European Advertising Academy

Peeter Verlegh
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RESEARCH

Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI)

The Digital, the Classic, the Subtle, and the Alternative

EUROPEAN ADVERTISING ACADEMY

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The objective of the European Advertising Academy (EAA) is to provide a professional association to academics and practitioners interested in advertising and its applications that will promote, disseminate and stimulate high quality research in the field.

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ISBN 978-3-658-10557-0 ISBN 978-3-658-10558-7 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015944170

Springer Gabler

Printed on acid-free paper

Springer Gabler is a brand of Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden
Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden is part of Springer Science+Business Media
(www.springer.com)

Advances in Advertising Research: The Digital, The Classic, The Subtle and The Alternative

The book that you have in front of you is the fifth volume of "Advances in Advertising Research." The series has its roots in the International Conference on Research In Advertising (ICORIA), which is organized every year by the European Advertising Academy. The editors of the series invite the authors of some of the most interesting papers at the conference, asking them to expand their work into a book chapter. The present edition is tied to the 13th ICORIA, organized at the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. This conference drew a record attendance, with more than one hundred papers being presented by authors from five continents. The competition was fierce, which has resulted in thirty high quality chapters for this volume.

Based on the content of the different chapters we divided this volume into four different sections. Together, these sections present an excellent overview of the wide array of topics that is studied by advertising academics. The four sections are titled "The Digital," "The Classic," The Subtle," and The Alternative."

The Digital is a collection of eight papers that look at advertising in online and social media. Over the past few years, this area has become an important part of mainstream advertising, and an ever larger proportion of advertising spending is devoted to this domain. Academics have quickly followed this trend, as illustrated by these papers. The section starts with a chapter by the winner of the ICORIA best student paper award (Bernritter) that focuses on the question which brands are more likely to be endorsed on social media like Facebook. The section continues with four more papers on social media, with topics ranging from consumers engagement in online word of mouth to brands' use of Twitter during the Super Bowl. The remaining chapters in this section focus on other topics in the digital domain, including the use of 3D imaging and pre-roll ads on online videochannels.

The Classic section is juxtaposed to the "brave new world" of digital advertising, and brings together nine papers dealing with print and TV advertising. It should be noted, however, that many of the chapters in this section can easily be extended into the digital domain: they deal with topics like celebrity endorsements, the use of different message strategies, and the impact of different types of advertising appeals (e.g., emotional, threat, gender egalitarian) on consumers. The first chapter of this section, written by Arslanagić-Kalajdžić and Zabkar, is again noteworthy, because it is based on one of the two papers that were voted "best conference paper" at the ICORIA conference. This particular chapter studies the world behind the ads, and focuses on the relationships between advertising agencies and their clients.

The Subtle consists of five chapters that build on the idea that the most powerful effects of advertising occur outside of the awareness of consumers. This notion is reflected in recently developed advertising formats (i.e., brand placement, sponsored programs) that blend commercial messages with editorial content. These formats are the focus of three of the five chapters in this section. The word “subtle” also refers to the measures that are used in three of the chapters. In recent years, academics have developed a range of methods (“implicit measures”) that allow for the subtle effects of advertising that often occur outside the awareness of consumers. This section includes a theoretical chapter that discusses the importance of dissociations between implicit and explicit measures, but also an empirical chapter that uses both types of measures to study the impact of brand placements on consumers.

The Alternative is a collection of eight “outsiders,” studies that look at unconventional and (in some cases) new forms of advertising. The advertising industry is always looking for new ways to grab consumers’ attention and break through the clutter. In the past few years, creative media use has been the subject of a number of studies. Creative media are media that are not traditionally seen as carriers of promotional messages, and may include shopping carts, fire extinguishers or drinking straws. In creative media use, the medium is an integral part of the advertisement. This section includes no less than three chapters on this topic, of which the first one (Eelen and Seiler) is the co-winner of the ICORIA best paper award. Other chapters in this section study topics such as in-store communication, and communication via packaging and brand logos.

Together, these four sections contain thirty chapters representing the state of the art of international advertising research: creative studies that cover a wide range of topics in advertising, and have important implications for practice. The chapters also provide fresh ideas for future avenues of research in this exciting field of study.We thank our co-organizers of the 2014 ICORIA: Edith Smit, Peter Neijens, and Eva van Reijmersdal, and everyone else at the University of Amsterdam and the EAA who has helped to make this conference a big success. We hope that you enjoy the chapters in this volume and that you get inspired to develop your own ideas and studies for future ICORIA conferences and chapters for future volumes of this series.

Peeter W.J. Verlegh, Hilde A.M. Voorveld, and Martin Eisend

EUROPEAN ADVERTISING ACADEMY

The objective of the association is to provide a professional association to academics and practitioners interested in advertising and its applications that will promote, disseminate and stimulate high quality research in the field.

The association particularly serves as a meeting and communication forum for its members. It offers a network for the exchange of knowledge on an international level and constitutes a framework allowing for a better dissemination of information on research and teaching.

The association also aims at the development of relations with all other professional and research-oriented associations which are active in the field, as well as with European or international committees and authorities concerned with political decision making, active in this field.

The EAA is closely related to the yearly International Conference on Research in Advertising (ICORIA). The purpose of the conference is to create a forum where people studying advertising in the academic world could exchange ideas, and where they could meet with practitioners who have experience with advertising in the commercial world.

Every natural person that is professionally concerned with or interested in research or teaching in the field of advertising is, irrespective of nationality, eligible to become a full member of the association.

For further information please visit our website: www.icoria.org

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Part I. The Digital: Advertising in Online and Social Media

Signaling Warmth: How Brand Warmth and Symbolism Affect Consumers' Online Brand Endorsements

Stefan F. Bernritter

1 Introduction and Theory

In their efforts to promote their brands, products and services, advertisers often enlist endorsement by other parties, such as celebrities or experts (e.g., Biswas, Biswas, and Das, 2006; Rice, Kelting, and Lutz, 2012). Increasingly, brands and organizations are also seeking endorsement by their consumers on social network sites, for instance by a like on Facebook. These endorsements can be stimulated by the endorsed brands (e.g., by raffling prices among people who like the brand's page on Facebook), but may also occur spontaneously. While externally motivated endorsements are easy to explain, the question remains why consumers decide voluntarily to endorse brands without getting something in return. Therefore, in the present chapter, we examine factors that might play a role in consumers' decisions to endorse brands on social media. More concretely, we investigate to what extent the perceived warmth of a brand and brand symbolism affect consumers' intentions to endorse a brand on social media.

It is not surprising that marketers appreciate the merits of consumers' online brand endorsements such as likes on Facebook. The continuing skepticism and resistance against 'traditional' persuasion tactics have driven increased motivation to facilitate consumers' endorsements (e.g., Campbell and Kirmani, 2008; Laran, Dalton, and Andrade, 2011). Consumers dislike the feeling of being persuaded and tend to show resistance when marketers attempt to influence them directly (Knowles and Riner, 2007). Using consumers as a medium for persuasive communication is one way to overcome this (Kaikati and Kaikati, 2004). Consumers are less likely to perceive that other consumers' brand related activities have persuasive intent, and regard them therefore as more trustworthy and persuasive than direct brand information from marketers (Brown et al., 2007).

But why do consumers decide to endorse brands on social media? To answer this question it is important to reveal in what way consumers might benefit from doing so. Consumers buy brands not only for the quality of their products and services, but also because they symbolize something (Levy, 1959; Solomon, 1983). More specifically, consumers express and construct desired identities by using products that match these identities (Aaker, 1999; Belk, 1988, 2013;

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_1, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

Escalas and Bettman, 2005), and they use brands in order to converge to others (e.g., Escalas and Bettman, 2003) or diverge from them (Berger and Heath, 2007). Also, when observing others, consumers tend to make inferences about others based on their consumption behavior (Belk et al., 1982; Scott et al., 2013). Thus, consumer behavior and consumers' interactions with brands act as identity signals, which communicate information about oneself to others (Reed et al., 2012; Wernerfelt, 1990). Recently, this body of research was extended to the social media domain. Hollenbeck and Kaikati (2012) demonstrated in a qualitative study that consumers use brands on Facebook deliberately in order to create and manage their self-identities.

In line with the notion that consumers' online brand endorsements are – at least in part – driven by the desire to signal one's identity, we conducted an experiment to explore drivers of this behavior. Based on the perspective of the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework (BIAF, see next section; Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone, 2012), we demonstrate that warmth and not competence is the main driver of consumers' online brand endorsements. As a boundary condition, we also investigated to what extent the decision to endorse a brand depends on its level of brand symbolism (Escalas and Bettman, 2005) and show that a brand also needs to be able to signal the values that consumers' aim to express by means of their online brand endorsements. In other words, a high symbolic value of a brand enhances the positive effects of warmth on consumers' online brand endorsements.

1.1 Warmth and Competence

The BIAF (Kervyn et al., 2012) is based on the well-established Stereotype Content Model (Fiske et al., 2002). According to this model, people's perception of individuals and groups can be described on two dimensions: warmth and competence. The idea behind this model is that people shape the way in which they perceive their social environment based on these two dimensions. By perceiving warmth we can answer the question whether another individual or group has positive intentions towards ourselves. Perceived competence, in contrast, can answer the question whether this other individual or group is able to carry out these intentions. In line with the idea that people form similar relationships with brands as they do with people (e.g., Fournier, 1998), the BIAF (Kervyn et al., 2012) proposes that the social perception dimensions warmth and competence are also applicable to our perception of brands.

Supporting this notion, recent research demonstrates that consumers are more likely to identify with brands, when they perceive these brands to have a warm (vs. cold) personality (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). For this and several other reasons, endorsing brands that signal warmth might be perceived as a more useful or versatile "signal" than endorsing competence signaling brands:

Warmth is an universally positively evaluated attribute and therefore almost always of great interest for others (Cuddy et al., 2008; Fiske et al., 2002). Moreover, perceptions of warmth have been found to be more important than perceptions of competence with regard to people's affective and behavioral reactions (Fiske et al., 2007). They are also prior to other influences: before judging the competence of others, we judge their warmth (Ybarra et al., 2001). Furthermore, signaling competence to others might be more "risky" as judgments of competence are more sensitive to context (Kervyn et al., 2012) than judgments of warmth. Being perceived as intelligent, for instance, may be positive in some contexts, but threatening or dislikeable in others. As a result, the influence of competence judgments on the impressions of others may vary considerably. Thus, when people strive to express their (desired) identity by means of endorsing a brand online, the easiest and most effective way to make a favorable (first) impression would be to endorse a brand that signals warmth rather than competence. Moreover, Facebook is considered to be a social network site that primarily focuses on personal self-promotion (and thus identity signaling), rather than on professional self-promotion (van Dijck, 2013), which makes it likely that competence does not play a role in consumers' decision to endorse brands on social networks like Facebook. As a consequence of any or all of these reasons, the social benefits of endorsing warm brands will almost always be higher than the social benefits of endorsing competent brands. Based on these assumptions we hypothesize:

H1: Perceptions of (a) warmth and (b) competence of a brand will have a positive effect on consumers' intention to endorse the brand on social media, but the effect of warmth is stronger than that of competence.

1.2 Brand Symbolism

A brand's capability to signal consumers' identity depends on the degree to which it can communicate something about a person who is using or consuming it. Escalas and Bettman (2005) established this identity signaling function of a brand as *brand symbolism* and showed that brands differ with regard to their symbolic value. They demonstrated that this difference in symbolism plays a crucial role in how consumers construct their identity by means of their brand usage and that brand symbolism also positively affects consumers' formation of self-brand connections. They also found that in-group and out-group brand associations affected consumers' self-brand connections significantly stronger when a brand was highly symbolic. White and Dahl (2006) extended this framework by demonstrating that consumers are not always motivated to avoid out-group membership but rather tend to avoid being associated with dissociative reference groups. The dissociative reference groups most strongly negatively affected product choices, self-brand connections and consumers' evaluations. A subsequent study demonstrated that these negative effects were stronger for brands that are relatively higher in symbolic value (White and Dahl, 2007). Emphasizing the central role of brand symbolism in consumers' identity signaling, Berger and Heath (2007) demonstrated that consumers want to diverge from other's product choices as means for communicating desired identities to others. Additionally, this effect is stronger in product domains that are perceived to be high in symbolic value and thus symbolizing people's identity.

Research suggests that consumers use brands to highlight certain aspects of their own identity, and downplay other aspects (e.g., Aaker, 1999). This notion is supported by a recent qualitative study that demonstrates that consumers behave similarly in the online domain and use brands on Facebook as subtle cues to signal their identity (Hollenbeck and Kaikati, 2012). As we suggest that consumers endorse brands on social media to signal their warmth, we assume that they are less likely to endorse a brand if it were – according to them – not be suited as identity signal. That is, we suggest that the effect of warmth on consumers' intention to endorse can be enhanced by brand symbolism. We, thus, predict an interaction effect between warmth and brand symbolism and hypothesize the following:

H2: The effect of warmth on consumers' intention to endorse brands on social media will be stronger for highly symbolic brands than for brands with low symbolic value.

2 Method

2.1 Participants and Design

Ninety-one students from the University of Amsterdam (75.8% female; $M_{\text{age}} = 22.14$; $SD_{\text{age}} = 4.60$) participated for course credit or financial compensation. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions of the single factor design with two levels (high vs. low symbolic brands).

2.2 Pretest

To find suited brands for the brand symbolism manipulation, we conducted a pre-test on brand symbolism for ten for-profit brands before the actual experiment among a different sample. We chose these ten brands based on the 100 strongest brands in the Netherlands (BrandAsset Consult, 2013). For the sake of comparability of the brands, brands that do not produce physical products (e.g., YouTube) were excluded from the analyses, as well as brands that produce addictive substances such as tobacco or alcohol. 40 participants rated the extent to which the 10 brands were symbolic on the brand symbolism scale (Escalas and Bettman, 2005). This scale consists of two items and was measured on 5-point Likert scales: ‘How much does this brand symbolize what kind of person uses it?’ (not at all symbolic / highly symbolic); and ‘to what extent does this brand communicate something specific about the person who uses it?’ (does not communicate a lot / communicates a lot).

We chose the two most symbolic and the two least symbolic brands to serve as the high/ low symbolism manipulation in the actual experiment: Apple and Nivea (highly symbolic brands) and Philips and Hansaplast (low symbolic brands), which represent the product categories of electronics and personal care products. T-Tests revealed that the high symbolic brands were indeed perceived to be more symbolic ($M = 3.39$; $SD = 0.79$) than the low symbolic brands ($M = 2.03$; $SD = 0.73$), $t(39) = 11.98$, $p < .001$.

2.3 Procedure

The experiment was conducted online using Qualtrics. After they answered several demographic questions, participants were asked to evaluate some brands with regard to several characteristics in the subsequent task. The experiment consisted out of two blocks per condition (i.e., one block per brand). Each block started with the logo of the respective brand and was followed by the instruction: ‘In this part of the experiment, we will ask you some questions about brand X.’ Afterwards, participants first indicated their perception of warmth and competence of the brand. Then, they answered questions about how symbolic they perceived the brand to be and finally indicated how likely they were to like the brand on Facebook. The two blocks of each condition were presented in random order.

2.4 Measurements

2.4.1 Warmth & Competence

We measured participants’ perception of the brands’ warmth and competence by a set of 7-point Likert scales, as used by Aaker, Vohs and Mogilner (2010). The warmth scale contained three items: warmth, generosity and kindness (Cronbach’s $\alpha > .77$ for all brands). We measured competence by another set of three items: competence, efficiency and effectiveness (Cronbach’s $\alpha > .85$ for all brands).

2.4.2 Brand Symbolism

Brand symbolism was assessed by means of the brand symbolism scale of Escalas and Bettman (2005), which we also used in the pretest (Cronbach's $\alpha >$ .61 for all brands).

2.4.3 Intention to Endorse

Participants were asked to indicate their intention to like the brands of their experimental condition on Facebook on a 100-point slider scale. We intended a measurement of consumers' overall online brand endorsements in order to avoid being susceptible to effects of individual brand characteristics and limiting our results by only focusing on one brand per analysis. Therefore, we calculated the mean of consumers' scores on their intention to like their condition's brands as dependent variable in the subsequent analyses. Cronbach's α for this measure was good (= .71 for low symbolic brands; = .77 for high symbolic brands).

2.5 Manipulation Check

To ensure that our manipulation worked as intended, we conducted a manipulation check with the brand symbolism measurements as described earlier in this section. T-Tests confirmed that the brands of the high symbolism condition were perceived to more symbolic (M = 3.15; SD = 0.75) than the brands in the low symbolism condition (M = 2.44; SD = 0.89), $t(89) = 4.19$, $p <$ .001.

3 Results

To test our hypotheses, we conducted a linear regression analysis, with consumers' intention to endorse as dependent variable and perceived warmth and competence, brand symbolism (low symbolic condition = -.5; high symbolic condition = .5) and the warmth X brand symbolism interaction as predictors. In line with hypothesis 1, warmth had a positive effect on consumers' intention to endorse brands on social media, $\beta = 0.28$, $SE = 2.74$, $t(4, 86) = 2.11$, $p = .038$. Also competence positively affected consumers' intention to endorse, but this effect did not reach statistical significance, $\beta = 0.20$, $SE = 2.64$, $t(4, 86) = 1.59$, $p = .117$. There was also no main effect of brand symbolism $\beta = -0.39$, $SE = 7.53$, $t(4, 86) = 1.20$, $p = .038$. There was, however, an interaction effect of warmth and brand symbolism as predicted by hypothesis 2. In other words, the main effect of warmth was moderated by brand symbolism $\beta = 0.69$, $SE = 1.89$, $t(4, 86) = 2.07$, $p = .042$.

3.1 Moderation Analysis

To gain more insight into this interaction effect and test for moderation, we performed 5,000 bootstrap resamples using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro for SPSS. Providing further support for hypothesis 2, this analysis revealed that the effect of warmth on consumers' intention to endorse brands on social media was smaller for brands that are low in symbolic value (conditional effect = 1.90, boot *SE* = 3.76, 95% BCBCI [-5.58, 9.38]), compared to highly symbolic brands (conditional effect = 9.62, boot *SE* = 2.80, 95% BCBCI [4.06, 15.18]; Figure 1).

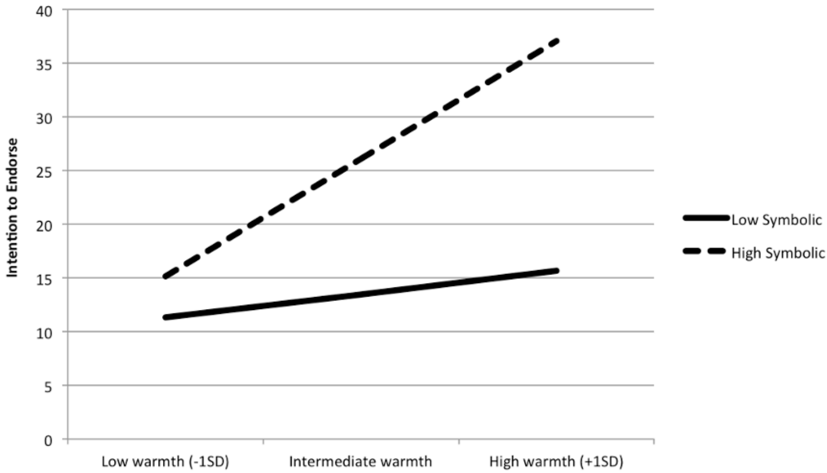

Figure 1: Consumers' intention to endorse as a function of warmth and brand symbolism

4 Conclusion and Discussion

In this experiment, we investigated two factors that affect consumers` online brand endorsements. First, we demonstrated that consumers primarily want to express their warmth by endorsing brands that they perceive to be warm rather than competent. Second, we showed that this effect of warmth is enhanced by a brand's symbolic value.

While earlier correlational research suggested that warmth is a central driver of consumers' brand identification (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012), the present research extends this framework by demonstrating that warmth also drives consumers' expression of this relationship. We also show that it is only one of the two domains of the BIAF that affects consumers' online brand endorsements. As a boundary condition of this occurrence, we also demonstrated that a brands capability to communicate something about the person who uses it, can considerably enforce this identity signaling behavior.

4.1 Limitations and Future Research

We only used for-profit brands in this experiment. Research, however, showed that consumers perceive for-profit brands in different from nonprofit brands. Aaker and colleagues (2010) demonstrated that while perceptions of for-profit brands rather map onto a competence dimension, perceptions of nonprofit brands map onto a warmth dimension. It might thus be that our findings are not applicable to nonprofit brands. Future research should investigate this question.

Another interesting venue for future research would be the effects that consumers' online brand endorsements have on other consumers. Although we argued earlier that consumers' online brand endorsements would be a strong technique of marketing, which might be able to rule out the disadvantages of direct attempts of marketing communication, there is no research yet that directly investigated this issue. While literature in the domain of online reviews suggests that information that origins from other consumers is more trustworthy and therefore more persuasive than direct attempts of persuasion (e.g., Willemsen, Neijens, & Bronner, 2012), research on conspicuous brand usage suggests that consumers' online brand endorsements might not always have a positive effect on other consumers, but only on those who already have a positive attitude towards the endorsed brand (cf., Ferraro, Kirmani, & Matherly, 2013). The efficacy of online brand endorsements on other consumers might also depend on whom of a consumer's ties and how many of them endorsed a brand. It is thus not entirely clear if and how consumers' online brand endorsements affect other consumers. We therefore propose these questions for future investigations.

4.2 Practical Implications

Our research does also have important practical implications. We advise that brands should examine how consumers perceive the brand's warmth and symbolic value before deciding to embark on a marketing strategy that might entail consumers' online brand endorsements. For-profit brands that are perceived to be warm might have the highest potential to evoke consumers' endorsements. They also can considerably strengthen this potential if they are able to symbolize this warmth to other consumers. For those brands, it might be worthwhile to invest in marketing strategies that involve consumers' online brand endorsements. For brands that are perceived to be low in warmth, it might be difficult to persuade consumers to endorse them. In this case, also a high symbolic value of the brand does not noticeably increase consumers' intention to endorse this brand online. These brands should therefore rather focus on other ways of marketing, or might first invest in a marketing strategy that increases the public's perception of warmth of the brand.

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PEER: Looking into Consumer Engagement in e-WOM through Social Media

Leonidas Hatzithomas, Christina Boutsouki, Vassilis Pigadas, and Yorgos Zotos

1 Introduction: The Sequence of Participation, Engrossment, Emotion Sharing and Relationship Building (PEER)

According to philosopher Martin Heidegger (1927/1996) the human existence takes place through the ongoing, active and practical engagement with other people, things and the world as a whole. To be human is to be engaged with other beings in the world. This central role of engagement in human life and consciousness has drawn the attention of academics from different disciplines (Hollebeek, 2011). A plethora of studies has examined the concept of engagement in education (Lutz et al., 2006), organizational behavior (Noland and Phillips, 2010), psychology (Avery et al., 2007), political sciences (Resnick, 2001) and information systems (Wagner and Majchrzak, 2007). In marketing consumer engagement is a strategic direction. It is a carefully planned necessity for all those companies striving to establish and maintain sustainable competitive advantage, as it predicts future business performances (Brodie et al., 2013).

According to Hollebeek (2010, p. 1) "consumer engagement may be viewed to reflect consumers' levels of motivational (cognitive, emotional and/or behavioral) investments in their brand interactions". Indeed, most researchers in this field shed light on these particular dimensions of consumer engagement (Vivek et al., 2012). However, except for cognitive, emotional and behavioral, social motives are also of great importance in the context of social media. Through social networks the users have the opportunity to get along with other people, to establish ties with peers, to make new friends and to share social experiences (Chu and Kim, 2011). Social brand experiences contribute to the creation of brand associations (Berry, 2000) and to the establishment of brand relationships similar to human relationships (Schmitt, 1999). To date the vast majority of the research papers examining consumer engagement remains conceptual and theoretical in its focus (Hollebeek, 2011). Furthermore, only a few research papers have concentrated on virtual consumer engagement in internet (Sawhney et al., 2005; Fuller, 2006) and in social media (Chu and Kim, 2011).

The present paper intends to fill this research gap by conceptualizing consumer engagement (that manifested the days preceding, during and after a provider-initiated event) as a process of four steps: participation (behavioral

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_2, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

engagement), engrossment (cognitive engagement), emotion sharing (emotional engagement) and finally relationship building (social engagement). In this model, behavioral engagement (namely the participation in electronic word of mouth) is considered a prerequisite condition for the cognitive, affective and social manifestations of consumer engagement, while social engagement represents both the continuous and the ultimate purpose of the process (Figure 1 illustrates the PEER model). The proposed framework was empirically tested using 10.801 tweets for two events (organized by Apple – 10/9/2013 – and Nintendo –18/11/2012 – in the USA for launching their new brands) that were collected and text analyzed by an online version of the Linguistic Inquiry Word Count software (LIWC) (Pennebaker et al., 2007).

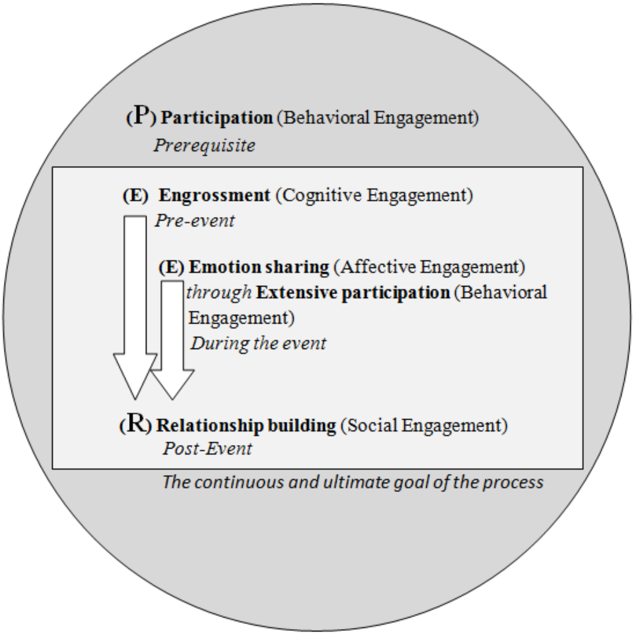


Figure 1: The PEER Model for Consumer Engagement in e-WOM via Social Media

The objective of this study and model testing is to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. How does a provider-initiated event, such as a brand-launching event, affect behavioral, cognitive, emotional and social consumer engagement in eWOM? Are the effects distributed uniformly or heterogeneously throughout the days preceding, during and after the event? Do they take a form of hierarchy of effects?

2. Is this hierarchical model valid for other brands or it represents a brand-specific model?
3. Can the model predict the success or failure of a new brand in the market?
4. Are there any causal relationships between the variables?

2 Looking into the Features of PEER

2.1 Participation (Behavioral Engagement)

Vivek et al. (2012, pp. 127) defines consumer engagement "as the intensity of an individual's participation in and connection with an organization's offerings and/or organizational activities, which either the customer or the organization initiate". Indeed, consumer brand engagement in eWOM begins at the moment an internet user participates in a dialogue by requesting more information, answering questions, generating reports and/or providing product reviews. These consumer engagement behaviors create value for firms by influencing other customers (customer influencer value), incentivizing referral of new customers (customer referral value) and providing feedback to the firm (customer knowledge value) (Kumar et al., 2011). Participation is a behavioral manifestation of consumer engagement toward the brand and at the same time a distinct and necessary variable that precedes consumer engagement (Vivek et al., 2012) in eWOM – that is, participation in eWOM is a prerequisite condition for cognitive, emotional and social engagement to be manifested. It prepares the ground for them when it is motivated by organizational offerings and/or activities such as brand launching events. Based on the aforementioned analysis it is expected that the intensity of individuals' participation in a provider-initiated event affects the intensity of consumer engagement as a whole. At the same time, as prior studies (Thelwall et al., 2010) have shown, extensive participation in eWOM is expected to be observed on the day of the event. Hence, the following hypothesis is advanced:

H1: Consumers' participation in eWOM about the brand has a sharp increase on the day of the event.

