerwin, former Chairman of Dentsu Young & Rubicam, Tokyo**

"The world is changing, and aging. As Prieler and Kohlbacher note, by the year 2050 around 25% of the developed world's population will be over 65. Japan is leading this trend as 'the world's most advanced aging society' and this book is a fascinating study of how advertisers and consumers in Japan are dealing with an aging consumer segment. The lessons learned by marketers and advertisers in Japan, and covered in detail in this book, will lead the rest of the world in shaping how we represent and create messages for the world's most rapidly expanding demographic."

**Katherine T. Frith, co-author of *Advertising and Societies: Global Issues*, Professor of Advertising, Southern Illinois University**

"*Advertising in the Aging Society* covers a significant topic, since the demographic of older people is increasing around the world and is becoming more crucial as an advertising market. This book skillfully highlights ethical considerations in how to represent older people adequately, and it is one of the few studies that triangulates data from advertising practitioners with content and consumer information."

**Jörg Matthes, Director and Professor, Department of Communication, University of Vienna**

"This is a very exciting book. Japanese advertising practitioners should listen carefully to Prieler and Kohlbacher's messages. They have implications for advertising around the world as population's aging is a global megatrend."

**Setsuo Sakamoto, Executive Producer, Institute of Elder Knowledge and New Adult Culture, HAKUHODO Inc.**

"When I got my first job with an advertising agency, I was told that creating ads was a young man's game. But that was yesterday, a long time ago. In countries with aging populations, how to advertise to older affluent consumers who make up an increasingly large demographic is becoming an urgent priority for advertisers and agencies alike. Nowhere is this more true than in Japan, the world's most rapidly aging society. Michael Prieler and Florian Kohlbacher's *Advertising in the Aging Society: Understanding Representations, Practitioners, and Consumers in Japan* is an indispensable resource for anyone confronting this issue - and not just in Japan."

**John McCreery, author of *Japanese Consumer Behaviour*, Partner at *The Word Works, Ltd.***

"Communicating to seniors is a universal challenge that every marketer will face if they haven't done so already. The world grows older every day. So does its population. Japan is testament to that fact, as the most aged society, the very first live case study. The world can learn a lot from what is happening in Japan at the moment and this book admirably demonstrates the issues for marketers."

**Aki Kubo, Chairman, Group Representative, Ogilvy & Mather Japan**

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