2.2 Engrossment (Cognitive Engagement)

Every brand event has three time phases in relation to it (the event cycle): before, during and after the event (Saget, 2006). During the first phase, namely the days preceding the event (pre-event), teaser messages and announcements are broadcast on traditional and new media, exciting the curiosity of the public

(Erber, 2005). The intensity of consumers' interest in brand announcements and new brand characteristics is increased and consumers are searching like "maniacs" for anything that has any connection both with the brand and the event. Funs, blogs, websites, social media and videos circulate and recirculate rumors, speculations and suggestions about the event and the announced brands (Sherr, 2013). Consumers experience high levels of engrossment or concentration towards the event, expressing, in that manner, their high cognitive engagement (Hollebeek, 2011). On the other hand, the firm provides information sparingly, trying to manage and control the information flow (Sherr, 2013). This strategy rekindles rumors and increases consumers' cognitive engagement in eWOM. The above arguments lead to the following hypothesis:

H2: Cognitive engagement in eWOM (engrossment) has a sharp increase on the days preceding the event.

2.3 Emotion Sharing (Emotional Engagement)

During the second phase of the event cycle, consumers attend the event either on TV or on internet or live. Participation in eWOM becomes more intense and extensive on that day. Consumers had been waiting for months and now their desire to interact with each other and to engage in brand activities bursts out like a volcano (see also Marcus et al., 2011). The firm is presenting its new offerings giving the opportunity to consumers to share their emotions and attitudes as well as their commitment, enthusiasm, inspiration and pride (emotional engagement) (Hollebeek, 2011; Vivek, 2009). In line with this, Thelwall et al. (2010) indicated that important events creating higher participation rates are associated with increased positive and/or negative emotions. These fluctuations of emotions in reaction to the event are expressed in real time and can be used to evaluate its success (Diakopoulos and Shamma, 2010). The following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Emotional engagement in eWOM (through emotion sharing) has a sharp increase on the day of the event.

2.4 Relationship Building (Social Engagement)

Even when the event has finished, usually consumer engagement in eWOM does not stop. Especially in the events organized by well-known corporations, internet users continue to be engaged in eWOM communication about the brand and the event itself in the post-event phase (see also Gruhl and Guha, 2004 for Microsoft). They use social media in order to upload, tag and comment pictures of the event, to join in groups related to it and to build relationships with other peers around the event and the advertised brand (Zhang et al., 2011). Actually, social engagement in eWOM via social media is a continuous activity throughout the event cycle (Zhang et al., 2011). However, in the post-event period, consumers capitalize the social investments they have made in the previous days. The following hypothesis is advanced:

H4: Social engagement in eWOM (relationship building) has a sharp increase on the days after the event.

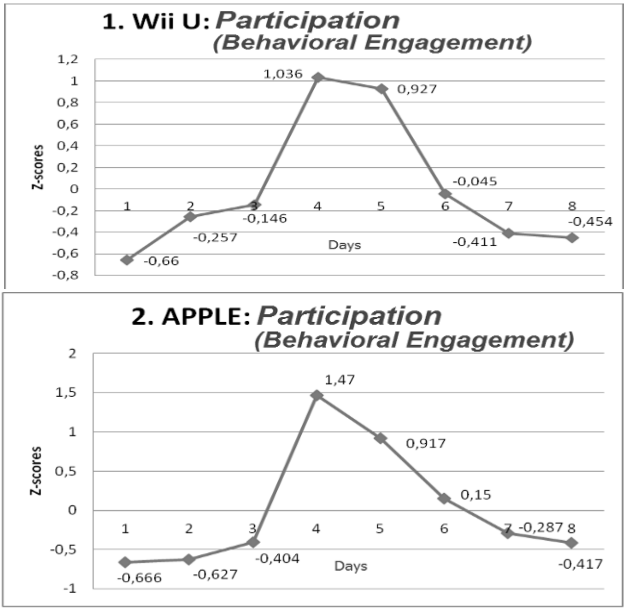
3 The Research Process

A text analysis approach was adopted as an appropriate and suitable method for the scientific analysis of text-based electronic word of mouth (Tang and Guo, 2013). LIWC software (Pennebaker et al., 2007) was used as the text mining tool since it is a validated and reliable tool for measuring cognitive, emotional and social engagement through the analysis of written or spoken texts (Cohn et al., 2004). LIWC program is a computerized text analysis tool that has been used in marketing literature in studying electronic word of mouth communication (Tang and Guo, 2013) and the effect of online user reviews on conversation rates (Ludwig, 2013). This approach gave the opportunity to the authors to study the spontaneous manifestations of cognitive, emotional and social consumer engagement and not just the levels of self reported engagement in eWOM (for self-reported consumer engagement see Vivek, 2009). For the purpose of this study an online version of LIWC program was designed and it provided researchers with the ability to collect, manage, clear and process social media texts in real time. Overall, 171,399 tweets for the hashtag #Apple and 157,758 tweets for the hashtag #WiiU were collected. In each case, the tweets had been posted three days preceding the event, the day of the event and four days after the event. Tweets were obtained for these hashtags because the events were advertised as the “Wii U launch event” and the “Apple’s annual event”. After deleting retweets, tweets containing only hashtags and irrelevant tweets (e.g. “Does eating an #apple a day really keep the doctor away?”), a random sample of 7,107 tweets for the hashtag #Apple and 3,694 tweets for the hashtag #WiiU was selected from the whole population. This study focused on twitter, since prior studies have indicated that twitter mirrors offline sentiment (Tumasjan et al., 2010).

4 Debating PEER

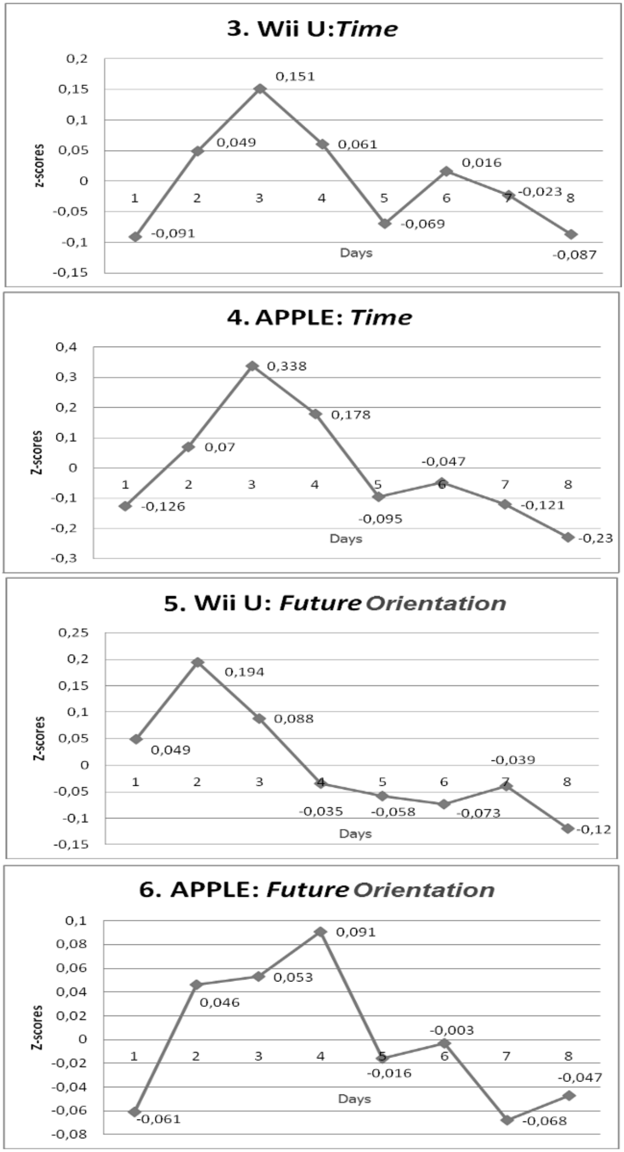
Kruskal–Wallis test and Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni corrections were used for the examination of the four hypotheses, since the data were obtained from a non-normal distribution (as Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-

Wilk tests were statistically insignificant). Moreover the z-scores were computed for each variable to both express how far any given score is from average and show the effect sizes on the same graph. As the first hypothesis suggested, the results indicated that the participation in eWOM, about the brand, experiences a sharp increase on the day of the event (the fourth day was the day of the event). This trend was observed both in the Wii U launch event (x2=72.85, df=7, n=192, p<.000) and in Apple's annual event (x2=143.803, df=7, n=192, p<.000) (Graphs 1 and 2). Hence, hypothesis 1 is supported.

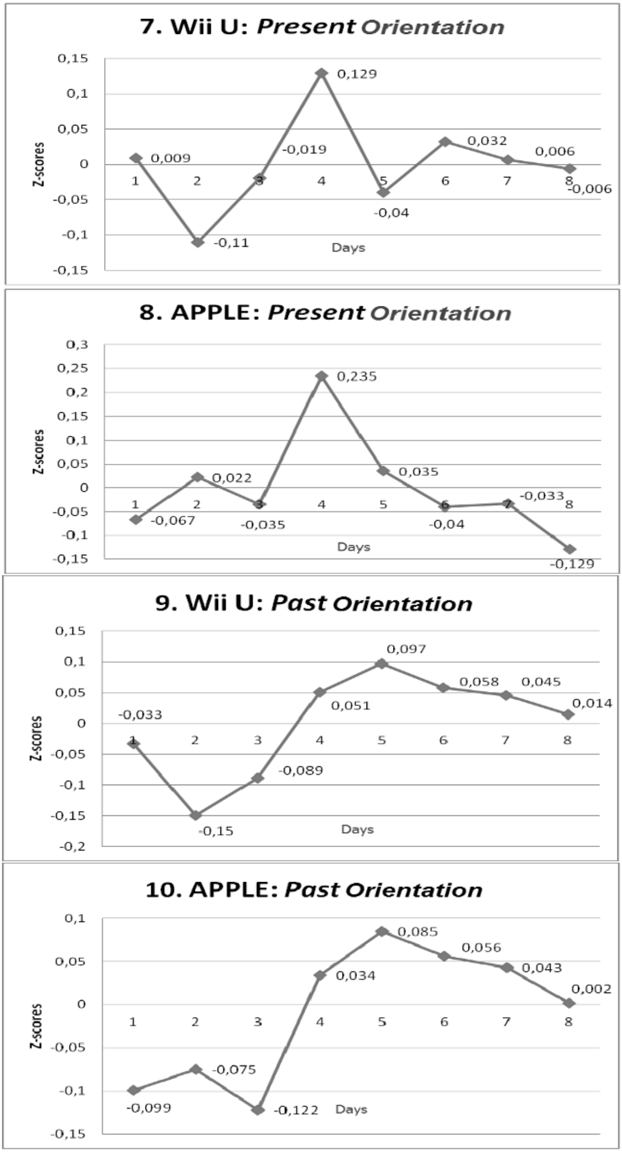


Graphs 1, 2: Behavioral Engagement (the fourth day is the day of the event)

Interestingly, the text analysis, also, revealed that consumers engage continuously in eWOM conversations as an alternative means of "participating" in the three phases of the event. Actually, it seems like they had synchronized their clocks to keep track of the event (Wii U: x2=18.30, df=7, n=3,694, p<.011, Apple: x2=254.99, df=7, n=7,107, p<.000) (Graphs 3 and 4). Their tweets had a future-orientation on the days preceding the event (Wii U: x2=36.13, df=7, n=3,694, p<.000, Apple: x2=29.61, df=7, n=7,107, p<.000), a present-orientation the day of the event (Wii U: x2=20.43, df=7, n=3,694, p<.005, Apple: x2=74.74, df=7, n=7,107, p<.000) and a past-orientation the days following the event (Wii U: x2=20.55, df=7, n=3,694, p<.005, Apple: x2=41.55, df=7, n=7,107, p<.000) (Graphs 5-10). For instance, someone mentioned "Just one day left #Apple", while another one posted "Today is THE day !!! #apple #iphone".

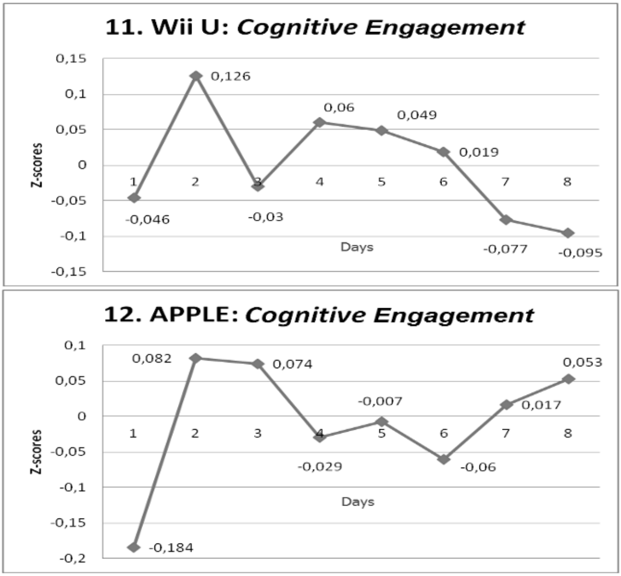


Graphs 3-6: Time orientation (the fourth day is the day of the event)



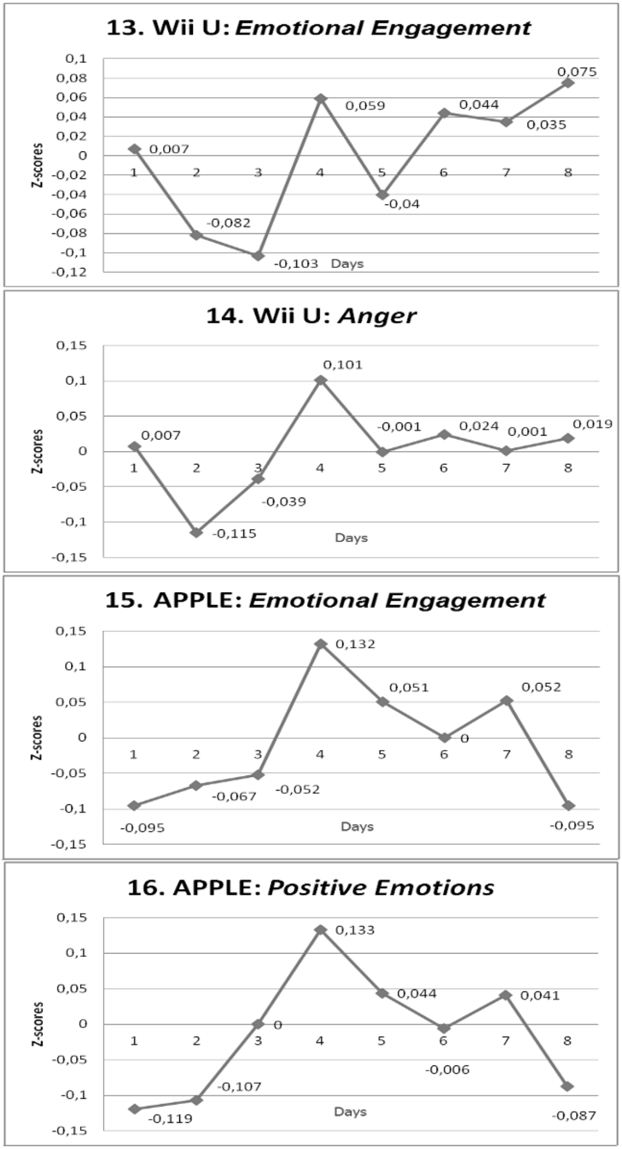
Graphs 7-10: Time Orientation (the fourth day is the day of the event)

As far as the cognitive engagement (engrossment) in eWOM is concerned, it considerably increased in the days preceding the event (Graphs 11 and 12). In those days consumers wanted to know more about the brand and the upcoming event (Wii U: x2=20.28, df=7, n=3,694, p<.005, Apple: x2=34.31, df=7, n=7,107, p<.000). For example a consumer tweeted "#iPhone 5S may have a ring of light around the home button? What do you think, fact or fiction?" Another user fed the need of other fans to know more, writing "#WiiU commercials are running before Breaking Dawn Part 2. Don't ask how I know this". Thus, hypothesis 2 is also supported. Interestingly, it seems that in the case of Apple, consumers' participation in eWOM, also had a sharp increase the fourth day (September 14, 2013) after the event. Indeed, a new PEER process had begun, because iPad Air and IOS7 were released by APPLE on September 18, 2013, eight days after their announcement.



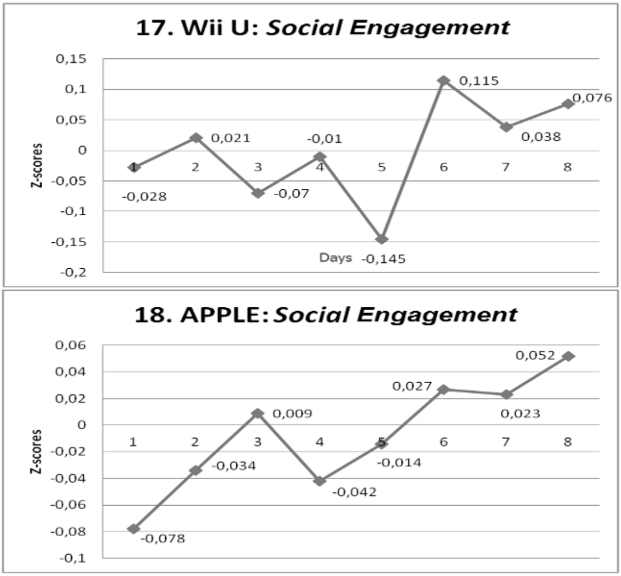
Graphs 11, 12: Cognitive Engagement (The fourth day is the day of the event)

The intense desire of consumers to share their emotions about the brand with their friends on twitter was expressed especially during the event (Wii U: x2=15.17, df=7, n=, p<, Apple: x2=31.42, df=7, n=7,107, p<.000) (Graphs 13 and 15). For instance, someone wrote "Thought you hated the original Wii. Don't worry, the #WiiU can emulate it!!", while another one tweeted "i phone 5s is insane I love it so much i think I' ll marry it. #apple #iphone5s".These results provide support to the third hypothesis. It is noteworthy that in the case of the Wii U launch event, the graph of emotional engagement is similar to the graph of anger (Graph 14).



Graphs 13-16: Emotional Engagement (The fourth day is the day of the event)

Indeed, the negative emotions of sadness and anxiety culminated in anger the day of the event, and only the fourth day after the event positive emotions returned to the normal situation (with emotional engagement experiencing a second peak) (Graph 13). On the other hand, in the case of the Apple's annual event the graph of emotional engagement (Graph 15) is similar to the graph of positive emotions (Graph 16). Given the sluggish demand that Wii U faced in its market (McLannahan, 2014) and the strong demand of iPhone 5s and iPad Air in the first quarter of 2014 (though a better performance was expected in the US) (Waters, 2014), it can be assumed that the graphs of positive and/or negative emotions can predict the commercial success of a brand launch.



Graphs 17-18: Social Engagement (The fourth day is the day of the event)

The days after the event consumers tried to establish and/or reestablish relationships with other peers around the event and the advertised brands. This finding was evident especially in the case of the Wii U launch event (Wii U: x2=21.59, df=7, n=3,694, p<.005, Apple: x2=12.17, df=7, n=7,107, p<.095) (Graphs 17, 18). For example, a user posted on twitter "My niece and nephew said 'We're gonna teach Uncle Sunni how to play the Dark Vader game' lol. They mean the force unleashed on #wiiu. Cute". On the other hand, it seems that the consumers' tendency to build relationships with other peers after the completion of the event can be detected in the increased use of the personal pronouns "you" (x2=17.89, df=7, n=7,107, p<.012) and "he/she" (x2=40.74, df=7, n=7,107, p<.000) the days following the Apple's annual event. For instance, an Apple's fan wrote "As an #Apple fan, apple must persuade us to trust Them. Where r your fingerprint going?" These findings are supportive to hypothesis 4. Finally, a regression analysis provided evidence that emotional and cognitive engagement exert a positive effect on social engagement in both events (Wii U: F=35.59, df=2, n=3,694, p<.000, Apple: F=32.33, df=2, n=7,107, p<.000).

5 Closing Arguments

The findings of this study have interesting theoretical and practical implications for organizations trying not only to engage their consumers in eWOM but also to measure and to understand the different aspects of their engagement. This study indicated that consumer engagement in eWOM takes a form of hierarchy of effects, during the three phases of a mega-brand event: participation, engrossment, emotion sharing and relationship building. The PEER model can help enterprises to provide the right message (informative, emotional or social) at the right time of an event, in order to stimulate higher consumer engagement in eWOM. Moreover, the present study indicates that emotional engagement may have a predictive value regarding a possible brand success in the market, extending Ludwig et al.'s (2013) study. Finally, this study showed that LIWC software can constitute an appropriate measure for consumer engagement in eWOM via social media. Besides, the online version of LIWC that was developed for the purpose of this study can help organizations capture the real-time pulse of consumer engagement and react promptly. This is a very important connotation since Owyang (2007) claimed that "social engagement metrics represent the Holy Grail in Web 2.0 contexts". However, amendments and new features are needed so that the system becomes more sensitive to different manifestations of consumer engagement. For instance, alternative measures should be generated for the assessment of consumer social engagement (e.g. the use of twitter usernames, increase in followers, friends and/or retweets). Future research should, also, focus on investigating the effects of behavioral, cognitive, emotional and social engagement on shopping intention (PEERS Model).

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How to Achieve a Social Media Transformation

Mark Kilgour, Sheila Sasser, and Roy Larke

1 Theory Development

In the consumer decision making process there are four sources of information consumers use to assist in determining which brands they will consider for purchase; commercial, social, experiential, and public sources. Organisations have the most control over the commercial sources, but this information is usually viewed as the least credible from a consumer perspective. In contrast, experiential sources are usually the most reliable type of information, except in situations where a social source, such as a friend, is also an expert in that product category, in which case this social source may be perceived as more reliable. This chapter looks at how well planned content creation can blur the lines between commercial and social sources of information in this new social media environment.

Social media has changed the traditional dynamics of these types of information sources, both through changing the ease and frequency of access to social sources of information (Mangold & Faulds 2009), and also by providing new ways in which corporations manage their communication processes. A number of academic articles have looked at key individual elements of social media communications including; the degree and ease of interactivity (Boyd & Ellison 2007; Stewart 2005), the perceived level of control from users (Kelly, Kerr & Drennan 2010; Swain 2005), the importance of relationship marketing (Yoon, Cropp & Cameron 2002), the characteristics of the users and their active involvement in shaping the new media environment (Chi 2011; Keller 2007; Singh & Sonnenburg 2012) as well as their motivations for using the media (Gangadharbatla 2008; Zeng, Huang & Dou 2009). Each of these areas extends our knowledge of how these factors are important for corporations in the social media environment.

While these research streams have been crucial to our understanding of social media, they are yet to be fully integrated. The integration of these different streams provides the basis for a corporation to achieve outcomes beyond what traditional broadcast media can offer. Social media provides the potential to interact with users who are highly involved, and build relationships with individuals who will then positively represent your corporation to their social media communities. Social media campaigns, if they are well integrated, provide a synergistic form of interaction with customers that can change the corporate source of information from being perceived as a commercial source to

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_3, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

being perceived as an expert social source – we refer to this as the social media transformation approach.

The conceptualisation of this social media transformation was the result of a series of exploratory studies undertaken using experts and heavy social media users. This research provides an understanding of the transformation approach that corporations can use to improve the perceived credibility and value of their social media communication strategies.

2 Method

Social media as defined for this research is the media for interaction. While it uses the internet as the primary basis for information transfer, it differs from, and is a significant sub segment of, internet media. Social media has the additional component in that it involves some form of social interaction as part of the process. This may occur in a number of different forms from social media sites such as Facebook, Weibo, YouTube, Mixi and Twitter, through to blogs and online magazine style content. This social interaction component has significant implications for how corporations and society utilise this new media. There is a lot of hype around social media as a communication medium, and the objective of this research was to understand how corporations can best utilise social media communications in their promotional campaigns.

Given the broad nature of the research objective, research was first undertaken using interviews and surveys. A series of research techniques were employed with each stage informing the research objectives of the subsequent stage and guiding the next set of research questions with increasing structure. Initially unstructured depth interviews were conducted with experts at a major advertising networking event in Detroit. Use of expert interviews was chosen as the preferred research technique as it best serviced the research objective, through obtaining a deep understanding of participants' thoughts, opinions, attitudes and behavioral intentions (Hair et al., 2008).

This first stage involved interviews with a small sample of current US social media experts in order to identify a research framework. This involved unstructured interviews and feedback forums with senior executives in social media positions. Position titles were Director of Interactive Experience, Vice President Group Director of Digital, Director of Social Media and Interactive Marketing, all of major multinational advertising agencies or emerging social media agencies, followed by brief and informal discussions, casual interviews, and informational excerpts with senior executives at Facebook, Yahoo, Google, F/X, Hulu, MEDC, and VideoEgg. These took place at professional events, seminars, panels and symposiums that provided access to these individuals, who are typically unreachable.

In order to shed further light on the initial findings from the depth interviews, qualitative research was conducted using two distinct groups of heavy social media users. Given that social media is relatively new, coupled with its very dynamic nature, it was necessary to develop an analysis based on a group of heavy social media users who possess an extensive corporate background and applied expertise. The first discussion group evolved as part of a topical media exercise of students that fit the target profile, and who were enrolled in an online, graduate, integrated marketing communication program. Respondents were identified only within their specific group and remained otherwise anonymous. Findings from this exploratory study were then used to develop a set of questions that were then administered to a group of graduate students in the United States and New Zealand.

The refined survey questionnaire was administered to two small groups of 10 graduate students enrolled in at two major universities in the United States and New Zealand. This group was selected as they fit the profile of heavy and informed users of social media (VALS™, SRI Consulting Business Intelligence 2009). Thematic analysis was undertaken to identify key themes. Finally a further survey was administered to 105 executive graduate MBA and Graduate Master's students with five years of industry experience in appropriate industries. Thematic analysis was conducted on the data and key themes identified. This series of studies provided a number of insights. Integrating the key set of themes, lead to the identification of the social media transformation process. Given the amount of data generated and limited space, this paper focuses on a limited number of themes.

3 Theme One – Context Matters

Social media has quickly become a prevalent source of social information. Particularly amongst certain segments, the high usage and ease of access to social media means consumers have become more reliant on social sources of information to determine their consideration sets for purchase. These social sources of information are viewed as more reliable than traditional broadcast advertising. Not only does social media provide information that is perceived as more credible, the high use of social media by some segments means that traditional media are being crowded out, especially as simultaneous viewing habits increase (Pavlou & Stewart 2000). However, social media is not a traditional media and even if companies are able to use this media to converse with consumers, the consumer can always stop the conversation. It is important for an corporation to first understand the social media environment and the opportunities and constraints that this environment presents.

Responses highlighted the importance of the media environment as influencing expectations and perceived benefits, as context dictates customers' expectations and values. In terms of why consumers use the media, it is clear that consumers use social media primarily to meet social and esteem needs by interacting with friends, family, and communities, with which they share common interests (Ridings & Gefen 2004). From a corporate perspective, respondents emphasised the need to avoid using social media as a traditional broadcast advertising medium.

A key difference between the social media context and traditional media such as radio or television is that, unlike traditional broadcast media where the content is primarily provided by corporations for customer's entertainment purposes, and where consumers have an expectation that the cost of that entertainment is advertising, in the social media context the platform is primarily for social interaction between individuals who share common interests and who do not accept that the cost of using the medium is advertising. This lack of acceptance of advertising means that corporate communications need to be integrated into the reasons for people using this medium – their social and esteem needs.

For a corporation using this medium it is therefore paramount that they are not using it to merely sell product, but are providing something that is of social value. A consistent theme in responses was the need for a soft sell approach and the need to provide information that is of value to the community at large. So while corporations may provide content and entertainment, to be effective they need to do so in a way that their message becomes part of the social interaction and provides value to either the individual or the community.

4 Theme Two: Social Value

A central theme across all respondents was the need for corporations to interact in a way that is valued by their targeted social media community. This value may be a result of individuals discussing entertaining brand activities or promotions, or by providing information to an individual that will enhance their social standing.

A corporation can try to sell to social media users, but unlike many advertising media, this is not the place users expect to see commercial information. Unless the user has chosen to seek out commercial information, then in most cases corporate advertising messages will be viewed as an intrusion from an outsider into the user's social media space. To overcome this limitation social media facilitated sites, or those that use a social model, are appearing that have a direct commercial objective. Examples include Gilte Group, Glamour Sales, or other flash sales membership sites, as well as more general social media commerce sites like style.com, fancy.com, or, in a more specialist way, iQon and Buyma.com in Japan.

Buyma.com, uses social interaction as the entire basis of its business model, integrating with the Japanese group orientated culture, limitations on import opportunities and language barriers. Members to the site, which at its most basic level is a social media site, sign up to be either sellers (called ‘buyers’ by the site in the same way as any retail organisation) or purchasers. Buyers are most usually based overseas or are about to travel overseas. They take orders from their followers for products only available outside Japan, and build their following based on their reviews and access to new and interesting merchandise. Buyma.com takes a margin from both seller and purchaser.

As this example indicates, the key for brand use of social media is interactivity, but it does not need to be corporations interacting with customers directly, it can be a message or platform that results in social interaction. So when looking at using social media, broadcast type advertising is appropriate if corporations are providing advertisements which then result in social interactions. Subsequently, traditional advertising media may still have an effect in this media given appropriately creative content. Although respondents generally do not listen to corporate broadcast advertisements in a social media setting, respondents noted that social media communications can be effective if they do not just ‘talk at the consumer’, but start by listening and interacting with them, creating conversations.

Consumers will only maintain a relationship with a brand on social media if the value they get from the relationship is perceived to be greater than the cost of maintaining that relationship. The same applies for the corporation. While the transaction costs may seem to be minimal for the consumer in an online environment, the increasing time scarcity of consumers may continue to increase the perceived relationship cost. If, however, a consumer’s self-concept is tied to information provided by the brand, then this will enhance the value of the relationship. If that consumer is also an influencer and an existing brand advocate, then the corporate value of maintaining that relationship is dramatically increased.

5 Theme Three: Integration

One of the issues noted by respondents was that interactions must consider the current relationship between the corporation and the social media user. Each social media user comes with a pre-existing level of knowledge, and relationship, with the corporation. This relationship may range from a prospect to a brand advocate. This level of pre-existing knowledge influences how each person will react to content.

People may initially join a social networking site, forum, or view a user generated content site, for social needs, and as their level of participation increases their self-identity may become related and enhanced by their interactions with the site itself. This greater level of involvement presupposes a greater level of commitment and a development of further social and self-esteem based bonds which will further influence the users' motivations. User generated content and interactivity also changes the degree of interdependence and power of individual contributors. Knowledge of the users and information generation therefore become key currencies in social media.

6 Theme Four: Targeted Objectives

As with any form of promotion, the corporation will have different objectives they need to achieve based upon the current type of relationship they have with a customer. For prospects, a corporation will have to gain attention and develop affective responses. For a brand advocate, reinforcement of existing positive attitudes and encouraging word of mouth is often the focus. Hence the content elements within messages will depend upon the current level of brand knowledge, with more originality relative to appropriateness elements required to break through to less knowledgeable target audiences such as prospects. For advocates, more focus will be on appropriateness elements and the maintenance of a dialogue in order to further build the relationship and encourage positive word of mouth. However, the fact that consumers are using this media for social rather than commercial purposes means a high level of novelty may still be required and effects are likely to be small unless the user finds social value in the corporate message. Highly original social media advertising can create the 'talk around the water cooler' effect, and generate conversations within the community.

The problem of linking social media content to actual sales opportunities has now been largely solved. In Japan, a reasonably recent example and one currently receiving significant support in terms of venture funding from Itochu Technology Ventures and KDDI is iQon. The company began as a fashion-related social media site. Members take pictures of themselves in their own fashion outfits (called 'looks') and make collages of their fashion collections which they post online. In addition to receiving comments and advice from other members, and building a 'fan' following in this way, iQon has commercialised the service in two ways. First, comment and feedback, even complete make-over advice is provided at a fee by the company's own experts. Secondly, and more importantly, iQon links individual photos of product to online sales sites of the brand in question, allowing users to click a product and make an immediate purchase. This kind of thing has been common in digital magazines for much of the past 10 years, but it is now possible using product shots posted by members from the general public. Until it was shutdown in 2014, Dentsu and NTT's 'Finddog' smartphone search tool similarly allowed consumers to take photos of fashion and interior items they find anywhere, and have the software search for the same item in NTT's databases, compiled from links with most of the major catalogue shopping sites.

One advantage of most social media platforms is that they allow for the full range of promotional tools to be utilised from advertising through publicity, sales promotions and even virtual personal selling. The costs versus the benefits need to be considered when deciding upon whom to target using which social media platform, and which promotional tools to use. Advocates will be more responsive to social media communications as they have a higher level of existing knowledge and involvement with the brand. However, the fact people are non-responsive to advertising using this media will diminish the relative effectiveness of using this media for that purpose. Subsequently it is not surprising that many corporations have chosen to include sales promotions activities to incentivise response.

Social media can be used as a virtual salesperson with the opportunity for a corporation to develop a relationship with customers. While the costs of a virtual salesperson may be lower than an actual face to face or telephone based sales call, this relationship building will still consume significant resources and hence relative costs to benefits must be considered. Relationship variables have been extensively modelled in the literature (Wilson, 1995) and include key variables commitment, trust, cooperation, mutual goals and performance satisfaction. Many of these variables will take a significant amount of time and resources to develop, and operationalising the system of interaction will vary dependent upon the status of the current relationship, and the product category. Convincing a prospect, using a virtual salesperson, that your corporation has mutual goals with them and that you can be trusted is a difficult proposition as prospects are unlikely to be responsive, even to the initial communication. Subsequently applying resources to achieve more intensive interactions will be more cost effective with consumers who have a strong existing relationship with the brand.

7 Theme Five: Influencing the Influencers

Many social media commentators have identified what are referred to as influencers, and this theme was clear in the comments in this research. Influencers are people who have strong networks within a social media community and who diffuse information that maintains and often enhances information flows across that community (Murdough 2009). Some of these people are active bloggers, or tweeters, with large followings of people who actively seek out their messages. The importance of these opinion leaders, and/or network hubs, has been increased significantly due to the large number of people having access to their communications over what is a highly efficient and timely media. While the true value of some of these individuals may be overestimated due to the increasing propensity to 'buy' followers and likes, their relative effect is still substantial. Corporations must be careful when attempting to influence these opinion leaders as they are difficult to control and could therefore result in unwanted re-messaging.

Corporations need to identify the value they can provide to these key influencers. Social media can be a source of product information (Ahrens & Coyle 2011), and the influencers achieve their influential status by providing social information to the community. Some of this social information may be related to products and services. Content therefore needs to be developed that has social value. The problem is that what is valued by whom will differ at least to some extent on the individual. Understanding influencers and developing content to meet their needs therefore increases the likelihood of the corporation's message being redeveloped and diffused in a form that loses its perceived corporate identity. Ideally over time such strong relationships can be developed with influencers that they become advocates of the brand, actively and voluntarily becoming part of the communication process; and passing on information and/or events to their networks.

Subsequently, to facilitate positive social discussion around their brands, corporations should not only identify opinion leaders they should identify those that are already advocates and those that would value information from the corporation to enhance their social standing. This can be achieved through data mining of social media information as this can provide invaluable information about groups of people and the relationships between demographic and behavioural information and interests, attitudes, and purchase intentions. Not only is basic demographic and geographic data available, underlying motivations to use the social media, such as friendship versus emotional support, can be utilised to identify key opinion leaders who will be receptive to the brand message. If opinion leaders can be identified whose self-concept is tied to their knowledge of the product category, then they are more likely to be receptive to brand information.

The alternative strategy is for a corporate representative to become the influencer in the product category. However, this strategy has significant risks as a lack of transparency in terms of disclosure of vested interests can result in a strong negative brand effect. Influencers who are corporate based lose credibility as they are seen as a commercial, not a social source, of information. Hence a corporation's social media spokespeople must be careful not to be seen as selling product but providing information.

8 Theme Six: How to Communicate

People in the social media environment are not looking for ads. However, if the ad is novel enough it may become part of the social conversation in social media. Most forms of advertising are however, essentially just another form of broadcast advertising and in many circumstances it may be more effective to continue to use traditional media such as TV or radio where there is at least some acceptance of advertising as the cost of using those media, and also provide those ads in a viewable social media context such as on the corporate Facebook page or on YouTube.

The greatest potential return from social media activities is when a corporation is able to change their commercial communication to be perceived as an expert social source. They would do this by targeting social media influencers and having a conversation with them. If the corporation can develop relationships with brand advocates who are also social media influencers, then this will provide a significant return through e-word of mouth and inclusion of the brand in prospects' consideration sets.

While the ultimate aim of corporate communications is brand purchase, for this to occur they must be in the customer's consideration set. Social sources of information from opinion leaders are often the most powerful and credible source of information for consumers when developing their consideration sets. By providing influencers with information that will enable them to maintain their expert status in their social media community, corporations can change their corporate communication into an expert social source – the social media transformation approach. Given that influencers are identifiable through their activities on social media sites and their motives can also be determined through analysis of their social media behaviour, highly targeted content can be developed.

Of course once you are in the customer's consideration set you still need to have a high quality landing site for the customer to be able to further evaluate and ideally purchase your product – this is now so crucial that the landing site is a key element in the 'quality' measure used in Google Adwords. Social media provides the basis for corporations to have their brands become the consumer's friend, but unless it is part of an integrated process of moving consumers through cognition, affective, and behavioural responses, then it is wasted. Hence a series of steps can be utilised to manage the social media transformation process, although the objectives and content elements will depend upon the characteristics of the target audience, and in particular their brand relationship and level of category involvement. For example, when targeting key influencers with a strong positive relationship with the brand and category, the following steps can be followed to assist with the process;

The Social Media Transformation Approach

1. Determine your communication objectives and the target audience

2. Use social media information sources to identify the key influencers of your target audience who have a strong and positive relationship with your brand/ corporation

3. Determine the value those influencers get from their social media community and how you can assist them in attaining this value

4. Integrate what the influencers value into your key message

5. Provide an integrated landing site to support the process

6. Scan the social media environment to identify opportunities to implement the social media transformation process

7. Evaluate and refine the message based upon the outcome of the target's social media interactions in relation to their user generated content and their changing user status.

9 Implications

Social media changes the environment in which communication takes place and hence a corporation must adapt to this new environment. Integration of the implications of the key themes led to the following insight – if done properly social media can be used to change a corporation's communications from being perceived as a commercial source to a social source. The result of which is that the brand becomes their friend. This is critical in a social media environment but is something a lot of managers are yet to grasp.

Social media, as the name implies, provides a 'friend' or at least 'the opinion of a friend', providing constant, fresh content, information and involvement. Many corporations are still using social media as a broadcast sales media rather that what it ideally is: a social media. Concepts such as permission marketing and in-bound marketing have been coined to refocus social media campaigns and they are an integral part of a social media strategy, but this social media transformational approach goes beyond this.

Social media is not a traditional advertising media and should not be used as such. The focus should be to understand the community and the social dynamics of that community so that you can provide that community or its key members with something they want that relates to your brand – true marketing. Social media marketing should not follow the traditional broadcast route, you have to add something to the community not just sell to it.

Brands may not assume that all social media users welcome intrusions, although it may be appropriate for some users, others may not be so eager to engage. Brand managers and all entities engaged in social media positioning must carefully listen to the consumer conversations and determine the needs and segments that may be receptive. Social media is complex as each user is different. Understanding of the drivers of these differences allows for more effective content creation strategies that may allow your brand to become the customer's friend.

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Discovering Twitter Metrics for Creative Super Bowl Campaigns

Chong Oh, Sheila Sasser, Chelsea Lockwood-White, and Soliman Almahmoud

1 Introduction

While Twitter's use in IMC for branding, buzz marketing, and CRM is well documented, the interaction between Twitter and a brand's television broadcast advertising is not apparent (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel, & Chowdhury, 2009). With measurement firms such as Nielsen now tracking data on the amount of Twitter buzz and usage for certain television programs, it is becoming necessary to actually quantify the impact of Twitter on brand advertising. Current research shows that increased Twitter activity with movie box office releases is quantifiably related to opening-weekend box office gross revenue, and the use of Twitter resulted in increased interaction (Oh, 2013). In addition, mass-scale brand sentiment via the Twitter platform has been correlated to a level of 86.7% with the stock prices of the corresponding brand (Bollen, Mao & Zeng, 2011). The present exploratory research aims to quantify a link between the volume of tweets in response to Super Bowl ads and those ads' ratings in USA Today *AD-METER*, and provide a rationale for why some ads are "Tweetworthy" while others fall short.

The use of the social media outlet Twitter as a branding outlet in IMC is well-documented, but a major criticism is that the effects of social networking sites (SNSs) on branding measures and return on investment are extremely difficult to quantify, leading marketers to wonder if social media efforts are worth the effort. Where Twitter and other associated SNSs are shown to have strength is in creating eWOM (electronic word of mouth) and "buzz," as tools for users to share what they find interesting or useful, when tied into an IMC campaign (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel, & Chowdhury, 2009). Twitter and other SNSs also have a well-documented history of acting as a customer relationship management (CRM) tool as part of an IMC plan, with the trade publication "Customer Relationship Management" having regular features on the use of Twitter specifically in the field of CRM. Recommendations for effective Twitter use as a branding tool involve the use of authenticity, creativity, and creating shared value for both brand and follower (Fraser, 2009). Research also shows that users of Twitter tend to be more engaged with brands versus other SNSs (Kee, 2009). However useful Twitter and SNSs seem, particularly due to the low cost needed to employ these tools as part of an IMC plan, the effects of Twitter

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_4, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

and SNS use on traditional measures like revenues, purchases, or other branding measures are extraordinarily difficult to measure. Nielsen has begun keeping data on Twitter use in relation to television programs, showing higher television ratings for programs with higher amounts of Twitter buzz, showing that "…by midseason Twitter was responsible for more of the variance in ratings for 18-34 year olds than advertising spend." (Warc, 2013).

Going further into the crossover between television and SNSs in the age of multi-screen technology, television program "The X Factor" collaborated with Twitter in a revolutionary partnership at the time, featuring real-time tweets and Twitter data featured on the television program, and comments from the hosts of the show on a specialized Twitter feed (Bulkley, 2011). Fostering a collaborative community within the context of social networking sites like Twitter may indeed be necessary for the businesses of today, which can be arguably exist as social businesses in the changing roles of an organization in response to market demands and a heavily "socially networked marketplace." (Weinberg, de Ruyter Ko, Buck, & Keeling, 2013). Ads that may have worked in the past to increase sales may not work with the increasingly engaged and interactive consumer in today's marketplace. The research also shows that value exists and is created within online communities like Twitter and YouTube through the use of co-creation. Intangible factors making up the total value of an online community include intellectual value, through content co-creation, social value, through interactivity and connection, as well as cultural value, in the form of a self-policing group, is noted in a netnographical study by Seraj (2012). The study found that online communities were ideal hotbeds for ideas and insights in the form of created value by customers for brands (Seraj, 2012).

Social media's value in branding efforts is notoriously hard to measure, but there is research showing that social media-created value can also translate to actual financial value and performance. The use of data-mining within the Twitter platform can be used to perform research on tweets and tweeters on a massive level. Besprosvan, through the use of data-mining and linguistic coding software, was able to gain insights on brand and consumer sentiment as an aggregate (Besprosvan & Oyarzun, 2009). In addition the combination of mood-tracking with Twitter data mining has been used to predict stock prices with an accuracy of 86.7%, showing the tie between social media affective behavior and financial performance of firms (Bollen, Mao, & Zeng, 2011) In fact, Yu, Duan, and Cao (2013) have found that a stronger relationship exists between social media and firm performance than with conventional media tools. The interaction of social media with conventional media tools is also found to influence stock in predictable ways, again demonstrating the link between social media performance and actual financial performance (Yu, Duan, & Cao, 2013). These studies show that not only intangible value, but also financial value of a company can be created by users of the products through SNSs. This lends credence to probing such relationships, in the context of Super Bowl Advertising, since it represents the most expensive media time. It is used as a showcase for commercials and brands, often reaching over 110 million viewers.

In another testament to the changing game of marketing in the social networking age, Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker, and Bloching (2013) demonstrate that the increased participation of “now-more-powerful” consumers in the marketplace, as well as the sense of community fostered in social networking environments, as previously discussed, have turned marketing and branding efforts into a pinball game (with the balls as various marketing tools, and bumpers, paddles, shots, etc, as consumers who can respond and slow things down, move things faster, or change trajectory of marketing tools) as opposed to the bowling-game-marketing of the past where you have one marketing tool (one ball) and non-interactive participants in the marketplace (the pins). Due to the changing landscape of the marketplace as discussed, the need for new metrics, openness to co-creation of value as opposed to value generation strategies of the past, and other organizational adaptations to create value for brands (Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker, & Bloching, 2013). While there is research on the use of Twitter as a tool in and of itself for branding, there is little research on the interaction between Twitter and television advertising. Nielsen has begun reporting top shows engaging the highest number of viewers tweeting. Yet, the impact of Twitter buzz on the perception of television advertising, particularly on a large scale is still quite a mystery, as is the motivation for tweeting. Hopefully, the intuition gained from this study will enable researchers to better interpret, predict and quantify the effects of social media buzz and viewer interaction with television advertising, and to discover what kinds of advertisements are “Tweetworthy” as evidenced by number of Tweets shareable among users.

2 Hypotheses

The overall research objective is to search for links between characteristics of Twitter activity surrounding Super Bowl ads that may cause some advertisements to be more “Tweetworthy” than others like suggested hashtags included in the television ad. Future research would focus on the hypotheses regarding the use of Twitter to explore brand sentiment on a large scale to look for predictive ability in quantifiable success measures for the brands, such as through increased sales or revenues. Current research focuses on any correlation between number of tweets about a brand or advertisement and Super Bowl ad’s rating on the USA Today AD-METER index.

Research Question: What are the metrics exhibited in the Twitter streams during the Super Bowl broadcast related to ad tweets aired during the game and how can these be modeled in relation to ad performance? Specifically we pose the following four hypotheses:

H1: Does the length of broadcast of the Super Bowl advertisement matter?
H2: Are ads using humor tweeted more frequently than other types of ads?
H3: Does volume of tweets related to each ad and brand matter?
H4: What is the impact of sentiment on ad rating?

The methodology for this study is based upon a proprietary software program developed by coauthors in the Computer Information Systems department combined with the framework proposed by Okazaki (Okazaki, Diaz, Rozano, & Benito, 2013). This methodology includes loading the software onto student laptop computers in advance of the research time period specified. Students are instructed on the use of the software and a beta pilot test is performed to demonstrate how the Twitter Stream is accessed.

Additionally a group of students work in tandem in a computer lab setting to ensure that everything is functioning successfully, as a backup measure and for quality control. Team leaders take turns to ensure that all vital information is captured and to avoid wear out during the course of the broadcast of the game. The preparation begins many months in advance and continues after the end of the broadcast, now in the third year of the study period. Each year, an innovation is added to the methodology, such as an advance survey to ascertain twitter handles and key words. Teams collect advance listings of the Super Bowl commercials as soon as they become available or are leaked to the press. Once the data is caputured, it is cleaned and prepared for analysis. Finally, a set of OLS regression models and statistical analysis is employed to investigate the proposed hypotheses and test for significance.

3 Data, Variables and Findings

Teams of students assembled in the student center auditorium watched the Super Bowl broadcast on the big screen with their laptops on game night. Over 660,000 tweets were collected from an audience of over 525,000 in Twitter using automated scripts during the 2014 Super Bowl game from 6 to 11 pm. There were fifty-two ads featured during the event. Students were tasked to identify keywords such as hashtags from each commercial and those keywords were used in the scripts to search and download relevant tweets. Table 1 shows examples of keywords for brand, ad and others that are visible in the tweets. while Table 2 shows top five keywords with their corresponding tweet volumes.

Table 1: Twitter message samples of 2014 ad and brand keywords

Ex.	*Message*	*Ad keywords*	*Brand keywords*	*Other keywords*
1	Those Budweiser commercials had me balling my eyes out!! #Budweiser #SuperBowlXLVIII #horsepuppy #tearjerker	#horsepuppy	#Budweiser	#SuperBowlXLVIII, #tearjerker
2	Thanks #CocaCola & #Cheerios for showing U.S. multicultural families and successfully including diverse markets #adbowl #AmericaIsBeautiful	#AmericaIsBeautiful	#CocaCola, #Cheerios	#adbowl
3	Scarlett Johansson should realize that the only real flavor of #SodaStream is oppression#superbowl	#SodaStream	#SodaStream	#superbowl

One person served as time keeper and recorded the exact time that the commercials aired during the game. This is especially important given the various media placements of commercials during specific time slots for the broadcast. Figure 1 shows a timeline of top Super Bowl brands with their respective tweet volume during the course of the game. The affective Budweiser ad is the most talked about brand followed closely by a controverial Coke spot.

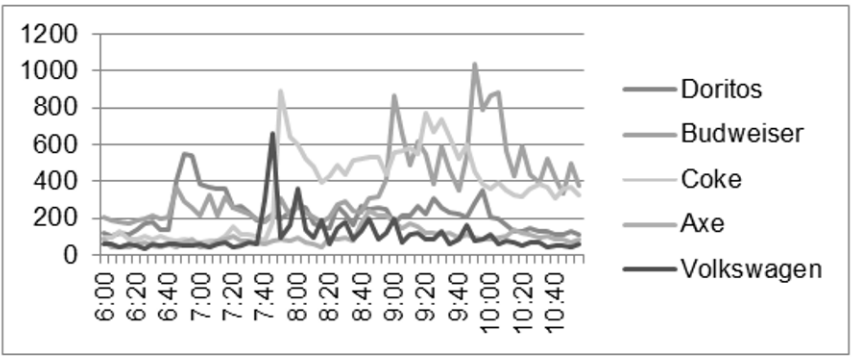

Figure 1: Tweet volume of top 2014 Super Bowl ads by time and brand

The top five keywords and top five brands linked to those keywords are shown in Table 2 below. Budweiser scored the most with a highly emotional affective ad about a puppy and was by far the leader of the pack. Table 3 is a sample of the coding of the positive and negative sentiment expressed in the tweets using the LIWC software based on the emotion state of the words used.

Table 2: Top five 2014 keywords

Keyword	*Brand*	*Twitter Messages*
puppy	Budweiser	10760
BOA	Bank of America	8724
captainamerica	Captain America	8507
america	Coke	5667
beer	Budweiser	5372

Table 3: Sample 2014 Twitter messages with LIWC index and sentiment

Message	*LIWC index*	*Sentiment*
That coca-cola commercial was beautiful! #AmericaIsBeautiful	14.29 (positive) 0 (negative)	1 (positive)
RT @alexhammay: Coke you liberal <EXPLETIVE> <EXPLETIVE > @cocacola #americaISbeautiful	0 (positive) 11.11 (negative)	-1 (negative)
@CocaCola: The people are why #AmericaIsBeautiful. Send a selfie & maybe well see you in Times Square! You should stop	0 (positive) 0 (negative)	0 (neutral)

As a first step in sentiment analysis, an emotion score is extracted for each tweet using LIWC software (Pennebaker, Francis & Booth, 2001) based on the emotion state of the words in each tweet. Table 3 shows an example of a few tweets with their LIWC scores. Counting all the total positive and negative Twitter messages for each brand (x), one can then adopt the positive-negative index measure introduced by Antweiler & Frank (2004) in generating the *SENTIMENT* variable. This measure was used to determine the bullishness index of a stock ticker for each trading day and they found this measure to be robust in accounting for large number of messages expressing a particular sentiment. A measure that is more than 0 is positive (bullish), while 0 is neutral and less than 0 is negative (bearish).

Eq. 1 shows the equation for $SENTIMENT_x$ where x is the brand and $TOTAL_x^{POSITIVE}$ and $TOTAL_x^{NEGATIVE}$ are total count of positive and negative messages for that brand.

$$SENTIMENT_x = \ln \left[\frac{1 + TOTAL_x^{POSITIVE}}{1 + TOTAL_x^{NEGATIVE}} \right] \quad (1)$$

Table 4 shows top five commercials sorted by AD-METER rating with corresponding extracted sentiment values.

Table 4: Top 2014 five commercials by ADMETER rating

Commercial	*Brand*	*Ad-meter*	*avg-length* (seconds)	*Humor*	*Brand -vol*	*Ad-vol*	*Senti-ment*
Puppy Love	Budweiser	8.29	:60	0	22501	10206	1.66
Cowboy Kid	Doritos	7.58	:30	1	13365	9000	1.42
Hero's Welcome	Budweiser	7.21	:60	0	22501	9799	1.66
Time Machine	Doritos	7.13	:30	1	13365	5241	1.42
80's celebrity	Radio Shack	7	:30	1	2789	1659	3.02

The dependent variable used for this study is the USA Today AD-METER ad likeability measure. AD-METER is an annual survey that recruited thousands of panelists across the US to participate in AD-METER (Wall Street Journal, 2014). This ad likeability measure was used in past literature (Yelkur et al., 2013; Lawrence, Fournier & Brunel, 2013) to examine consumer-generated advertising. AD-METER is considered to be the most widely recognized measure of Super Bowl commercial popularity (Kanner, 2004). Two groups of independent variables are examined: Super Bowl (SB) and Social Media (SM) measures for brand (x) and ad (i). Each is discussed in detail below.

Super Bowl (SB) Metrics

$HUMOR_i$ has been labeled as a valuable advertising element and has direct impact on ad likeability (Yelkur et al., 2013). It gains attention (e.g. Eisend, 2009), improves recall (e.g. Chung & Zhao, 2003) and influences attitude towards the ad (e.g. De Pelsmacker & Geuens, 1996).

AD-LENGTH$_i$ is commercial air time in seconds, another significant element to ad likeability based on literature (Yelkur et al., 2013). Longer commercials were found to generate greater recall, better sponsor identification and more consumer desire for the products (Wheatly, 1968; Yelkur et al., 2013).

Social Media (SM) Metrics

BRAND-VOL$_x$ or brand volume of tweets is a measure of tweets about a particular brand. This measure has been shown to be an accurate measure of Word-of-mouth (WOM) (Oh, 2013; Rui et al., 2010).

AD-VOL$_i$ or ad volume of tweets is a measure of tweets about a commercial. Similar to BRAND-VOL, this measure is the WOM except that it is related to a specific commercial and not to the brand.

SENTIMENT$_x$ is an index measure of the polarity of number of positive over negative tweets for each brand. *SENTIMENT$_x$* is relevant to other contexts such as movies (Oh, 2013) and online sales (Duan, Gu & Whinston, 2008).

Table 5 outlines a summary statistics while Table 6 shows correlation matrix for all variables above. Figure 2 shows the scatter plots of a few key variables.

Table 5: Summary statistics of key variables for 2014 ads

Variable	*Type*	*Description*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*
ADMETER$_i$	Numeric	USA Today ad likeability	5.588	.952	3.89	8.29
AVG-LENGTH$_i$	Numeric	Commercial air time in seconds.	43.269	20.070	15.00	120.00
HUMOR$_i$	Binary	Commercial has humor element.	.24	.432	0	1
BRAND-VOL$_x$	Numeric	# of tweets brand.	4967.903	5791.856	111.0	22501.00
AD-VOL$_i$	Numeric	# of tweets commercial.	2041.307	2349.057	9.00	10206.00
SENTIMENT$_x$	Numeric	Polarity of + to - tweets.	1.636	.704	.286	4.025

Scatter plots denote positive correlations for *BRAND-VOL*$_x$, *AD-VOL*$_i$ and *SENTIMENT*$_x$ with *AD METER*$_i$, as seen below:

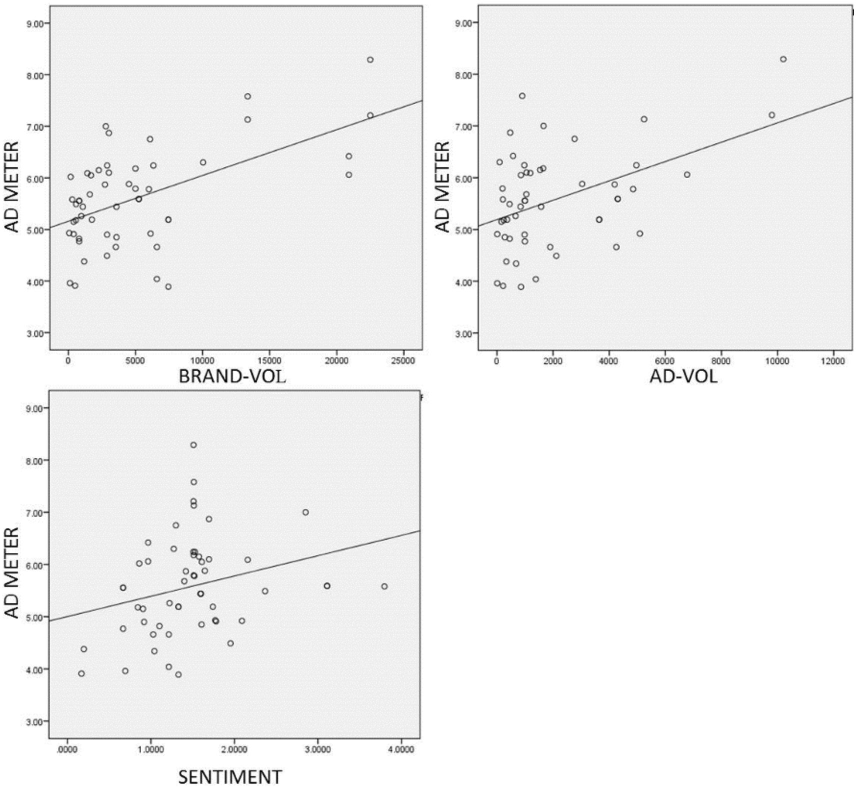

Figure 2: Scatter plots of ADMETER, BRAND-VOL, AD-VOL, and SENTIMENT

Table 6 exhibits the correlation matrix of key variables for Super Bowl commercials airing in the 2014 game. Note that there are high pairwise correlations between both brand volume and ad volume and AD-METER scores.

Table 6: Correlation Matrix of key variables for 2014 ads

		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	$ADMETER_i$	1					
2	$AVG\text{-}LENGTH_i$	.198	1				
3	$HUMOR_i$	.100	.031	1			
4	$BRAND\text{-}VOL_x$	.548**	.146	.091	1		
5	$AD\text{-}VOL_i$	.459**	088	.114	.696**	1	
6	$SENTIMENT_x$	.264	-.094	.025	-.045	.130	1

Note: High pairwise correlations between $BRAND\text{-}VOL_x$ and $AD\ METER_i$ as well as between $AD\text{-}VOL_i$ and $AD\ METER_i$.

4 Validation Analysis and Results of Findings

Finally, as validation of our proposed framework, we employed three Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression models (Kennedy, 1992) in examining characteristics of social media buzz surrounding Super Bowl commercials with performance ratings obtained from USA Today *AD-METER*. We used a stepwise regression of SB commercial characteristics and SM measures on *AD METER* rating. The first model relates SB commercial measures to *AD METER* rating, second model relates SM measures with *AD METER* ratings and the third model relates a combination of both SB and SM measures to *AD METER* rating.

4.1 Relating Super Bowl Characteristics to Ad Meter Rating

$$ADMETER_i = \beta_0\text{*intercept} + \beta_1 * LENGTH_i + \beta_2 * HUMOR_i + e \qquad (2)$$

Eq. 2 or Model 1 examined SB commercial characteristics, specifically $LENGTH_i$ and $HUMOR_i$ with $AD\ METER_i$. Unfortunately we were unable to find any significant correlation between the predictors with ad rating. The adjusted R-squared for Model 1 is a low 1.2%. Both H1 and H2 are not supported.

4.2 Relating Social Media Measures to Ad meter Rating

$$ADMETER_i = \beta_0\text{*intercept} + \beta_1 * BRAND\text{-}VOL_x + \beta_2 * AD\text{-}VOL_i + \beta_3 * SENTIMENT_x + e \qquad (3)$$

Eq. 3 or Model 2 examined SM measures on SB commercials, namely *AD-VOL*$_i$, *BRAND-VOL*$_x$ and *SENTIMENT*$_x$ with *AD METER*$_{\mathrm{i}}$. *BRAND-VOL*$_x$ (β = .544) and *SENTIMENT*$_x$ (β = .292) are significant in relating to *AD METER*$_{\mathrm{i}}$. The adjusted R-squared for Model 2 is 35.7% signifying a strong ability of the model in explaining *AD METER*$_{\mathrm{i}}$. The volume of tweets about commercial brands is a significant predictor of future commercial performance. In addition, the more positive the tweets are about a particular brand, the higher *AD METER*$_{\mathrm{i}}$ will be. On average, the addition of one message relate to a .54% increase in *AD METER*$_{\mathrm{i}}$. Table 7 outlines the result. Therefore both H3 and H4 are supported.

4.3 Relating Super Bowl and Social Media Measures to Ad meter Rating

$$ADMETER_i = \beta_0\text{*intercept} + \beta_1\text{*}LENGTH_i + \beta_2\text{*}HUMOR_i + \beta_3\text{*}BRAND\text{-}VOL_x + \beta_4\text{*}AD\text{-}VOL_i + \beta_5\text{*}SENTIMENT_x + e \quad (4)$$

Eq. 4 or Model 3 examined both SB commercial characteristics and SM measures on *AD METER*$_{\mathrm{i}}$. The result is consistent with those of Model 1 and Model 2. *BRAND-VOL*$_x$ (β =.527) and *SENTIMENT*$_x$ (β =.304) are still significant in relating to *AD METER*$_{\mathrm{i}}$ while SB characteristics are not relevant. The adjusted R-squared for Model 3 is 34.9%. *AD-VOL*$_i$ (β=.034) is insignificant probably due to the high collinearity between *AD-VOL*$_i$ and *BRAND-VOL*$_x$ (Refer to Table 7). An additional model (Model 4) is tested to show that without *BRAND-VOL*$_x$, *AD-VOL*$_i$ is significant. Table 7 outlines the result. Therefore H3 is also supported for ad volume.

Table 7: OLS Regression Results

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**
	B	β	β	B
Dependent Variable	*AD METER*	*AD METER*	*AD METER*	*AD METER*
LENGTH	.196 (.007)		.133 (.005)	.176 (.006)
HUMOR	.095 (.301)		.039 (.249)	.045 (.272)
AD-VOL		.039 (0)	.034 (0)	.407 (0)**
BRAND-VOL		.544 (0)**	.527 (0)**	
SENTIMENT		.292 (.155)*	.304 (.157)*	.241 (.168)
N	52	52	52	52
R-squared	.048	.397	.415	.292

Adjusted R-squared	.01	.357	.349	.231
F	1.273	10.088	6.254	4.748

* <.05, **<.01, ***<.001

β - Standardized coefficient, all models are with average VIF values of less than 3.

5 Discussion and Implications

Our study confirmed that social media (SM) measures, specifically volume of tweets, have value in relating Super Bowl ads to performance outcomes. In particular social media measures of brands and ads are relevant to ad ratings. In addition, those ads with a higher proportion of positive tweets are more likely to obtain higher ad ratings as well. Overall, this study concludes that social media measures can be a supplementary indicator of ad performance, especially for acquiring instant feedback at a low cost. Furthermore with social media ads that were released before the Super Bowl game, feedback could be obtained much earlier before the ad is officially shown at the game. Surprisingly Super Bowl measures such as HUMOR and length of ads are not relevant to ad ratings.

Implications and managerial recommendations are still a work in progress due to the exploratory nature of this study. Current recommendations would be for marketers who want their advertisements to be tweeted during the Super Bowl to design their advertisement with a positive message. The 2014 Super Tweet Bowl data collection was a great success with over 30 people participating in this unique research process at the student center and another computer lab full of Computer Information Science students handling the back end. It was a pedagogical experiment and a hands on skill offering real world experience for the students (both Marketing and CIS) to learn and apply social media and social media analytics. They watched the Super Bowl ads, determined keywords, and inserted them into the servers set up by the CIS group. Scripts were enabled to run and collect all related tweets for analysis from the Twitter Stream through a proprietary program. Over 500,000+ tweets were collected for analysis, as part of this longitudinal research project to determine viewer engagement on multiple screens. The game broadcast was the most watched ever with over 111.5 million viewers according to CBS news. New limitations on the Twitter pipe hose results in some limitations on collection of data.

Future research includes coding on brand sentiment and positive/negative brand mentions for individual tweets, to be conducted on a more massive scale through Ascribe or a similar computer program. Future research is also being focused on other type of appeals used in each advertisement (emotion, sex, informational) to see if a certain type of advertising appeal results in higher "Tweetworthiness."

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Memes at an Exhibition: Consumer Interpretations of Internet Memes[1]

Dóra Horváth and Ariel Mitev

1 Introduction

Have you ever participated a virtual exhibition that is made up of memes? If not, it is high time. Our research subjects put together virtual exhibitions of memes and their explanations as guides. Our projective exploratory research focused on internet-literate consumers' choices and interpretations of internet memes. We recorded 95 respondents' narratives about 125 different memes, altogether 281 memes. Our article takes the metaphor of an exhibition tour, where memes are the reframed pictures of the exhibition. This is Mussorgsky's Pictures of an Exhibition reloaded in Bakhtin's (1984) approach to folk culture of laughter.

2 Exhibited Objects: Memes (Theoretical Background)

The study of memes isn't new at all (Tresilian, 2008). Their presence on the internet, their impact on online communication calls for its further investigation (Shifman & Thelwal, 2009).

The internet meme is a phenomenon that can be a notion, text, image, text-image combination, which spreads on the internet like fashion; its content can be a joke, gossip, picture, website, reference or a fake piece of news they suddenly appear and then vanish. Internet memes with slight or big modifications may float on the internet for years, but most of them last for only a few weeks or months (Dawkins, 1976; Gelb, 1997; Veszelszky, 2013).

Object and meaning create a sign together, and these signs are summed in the newer and newer communication representations in different subcultures. As a result, when the bricoleur relocates the former object to a new position, or uses the same system of signs, or the object is put into another form: a new message is formulated. (Clarke, 1976). To illustrate, if we take the usual signs of the business world - e.g. suit, tie, collar, short hair - these might be used by other subcultures, who deprive these from their original meanings - e.g. performance, ambition, conformity - and they create new meanings, objects that are valued for their own virtue or just become empty fetish.

[1] This study is part of the "Unveiling Creativity for Innovation in Europe" (Cre8tv.eu), A multi-partner and multi-disciplinary project, 7th FP, Theme 4.

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_5, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

The bricolage well explains the logic of meme-creation and has a strong connection with surrealism as it connects two obviously unrelated notions. Objects may be twisted on their corners by connected and signified with new names. (Breton, 1929). Memes portray actors, stars, situations, objects that are taken away from their original context and in the online space and get new connotations. Visual elements and simplified text combinations depart a chain of associations among its audiences. This is a cavalcade of pictures, snapshots, phrases that the audience selects, contributes to, modifies and forwards.

2.1 Internet Memes: Root in Bakhtin's Folk Culture of Laughter

In medieval times community spaces appeared in churches and markets. While liturgy defined a strict system of symbols, carnivals and fairs inverted and memed these into a form that was banned by the church but part of the folk culture of laughter. Carnival events represent unofficial view of the world: its tone of voice (laughter), its content (material bodily lower stratum) is not approved by the authorities (Bakhtin, 1984).

The roots of internet memes may be derived from the folk culture of laughter (Bahktin, 1984), although internet memes are much faster, and hold the possibility of fast appearance and disappearance. According to Bakhtin (1984) folk culture of laughter may take three forms: a) ceremonies, staged acts, b) comic linguistic compositions and c) familiar speech (Brown, Stevens & Maclaran, 1999). Internet memes represent all three (Table 1).

Table 1: Folk culture of laughter, its forms, its correspondence with internet memes

Type	Classical form	Modern form	Essence	Internet meme, example
ceremonies, staged acts	Carnivals-que celebra-tions, fair feasts	community events, movies, clips	characteristics pictures or series of pictures taken out of context	Bad Luck Brian (tableau picture) Ridiculously Photogenic Guy (running competition) Harlem Shake (characteristic dance) Balotelli (special pose)
comic linguistic composi-tions	verbal or written, in Latin or in other national languages	English and Hungarian humour	phrases taken out of context	Ain't nobody got time for that (one sentence from an interview)
familiar speech	cursing, vows, folk roistering	cursing, rude speech, jerk, parody	phrases taken out of context	Gordon Ramsay tells, Bitch please

3 The Creative Process (Research Methodology)

The objective of current study's to explore underlying meaning structures of internet memes that audiences recall at a specific moment in time and to identify dimensions that remain mainly invariable while the content of internet memes are subject to continuous change.

We collected consumer narratives about spontaneously recalled memes. Participants were full time 3rd year university students, 20-23-year-olds. 95 respondents mentioned 125 different memes, altogether 281 memes mentioned. Participants wrote their narratives based on the following instructions: "Imagine you guide an exhibition about memes. As the guide of the virtual exhibition, pick three memes that you would recommend for the exhibition. Explain these three memes why they would fit the exhibition, tell their meanings."

Table 2 is a summary of the top mentioned memes (description is according to the narratives of participants, illustrations are in Table 3)

Table 2: Memes most mentioned

Meme	Description, origin	Features	number of mentions
Grumpy Cat	Tardar Sauce is an average cat from Arizona, who having a funny face gained wide range of enthusiast on the internet. Memes with her curved down mouth appear with sarcastic messages.	expression, grimace, cute cat	26
HungaroMeme	Placing a moustache (traditional Hungarian twirled facial hair) in any kind of pictures, sayings in a countryside dialect of a rascal / outlaw are added	moustache, countryside dialect	26
Balotelli's posture	Mario Ballotelli's pose at the Euro 2012 semi-final after he shot a goal against Germany. After the goal he took off his shirt and stood still with strained muscles.	posture (pose)	12
One does not simply (walk into Mordor)	The origin of the meme is from the movie Lord of the Rings (Fellowship of the Ring, 2001). The scene is a decision about the destruction of the ring which should be discarded to Mount Doom in Mordor. To this seemingly impossible task Boromir reacted like, "One does not simply walk into Mordor." The expression is used when we want to complete an extremely difficult task - sometimes almost seemingly impossible.	Pose and a sentence	8

NOT BAD	Obama was photographed while grimaced which appeared in cartoon version later. It shows a surprised and appreciative facial expression. The meme appears in unexpected situations and at the end of extraordinary attractions.	grimace (became a cartoon)	7
Gordon Ramsay tells	This meme is about the typical behaviour of Gordon Ramsay, who continuously curses and yells at people. The meme is exaggerated but still realistic. (e.g. Congratulations, you succeeded burning the water!) In the original context, the TV chef - known for trying to get the most out of the contestants of his show - yells at them and mocks at them.	curses	7
Bitch Please	The moment of expression of Yao Ming, Chinese basketball player's photo taken at a press conference, which made the drawing: B * tch Please! The picture expresses someone's uncaring, looseness, questioning others and overbidding others.	facial expression (became a cartoon)	6
Bad Luck Brian	A miserable tableau photo of a high school boy. Perfect for telling your own unfortunate stories.	Facial expression	6
You don't say	This is Nicolas Cage's face from the movie Vampire Kiss form 1988. The drawing derived from the picture became more popular than the original. It is used when somebody tells something absolutely trivial and still goes on with further explanations.	Facial expression (became a cartoon)	5
Trollface	Trolling, making fun of somebody. It was made by a user named „devianArt" with MS Paint. This is one of the oldest internet memes.	Facial expression (cartoon)	5
Lazy College Senior	Lazy college students drinking beer representing school laziness. It appeared on Reddit first: „5 minutes lateness from the class therefore skipping the whole day" – easy for students to identify with.	Facial expressions and thoughts	5

4 Exhibition – Memes & Mussorgsky (Decomposed and Recomposed Pictures of the Carnival)

Mussorgsky wrote “Pictures at an Exhibition” in memory his friend, painter Hartman. The sudden loss of the artist, aged only 39, shook Mussorgsky along with others in Russia's art world. Fired by the experience, he composed *Pictures at an Exhibition* in six weeks. The music depicts an imaginary tour of an art collection. Titles of individual movements allude to works of Hartmann, the music gave new meanings, new perspectives to the pictures. The loss of something created something new: Mussorgsky’s music gave newer and newer meanings to the original pictures.

Before we enter the exhibition we have to know this won’t be more than simple (*One does simply walk...*). It is not the gnome that waits for us at the entrance, but *Grumpy cat* greets us with a strange face. Quarrelling of the Limoges market are replaced by *Gordon Ramsay’s* curses, ballet of the unhatched chicks takes the form of *Gangnam style* or *Harlem shake*. Baba Yaga is kicked out from her hut by the miraculous stance of *Balotelli* or *Beyoncé.* (Full program of the exhibition is in Table 3).The memes we present appear in newer and newer contexts, conveying different meanings and messages and suddenly then disappear. Contrary to Mussorgsky’s and Hartman’s art, the pieces of this exhibition are rather temporary, subjects to continuous change and modification, certain pieces make others obsolete.

Task of the painter is to seize the moment, moments that viewers would further think about. This process was enhanced by Mussorgsky who added more associations to the pictures with his music. Internet memes emerge in a condensed combination of visuals and texts, which create the most straightforward script (at the longest one sentence) and picture (a poster-like picture or sequence of pictures) and become part of the everyday internet vocabulary of companies, brands, individuals and communities. What did Mussorgsky do? He connected Victor Hartman’s paintings by the language of music. We may also approach the question that he stopped the carnival at its peak, then took it into parts, decomposed them in order to connect according to his own rhythm. He stopped the moment, froze the actor’s movements to exhibit them in rephrased frames. If we enter an exhibition following the recommended route of the organisers we walk according to our own tempo and connect the exhibited objects with our inner world. Mussorgsky takes the hand of the visitor and guides us by his music. In our research participants created their own theme, took internet memes out of their online context and portrayed according to their own views. While pictures on their own touch viewers’ soul through emotions, the pictures all together create one enormous collage that speaks the community’s language (Landgarten,(1993). If we stopped the carnivalesque cavalcade all the joy we may see hides individual fates and tragedies.

Table 3. Exhibition program: Connecting Mussorgsky's scenes and recorded memes (music.pomona.edu/orchestra/mus_pict.htm; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pictures_at_an_Exhibition)

Pictures of the exhibition - scenes	**Scene from Mussorgsky's Pictures at an exhibition**	**Meme type**	**Meme example**
Walk	The visitor's subjective feelings, progress and connection	memes about taking a journey, struggle, quest for one's own self	*One does not simply walk* (challenges of the adventurer)
Gnome	Grotesque picture of the clumsy gnome with crooked legs, bizarre and grotesque self expression and thoughts	grotesque facial expression or pose that is the central thought of the meme	*Grumpy cat* *Trollface*
The old castle in watercolour (troubadour)	Troubadour's serenade in front of the old castle, characteristic tune with some Eastern tones, parodistic flavour	text and music based memes, mixture of different styles	*Ain't nobody got time for that* (mix of the vocalic statement)
Tuilleries	Dispute of the children after play	child or childish, infantile characters expressing joy	*Success Kid* (child at the seaside with clenched hand);
Bydlo	reflects the spirit of peasant workers	philosophical thoughts, clever *advice animal*s	*Philosoraptor* (philosophic dinosaur)
Ballet of the unhatched chicks	costume design for Szerov's Trylby ballet	Characteristic dance movements	*Gangnam style* *Harlem shake*
Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle	two independent sketches: one rich with a fur hat, one poor sitting by the street with a cane	social commentary raising societal questions	*Sceptical Third World Child* (3rd world problem raised in contrast with the Western world)
Market place at Limoges	gossiping and quarrelling women at the marketplace	battle of words, curses	*Gordon Ramsay* tells *Bitch please*;
Paris Catacombs	spooky visions, walk around graveyards with lanterns	unveiling underlying thoughts, forgotten events, things reconsidered	*Bad Luck Brian* (funny tableau picture)

With the dead in a dead language	cage full of skulls that begin to glow – scary visions	Link with the supernatural, mediators	Chuck Norris (the unbeatable)
Baba-Jaga	the hut on fowl's leg, witch from Russian fairy tales living in a hut	Modern magicians, characteristic movements and gestures	*Balotelli's posture Beyoncé at Superbowl*
Kiev Gate	Grand entrance to Kiev, entrance to one's own culture	Memes introducing a particular culture	*Hungaro meme (moustache and dialect)* (http://hungaromemes .tumblr.com/)

4.1 Walk: One Does not Simply Walk

Mussorgsky's piece is not started with the first painting but the walk, which expresses the visitor's mood and also connects the paintings with each other. No exhibition may be interpreted on its own, it is a complicated function of the visitor's past experiences, personality, feelings and thoughts. When we asked research participants to collect internet memes, we asked them to select ones that they found important for their own individual reason. Presented memes are snapshots of the carnivalesque cavalcade. These snapshots of dynamic moments may happen simultaneously or in a specific order. What do we see when a carnival stopped, frozen into a still picture of actors and scenes? Mussorgsky portrayed himself in the exhibition walk so did the research participants portrayed themselves in the memes they chose. The walk is an inner route too, which is never simple (one does not simply walk)

> *The meme is from one of my favourite movies, and I happen to be in situation when the sentence perfectly fits with the picture. If I don't succeed for the first time, or several times, then the sentence is to be used supplemented with the given situation (v76, female, One does not simply walk...)*

4.2 Gnome: Grumpy Cat

The first picture of Mussorgsky portrays the gnome, who is shown with a recurring grotesque musical combination of tunes. The usage of grotesque elements is a central component of the folk culture of laughter. According to Bakhtin (1984) folk art of laughter portrays medieval grotesque enormity with joyful bugbears who wear masks. Masks bring out the deepest essence of the grotesque element. The joyful bugbear is reborn in the shape of Grumpy cat.

> *Grumpy cat has a grumpy gaze each time. According to some at the age of nine she will convert into Satan. Her favourite word is: „no!" and „I hate it", she has hardly ever had a positive expression. Bitterness of everyday may be illustrated by reading this nice cat's thoughts. (v18, female, Grumpy cat)*

4.3 The Old Castle in Watercolour: Ain't Nobody got Time for That

If we look at the actors of the carnival, the show is given by the song poet, troubadour besides the gnome. Mussorgsky put a very parodistic tone into the description of the far too harmonic scenery mixing different musical styles. The meme entitled: "*Ain't nobody got time for that*" emerged from the special peculiar exaggerated tone of voice and special use of language of a lady who had to escape her house.

> *The interview that gave the basis of this meme was remixed, which made this meme even more popular. The source of humour of this meme is the woman's intonation and gestures (v27, female, Ain't nobody got time for that)*

4.4 Tuilleries: Lazy College Senior

Mussorgsky paints the Tuilleries loudly noisy by children's laughter, creating a kindly dynamic picture. The child is a very important symbol of the carnival, as the child is the universal symbol of the forever dying and reborn life. The carnival is the space for ceasing hierarchies, where social and age differences becoming equal. (Bakhtin, 1984).

This category reflects memes that portray children behaving like adults (e.g. success kid) or adults behaving infantile, or students being stuck on the border of the children and adult worlds (e.g. Lazy Collage Senior). This reflects a moment of joy, light-heartedness, enjoyment of life and total lack of responsibility.

> *What is university about? The last step in becoming adults, when you don't have to be responsible, but hardly have any obligations. Freedom, parties, more parties, some exams, quest of the future "do I really want to do this" and "something will happen anyway, let's enjoy it!" It is a general critique about university students that they just hang around, don't study hard enough, only party, spend money and waste time. This is what the "Lazy College Senior" meme is about. (v23, female, Lazy College Senior)*

4.5 Bydlo: Philosoraptor

In the Bydlo scene Mussorgsky depicts the struggling progression of the heavy ox-cart, which slowly fades away in the distance in the dust of the road. It is the symbol of the difficult to express philosophical thoughts, heavy thoughts that the individual carries, when suddenly the dust cloud disappears and the solution becomes clear. According to Bakhtin (1984) feasts and celebrations cannot be without deep philosophical thoughts, as the connection of spiritual and ideological spheres elevate a simple event into celebration. Similarly in carnivals as well as in memes philosophic thoughts get an ironic ricochet, like in the case of the Philosoraptor or some other advice animals (e.g. mallard or penguin)

> *T-Rex elevates into philosophical heights of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer with each of his questions. (v18, female, raptor)*

4.6 Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks: Gangnam Style and Harlem Shake

Funny and graceful movement of the unhatched chicks is expressed with a recurring, easy to remember melody. Music and dance are essential elements of the carnival, dances are easy to copy, but still characteristic lines of movement. While in the case of Gangnam Style the artist's movements are schematically copied, for Harlem Shake it is a crowd, group of people (frequently wearing masks) who go crazy and perform unusual compositions. In Harlem Shake one member part from the company, who is then memed by the others and create a group scene, which is then further copied and modified.

> *Should anyone say anything, I don't think there is anyone who has never tried the dance at least once in their lives. We can see than not only the whole world was conquered by Psy but he also made Gandalf get off his white horse, put on a suit and dance the world famous step combination with a smile on his face. (v74, Gangnam Style)*

4.7 Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle: First World Problem

With the debate of the wealthy and poor Mussorgsky shows the great differences of two social classes, and the last word remains at the wealthy person. We may use this debate as a metaphor for those memes that address the contradiction of the developed and underdeveloped parts of the world. Similarly to the dispute of Goldenberg and Schmuyle meme factories of the Western world define what a societal problem should be, in the light of which the classical problems of the developed world seem insignificant. According to Bakhtin (1984) the carnival vocabulary is full of with reversals, seeing things the other way round: anything can go up that was down, and go down that was up.

> *I like this meme because it calls it to our attention what a reverse world we live in – and I not only laugh out loud, because I also turn hysteric when the Wi-Fi goes unavailable. I recommend this meme to all of my friends who like sarcastic and ironic humour. (v17, female, first world problem)*

4.8 Market Place at Limoges: Gordon Ramsay Tells

Probably the most colourfully orchestrated movement that depicts women quarrelling and gossiping at a French market. The scene is very noisy, full of curses, vituperation which is expressed by clashing staccatos. Memes using curses (e.g. Bitch please) violate speech norms on purpose. Bakhtin also writes about free speech, foul-mouthedness: banning and stigmatizing reinforced the unofficial nature of curses, and enhanced the feeling that it is violating speech norms, and so made it familiar speech elements. As a result, cursing became a form of rejection of the official world view. Banned fruits are always sweater.

> *Get your passports ready because we depart to the depth of hell, where Gordon Ramsay is going to take care of a degrading welcome. Those with weaker nerves*

should take some pills, because offensive visual elements will be displayed. The atmosphere will not only be influenced by the heat, it will be useful to take some sandwiches with you as Mr. Ramsay delivers 20 % of the prepared food to the guest, the rest goes into the trash. Not only his dishes, but his vocabulary is spicy, as he says: "Yesterday's fish was so raw, it escaped from the guest's plate and already sent a postcard from Hawaii. (v43, female, Gordon Ramsey)

4.9 Paris Catacombs: Bad Luck Brian

With the painting Paris Catacombs Victor Hartman wanted to bring back past memories. The movement of elevating past, hidden things is also an act of the carnival. There are moments also we are reluctant to remember of and we would like to dig them deep. This is hardly possible, the internet does not help, even contributes to bringing back, brushing up forgotten moments, like in the case of Bad Luck Brian.

Everyone has experienced unfortunate moments, who would not like to accuse poor, unlucky Brian with these embarrassing stories. (v31, man, Bad Luck Brian)

4.10 With the Dead in a Dead Language: Chuck Norris the Unbeatable

In this section Mussorgsky pays a visit to the soul of the dead artist, Hartman. According to Bakhtin (1984) the carnival plays a very important role in overcoming the fear of cosmic and other forces, as it helps reliving the person under pressure. The devil coming from the dead world is immortal, but not with a bad intent. In medieval mystery plays flouting the devil, in joyful visions of hell the devil represents an unofficial world view, and he is an ambivalent spokesperson of the material bodily lower stratum. Does not invoke fear and does not seem strange. Sometimes the devil and hell does not seem more than a "ridiculous bugbear" In the world of memes Chuck Norris is one of these strange unbeatable creatures:

Those who don't know Chuck Norris will be deleted by his spinning rotating kick from space-time dimension. Chuck is the hero of our childhood who confronts and defeats the evil. Although we wore Superman pyjamas in our childhood, Superman slept in Chuck Norris pyjamas. The actor became famous not only for his film but his acts. Chuck Norris did count to infinity. Two times. Norris has two speed gears: walk and murder. He is used to dead bodies, as the Chuck Norris spinning rotating kick is an approved execution method in 16 states. Are there any questions? How many push-ups can Chuck Norris do? All of them. (v88, man, Chuck Norris)

4.11 Baba-Jaga: Balotelli and Beyoncé

Baba-Jaga is a traditional Russian folk tale about the witch living in a hut that is on a fowl's leg. According to Bakhtin (1984) the main objective of the fools' feasts are to grotesquely demoting religious ceremonies, so gets material bodily lower stratum a primary role, that is accompanied with obscene movements or undressing. The postmodern fools (who are magicians at the same time) don't perform in churches or altars, but in sport temples undress their selves and clothes. Their special poses become memes (e.g. Balotelli or Beyoncé).

If we want to mention something memorable about the 2012 European Championship that would definitely be Mario Balotelli. Everyone remembers the crazy Italian player posing without his jersey celebrating his goal which is memorable for boys and girls for different reasons. (v81, female, Balotelli)

The Balotelli mem is so excellent. This man is really insane. When he did the pose at the match it was clear that this idiotic posture will have an echo on the internet. (v9, man, Balotelli)

4.12 Kiev Gate: Hungaromemes

The Kiev gate is a closing (ending of the piece), but also an opening to something new, a new culture. The folk as a unified body on the carnivalesque street experiences its presence, and its eternity in history (Bakhtin, 1984). Hungaromemes try to adopt foreign cultural elements and accessorize them with elements of Hungarian culture, where central key element is the moustache and a dialect that is not comprehensible by other cultures.

Hungaro-meme is a little moustached and little with dialect, but is ours. We know it for a long time that our country has the highest number of Nobel Prize winners per capita, we have the most beautiful women, the only acceptable kitchen for men and the Hungarian sea just outperforms all oceans of the world. With a With a Photoshop moustache everything leads to little country, anything may be converted into the style of the friendly-goulash spirit. (v18, female, Hungaro-meme)

The moustache as a meme could be adopted to other memes, and brings closer the feeling of being Hungarian, ... and brings closer the Hungarian internet community (female, Hungaro-meme)

5 Closing Picture: Summary and Outlook

Flashlights, cameras, opening ceremony of the exhibition. Memories of what we have seen rush through our minds in no second. Crowd, cavalcade, carnival, colourful momentum. In cooperation with Mussorgsky, Hartman, Bakhtin and our research participants we seized the moment of the carnival of memes, we took them into parts, walked around in order to discover their underlying meanings in the overflow of information. We deconstructed the elements of the carnival (grotesque elements, fools, dance, folkloristic motives, underlying social differences and problems, familiar vocabulary).

Whether memes will be able to reproduce themselves is dependent on how its folkloristic roots will be preserved or become side products of some communication authorities. According to Jervis (1999) this happened to the ritual order of Western culture when fast, violence, drinking, processions, fairs, fighting spectacles, provocative reasoning are taken under official supervision. By 1860 carnivals were banned and transformed, they become civilian parades, fairs and the carnival become an empty and cheap spectacle.

This would happen when a company would put its hands on meme-creation. The company as well as public figures are subjects of memes as they also represent some authority. Memes rebel against any authority, create myths, reverse classical hierarchical relations. They emerge spontaneously and pull the rug from under the feet of those who are in high positions. It is a danger for memes to become part of corporate communication, being side-products of integrated marketing communication because they will remain an empty spectacles, which will lose its original function and credibility.

Internet memes are part of the online-audiences' vocabulary of expression, deeper study of their rise and fall is essential for the new-media, social media advertising related research (Gelb, 1997) We are convinced that the repetition of current study in any time would record reborn new examples of internet memes, but reveal similar meaning structures.

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Watch it! The Influence of Forced Pre-Roll Video Ads on Consumer Perceptions

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1 Introduction

The internet is the fastest growing advertising segment in the world (Gambaro and Puglisi, 2012). One specific online advertising format that is growing very rapidly is online video advertising. This advertising format owes its explosive growth to the rapid acceleration of online video viewing and is currently the fastest growing advertising format (eMarketer, 2012; Science Daily, 2013). A comparative study indicates that online video ads show a higher impact on recall and ad likeability than TV ads (IAB, 2013).

There are various appearances of these video ads. They can be placed before, during or after the watching of an online video, so called pre-, mid- or post-roll video ads. They also vary in length, the amount of control a user has over the ad, and in content. However, despite the booming market of online video advertising there is an ongoing trend of ad avoidance. Especially video advertising is a format that encounters a lot of opposition and avoidance. Due to this avoidance, video advertisers lose the opportunity to communicate their message to consumers (Teixeira et al., 2012). As internet users are usually more goal oriented when searching for a video on YouTube compared to television viewers, internet ads are therefore perceived as more intrusive than ads in traditional media (Li et al., 2002).

Considering the fact that ads interrupt a consumer's goal, this may lead to undesirable outcomes like irritation, negative attitudes towards the ads, and a wish for ad avoidance (Krugman, 1983), what eventually influences consumer behaviour (Keller, 1993). In academic literature only little research on online video advertising can be found. The aim of this study is to close this gap a bit further and investigate how functional features of pre-roll video-ads, length and skipping control, as well as content-related features, appeal and contextual overlap, influence the perceptions of viewers.

2 Theoretical Framework

The goal of online advertising is to interrupt the flow of editorial content and attract the attention of web users (Ha, 1996). As this interruption disrupts users' train of thought it is often considered as intrusive (McCoy et al., 2008). Users

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_6, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

perceive online ads as disturbing (Reed, 1999) or even annoying (McCoy et al., 2007; McCoy et al., 2008) and therefore detracting from their online experience. As users are in general more goal oriented when searching content online, a pre-roll ad interrupts their flow as they are deterred from achieving their goal. Thus, a perception of intrusiveness occurs as well as a feeling of losing freedom and control in conducting their desired task due to exposure to the intrusive ad (Morimoto and Chang, 2006). Additionally, the interruption that is created by online advertising like banners, interstitials, pop-ups has been found to negatively affect consumers' attitudes towards the ads (Rettie, 2001) leading to ad avoidance (Abernethy, 1991; Krugman and Johnson, 1991). MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) show that ad intrusiveness transfers to negative brand perceptions, therefore even derogating the brand image.

McCoy et al.'s (2008) study indicates that the control to remove an ad reduces perceived intrusiveness. Gaining back the feeling of control by allowing the user to skip the ad might result in lower perceived intrusiveness, and therefore less damage to users' perceptions. Psychological reactance theory by Brehm (1966) states that an individual is motivated to re-establish freedom in a state of perceived loss of control. By offering a skip-button users regain their feeling of control. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed

H1a: The opportunity of skipping a pre-roll video ad leads to lower perceived intrusiveness than a pre-roll ad that cannot be skipped.
H1b: The opportunity of skipping a pre-roll video ad leads to a higher attitude towards the ad than a pre-roll ad that cannot be skipped.
H1c: The opportunity of skipping a pre-roll video ad leads to a higher attitude towards the brand than a pre-roll ad that cannot be skipped.

Exposure length has received much research attention in the context of television advertising (e.g. Wheatly, 1968; Rethans et al., 1986; MacInnis and Jaworski, 1989; Singh and Cole, 1993). Though the outcomes are controversial, the overall tendency leans towards favouring longer commercials. Shorter commercials seem to limit the viewers' opportunity to elaborate the commercials and the opportunity to process the ad declines, while longer commercials enable a consumer to realize the message's argument and its favourable implications (Singh and Cole, 1993).

Considering exposure length of online pre-roll video ads large variation is noticed. Exposure length can vary from only a few seconds to over a minute. A common way of informing a viewer about the length of a video ad is to present this information directly in the video screen with counting down numbers.

Edwards et al. (2002) find no significant difference in intrusiveness for pop-ups containing moving images as well as sounds between 10 and 20 seconds ads.

Though, they attribute the insignificance of their findings to a lack of manipulation of length. Nonetheless, support for the idea that a longer involuntary exposure to an online ad creates longer interruption and thus higher intrusiveness is found in the study by Cho and Cheon (2004). The authors argue that perceived goal impediment through a long video ad is the most important factor in causing feelings of intrusiveness and irritation for consumers confronted with internet ads. In turn, these feelings of annoyance and intrusiveness can result in negative attitudes toward the ad, which can then affect brand perceptions and attitudes and lead to ad avoidance (Kelly et al., 2010). To minimize the negative effects, a shorter pre-roll video ad seems to be favourable compared to a longer version. Hence, we propose

H2a: A long pre-roll video-ad leads to higher perceived intrusiveness than a short video ad.
H2b: A short pre-roll video ad leads to a higher attitude towards the ad than a long video ad.
H2c: A short pre-roll video-ad leads to a higher attitude towards the brand than a long video ad.

Regarding content-based features of pre-roll video ads, two attributes play a major role, namely appeal of the video ad and contextual overlap. Emotional appeals are widely used in advertising due to their positive effects on consumer reactions towards these advertisements (Biswas et al., 1992). People experience emotions when their personal interests are concerned (Teixeira et al., 2012). Applying emotion regulation theory to the context of pre-roll video ads it can be stated that an emotional appeal of such a video ad provides value to the viewer and therefore activates the goal to continue exposure (Plutchik, 1980; Teixeira et al., 2012). When ads are perceived as valuable they elicit less irritation and avoidance (Pasadeos, 1990). This in turn leads to less psychological reactance and perceived intrusiveness, including less detrimental effects on the attitude towards the ad and the respective brand. Edwards et al. (2002) show that the entertainment level of an ad is negatively related to its perceived intrusiveness, therefore this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H3a: A pre-roll video ad with a higher positive emotional appeal leads to less perceived intrusiveness than a video ad with a less positive emotional appeal.
H3b: A pre-roll video ad with a higher positive emotional appeal leads to a higher attitude towards the ad than a video ad with a less positive emotional appeal.

H3c: A pre-roll video ad with a higher positive emotional appeal leads to a higher attitude towards the brand than a video ad with a less positive emotional appeal.

Besides the emotional appeal of an online ad, the contextual overlap of an advertisement with its surrounding environment is of importance. Research on the contextual overlap of TV ads shows that when ads are consistent on an emotional level with the TV program, they elicit more favourable attitudes (e.g. Kamins et al., 1991; Coulter, 1998). The same effect was found for product placement, where incongruent placements result in negative brand attitudes (Russell, 2002). From psychological literature it can be drawn that congruent information fits with the category schema of consumers, therefore creates less psychological reactance, and more favourable attitudes (Mandler, 1982; Braun-LaTour et al., 2007).

Studies in the context of online advertising, specifically pop-ups and banners, show that website congruent ads are perceived as less intrusive and result in more positive attitudes towards these ads (Edwards et al., 2002; Moore et al., 2005). Ads that are congruent with current expectations and cognitive activities are perceived as positive social influences and therefore offer value to the viewer. Hence, we propose

H4a: A pre-roll video ad with a higher contextual overlap leads to less perceived intrusiveness than a video ad with less contextual overlap.
H4b: A pre-roll video ad with a higher contextual overlap leads to a higher attitude towards the ad than a video ad with less contextual overlap.
H4c: A pre-roll video ad with a higher contextual overlap leads to a higher attitude towards the brand than a video ad with less contextual overlap.

3 Method

In order to test the hypotheses two distinct 2x2 between-subject experiments are conducted. Experiment 1 focuses on the length of the pre-roll video ad as well as the control the user has on skipping the video ad. Experiment 2 examines the two content-related factors, emotional appeal of the pre-roll video ad and its contextual overlap with the following video.

3.1 Procedure and Respondents

Every respondent in the study saw either one condition of experiment 1 or of experiment 2. 136 completed surveys were obtained for experiment 1 and 120 completed surveys were reported for experiment 2. Gender and age was equally distributed through all the conditions. The study was set up as an online survey.

A website was designed for the purpose of this research. First, respondents were given the task to search for a specific video on YouTube. When respondents clicked on the respective video, they were randomly assigned to one of the experimental conditions. After watching the video, the respondents were instructed to close the video and start the questionnaire.

3.2 Manipulation and Measures

For experiment 1 length and skipping of the ad was manipulated. The most acceptable length of an online ad is 15 seconds (Poll Position, 2012). However, it is unknown if this also applies specifically to pre-roll video-ads. In this experiment the choice was made to compare a shorter 15-second pre-roll video-ad with a longer 60-second version. This large difference is also chosen to reassure that there is an actual perception of difference in length, as this was not achieved with a shorter length in the study of Edwards et al. (2002). A pretest confirmed that the 60-second ad was perceived as significantly longer than the 15-second ad. The content of the ad was exactly the same just shortened in length. The video ad was derived from an original commercial and fitted for this experiment by editing length and layout. For the skipping conditions a skip-button was either in- or excluded in the pre-roll video ad.

In experiment 2 two different ads as well as two different YouTube videos as context were chosen. The length of all video ads was exactly 30 seconds, edited like in experiment 1. The ads were chosen based on their emotional appeal. The video ad from experiment 1 presented the condition with low emotional appeal, while a second ad was chosen to present the condition with high emotional appeal. This manipulation was checked in a pretest with the two-item scale of Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibanez (2013), indicating that there is a significant difference in emotional appeal between the two selected commercials. Additionally, the contextual overlap was pretested by a scale from Choi and Rifon (2002). The pretest results confirmed that this manipulation was successful as well.

The questionnaire started off with several filter questions to check whether the participant saw the pre-roll video ad and also recognized the skip button (if present). Afterwards manipulation check questions from the pretest were included followed by seven items measuring intrusiveness. The scale was obtained from Li et al. (2002) showing high reliability: experiment 1: $\alpha=0.92$; experiment 2: $\alpha=0.93$. Three items measured attitude towards the ad (AA), additional three items measured attitude towards the brand (AB). Both scales were validated by MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) and achieved high reliability: experiment 1: AA $\alpha=0.90$; AB $\alpha=0.92$; experiment 2: AA $\alpha=0.90$; AB $\alpha=0.92$. The questionnaire ended with general demographics.

4 Results

Hypotheses were tested by using multivariate analyses of variances. Means and standard deviations of the two experiments are summarized in Table 1. The respective F-values and p-values of the main effects as well as the interaction effects are found in Table 2.

The results of experiment 1 show a main effect for length of pre-roll video ad on intrusiveness. The longer a video ad, the more intrusive it is perceived, therefore H1a is confirmed. There was no main effect of length on attitude towards the ad or attitude towards the brand therefore H1b and H1c are not confirmed. No main effect of control was reported for any of the dependent variables, therefore H2a, H2b, and H2c need to be rejected. It seems that offering the viewer control over the ad by skipping the content has no effect on perceived intrusiveness or attitude towards the ad and the brand. Furthermore, no significant interaction effects of length and control are found.

Table 1: Means and standard deviations of the experiments

Experiment 1	**Short ad (15 sec)**	**Long ad (1 min)**	**With control**	**Without control**
Intrusiveness	3.62 (1.48)	4.21 (1.74)	3.92 (1.58)	3.92 (1.71)
Attitude towards ad	4.76 (1.52)	4.60 (1.56)	4.56 (1.67)	4.81 (1.39)
Attitude towards brand	5.75 (1.14)	5.69 (1.14)	5.83 (1.15)	5.60 (1.11)
Experiment 2	**High emotional appeal**	**Low emotional appeal**	**With overlap**	**Without overlap**
Intrusiveness	3.42 (1.30)	4.39 (1.42)	3.60 (1.42)	4.20 (1.41)
Attitude towards ad	5.06 (1.03)	4.05 (1.46)	4.76 (1.19)	4.36 (1.48)
Attitude towards brand	5.73 (0.90)	5.39 (1.05)	5.60 (0.89)	5.52 (1.08)

Table 2: Results of the main effects and interactions of the MANOVA

Experiment 1	**Length**	**Control**	**Length x Control**
Intrusiveness	**F = 4.46** **p = .03**	F = .00 p = .99	F = .42 p = .52
Attitude towards ad	F = .37 p = .55	F = .90 p = .34	F = .29 p = .59
Attitude towards brand	F = .12 p = .73	F = 1.43 p = .23	F = .38 p = .54
Wilk's Λ (partial η2)	.96 (.41)	.97 (.38)	.99 (.14)
Experiment 2	**Appeal**	**Overlap**	**Appeal x Overlap**
Intrusiveness	**F = 15.51** **p < .001**	**F = 5.33** **p = .02**	F = .50 p = .48
Attitude towards ad	**F = 19.29** **p < .001**	F = 2.65 p = .11	**F = 4.51** **p = .04**
Attitude towards brand	F = 3.73 p = .06	F = 0.24 p = .62	F = .75 p = .39
Wilk's Λ (partial η2)	.83 (.99)	.95 (.53)	.93 (.67)

The results of experiment 2 show a main effect of appeal on intrusiveness and attitude towards the ad. Therefore, hypotheses H3a and H3b are confirmed. The main effect of appeal on attitude towards the brand is only marginally significant at a .10 significance level. Nevertheless, regarding the means it becomes clear that a more emotional ad is perceived as less intrusive and generates a more favourable attitude towards the ad as well as towards the brand.

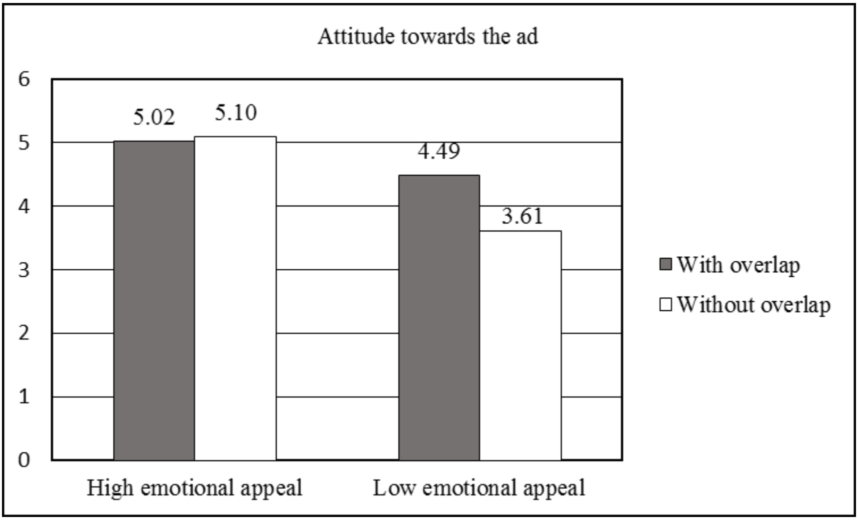

Figure 1: Interaction effect of appeal and overlap on attitude towards the ad

Further, a main effect of contextual overlap on perceived intrusiveness was found, therefore confirming H4a as contextual overlap leads to less perceived intrusiveness than incongruence of ad and content of the actual video. No significant difference was found between contextual congruence and incongruence for attitude towards the ad and attitude towards the brand, therefore H4b and H4c cannot be confirmed, although the means indicate in the proposed direction. Additionally, an interaction between appeal and control is reported for attitude towards the ad. As displayed in Figure 1 in case the emotional appeal is low contextual overlap has a higher influence than when the emotional appeal is high. In case of low emotional appeal contextual congruence leads to a higher attitude towards the ad than in case of contextual incongruence.

5 Discussion

This paper analysed the effects of four characteristics of pre-roll video ads on viewer's perceived intrusiveness, attitude towards the ad, and attitude towards the brand in the ad. By conducting two separate experiments we found a significant effect of length of the video ad on perceived intrusiveness. A 60-seconds video ad is perceived as significantly more intrusive compared to a 15-seconds video ad. Nevertheless, the length of the video ad did not influence viewer's attitude towards the ad or attitude towards the displayed brand. No effect of skipping control was reported. So, it seems that offering viewers a skip button does not influence their perceived intrusiveness, attitude towards the ad, or attitude towards the brand. These results implicate major managerial recommendations. Length of the video ad represents a critical factor for marketers. If an ad is too short, a company might miss the chance to communicate its message as it limits viewers' opportunity to elaborate on the commercial and a processing of the actual message will be less feasible. While if a video ad is too long, viewers have the opportunity to realize the message arguments and implications, but intrusiveness could be raised.

As offering a skip button does not influence viewers' perceptions of the ad or the brand, a skip button seems to be obsolete. It might be that the skip button is not attributed to the ad or the brand but rather to the website that is using pre-roll video ads like YouTube. So offering a skip button might reflect positively on the website providing pre-roll video ads but as this research shows not on the ad or the brand. This observation needs further investigation for proof.

Looking at the results of experiment 2, our research shows that the content of a pre-roll video ad has major influence on viewers' perceptions. First of all, we tested the influence of the emotional appeal of the video ad and found significant main effects on perceived intrusiveness and attitude towards the ad. A higher emotional appeal is perceived as less intrusive and leads to a higher attitude towards the brand than a lower emotional appeal. Regarding the contextual overlap of the pre-roll video ad and the subsequent video, our study shows a significant main effect of contextual overlap on intrusiveness. If the pre-roll video ad and the subsequent video imply content congruency the pre-roll video ad is perceived as less intrusive.

Furthermore, an interaction effect of emotional appeal and contextual overlap on attitude towards the ad was reported. In case of an emotionally appealing video ad, contextual overlap does not play a role for the attitude towards the ad. Though, if the emotional appeal is low, attitude towards the ad is significantly higher in case a contextual overlap between ad and subsequent video is present.

This research presents a first starting point for a better understanding of the influence of pre-roll video ads on viewers' perceptions leaving many opportunities for further investigation, for example contrasting the results to the effects of mid- or post-roll video ads, or investigating the effect of contextual overlap between positive and negative subsequent video content.

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The Role of Stereoscopic 3D Virtual Reality in Fashion Advertising and Consumer Learning

Kung Wong Lau and Pui Yuen Lee

1 Introduction

The fashion show is the heart of the fashion advertising and promotional activities. Every fashion show does not simply an advertising event exhibiting designers' collections to the consumers, but it also tips off multi-million-dollar activities across various business domains, which includes marketing, manufacturing, merchandising, retailing, public media, and so on. Fashion show also evidenced the development of distribution channel. Since the first modern fashion show at Ehrich Brothers, New York City in 1903 (Fortini, 2006), fashion shows have been going through drastic changes in nature and even evidenced the evolving process of distribution channels in advertising and retailing. They developed from a private business show, to global marketing events. At the same time, consumers' fashion show experiences are shared through photographers, posters, newspapers, magazines, and television broadcasting channels, to ubiquitous media.

In recent years, fashion show distribution media have extended from two-dimensional (2D) displays to three-dimensional (3D) and to stereoscopic 3D. ISPO Sport & Style created a stereoscopic 3D fashion show in Munich in 2007 and Burberry launched its 3D fashion show for the A/W 2010 during London Fashion Week. Additionally, Burberry is the first fashion brand making promotion over 3DTV. However, these prior approaches were only focused on applying stereoscopic 3D technologies in simple promotional strategies, the core issues of how to use stereoscopic 3D as an effective media with its advantages for fashion advertising and retailing still remain uncovered. Thus, it is important to study the design of consumers' experience and the related technologies for bringing consumers into a completely new area of stereoscopic 3D stimulations. Especially, the traditional 3D environments are mainly focusing on computer-generated environment and postproduction touch up of stereo images. For real-time shooting, a serious problem is that stereoscopic moving objects are blurred particularly when the 3D camera is zooming. The stereoscopic effect is sometimes destroyed during this traditional ways of stereo shooting. Therefore, this project aims at studying consumers' experiences in order to develop a theoretical framework for virtual experience design and various advantages technologies. The project includes the (1) study of virtual experience designs;

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_7, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

(2) exploration of interactive and stereoscopic 3D interfaces; and (3) user-research on virtual experience in stereoscopic 3D fashion promotion.

2 The Stereoscopic 3D Virtual Reality in Advertising and Marketing

Davis (1998) stated that “Virtual Reality (VR)” was founded in “The Theatre and its Double” by Anotnin Artaud, described *"la réalite virtuelle"* (a virtual reality), "in which characters, objects, and images take on the phantasmagoric force of alchemy's visionary internal dramas". Virtual reality creates a sense of existing in the dramatic context to audience. This definition becomes the mission of the computer-simulated virtual environment designers. Sherman and Craig (2003) emphasize that a successful experience design of virtual reality should include: “a virtual world” – a sense of being there; immersion – a sense of self presentation in the virtual environment; sensory feedback – the use of stereoscopic 3D sensory generating devices, for examples, stereoscopic 3D display, stereoscopic sound synthesizer or haptic controllers; and interactivity – smooth interaction among users, virtual objects and other characters within the virtual reality. VR technologies and devices, such as head-mounted display, augmented virtual technologies and stereoscopic 3D displays, VR enriche consumer experiences to obtain a sense of telepresence, immersive and hedonic experience. In fashion advertising, the use of virtual technology serves the purpose to narrow down the gap between online and brick-and-mortar shopping experience. For instance, Virtual Model Inc. was one of the pioneers in promoting 3D technology in online apparel shopping business by designing the My Virtual Model™ Dressing Room, My Fit ™ and BrandME™, since 1997. These interfaces enable consumers virtual “try on” features, which attracts global brands like H&M, Adidas, Speedo and Levi Strauss & Co, who have implemented BrandME™ in their online stores.

Effective advertising under simulated virtual reality leans on complicated relationships between the consumers’ shopping experiences and the hyperrealistic stimulation. Therefore, marketers and advertising practitioners have to grasp the correlation among these factors and elements in order to facilitate a well-enough experiential design in ubiquitous media. Schlosser (2003) emphasizes that unlike 2D presentation, consumers are undergoing mental simulation of the interaction with the product during the decision-making process, prior to product knowledge and brand attitude. Results showed that the ability to manipulate the product in the virtual world, elevated participants’ vivid mental imagery as part of immersion into the virtual world. As a result, their purchase intentions were much higher compared to 2D storyboard presentation. In alignment with the tremendous development of these technologies, there are three major domains have to explore in order to cope with the challenges. First of all, it is important to study the theoretical framework of virtual experience design for advertising activities in virtual worlds. The design of consumers' experience is one of the major components of any attempt in fashion advertising and promotional campaigns, and it should be the challenges of fashion marketers in their virtual shopping projects as well. Second, the stereoscopic 3D interactive interface design is also important for any attempts in virtual marketing communication to address. Third, it is crucial to understand consumers' or users' experiences in interacting with this stereoscopic 3D environment for further development in the related domains. This is particularly important in real-time stereoscopic environment.

This qualitative research project reports the findings of a funded research project that explored the theoretical framework in fashion advertising and promotion through developing an advanced virtual applications in stereoscopic 3D virtual environment. In this project, the research team developed a stereoscopic 3D fashion show in order to provide consumers with an immersive and telepresence experiences towards advertising, marketing and consumer learning activities. Consumers watched the virtual fashion show at the 4D Visual Retailing Theatre located in our University. The major objectives of this project include: first, for advertising practitioners and marketers, we are going to explore the novelty nature of a stereoscopic 3D fashion advertising experience which could bring new impacts to the industry; and second, for marketing level, this stereoscopic 3D fashion show interface acts as a virtual learning platform for consumers to study, choose and prioritize their favorite products, which is able to enhance consumers' learning eventually.

3 The Interactive Stereoscopic 3D Fashion Show

In this project, our research team established an interactive fashion show in a stereoscopic 3D theater for fashion advertising and promotion. This interactive platform is able to exhibit fashion products with the virtual fashion model in an immersive environment. Consumers can change the appearance and clothing of the virtual models and control its' pose on a virtual fashion catwalk stage. Basically, the fashion show consists of two parts: (1) the building of virtual objects, and (2) the design of interactivity. The virtual objects are built with Autodesk software, named Maya and then export to another software, Unity to create interactive features.

3.1 Building of Virtual Objects

The virtual objects include runway environment and virtual fashion model. In this research, virtual fashion model was built (See figure 1), with interchangeable appearance, included hairstyles, tops, panty, shoes and pantyhose (See figure 2). The default animations include: standby standing, stylish standing posture and walking. The T-shape runway stage, back panel the props with lighting themes and background music. The T-shaped runway stage is approximately 22m^2 (See figure 3), which are 6m in width times 9m in length comparing to the physical world. Virtual fashion models can walk along, pose, return and go to the back-stage freely at the. Behind the left backdrop of the stage, there is also a virtual fitting room for the virtual fashion model to change the clothing and appearance. According to the counter-comments from Kim and Forsythe (2008) about the use of Virtual Try-on for online apparel shops, interviewees reported confusing, as it is not too accurate to generate a model from input one's own measurement; and it makes the clothing not look realistic enough. Therefore, a virtual mirror (See figure 4) is put behind the virtual fashion model at the virtual fitting room presenting the image of the model's back perspective.

Figure 1: Virtual fashion model

Figure 2: Virtual fashion model with interchangeable appearance

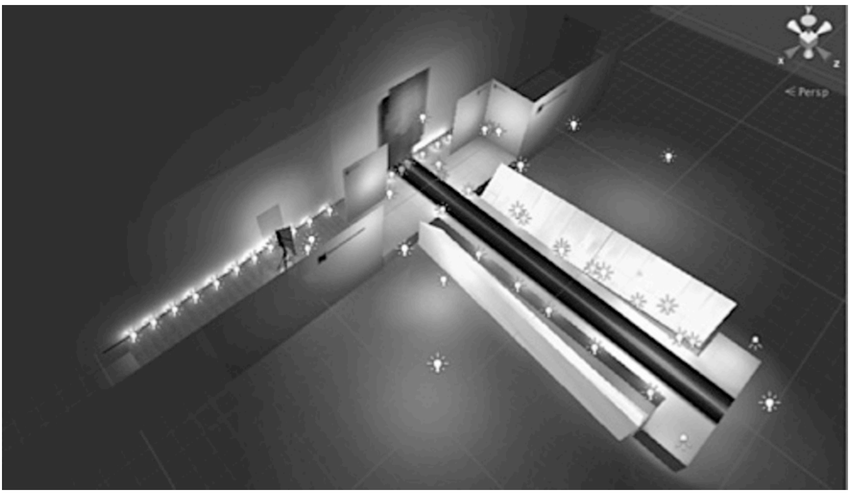

Figure 3: T-Shape runway stage

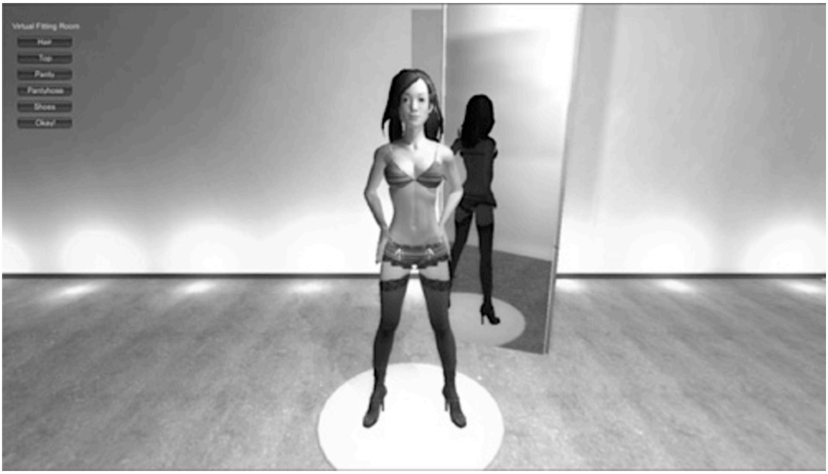

Figure 4: Virtual mirror at virtual fitting room

3.2 The Interaction Design

As Shanken (2007) suggested, interactivity of ambient manipulation, such as changing lighting intensity, or selecting music, enable the audiences' sense of telepresence in virtual environments. Since the focus of this research is to enrich consumers' experiences within an interactive, immersive, and stereoscopic 3D environment, all the virtual objects built in the Maya are then exported to the interactivity engine, Unity. This software allows users to set up different features by computer programming, such as lighting composition and background music; or set up any user animation through graphical user interface (GUI) with mouse control.

Researchers, such as Azuma (1997) and Sherman and Craig (2003) stated that the key of virtual reality is to combine virtual and real environments, and allow users to interact with virtual objects and space. In order to create an immersive experience for consumers in the virtual environment, a series of lighting composition is applied to produce 3D effects at the virtual fitting room and the T-shape runway. At the virtual fitting room, there is a spotlight at the virtual fashion model standing position and a virtual mirror, comes with a fixed camera shoots the virtual model in portrait to build up a high enough contrast between the virtual fashion model and the background. At the runway, the ambient light set is composed with area light and point light. The area light is in white color, and projects from the ceiling. On the other hand, there are two sets of point lights, one in yellow and the other in pink. The yellow color point light projects on the ground and the pink colored point light projects on the wall. Besides the ambient light, the light source for drop show is established in order to create shadow for the virtual fashion model on the stage. There are also two sets of cameras, prepared to capture wide-angel shots and move-along shots of the virtual model.

At the virtual fitting room, users can select different features from the hierarchical menu, include “Hair”, “Top”, “Panty”, Pantyhose”, “Shoes” and “OK” buttons. Consumers can simply click any button to dress up the model in the styles they want want. Then, consumers can click “OK” button when finished and the virtual model will standby at the T-shape runway. At the stage, users can control the virtual fashion model the walking direction by moving forward, turn left, turn right and return to the beginning standing pose through mouse and spacebar of the keyboard.

4 Methodology and Results

This study pinpoints both advertising and consumer learning domains, which attempt to explore the novelty natures and approaches for the stereoscopic 3D fashion advertising and consumer learning, and also consumers’ learning experience of being a part in the fashion advertising through our platform. This study adopted a focus group discussion approach to collect comments from two groups of consumers after the participation of our platform. The first group consists of six professionals from fashion industry, marketing and advertising. Another group of consumers are fashion design and merchandising practitioners, in randomly selection basis. Consumers were invited to watch a full demonstration of the stereoscopic 3D fashion show, from dress up of virtual fashion model at the virtual fitting room and a catwalk at the T-shape runway at the 4D Visual Retailing Theatre. After the fashion show, consumers can try to use the interface to interact with the virtual fashion model to study, choose and prioritize their favorite fashion products. After two sessions, the research team hosted two independent forums for both groups respectively.

Summarizing participants’ comments, both professionals and students felt amazed by the hyperrealistic simulations of the T-shape runway, background and the ambient settings, which offered a sense of telepresence in the immersive and stereoscopic 3D virtual environment. Apparently, the spacious environment in the virtual platform offered a more immersive experience than web-based video playing interfaces, and could enhance consumers’ sense of participation. The backdrop and the props at both sides under lighting effects enriched the runway by an enhanced contrast and sense of depth of the stage. These effects facilitated drop shadows across the runway and so as the virtual fitting room, which seems to look at the virtual fashion model and her catwalk at sight. Moreover, by the editing between wide-angel shots and move-along shots, together with the lighting effect, motions of the virtual fashion model became more alive, and it is definitely helpful for consumers to study the products in details actively. Lastly, unlike using the traditional 3D head-mount display, watching the show at the giant 3D screen through polarized 3D glasses was more easily to generate 3D images and seemed to be lighter perception loading.

The try-on experience of the virtual fashion model at the virtual fitting room offered a hedonic game-liked experience to consumers through mix-and-match across various clothing, accessories and even hairstyles. It helped consumers to enrich their product knowledge in the way that develops consumer learning. On the contrary, unlike turn-around control of the virtual fashion model as other virtual try-on interface, it was smart to use a virtual mirror at the virtual fitting room reflect the model's back view, which strongly created sense of telepresence as if a designer was looking at the model in front of the mirror, at real time. Motion control of the virtual fashion model to walk, pose and turn gave free-to-attempt opportunities to manipulate the virtual fashion model to demonstrate the fashion products in details.

In addition, according the feedback of the focus groups, even though the animation was rendered under high-density output, the motion of the virtual fashion model, especially hair motion and muscle motion, was still not detailed enough, and the choice of clothing limited at bra tops and tight pants was simply not enough. More choice of clothing styles should be extended.

5 Discussions, Limitation and Future Recommendation

This project demonstrated a future modular framework; both in practical perspective and explorative purpose for fashion advertising and consumer learning. The virtual fashion show, together with the manipulation at the virtual fitting room was successfully able to provide consumers with a simulated real-life fashion show experience in the theater that echoes suggestions by Chittaro and Ranon (2002). Consumers reflected the vividness of the environment during the virtual fashion show and manipulation of the virtual fashion model facilitated a strong sense of telepresence, which is an important element of virtual experience as immersion and hedonic value of virtual experience helps the development of product memory and arouse purchase intention as some prior researchers had suggested (Childers, Carr, Peck and Carson, 2001; Song, Fiore and Park, 2007). The use of virtual mirrors creates another possibility for first person perspective, rather than 3D turn-around features currently using at e-shopping websites or virtual try-on interfaces. It is not difficult to have a first impression that the use of virtual mirror lowers the level of 3D product presentation on the surface. However, in matching with high-density 3D rendering technology, use of virtual mirrors can offer a designer's first person perspective as if looking at the virtual fashion model try-on the merchandise on site.

However, there were still some limitations in this explorative study. The choice of tight dressing and limited hairstyle was a preventive action of lost of immersion caused by non-smooth motions of fabric or hairstyle when the virtual model walks along the stage. It is a common error in existing virtual experience interface, as it requires higher quality computer rendering software. As virtual technology is an evolving process, more advanced rendering technology, especially fabric motion technology, is crucial for implementing virtual technology on fashion advertising and consumer learning practices.

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Effects of Online Review Response Strategies on Attitudes toward the Hotel

Heike Kniesel, Martin K. J. Waiguny, and Sandra Diehl

1 Introduction

The Internet has extended consumers' possibilities for gathering information about products and services; for which online reviews serve as a valuable information source (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004; Cheung and Thadani, 2012; Lee et al., 2008). This is particularly true of the hospitality and tourism industries wherein products and services are intangible and perishable (Gardini, 2009; Jeacle and Carter, 2011; Gretzel et al., 2007). Hardly any other sector is equally affected by the impact of online comments as the hospitality industry (Sabel, 2014). TripAdvisor's branded sites alone already reach 315 million unique monthly visitors, and more than 190 million reviews and opinions covering more than 4.4 hospitality businesses (TripAdvisor, 2014). In addition other major online travel sites have even compiled tens of millions more (emarketer, 2013). Buyers visit on average almost 14 different travel-related sites, and carry out nine travel-related searches on search engines before making an online hotel reservation for a major holiday (UNWTO, 2014). In addition to consumer utility, online comments serve to present valuable information to hotels, and their employees, as they seek to gather insight into customers' experiences (Park and Kim, 2008; Sabel, 2014). Many hospitality managers are now facing the question of whether, and how, to answer these online comments (Park and Allen, 2013). The majority of literature on complaint management indicates that responding to complaints is not only useful but necessary (Hansen et al., 2010; Strauss and Hill, 2001). The appropriate handling of a complaint leads to higher levels of satisfaction and, subsequently, customer loyalty (Niefind and Wiegran, 2010; Bunk, 1993). However, despite these findings within the complaint management literature, the frequency of responses to online consumer grievances remains low. Research indicates that only 4% of negative online reviews are responded to by hotel operators, suggesting that many operators do not know how to respond, or are afraid of responding, to online reviews (Nadel, 2013; Lee and Song, 2010).

Few academic studies have investigated the effects of responding to online reviews. Evidence from internet blog research (van Noort and Willemsen, 2011), customer complaint pages (Lee and Song, 2010), consumer generated homepages (Mauri and Minazzi, 2013) and complaints by e-mail (Strauss and

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_8, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

Hill, 2001) as well as content and case study analysis (Burton and Khammash, 2010; Park and Allen, 2013) of consumer complaint portals suggests that corporate responses may affect the perception of a company or the products. Thus, we add to this growing body of research by examining factors that influence the perception and impact of different response strategies to online hotel reviews. The theoretical foundations of this research are drawn from attribution theory (Heider, 1958; Curren and Folkes, 1987) and hypotheses are tested within an online, experimental framework.

2 Theoretical Framework

Our framework considers the effect of a hotel's response to a negative review on the likeability of the hotel. Our research also seeks to discover differences in the effect of the response if the response is written in different tones of voice and also seeks to explore whether the respondent's position and the identification of the respondent alter these effects.

2.1 Responding to Reviews

The few existing studies which investigate whether or not a corporate should respond to a consumer's review have proven indecisive. One stream of literature suggests that corporate participation in word-of-mouth (WOM) communication processes leads to skepticism toward the company and serves to amplify negative effects rather than mitigate them (Deighton and Kornfeld, 2009; Dellarocas, 2006). Such corporate activity can appear to lack credibility and be construed as self-serving (Mauri and Minazzi, 2013), as well as intrusive and inappropriate in a consumer-dominant domain (van Noort and Willemsen, 2011).

Contrary to these findings, Breitsohl et al. (2010) found that corporate complaint responses induce higher credibility compared to non-responses. Responses from a reliable source are therefore perceived as more reliable and increase the trustworthiness of the review. Van Noort and Willemsen (2011) point out that, under special circumstances, corporate responses create a more positive attitude toward the reviewed business, e.g., if the corporate response is presented within a market-induced platform rather than a consumer-induced platform. If the hotel is directly addressed in the review and the reviewer demands a response (Vásquez, 2011; van Noort and Willemsen, 2011), corporate response from the hotel might lead to a more positive attitude.

Similarly, public relations literature advocates for responses and interaction with stakeholders, such as consumers (Kelleher, 2009). Two-way communication through the review platform can increase confidence, satisfaction, and commitment and improve the quality of the relationship with the customer (Saffer et al., 2013). We therefore suggest that hotel responses to general claims within an online review generate a more positive evaluation of the responding hotel. In addition, we assume that the perceived usefulness and credibility of reviews containing a response will increase as well, as the hotel demonstrates customer care.

H1a: Compared to the review only, a review with a response from the hotel will result in a more positive attitude towards the hotel
H1b: Compared to the review only, a review with a response from the hotel will result in a higher perceived credibility of the review.
H1c: Compared to the review only, a review with a response from the hotel will result in a higher perceived usefulness of the review.

2.2 Voice of the Response

We suggest that the reaction to the response depends on several factors: one possible factor is the choice of response style. Studies in the area of defensive and accommodative responses (Lee and Song, 2010), proactive and reactive responses (van Noort and Willemsen, 2011) and specific and generic responses (Wei et al., 2013) clearly illustrate the importance of response style. Our study complements these findings by proposing that the voice used in the response affects consumers' evaluation of the responding company. Similarly to the theoretical foundation for explaining attitude towards the reviewed objects (Laczniak et al., 2001; Sen and Lermann, 2007), we base our assumptions on attribution theory (Heider, 1958; Curren and Folkes, 1987; Mizerski et al., 1979).

Attribution theory suggests that people attribute information either internally to the source of information or externally to factors which are related to the information. In relation to our study, if readers make the attribution that the response is based on product related (= external) reasons, they will perceive the response to be legitimate and believable. If consumers attribute internally, they assume that the source had other/communicator related (= internal) reasons for providing that kind of information. As a result they tend to devalue the information. In other words, the reader's attributions regarding the respondent's motivations on writing the response will influence the effect on the attitude towards the hotel. We expect that the response voice will determine whether consumers internally or externally attribute the information.

The distinction between human voice and corporate voice has been developed within organizational communication literature. Human voice is described as *"…an engaging and natural style of organizational communication as perceived by an organization's publics based on interactions between* *individuals in the organization and individuals in publics*" (Kelleher, 2009, p. 177). It is seen as non-persuasive and invites the audience to a dialogue.

In contrast, a corporate voice is perceived as profit-driven and persuasive (Levine et al., 2009). Corporate voice denotes communicating in a conventional corporate language (publicly referred to as typical marketing language or advertising slogans). Corporate voice also typically emphasizes commercial interests. While human voice signals understanding and willingness for dialogue, corporate voice is more of a one-way message to the receiver (Kelleher and Miller, 2006).

By using human voice, one-to-one communication is imitated, which makes the company voice more personal (Kuhn, 2005) and authentic for the reader. Studies from the blogging domain confirm that a human voice fosters effective communication on the Internet (Kelleher, 2009; Yang et al., 2010). Conversely, corporate voice is viewed with more suspicion and scepticism.

Based on our assumptions from attribution theory, we propose that if human voice is employed this will lead to external attribution as the reader assumes that the hotel wishes to engage in dialogue and offer feedback. The use of corporate voice, however, is more likely to favor internal attribution as the response appears more predetermined or manufactured. Hence, by adopting human voice, attitudes toward the hotel should be more favorable, whereas the reader is more likely to doubt the hotel response when corporate voice is employed.

H2: The attitude toward the hotel will be more favorable if the response is written in human voice compared to corporate voice.

2.3 Identification of the Respondent

Another factor that serves to influence whether a reader attributes internally or externally is the relative position within the company that the responder holds. Particularly for small and medium-sized service companies, it seems prudent to designate customer complaint responses to upper management to give customers a clear signal that their complaint has been taken seriously (Scheuer, 2011). Thus, if the response is provided by a senior management position, this may lead to a more favorable attitude toward the hotel. This effect might even be reinforced by the use of human voice. It is expected that a response by hotel management, expressed in human voice, will lead to the most positive evaluation of the hotel. Corporate voice responses from lower management staff members, however, are expected to lack external attribution as they appear mandated. Furthermore customers might feel less cared of if they receive answers from staff only. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

H3: Reading a response to an online review written by the company owner (top management) will result in a more favorable attitude toward the hotel compared to reading a response written by a staff member.

H4: Within the groups which received a response from the hotel, the effect of voice will interact with the respondent's position. The most favorable attitude toward the hotel will occur in the condition of a manager or owner answering in human voice while the least favorable attitude will occur in the condition of a staff member answering in corporate voice.

As our theoretical framework assumes that response voice and respondent's position have an impact on attitudes, we also test whether this attitudinal effect is mediated via the level of external attribution. Thus, we expect an indirect effect from response voice and respondent's position on attitude toward the hotel. Finally, if readers could explicitly identify the hotel respondent it may serve to change their attribution. As such, we investigate, firstly, whether a reasonable number of readers can identify the hotel respondent and if that changes attribution and, by extension, the effects on the attitude toward the hotel.
H5: The effect of response voice and respondent's position on attitude toward the hotel will be mediated via the external attribution.
RQ1: Do readers explicitly remember the respondent and, if so, is there a difference with regard to the before described effects?

3 Study

To investigate the proposed hypotheses a 2 (voice: human voice vs. corporate voice) by 2 (respondent's position: manager vs. staff) between-subjects and by 2 (identification: non-identified vs. identified) quasi-experimental factor was employed. To investigate H1 an additional control group, which only saw the plain review, was added.

3.1 Method

Design

The participants of the experimental groups received a fictitious review, which contained a few positive as well as mostly negative elements about a fictitious hotel in Austria. The displayed review portal was fictitious, as well. For both the hotel as well as the review website over 98% of the respondents indicated that they knew neither the hotel nor the website. Different responses from the hotel were provided, per group, while the control group received only the review without a response.

In the "response" groups, the hotel responded to the negative elements of the review and thanked reviewers for the positive elements. Corporate voice was manipulated by including a more marketing, report-like or formal language. Human voice featured language that was more emotional and emphasized that the concerns of the consumer were understood. In order to select the review text and hotel response we carried out two pretests. For generating the text of the review, we formulated and tested four hotel reviews, which were taken from genuine review sites and were only slightly modified. This study with 36 participants identified the review, which was perceived by the test subjects as negative but helpful and led to the lowest booking probability.

In the second pretest we generated four pairs of human and corporate voice responses. 54 participants rated these eight responses with regard to the communication style (Kelleher and Miller 2006). The two responses with the largest disparity in rating score and thus the strongest distinction between human and corporate voice were chosen for the final study. A manipulation check was implemented to analyze whether human or corporate voice was perceived (Kelleher and Miller, 2006; van Noort and Willemsen, 2011). The level of perceived human voice was measured by six items, which were adopted from Kelleher and Miller (2006). The 7-point Likert-scale (m=4.59, α=.74) included items such as: “The hotel is open to dialogue”; “The hotel addresses criticism with a direct, but uncritical manner” and “The hotel treats the customers as humans”. The analyses showed a significant difference between the two groups ($PERCVOICE_{human}$=4.82, $PERCVOICE_{corporate}$=4.27, t(339)=4.849, p=.000).

The respondent’s position was manipulated by adding a signature either of a manager, or the front desk staff. We asked whether the participants could remember who responded to the review, and coded correct identifications. This test revealed that 56% of the participants could explicitly identify the hotel respondent. We found no significant differences with regard to respondent’s identification between the four groups. Thus, following RQ1 we integrated identification as a quasi-experimental factor in the analyses.

Measures

Attitude towards the hotel was measured with three items (AH=3.40, α=.87) utilizing a 7-point Likert scale (Purnawirawan et al., 2012). Three items adapted from Cheung et al. 2009 assessed perceived credibility (CRED=4.54, α=.75) and three items adapted from Purnawirawan et al., 2012 gauged perceived usefulness (PU=4.97, α=.87). The external attribution was measured by three items (EXT ATTRIBUTION=4.95, α=.64) adapted from Laczniak et al. (2001) and Sen and Lerman (2007). Furthermore we measured some demographics regarding subjects’ information habits on a seven point scale.

Procedure

Participants were invited via the SoSci Panel (Leiner 2012). After an introduction and initial questions about their holiday behavior, participants received the review with the respective hotel response. Immediately after the exposure to the review, respondents were asked about their attitudes, the credibility and usefulness of the reviews as well as their attributions, followed by demographic questions.

Sample

Incomplete questionnaires, non-meaningful-answers, super-fast respondents (screen out criteria fastest 10%) as well as responses from participants who do not book hotels at all or not for recreational activities, were excluded from the sample. In total, 81 respondents had to be removed. After this screening process, a final sample of 315 in the experimental groups and 66 in the control group remained.

23.1% of the participants were male and the average age was 29.6 years (median=27). Review portals (m=5.98) followed by websites from tourism providers (m=5.48) were seen as the most influential sources for holiday information; while social networks (m=2.78), advertising (m=2.85) and travel agents (m=2.91) were seen as least influential. Only 5.5% of the participants indicated that they have never booked a hotel online.

3.2 Results

H1 proposes that if a review includes a response from the hotel it will lead to a more favorable attitude towards the hotel. To test H1, a t-test was employed comparing the combined "response" groups with the control group. As proposed in H1a, attitude towards the hotel was significantly higher, if an answer was provided ($AH_{response}$=3.55, $AH_{noresponse}$=2.67, t(112.79)=5.687, p<.000). In line with H1b, the credibility of the reviews increased if the hotel responded ($CRED_{response}$=4.61, $CRED_{noresponse}$=4.24, t(1,377)=2.538, p=.012). However, the perceived usefulness of the review did not differ, rejecting H1c. Thus, we can confirm that answering to reviews is beneficial for the likeability of the hotel and also increases the credibility of the review, yet the usefulness of the review does not necessarily increase if a response from the hotel is included.

H2, H3 and H4 propose that attitude toward the hotel is related to the voice of the hotel response and the respondent's position. To test the proposed hypotheses a 2x2x2 ANOVA was conducted with response voice, respondent's position and identification as factors. Table 1 summarizes the results of the ANOVA analyses showing the main and interaction effects:

Table 1: Results of the ANOVA for Attitude towards the hotel

Source	*df*	*F*	*P*
VOICE	1	0.033	0.855
RESPONDENT	1	2.565	0.110
IDENTIFICATION	1	2.300	0.130
VOICE * RESPONDENT	1	16.084	0.003

VOICE * IDENTIFICATION	1	5.090	0.099
RESPONDENT * IDENTIFICATION	1	0.001	0.981
VOICE * RESPONDENT * IDENTIFICATION	1	2.471	0.249

We did not observe any significant main effects; therefore we had to reject H2 and H3. But, as expected, the voice interacts with respondent's position. We suggested that the use of human voice by the manager would lead to the most favorable attitude toward the hotel (see H4 and Figure 1). However, the results do not support H4. In fact, they show opposite; they point in a different direction. Firstly, if written in a human voice the respondent's position in the organization does not seem to be important. Secondly, regarding the corporate voice groups, results show a significant difference in the attitude for the hotel.

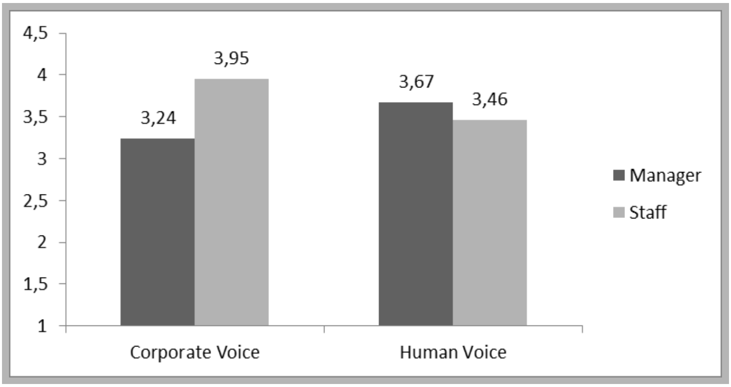

Figure 1: Effects of Response Voice and Respondent's Position on Attitude toward the Hotel

Interestingly, the direction of the effect was opposite to the proposed direction. Figure 1 details this interaction effect. Contrast analyses showed that responses written in corporate voice from staff lead to a more favorable attitude toward the hotel, compared to corporate voice written by management ($AH_{Manage}r=3.95$, $AH_{Staff}=3.24$, $F(1,307)=19.307$, $p=.001$). Thus, H4 is rejected by our data. The results do, however, demonstrate that for the corporate voice of communication, the different positions of the respondent lead to differences in readers' perception.

H5 proposes that the effects of respondent's voice, position and identification on the attitude towards the hotel are mediated by external attribution. We performed a bootstrap analysis as proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2008), Hayes (2013) and following Zhao et al. (2010). This analysis checks whether the independent variables and possible moderators influence possible mediators and whether these mediators affect the dependent exogenous variables. Table 2 depicts the regression model using the PROCESS macro, Model 12, 10,000 bootstraps (Hayes, 2013).

Table 2: Regression Model and Mediation Test

	Mediator (EXT ATTRIBUTION)			*DV (AH)*	
Source	Coeff	P		Coeff	P
Constant	4.949	.00		1.948	.00
VOICE (V)	-.100	.52		.004	.98
RESPONDENT (R)	.091	.64		.220	.14
IDENTIFICATION (I)	.251	.08		-.319	.03
V x R	-.559	.05		-.735	.02
V x I	-.293	.31		-.420	.16
R x I	-.401	.16		-.141	.64
V x I x R	1.676	.00		-.168	.78
EXT ATTRIBUTION				.294	.00
	R^2=.06, F(7,306)=2.733, p=.01			R^2=.14, F(8,305)=6.061, p=.00	

The mediation model shows that we have direct and indirect effects of respondent's voice, position and identification on attitude toward the hotel. The interaction effect of voice and respondent's position has a direct and an indirect significant effect. Thus, our mediation analysis confirms partly H5, as also a direct effect of Voice x Respondent was observed.

Regarding RQ1 we observed for identification a three-way interaction with voice and respondent's position, which is a full mediator on the attitude towards the hotel.

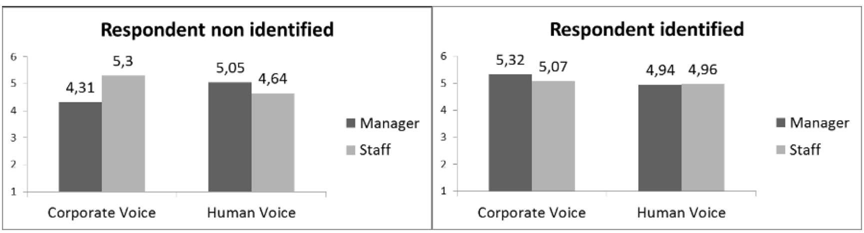

Figure 2: The Effects of Respondent's Voice, Position and Identification on external attribution

Figure 2 details the effects of the different voices, respondent's position and identification on external attribution. These findings reveal that if the respondent is not explicitly recognized, the staff member receives a stronger external attribution when they answer in corporate voice while the opposite is true for human voice. Contrast analyses showed significant differences for all four groups in the condition of non-identification, explaining the two-way interaction between voice and respondent. Yet although participants could not remember who answered, there seemed to be still a feeling that the human voice is 'wrong'. This effect is also explainable from the order of the questions as we assessed internal attribution before the questions, who actually was the respondent. Thus participants already expressed if they see the answer as internally or externally attributed.

If the respondent is identified, there were no significant differences for human or corporate voice or the respondent. However, interestingly if the respondent was identified, the answer from the manager in corporate voice surged in the ratings of external attribution and was significantly higher than an answer in corporate voice from the management and in human voice from the staff in the non-identified condition. These differences explain the significant three-way interactions.

Table 3 reports the mediation effects of the 3way interaction. The 3way interaction of voice, respondent and identification was only mediated if the respondent was not identified as a manager. The other indirect effect observed was in the condition that the staff member was the respondent but again they were not identified.

Table 3: Direct and Indirect Effects on Attitude toward the Hotel

Indirect effect of VOICE on AttH at the levels of respondent's position and identification mediated via external attribution				*Direct effect of VOICE at the levels of respondent's position and identification on AttH*	
Respondent	Identification	Indirect effect	LLCI to ULCI	Coeff	P
Manager	Non identified	.246	.054 to .494*	.626	.07
Manager	Identified	-.128	-.336 to .038	.120	.66
Staff	Non identified	-.216	-.450 to -.033*	-.195	.52
Staff	Identified	-.035	-.214 to .130	-.531	.07

Conversely, identification of the respondent leads to generally lower levels of external attribution with the exception of corporate voice used by the manager. Furthermore, this three-way interaction is significant if the respondent's position is hotel management and the response is written in corporate voice. ($EA_{nonidentified}$=4.31, $EA_{identified}$=5.32, F(77)=15.619, p=.00). Conditional analyses (Table 3) indicate that two conditions of non-identification of a manager's response and non-identification of a staff's response lead to significant indirect effects.

Thus, considering RQ1 we can summarize that in the case of non-identification, the human voice of the manager was more externally attributed and, therefore, positively influenced the attitude toward the hotel. Conversely, human voice from a staff member leads to a decrease in external attribution and, subsequently, to less favorable attitudes toward the hotel. In the case where respondents identified the source, we did not observe any indirect effects.

4 Discussion and Implications

Our study contributes towards an answer as to whether the response voice and respondent's position have an effect on consumer attitudes. Our results show that the worst strategy for a hotel is to not respond at all. In the case of non-response, the attitude toward the hotel was significantly more negative than in cases where the reviews included a response from the hotel. Credibility of the review was also enhanced by including a response from the hotel, whereas the perceived usefulness was not affected by the hotel's response.

However, contrary to suggestions from public relations literature that a human voice from the management should result in more favorable attitudes, our experimental results show that a corporate voice from staff members actually creates more favorable attitudes. One possible explanation for these results might be found in cultural differences in communication styles. The cited literature refers exclusively to the Anglo-American world, while this study was conducted in German. Compared to English, the German language includes a strong emphasis of the content level of communication (House, 1996). Most research concerning differences between these languages indicates that in both business and private interactions Germans tend to be content-, goal- and truth-oriented and less relationship-oriented (Grieve, 2010); while for English speaking people the content level and the relationship level are equally important toward successful dialogue (Nees, 2000). These differences may serve to explain why the human voice in a German-speaking country like Austria is less important than suggested. This result clearly indicates an avenue for further research.

In addition, our study confirms that readers of online reviews either internally or externally attribute the corporate response, and that the respondent's position and voice can leverage the external attribution. Our results show that the corporate voice written by a staff member is perceived more externally attributed than the same response written by management. This might be due to the role of the manager and common associations of management and owners possessing stronger self-serving motivations. For the staff, it is their job to respond; if the respondent is the manager or owner, recipients might perceive a stronger internal attribution as negative reviews might have a stronger negative impact on the manager's performance. Thus a reader of response by a manager might perceive it to be more self-motivated.

Finally, our data suggests that for attribution, a 3-way interaction exists with the explicit identification of the respondent. It appears that, generally, if the respondent's position is explicitly recalled that increases in external attribution occur. However, most critically is the difference for the manager responding in corporate voice. If the respondent's position is not explicitly recalled, this response creates the lowest level of external attribution whilst in the identification condition it created the highest level of attribution. Thus, if management responds to online reviews, they must give several hints to confirm his, or her, identity within the response to increase external attribution.

Our work opens several avenues for further research. Firstly, the role of culture needs more investigation. Secondly, we created a mixed review with few positive and mostly negative arguments. Thus, it would be worthwhile to analyze if responses to a positive review produce the same effects. In addition, the role of respondent's identification on the internal and external attribution also deserves further research. Finally, we tested the hypotheses within a hospitality context; other services like doctors or suppliers of material goods might experience different outcomes.

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Part II. The Classic: Advertising Strategies for Print, TV and Radio

Understanding Agency-Client Relationships Better Through Clients' Perceptions of Value and Value Antecedents

Maja Arslanagic-Kalajdzic and Vesna Zabkar

1 Introduction

Understanding advertising agency-client relationships is important for marketers because of its strong theoretical and practical implications. There are several relevant theories for this field: professional services theory (Beverland, Farrelly, and Woodhatch, 2007; von Nordenflycht, 2010; West, 1997), agency theory (Bergen, Dutta and Walker Jr, 1992; Waller, 2004) and relationship theory (Berry, 1995; Lindgreen and Wynstra, 2005; Ravald and Grönroos, 1996; Storbacka, Strandvik, and Grönroos, 1994). As client's participation is inevitable for knowledge-intensive ad agency services, agency-client relationships have practical implications and shape the outcome of advertising and/or communication mix that is in the core of cooperation.

Client's perceived value (CPV) in ad agency-client relationship was so far not thoroughly researched (except for Halinen, 1997), although perceived value was actively debated in business relationship research (e.g. Eggert and Ulaga, 2002; Lapierre, 2000; Lindgreen, Hingley, Grant, and Morgan, 2012). The main contribution of this research is in the extensive conceptualization of CPV in the agency-client relationships. We define CPV as a multidimensional concept with three value dimensions: functional, emotional and social. In terms of functional value, quality, price and time, effort and energy are included as its main components. Emotional value is rarely analyzed in business relationships in general; however, there is evidence for emotions to play a role for business clients (Lynch and de Chernatony, 2004; Prior, 2013); this is why we include this dimension in the model. Client's assessment of the social value of agency's services for its own products/services differs from the assessment of the social value of the agency's firm for its firm at the overall level and hence we use these two dimensions of social value. Further contribution of the paper is in exploring the role of intangible antecedents of CPV in agency-client relationships, especially perceived agency reputation, credibility and relationship quality.

2 Conceptual Framework of the Research

Research on agency-client relationship has many different directions: advertising evaluation (Devinney, Dowling, and Collins, 2005), creativity

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_9, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

(Nyilasy, Canniford, and Kreshel, 2013; Sasser and Koslow, 2012; Suh, Jung, and Smith, 2012), tolerance and commitment (Davies, 2006; LaBahn and Kohli, 1997), agency-client relationship dimensions and phases (Beverland et al., 2007; Jancic and Zabkar, 1998; Prendergast, Shi, and West, 2001; Verbeke, 1988; Waller, 2004).

Perceived value is rarely mentioned, although it is important for the overall relationships outcome. When it comes to the conceptualization of *CPV (see Figure 1)*, there is a lack of consensus between researchers in several important issues (Lin, Sher, and Shih, 2005): distinction between "value" and "values" (Lindgreen and Wynstra, 2005; Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007), CPV definition, its operationalization (uni-dimensional or multidimensional construct, formative or reflective, ratio or difference between benefits and sacrifices, first or second order construct, etc.). As the response to these debates, we formulate the CPV concept through functional, emotional and social value, and operationalize it as the multidimensional first order construct.

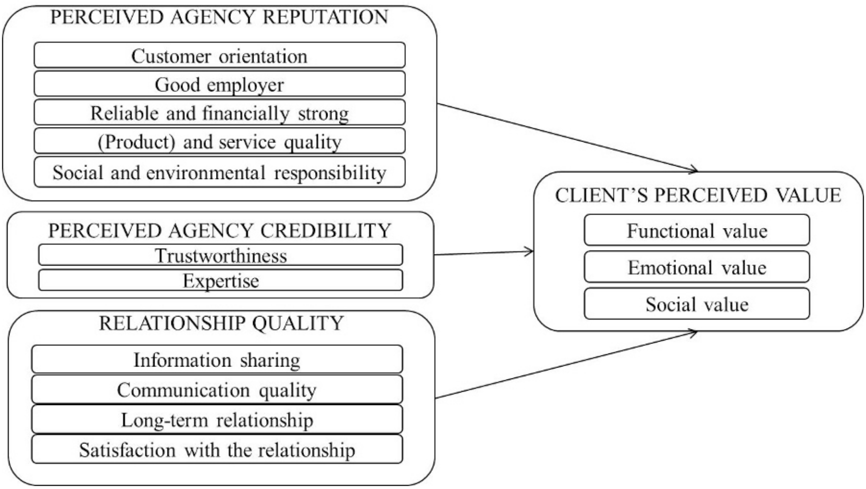

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Research

This research follows the premises of the relationship theory in perceived value analysis where according to Ravald and Grönroos (1996) perceived value represents an important component of relationship marketing and where relationship itself might have a major impact on the total value perceived. According to Lapierre (2000), value domain consists of benefits vs. sacrifices, while value scope entails product, service and relationship. Accordingly, definitional landscape of CPV value is very broad. The most frequent definition used in the literature, based on more than 2,730 hits for "perceived value" and "definition" through Google Scholar and focusing on business relationships, is Zeithaml's (1988, p. 12): "…customer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given" (Google Citation rank of 8331 as of January 2014).

For the purpose of CPV analysis in the agency-client relationship context we propose the following definition, relying on Anderson, Jain and Chintagunta, (1993) and Eggert and Ulaga (2002) proposals: *customer perceived value in agency-client relationship is the perception of the functional, emotional and social benefits and sacrifices related to the agency offer, perceived by key decision-makers in the client's organization, taking into consideration their business relationship and available alternative offerings in a specific use situation*. This definition clearly captures the proposed multidimensionality of perceived value in business relationships. For the purpose of this research, we argue that CPV in business relationships should advance from simpler value conceptualization (e.g. Graf and Maas, 2008; Lindgreen and Wynstra, 2005), to more complex values conceptualization (Petrick, 2002; Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007; Sheth, Newman, and Gross, 1991; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). We use Sweeney and Soutar's (2001) approach as a base.

Drawing on service theory (von Nordenflycht, 2010) we know that clients are not able to assess the skill level of professional service provider, this is why, different intangible signals are used for evaluation, such as corporate reputation, communication etc. There is still much confusion in literature and practice when it comes to terms *corporate reputation*, corporate identity, corporate communications, corporate image and corporate brand (Gray and Balmer, 1998). In other words, identity, image and reputation are still often used as synonyms (Barnett, Jermier, and Lafferty, 2006).

However, even in early works on reputation, image and reputation were recognized as conceptually similar, but different concepts. Weiss, Anderson and Macinnis (1999) stated that image and reputation are similar because they both reflect *perceptions* of the entity. On the other hand, they are different because: "image reflects a set of associations linked to a brand or company name that summarizes a brand or firm's identity" and that "reputation reflects an overall judgment regarding the extent to which a firm is held in high esteem or regard" (Weiss et al., 1999, p. 75). Barnett et al. (2006) recognized that there is an integrative perspective which imposes that image and identity are seen as the basic components of reputation (identity = internal perspective and image = external perspective). In the corporate marketing framework (Gray and Balmer, 1998), interesting conceptual link is offered: corporate identity through corporate communications creates corporate image and corporate reputation (image and reputation are influenced by exogenous factors, too) and can lead to competitive advantage.

The three most frequent theories that frame the field of corporate reputation are: institutional theory, resource-based view and signaling theory (Walker, 2010). Institutional theory points out to the importance of the environmental context when building corporate reputation. Resource-based view regards reputation as a source of a firm's competitive advantage. We align with signaling theory (Kirmani and Rao, 2000; Spence, 1973, 2002) that explains that reputation may become a signal that clients observe when forming their value perceptions.

Two different approaches towards defining corporate reputation are evident: integrative (overall and all comprehensive definition) and specific (for a specific aim or for specific stakeholder group). One of the mostly used and mentioned definitions of reputation (Walker, 2010) is by Fombrun and Van Riel (1996): "…a perceptual representation of a company's past actions and future prospects that describe the firm's overall appeal to all of its key constituents when compared with other leading rivals". Specific definitions are more appropriate for the purpose of our research, and we stick to the definition offered by Walsh and Beatty (2007, p. 129) in defining customer-based corporate reputation (CBCR) as "*the customer's overall evaluation of a firm based on his or her reactions to the firm's goods, services, communication activities, interactions with the firm and/or its representatives or constituencies (such as employees, management, or other customers) and/or known corporate activities*".

Closely related (and sometimes equated) concept to the corporate reputation is *perceived agency credibility.* Newell and Goldsmith (2001, p. 235) define perceived agency credibility (CC) as: *"... the extent to which consumers feel that the firm has the knowledge or ability to fulfill its claims and whether the firm can be trusted to tell the truth or not"*. Perceived agency credibility is here conceptualized through two dimensions: (1) trustworthiness and (2) expertise. Data from interviews in prior qualitative research confirm that trustworthiness and expertise are amongst top value drivers in agency-client relationship.

Our first research question is how perceived agency reputation and perceived agency credibility influence CPV in agency-client relationships. Corporate reputation and credibility decrease purchase risk (Helm and Salminen, 2010; Sheehan and Stabell, 2010) and when the relationship between agency and client is already established, they increase trust (Keh and Xie, 2009), thus they increase perceived benefits. If corporate reputation and credibility are high, clients do not need to spend additional resources in overlooking the relationship (Hansen, Samuelsen and Silseth, 2008), which lowers sacrifices and therefore increases perceived value. We can say that corporate reputation and credibility of agencies are directly related to benefits and at the same time inversely related to sacrifices in client's value perception and hence we postulate:

H1: Perceived agency reputation positively and significantly influence client' perceived value.

H2: Perceived agency credibility positively and significantly influence client' perceived value.

We then continue in building our conceptual framework through outlining the link between perceptions on communication and relationships and its relation to the client's perceived value. Corporate communication may be defined as "an instrument of management by means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external communication are harmonized as effectively and efficiently as possible so as to create a favorable basis for relationships with groups upon which the company is dependent" (Van Riel, 1995, p. 26). Corporate communication in agency-client relationship is through information sharing (Davies, 2006), which is important from the long-term and relationship perspective (Hansen et al., 2008; Noordewier, John, and Nevin, 1990).

As we are aligned with the relationship theory, communication aspects and relationship assessments are combined for the purposes of the framework. This is why we use *relationship quality* (RQ) concept that *"…consists of the assessment of various episodes within an association, reflecting the overall strength of the relationship"* (Lages, Lages, and Lages, 2005, p. 1041). Relationship quality construct has four different communication and relationship elements: (1) information sharing, (2) communication quality, (3) long-term relationship and (4) satisfaction with the relationship (Lages et al., 2005).

The second research question that we aim to explore is how relationship quality influences CPV in agency-client relationships. If agency is open towards its clients and if it offers all the important information in order to create a better relationship, it increases clients' trust (Tai and Ho, 2010) and therefore helps to an increase in perceived benefits. Frequent and relevant information sharing also decreases the costs the client would have if it would want to collect such information on its own (Lee, So, and Tang, 2000). On the other hand, satisfaction with the relationship increases benefits for clients and therefore we hypothesize:

H3: Relationship quality positively and significantly influences customer perceived value.

3 Methodology

In line with the outlined conceptual framework, and derived hypotheses, questionnaire for quantitative survey was developed. Respondent firms were asked to assess the current or most recent advertising agency they cooperated with. All measures were adapted from existing literature. Customer based corporate reputation with five dimensions (Walsh, Beatty, and Shiu, 2009; Walsh and Beatty, 2007), two-dimensional perceived agency credibility (Newell and Goldsmith, 2001) and relationship quality (RELQUAL) operationalized through four dimensions (Lages, Lages, and Lages, 2005). These antecedents summarize intangible and relationship specific influencers of CPV. Detailed review of research on CPV in business relationship resulted with the following components: functional value – quality (Davies, 2006; Lapierre, 2000; Park, Lee, Lee, and Truex, 2012), functional value – price (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001), functional value – time, effort and energy (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001), emotional value (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001), and social value separated to the social value perception of the firm and social value perception of firm's products and services (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001).

The survey was conducted among companies from one of the European countries in 2013. A total of 4,591 e-mails were sent and after three reminders, 927 companies were reached. Due to the policy of personal data protection, most of the mails were sent to general (info) mails of the company; therefore the reach was lower than it would be with direct access to respondents. There were 228 usable questionnaires returned in time for the analysis (24% response rate).

4 Results

Majority of companies in the sample belong to the wholesale and retail trade (18.58%), other services (16.39%) and manufacturing (9.84%) industries (in line with the national classification of enterprises). Medium sized firms (50 – 249 employees) make up the 31.29% of the sample, and they are followed by small firms (10 – 49 employees) who represent the 30.61% of the sample. Micro firms (up to 10 employees) correspond to the 21.77% of the sample, and the rest is representing the large firms (250 – more employees). The majority of firms-clients (118 out of 228) listed the name of advertising agency they worked with. The average length of the relationship was 3 years and the average spending with the selected agency 32% of the total marketing budget. Almost half of the respondents (46%) are directors of the firms (CEOs, general managers), followed by heads of marketing department and members of marketing department.

Items for all constructs were firstly analyzed in detail using the SPSS v.20. After conducting the reliability and validity analyses of item-level constructs and dimensions, items were aggregated following up the conceptual framework. Covariance-based structural equation modeling was used for testing the hypothesized model, following the two-step approach (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Firstly, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the measurement model (Table 1).

Table 1: Item and construct reliability

Item	CR	AVE	A	λ	t-value
Perceived agency reputation	0.96	0.82	0.96		
Customer orientation				0.90	-
Good employer				0.93	23.53
Reliable and financially strong				0.93	24.02
Service quality				0.96	26.30
Social and environmental responsibility				0.81	17.13
Perceived agency credibility	0.93	0.88	0.93		
Expertise				0.89	-
Trustworthiness				0.98	24.02
Relationship quality	0.83	0.57	0.82		
Information sharing				0.40	-
Communication quality				0.79	6.04
Long-term orientation				0.87	6.18
Relationship satisfaction				0.85	6.16
Customer perceived value	0.94	0.83	0.88		
Functional value				0.88	-
Emotional value				0.97	23.40
Social value				0.88	19.10
Model fit	$\chi2$=168.03 (P=0.0000), d.f.=71, $\chi2$/df=2.67, RMSEA=0.078, CFI=0.99, Standardized RMR=0.03				

Note: CR = composite reliability, AVE= average variance extracted, α = Cronbach's Alpha, λ =indicator loadings

We used the covariance matrix as an input to LISREL 8.71. Goodness-of-fit statistics were acceptable and indicated a good fit (Chi-Square = 168.03, df = 71, p = 0.00; 90 Percent Confidence Interval for RMSEA = (0.062; 0.093); SRMR = 0.033). We then tested the item and construct reliability (see Table 1 and Table 2). Perceived agency corporate reputation and credibility have excellent composite reliability and AVE. Relationship quality has one low loading, however, C.R. and AVE above the critical limit.

The convergent validity of the model was supported as all t-test values of the indicator loadings in the measurement model (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988) were statistically significant. Discriminant validity was assessed with a χ^2-test for pairs of latent variables with a constraining correlation coefficient between two latent variables (ϕ_{ij}) to 1 (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). All unconstrained models had a significantly lower value of χ^2 than the constrained models, so latent variables were not perfectly correlated and that discriminant validity exists (Bagozzi and Phillips, 1982).

Table 2: Construct means and correlations

Constructs	1	2	3	4
1. Perceived agency reputation				
2. Perceived agency credibility	0.80**			
3. Relationship quality	0.78**	0.78**		
4. Client perceived value	0.74**	0.75**	0.73**	
Mean [a]	4.96	4.92	3.50	4.68
Standard deviation	1.28	1.22	0.68	1.20

Note: [a] Scale 1-2 and 4, 1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree; Scale 3, 1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree; ** Correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Data were also tested for common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff, 2003). Through survey duration, we've made an effort to control for common method bias by protecting and assuring respondents of their anonymity, thus reducing evaluation apprehension and introducing questionnaire design with different visual question types. Statistically, we tested the presence of common method bias using Harman's single factor test. The resulting one-factor measurement model (Chi-Square = 759.89 (P = 0.000), *df* =77, RMSEA =0.20, standardized RMR =0.06) had much worse fit indices than the proposed measurement model. Next step was the assessment of the structural equation model and paths for the hypothesized relationships. The overall fit of the model is good, and it is presented in the Table 3. When it comes to the value antecedents in the hypothesized relationships, they explain 66% of the variance of client's perceived value. All hypothesized relationships were confirmed, although with lower significance level for H1.

Table 3: Hypotheses and fit indices

Hypothesized relationships	Standardized Path Coefficients
H1: Perceived agency reputation - > Client's perceived value	0.18*
H2: Perceived agency credibility -> Client's perceived value	0.31***
H3: Relationship quality - > Client's perceived value	0.35***

Fit indices: $\chi2$ = 168.03, df = 71, p = 0.00 ($\chi2$/df = 2,37); RMSEA = 0.078; Standardized RMR = 0.03; NFI = 0.98; NNFI = 0.99; CFI = 0.99; GFI = 0.90

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < .001$

5 Conclusions

Value proposition should be the core of every offer. When it comes to advertising agencies, providing valuable service is a serious challenge. This paper aims to increase understanding of client's perceived value in ad agency-client relationship through thorough theoretical and conceptual analysis and carefully planned and conducted quantitative research. We developed and empirically tested the conceptual framework that links selected intangible value antecedents and client's perceived value, and with that presented research helps in furthering the understanding and explaining the CPV. Many important implications for advertisers are present in this research, as well as a call for further discussion.

From the theoretical point of view, firstly, we offer new conceptualization of CPV in business relationships, through functional, but also through emotional and social value dimensions. This shows us that in the framework of the relationship theory, agency-client relationships cannot rely on only functional client perceived value elements. Hence, ad agencies should focus on the developing of the positive emotional and social notion with their clients in order to boost their client's perceived value. Secondly, we develop a framework with selected intangible value antecedents which are in line with the signaling theory (Spence, 1973, 2002) and also which belong to the corporate marketing framework elements (Balmer, 2009, 2011). This means that selected antecedents (agency reputation, agency credibility and relationship quality) are conceptualized to represent signals at the agency level that are perceived by their business clients and that are associated with CPV. Our empirical results confirm these conceptualizations.

Further on, positive and significant relationships between agency's reputation, perceived agency credibility, relationship quality and CPV help in practical guiding of ad agencies. Namely, they may combine the signals as tools they should use in the relationship with their clients in order to deliver value and to establish and sustain relationships on the long term. By building reputation as well as by making investments to improve credibility (here the focus should be primarily on increasing the expertise and trustworthiness of the first-line employees, e.g. key accounts), perceived value increases. We also see that dimensions of client-based reputation explain overall reputation and its relationship with CPV, so agencies should be focused on all five dimensions of reputation: show their customer orientation, demonstrate that they are good employers, reliable and financially strong, socially and environmentally responsible, and at the same time keep the high level of service quality.

Relationships quality represents the concept of the strongest influence in our model. The concept is all about different ways of communication, such as information sharing and communication quality. It also influences the overall value perception created through the process of agency service delivery. No wonder that long-term relationships and satisfaction with relationships contribute to clients' perceived value of agencies' services (functional, emotional and social). Although they are indeed intangible, antecedents in our model significantly explain perceived value of clients, making it meaningful for ad agencies to work on their reputation, credibility and relationship quality with clients.

One of the limitations of this research is that it relies on the results of the cross-section research. Hence, for further research value antecedents and CPV should be examined in two different points of time (longitudinal research). Furthermore, model in the empirical research should be controlled for different control variables (such as firmographic data of the client and control variables describing the relationships between agency and client).

Additionally, more outcome variables of interest could be included in the model in further research (such as loyalty, repurchase intentions or word of mouth as the value outcomes) as well as the potential moderator variables of the present relationships. Another interesting future research avenue is in separating three value dimensions in the empirical part of the research, and hence testing the relationships between antecedents and separate value dimensions as outcomes. Further research also may be extended to other service industries, especially to high-contact, professional services.

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The Effects of Emotional Television Advertising on Older and Younger Adults

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1 Introduction

Understanding older adults' responses to advertising is vital for the industry because older adults constitute a large and lucrative market: The world population is aging (United Nations, 2012) and consumers of 50 years and older have more disposable income than younger consumers (e.g., Ahmad, 2003; Carrigan and Szmigin, 2000; Moschis, 2012; Yoon et al., 2009). Surprisingly, research on older adults' processing of advertising is rather limited (e.g., Gunter, 1998; Micu and Chowdhury, 2010; Moschis, 2012; Simcock and Sudbury, 2006; Yoon et al., 2009).

The current study focuses on older adults' responses to emotional television commercials, because emotions are a crucial factor in advertising (e.g., Holbrook and Batra, 1987; Poels and Dewitte, 2006). Importantly, it is to be expected that older adults respond differently to emotional appeals than younger adults. Extensive psychological research, particularly work based on the socio-emotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, 1992), shows that older adults differ in their emotional goal setting from younger adults (Carstensen et al., 2003). Potentially, television ads that relate to these emotional goals are particularly effective for this target audience.

To the best of our knowledge, only a few studies (Drolet et al., 2007; Fung and Carstensen, 2003; Williams and Drolet, 2005) aimed to answer the question whether the age difference in emotional goal setting leads to differences in advertising responses. These studies focused on print advertising, and found the expected age differences. However, we cannot simply extrapolate these findings to television advertising; in particular because television stimulates a larger number of senses and thus evokes emotional responses more than print advertising does (e.g., Chaudhuri and Buck, 1995). These more intense emotional reactions may either mean that the age difference in responses to emotional appeals is more pronounced for television than for print, or that both age groups are so used to emotions in television ads that the difference between the two groups is smaller.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the differences between older and younger adults in liking and recall of emotional (versus knowledge-related)

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_10,

television commercials. We used real television commercials to enable the study to generate recommendations for practitioners.

2 Theoretical Background

A large body of psychological literature theorizes and tests how emotional goal setting and the regulation of emotions change as people grow older. One theory that is exceptionally widely cited in this body of research is the socioemotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, 1992).

2.1 Socioemotional Selectivity Theory

The main tenet of the socioemotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, 1992) is that as people age their future time perspective becomes more limited and therefore their goal setting changes. Future time perspective entails that human beings perceive their time as either limited or extensive (Carstensen, 1992): individuals view the time they will live as very long, or about to end. This perception of time has an impact on the assessment process that leads to a selection of life goals.

The theory distinguishes between *emotionally meaningful goals* and *knowledge-related goals.* Together, emotionally meaningful and knowledge-related goals are seen as the essential constellation of goals that guides social behavior throughout people's lives (Carstensen et al., 1999). Emotionally meaningful goals are defined as goals directly related to feelings such as balancing emotional states or sensing that one is needed by others. Knowledge-related goals are defined as goals that optimize the future, often through attainment of novel information (Fung and Carstensen, 2003, p. 163).

In cases when time is perceived as extensive and open-ended, priority is given to knowledge-related goals and information is accumulated for being used in the future. In contrast, when time is perceived as limited, emotionally meaningful goals are much more relevant because they are accomplished at the same time as they are being pursued, and, thus, are immediately gratifying (Fung and Carstensen, 2003). Growing older is inextricably connected to having less time left in life. Therefore, the socioemotional selectivity theory predicts that as people age, they attach greater importance to goals aimed at deriving emotional meaning from life than to goals that increase future preparedness (Carstensen et al., 1999). The prediction is also that older people are more likely to emphasize emotionally meaningful goals than younger people (Fung and Carstensen, 2003). Empirical research on social preferences has provided ample support for these central tenets of the theory (e.g., Carstensen et al., 1999).

2.2 Previous Studies on Print Advertising

A few experiments (Drolet et al., 2007; Fung and Carstensen, 2003; Williams and Drolet, 2005) were designed to test whether age differences in goal setting, as postulated by the socioemotional selectivity theory, are reflected in preference and recall of emotional magazine advertisements. Fung and Carstensen (2003) argued that goal-relevant information is not only remembered better, but is also evaluated more positively. They therefore hypothesized that older adults would prefer advertisements with emotionally meaningful appeals over those with knowledge-related appeals, and would also better remember information presented in such advertisements. They found support for these hypotheses, albeit not for all measures of preference. In addition, Fung and Carstensen (2003) hypothesized and found that younger adults' preference and memory were not influenced by type of appeal.

Williams and Drolet (2005) also found that older adults had higher liking and recall of emotional appeals compared to knowledge-related appeals. In contrast, younger adults had higher liking and recall for the knowledge-related appeals. Drolet et al. (2007) also reported that older adults liked and remembered affective print ads better than rational ads, regardless of type of product (hedonic versus utilitarian).

Our aim was to test whether these findings also apply to television commercials. In line with the print studies, we assumed that older adults' focus on emotionally meaningful goals would render the emotional advertising more appealing to them, whereas younger people would not show this bias:

H1: Older people like emotionally meaningful television commercials better than knowledge-related ones, whereas younger people do not show this difference.
H2: Older people remember brands in emotionally meaningful television commercials better than those in knowledge-related ones, whereas younger people do not show this difference.

3 Method

An experiment was conducted, using a 2 (type of commercial: emotionally meaningful versus knowledge-related commercial) x 3 (product: coffee, sweets, banking services) x 2 (age: older versus younger adults) mixed design. Both groups watched the same six television commercials: three emotionally meaningful and three knowledge-related ones.

3.1 Stimulus Materials

We selected six commercials: an emotionally meaningful and a knowledge-related commercial for each of the three product categories. In line with the study by Fung and Carstensen (2003), the emotionally meaningful commercials were chosen because they showed people sharing love, warmth, happiness, and special moments. The knowledge-related commercials were selected because they contained informative and factual content (as in Drolet et al., 2007; Williams and Drolet, 2005).

We chose the product categories coffee, sweets and banking services, because a pretest showed that the two age groups did not differ in product involvement and product use for these categories. The three emotional commercials featured the brands Tim Hortons, Werther's original and Visa, whereas the three knowledge-related commercials featured Nabob, Callebaut and Bank of America (see Table 1 for a description of the commercials).

Table 1: Description of the Commercials

	Emotionally meaningful commercial	*Knowledge-related commercial*
Coffee	Brand: Tim Hortons Content: Parents visit their daughter. They drink a cup of coffee and share a special moment in which they express that they miss each other.	Brand: Nabob Content: A person explains the procedure through which Nabob selects only the best quality coffee beans.
Sweets	Brand: Werther's orginal Content: A grandfather explains how his grandfather used to give him Werther's original. Now he gives Werther's orginal to his own grandson because he is very special.	Brand: Callebaut Content: A person explains that chocolate is a descendant of the cacao bean and that Callebaut has a long history of making chocolate.
Banking services	Brand: Visa Content: An olympic iceskater promised his sister -before she passed away- to win gold. Six years later he succeeded, skating a victory lap with his child. Visa made this possible.	Brand: Bank of America Content: A person lists the advantages of the credit card, such as 1% cash back, and shows how paying with the credit card works.

All commercials were in English. We ensured that the commercials had approximately the same length, and were not broadcast anymore at the time of the experiment. In the questionnaire, the three emotionally meaningful commercials and the three knowledge-related ones were presented randomly. We measured brand familiarity in the study in order to check whether the two age groups were equal in this respect.

3.2 Participants and Procedure

A total number of 83 participants took part in the experiment. The older age group ($N = 39$) consisted of people aged between 50 and 80 years ($M = 58.28$; $SD = 7.75$) and the younger group ($N = 44$) consisted of people with ages between 20 and 30 years ($M = 25.09$; $SD = 2.57$). Men ($N = 37$) and women ($N = 46$) were almost equally represented in the sample. The sample was highly educated, with a majority of participants having completed higher professional education ($N = 51$) or scientific education ($N = 29$). Most participants were from Europe ($N = 64$), while also participants from North America ($N = 14$) and the other continents participated.

The experiment was conducted online and in English. Participants received an invitation by e-mail including a link to the online questionnaire in which the commercials were embedded. They were instructed to watch each commercial only once.

3.3 Measures

As a manipulation check, emotional arousal was measured with four items on 7-point scales: “The commercial left a deep impression on me”; “The commercial really touched me”; “I felt involved with the commercial” and “The commercial left me unaffected” (Hendriks Vettehen et al., 2008). For each commercial, the four items proved to be one factor with sufficient reliability ($\alpha > .86$). The scores on the items were averaged to create a single measure of emotional arousal ($M = 3.92$; $SD = .55$).

Liking was measured as attitude toward the commercial (Drolet et al., 2007; Williams and Drolet, 2005). After each commercial, respondents were asked to evaluate the commercial on four items with 7-point scales: unfavorable/favorable, not enjoyable/enjoyable, dislike very much/like very much, bad/good ($M = 4.42$; $SD = .59$). Principal component analyses for each commercial showed that the four items loaded on one factor with sufficient reliabilities ($\alpha > .92$).

Unaided recall was measured with an open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire. Participants were asked to write down the brands they remembered seeing in the commercials. Each correct answer was coded as 1.

Based on the answers, sum scores for unaided recall of emotional meaningful commercials (M = 1.33; SD =.99) and knowledge-related commercials (M = 0.66; SD = .80) were calculated.

To measure aided recall, respondents were provided with a list of twelve brands: six that were in the commercials and six filler brands from the same product categories. The twelve brands were listed in a random order. Based on the answers, sum scores for aided recall of emotional meaningful commercials (M = 2.31; SD =.81) and knowledge-related commercials (M = 1.70; SD = 1.04) were calculated. These scores reflect the number of brands that were correctly recalled for the two types of commercials.

Brand familiarity was tested at the end of the survey. For each of the brands that were shown in the commercials, respondents were asked two questions: whether they knew and whether they used this brand ("yes" or "no").

4 Results

4.1 Manipulation and Confound Checks

To test whether the emotionally meaningful commercials were indeed perceived as more emotionally arousing than the knowledge-related commercials a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted. The manipulation check showed that self-reported emotional arousal was indeed significantly higher ($F(1,82)$ = 104.36; p <.001; η^2 = .56) for the emotionally meaningful commercials (M = 4.73; SE = .11) than for the knowledge-related commercials (M = 3.12; SE = .09).

To control for alternative explanations, we first checked whether the two age groups differed on several background characteristics. The two groups did not differ with respect to gender (χ^2 (1) = 1.11, p > .05), education (χ^2 (2) = 0.51, p > .05), or continent of residence (χ^2 (4) = 3.43, p > .05). However, the two groups did differ with respect to brand familiarity (using and knowing the brand) of Bank of America (χ^2_{using} (1) = 4.97, p < .05; $\chi^2_{knowing}$ (1) = 4.16, p < .05) and Werther's Original (χ^2_{using} (1) = 28.67, p < .001; $\chi^2_{knowing}$ (1) = 8.30, p < .01). This brand familiarity was not related to ad liking, and it was related to recall of Werther's Original but not to the full recall variable; therefore brand familiarity was not included as a covariate in the analyses.

4.2 Liking of Commercials

To test the hypothesis for liking (H1), we conducted a repeated measures ANOVA with type of commercial and product category as within-subject factors, and age as the between-subjects factor. The ANOVA with liking of the commercial as the dependent variable showed a main effect for type of commercial, $F(1,81) = 38.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.11$, with higher liking for emotionally meaningful commercials ($M = 4.81$; $SE = 0.10$) than for knowledge-related commercials ($M = 4.03$; $SE = 0.08$) There was no main effect for age ($F(1,81) = 1.19$; $p > .10$).

The analysis showed the expected interaction effect between type of commercial and age, $F(1,81) = 9.65$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = 0.03$. Post hoc tests showed that older adults liked the emotional commercials ($M = 5.08$; $SE = 0.15$) significantly ($p < .001$) more than the knowledge-related ones ($M = 3.90$; $SE = 0.11$). The same applied to the younger adults (emotional commercials: $M = 4.55$; $SE = 0.14$; knowledge-related commercials: $M = 4.15$; $SE = 0.11$), but for them the difference between the two types of commercials was smaller ($p < .05$). For emotional commercials, the difference in liking between the two age groups was significant ($p < .05$). For knowledge-related commercials, the difference between the two groups was not significant ($p > .10$).

Thus, hypothesis 1 was confirmed in the sense that we found the anticipated pattern for the older adults. However, we did not hypothesize that also the younger adults would like the emotional commercials more than the knowledge-related ones.

4.3 Recall of Brands

To test the hypothesis for recall (H2), we conducted two repeated measures ANOVAs (unaided and aided recall) with type of commercial as within-subject factor, and age as the between-subjects factor. The ANOVA with unaided recall as the dependent variable showed a main effect for type of commercial, $F(1,81) = 32.93$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .27$ with higher recall for brands in emotional commercials ($M = 1.31$; $SE = 0.11$) than in knowledge-related commercials ($M = .65$; $SE = 0.09$). There was also a main effect for age, $F(1,81) = 8.39$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .09$, with younger adults ($M = 1.21$; $SE = 0.11$) remembering more brands than older adults ($M = .76$; $SE = 0.11$). However, there was no interaction effect between type of commercial and age on unaided recall, $F(1,81) = 1.05$, $p > .10$.

For aided recall, the ANOVA showed a similar pattern. First, there was a main effect for type of commercial, $F(1,81) = 30.37$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .27$, with higher aided recall for brands in emotional commercials ($M = 2.30$; $SE = 0.09$) compared to knowledge-related commercials ($M = 1.68$; $SE = 0.11$). Moreover, the main effect of age, $F(1,81) = 15.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .16$, showed that younger adults ($M = 2.31$; $SE = 0.11$) remembered more brands than older adults ($M = 1.68$; $SE = 0.12$). No interaction effect between type of commercial and age, $F(1,81) = .75$, $p > .10$, was found.

In all, as the results did not show an interaction between type of commercial and age for both unaided and aided recall, the second hypothesis was rejected.

5 Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine whether there are differences between older and younger adults in responses to emotionally meaningful (versus knowledge-related) television commercials. For liking, we found that both age groups liked the emotionally meaningful commercials more than the knowledge-related ones, but the difference between the two types of commercials was larger for older adults. Moreover, older adults liked the emotional commercials more than the younger adults did. For recall, we found a main effect for age, with older adults remembering fewer brands than younger adults (as in for example Dubow, 1995; Fung and Carstensen, 2003; Johnson and Cobb-Walgren, 1994), but we did not find the anticipated age difference in recall of emotional advertising.

When comparing our findings to previous studies, it seems that the studied medium plays an important role. It is interesting that for print media younger adults preferred knowledge-related ads (Williams and Drolet, 2005) or did not show a bias (Fung and Carstensen, 2003), whereas for television they aligned with the older group in liking the emotional ads more. Potentially this is caused by the fact that a defining characteristic of television advertising is that it is directed at emotions, and that it evokes emotions more intensely than print advertising (Chaudhuri and Buck, 1995). We therefore recommend future research into the effects of emotional advertising on older and younger adults to focus specifically on the comparison between effects for television and print advertising.

The second unexpected finding, namely that we did not find the hypothesized effect for recall, could also be caused by a specific characteristic of television. Potentially, older adults remember less from television commercials than younger adults because of the audiovisual production features of commercials regardless of the type of content, thus ‘overriding’ the positive effect of emotional content. Future research is called for to test this explanation, and to delve into the question of how such production features differentially affect older and younger adults' processing of advertising (Van der Goot et al., 2015).

For practitioners who develop television commercials that need to appeal to an older target group, it is important to pay special attention to the emotional content. The current study, in combination with previous research based on the socioemotional selectivity theory (Drolet et al., 2007; Fung and Carstensen, 2003; Williams and Drolet, 2005), strongly implies that older adults are particularly attracted to loving and warm messages. The present study suggests that this approach would not scare younger audiences away, because they also liked the emotionally meaningful commercials more than the knowledge-related ones, although for them the difference between the two was less pronounced than for the older group.

To the best of our knowledge, the current study is the first to test whether the propositions of the socioemotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, 1992) translate to age differences in responses to television commercials. Although the results were not univocal, we do see this study as an incentive to continue on this path of research.

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7 Acknowledgement

We would like to thank Gintarė Stankevičiūtė for her contribution to this study.

Don't Hate me Because I am Beautiful: Identifying the Relative Influence of Celebrity Attractiveness and Character Traits on Credibility

Nora J. Rifon, Mengtian Jiang, and Sookyong Kim

1 Introduction

A celebrity spokesperson is typically defined as a recognizable person who uses this recognition to promote a consumer good through an advertisement. Celebrity endorsers are widely used to engage consumers. Past research has shown that almost 25% of all television commercials contain celebrity endorsers (Erdogan et al., 2001). As of 2010, it was estimated that $50 billion was spent on celebrity endorsements in traditional media (Crutchfield, 2012) and another $35 billion on digital endorsements (Shayon, 2011). Celebrities have their own brand and equity, and each celebrity's brand is important to marketers as they seek to transfer the celebrity's image to the endorsed product (McCraken, 1989).

Perhaps the most studied characteristic of effective celebrity endorsers is their credibility. For decades, celebrity attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness, the three dimensions of source credibility (Ohanian, 1990; Ohanian, 1991), have been examined and shown to create positive advertising effects (Amos et al., 2008; Baker and Churchill, 1977; Goldsmith et al., 2000; Hovland and Weiss, 1951; Pornpitakpan, 2004). Celebrity attractiveness is often associated with physical beauty and to some extent likability, and trustworthiness with sincerity and honesty. Expertise is a function of the match between the celebrity and the product endorsed; a celebrity should have special knowledge or experience with the category to have developed expertise. Tiger Woods can endorse golf equipment and be viewed as having the expertise needed to offer a valuable opinion, but in light of his recent bad press, it is possible consumer assessments of his character could undermine his expertise. Arguably, trustworthiness may be most important as it determines the credibility of the message as a whole. However, there has been no examination of what celebrity characteristics create trustworthiness. Indeed, there has been little research examining celebrity personality and what elements might influence the perception that the celebrity is trustworthy.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relative influence of celebrity characteristics such as physical attractiveness and character traits on consumer perceptions of celebrity credibility, using the dimensions of trustworthiness and expertise. Furthermore, we explore how celebrity philanthropy might also

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_11, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

influence those perceptions. A recent Huffington Post article highlights the value of celebrity philanthropy by suggesting that some celebrities, who are in some ways very unlikeable and unattractive, should be given “another chance” because they are active in supporting good causes (McDonald, 2013). In fact, with so many celebrities in the press for negative behaviors, some celebrities might seek a way to improve consumer perceptions of their character and credibility. The results inform future academic research on celebrity effects, offer a new dimension for inclusion in the profiling of celebrity endorsers, and offer implications for celebrities seeking to improve their image.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Celebrity Endorser Effects

A celebrity endorser can be defined as someone who is identifiable and uses that identification to support a product through some type of advertising. Decades of research have shown that there are several positive brand outcomes of celebrity endorsement. Ads with celebrities can cut through ad clutter, and leave a stronger memory trace (McCraken, 1989). Positive ad and brand attitudes can result from a good celebrity/brand match and a celebrity endorser can reposition a brand by associating his/her image with a brand (Tantiseneepong et al., 2012). A celebrity spokesperson can help a product to stand out among its competitors (Dean and Biswas, 2001). Increased product interest (Maronick, 2006) and stock value (Agrawal and Kamakura, 1995) are other outcomes of celebrity endorsements. Successful celebrity endorsers have been shown to be likable, familiar, expert, attractive and trustworthy (Atkin and Block, 1983; Ohanian, 1990; Eisend and Langner, 2010; Choi and Rifon, 2012; Tantiseneepong et al., 2012). Thus, the overall image the endorser is a vital part of an endorsement’s success.

A celebrity is successful as an endorser when, in the eyes of the consumer, the positive images and meanings associated with the celebrity are transferred to the endorsed product. The characteristics of the celebrity transfer to a product, and in this case, the corporation (McCracken, 1989). McCracken’s (1989) model of meaning transfer is widely used to explain how celebrities influence consumer brand perceptions. The transfer process from celebrity to a product helps explain some of the appeal of a celebrity endorser; a person will purchase a product endorsed by a celebrity in the hopes of becoming more like that celebrity. In order for meaning, or image variables, to transfer from the celebrity to the brand, the celebrity must first acquire that meaning from the societal culture. Recent research shows that this transfer of image is facilitated when the consumer perceives the celebrity as a version of their aspirational, and not actual, self (Choi and Rifon, 2012). Therefore, celebrity endorser effectiveness is heavily reliant on the positive image of the endorser and target consumer perceptions of the positive image as desirable.

2.2 Celebrity Credibility

The positive and desirable image of the celebrity endorser is based on perceived credibility of celebrity. Endorser credibility has received considerable attention because it is a critical factor to create the desirable image of the endorser (e.g., Aronson et al., 1963; Bergin, 1962; Bochner and Insko, 1966; Goldberg and Hartwick, 1990; Sternthal et al., 1978). In the context of celebrity endorsement, credibility is defined as the extent to which the source is perceived as possessing expertise relevant to the communication topic and can be trusted to give an objective opinion on the subject (Belch and Belch, 1993, pp.189-190; Ohanian, 1990).

Celebrity credibility is a function of attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1990; Ohanian, 1991). The first dimension of credibility is attractiveness. A substantial body of research in advertising suggests that physical attractiveness is a critical factor that influences an initial judgment of another person (e.g., Chaiken, 1979; Kahle and Homer, 1985). In fact, most studies have revealed that a physically attractive endorser facilitates attitude or opinion change (Baker and Churchill, 1977; Caballero and Pride, 1984; Chaiken, 1979; Joseph, 1982). For example, Joseph (1982) concluded that attractive communicators are steadily liked more and have more positive impact on the associated product than unattractive communicators. Physical attractiveness has been defined in terms of both facial and physical aspects (Baker and Churchill, 1977; Patzer, 1983) and the construct generally includes model attractiveness (attractive-unattractive) (Baker and Churchill, 1977), sexiness (Steadman, 1969), sexualness and likability (Maddux and Rogers, 1980), or chicness (Mills and Aronson, 1965).

Next, expertise refers to the match between the celebrity and the product endorsed so that a celebrity endorser can have special knowledge or experience with the category to have special expertise. Expertise indicates that the celebrity is competent, knowledgeable, has experience, and is qualified (Tantiseneepong et al., 2012). Similar concepts of expertise are “authoritativeness” (McCroskey, 1966), “competence” (Whitehead, 1968), or “qualification” (Berlo et al., 1969). Previous research showed that source expertise is positively related to attitude change (Maddux and Rogers, 1980), respondent’s compliance with the message (Crisci and Kassinove, 1973), and agreement on advocated position (Crano, 1970).

Lastly, trustworthiness refers to the message audience's degree of confidence in, and the level of acceptance of, the endorser and the message (Ohanion, 1990). That is, trustworthiness is a listener's trust in a speaker. Trustworthiness is an important cue to lead attitude change. For example, highly trustworthy communicator can make an opinionated message more effective than non-opinionated communication (Miller and Baseheart, 1969). And a trustworthy speaker was more persuasive regardless of his or her level of expertise (McGinnies and Ward, 1980).

2.3 Celebrity Character Traits, Philanthrophy, and Credibility

As noted earlier, Ohanian (1990) identified three global characteristics that can make a celebrity more effective. The three characteristics are attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. These global factors, however, do not account for the unique characteristics that any one celebrity might possess and are thought to transfer to the products they ally with (McCracken, 1989). Choi and Rifon (2007), for example, elaborated on Ohanian's work using traits identified in marketing, psychology and advertising. They identified genuineness, competence, excitement and sociability as desirable endorser's unique traits. Other personal traits for celebrity may include wise/stupid, down to earth/arrogant, socially responsible/irresponsible, or caring/uncaring characters (Choi and Rifon, 2007).

Empirical evidence supports the use of a celebrity that fits the product for greater credibility and ad effects (Koernig and Boyd, 2009). For example, an attractive celebrity would be more effective at selling beauty products than an unattractive celebrity. Or a racecar driver would be more effective at selling tires than a golfer. A caring celebrity would be more effective at endorsing family related products than a celebrity with uncaring character.

Celebrity involvement in philanthropy such as donation or other social responsible behavior can influence his/her persona or character traits (Littler, 2008). Celebrity involvements with charitable causes have spread over the past two decades (e.g., Audrey Hepburn's work for UNICEF). The third sectors have used marketing campaigns and branding to expand social issues using celebrities. Celebrity involvement with charitable causes can raise the profile of a campaign, and get wider media exposure (Lettler, 2008). Therefore, we summarize this review of literature with three broad research questions:

RQ1: What characteristics of the celebrity endorser drive the perceived trustworthiness?

RQ2: What characteristics of the celebrity endorser drive the perceived expertise?

RQ3: How does celebrity philanthropy influence the perceptions of trustworthiness and expertise?

3 Methods

3.1 Sample

A total of 567 undergraduate students at a large Midwestern university participated in the study. 381 of the participants are female, 184 are male while 2 are unidentified. Their age ranged from 18 to 27 years, with an average age of 20 years.

3.2 Data Collection Procedures

Subjects were recruited through email to participate in the study that was administered online using SurveyGizmo and were randomly assigned to see one of four celebrities (Ellen DeGeneres, Angelina Jolie, Kim Kardashian, or Lindsay Lohan). Forbes ranked Ellen DeGeneres, Angelina Jolie, and Kim Kardashian in the top 75 of Forbes 100 most powerful celebrities (Pomerantz, 2013) indicating they were all relevant choices to generate a range of perceptions of celebrity philanthropy. The measured variables were perceptions of celebrity philanthropy, attitude toward the celebrity, celebrity physical attractiveness, character, expertise, and trustworthiness.

3.3 Measures

All measures used a seven-point, semantic differential scale. Perceived philanthropy history was measured with one item (1 = low, 7 = high). Items from Choi and Rifon (2012) were adapted to measure attitude toward the celebrity (unfavorable/favorable, good/bad, pleasant/unpleasant, Cronbach's alpha = .92), celebrity character (wise/stupid, down to earth/arrogant, socially responsible/irresponsible, caring/uncaring, Cronbach's alpha =.8), celebrity physical attractiveness (attractive/not attractive, classy/not classy, elegant/plain, beautiful/ugly, sexy/not sexy, Cronbach's alpha = .89), celebrity expertise (expert/not expert, experienced/inexperienced, knowledgable/not knowledgable, qualified/unqualified, skilled/unskilled, Cronbach's alpha = .94), and celebrity trustworthiness (dependable/undependable, trustworthy/untrustworthy, honest/ dishonest, reliable/unreliable, sincere/insincere, Cronbach's alpha = .92).

4 Results

We conducted two sets of hierarchical regressions, first with trustworthiness as the dependent variable and then expertise as the dependent variable. We used attitude towards the celebrity, physical attractiveness and character as independent variables in the base model, and add perceive philanthropy to the second model. We also ran a simple regression to examine the relative importance of different specific character traits on perceived trustworthiness.

As shown in Table 1, 74.9% of the variance in trustworthiness was explained by the independent variables in the Model 1. Character (β = .466, p <.001), attitude towards the celebrity (β = .298 , p <.001), and physical attractiveness (β = .212, p<.001) all statistically significantly predict trustworthiness (F (3,527) = 5256.96, p < 0.001). Perceived philanthropy (β = .93, p <.001) is also positively related to trustworthiness and added .6% of the variance in trustworthiness. Results in Table 3 showed that within character traits, being down to earth (β = .337, p <.001), and caring (β = .325, p <.001), had bigger effects on trustworthiness, compared with being wise (β = .156, p <.001), and socially responsible (β = .149, p <.001).

Results in Table 2 showed that 60.1% of the variance in expertise was explained by the independent variables in Model 1. Character (β =. 430, p<. 001), attitude towards the celebrity (β = .257, p <. 001), and physical attractiveness (β = .187, p <. 001) all statistically significantly predict expertise (F (4, 526) = 408.30,, p <0.001). Perceived philanthropy (β = .177, p <. 001) added 2.2% of the variance in expertise and was also positively related to expertise. Within character traits, being down to earth (β = .340, p <. 001) and caring (β = .313, p <. 001), have bigger effect on expertise, compared with being wise (β = .113, p <. 01), and socially responsible (β = .097, p <. 05) (See Table 3).

Table 1: Regression Results of Celebrity Characteristics on Trustworthiness

	Model 1		*Model 2*	
	B	t	B	t
Character	.466***	12.880	.449***	12.472
Attitude towards celebrity	.298***	8.306	.275***	7.637
Physical Attractiveness	.212***	7.785	.197***	7.246
Perceived philanthropy			.093***	3.719
Df	F(3,527)		F(4,526)	
F	5256.960***		408.303***	
R^2	.756		.756	
Adjust R^2	.749		.755	

Note. * *p* < .05; ** p < .01; *** *p < .001*

Table 2: Regression Results of Celebrity Characteristics on Expertise

	Model 1		*Model 2*	
	β	t	B	t
Character	.430***	9.507	.400***	9.028
Attitude towards celebrity	.257***	5.676	.212***	4.748
Physical Attractiveness	.187***	5.474	.159***	4.720
Perceived philanthropy			.177***	5.658
Df	F(3,525)		F(4,524)	
F	263.418***		217.235***	
R^2	.601		.624	
Adjust R^2	.599		.621	

Note. * *p* < .05; ** p < .01; *** *p < .001*

Table 3: Regression Results of Specific Character Traits on Trustworthiness and Expertise

	Trustworthiness		Expertise	
	β	t	B	t
Wise vs. Stupid	.156***	.156	.113**	2.676
Socially Responsible vs. Irresponsible	.149***	.149	.097*	2.451
Caring vs. Uncaring	.325***	.325	.313***	6.919
Down to Earth vs. Arrogant	.337***	.337	.340***	8.220
Df	F(4,539)		F(4,537)	
F	293.845***		170.107***	
R^2	.686		.559	

Note. * *p* < .05; ** p < .01; *** *p < .001*

5 Discussion

Widely used in advertising and marketing strategies, the most successful celebrity endorsers are seen as attractive, familiar, and experts, but more importantly, trustworthy and likeable (Atkin and Block, 1983). However, few studies have looked at celebrity personality traits and examined what characteristics of the celebrity stand out in consumer's perception of credibility. The current study contributes to the celebrity endorser effects literature by comparing the relative influence of celebrity physical attractiveness and celebrity character on perceived trustworthiness and expertise, as well as examining how celebrity philanthropy affect these perceptions.

In a nutshell, the study findings show that perceived philanthropy, attitude towards the celebrity, physical attractiveness, and character traits, were all significant predictors of perceived trustworthiness and perceived expertise. Favorable attitude towards the celebrity and physical attractiveness increase the celebrity's perceived trustworthiness and expertise. This result is consistent with advertiser's selection of endorser selection decisions. Advertisers often use physical attractiveness and favorability as the most critical criteria to choose their product endorser.

However, according to our study results, celebrity character traits are more important than the physical attractiveness in predicting trustworthiness and expertise. This finding suggests that advertisers should consider more of the character traits of the celebrity than his or her physical beauty. The results in Table 3 detailed that celebrity character traits such as down to earth, caring explained more variance of celebrity credibility than being wise, and socially responsible. Thus advertisers should take cautions when they use celebrity endorsers perceived as arrogant and uncaring in order to gain credibility. The findings also indicate that perceived philanthropy help to increase celebrity's trustworthiness and expertise. Celebrities could increase perceived credibility by involving in charity, philanthropy or social marketing campaigns.

The possible limitation of this study is that we only used four female celebrities to test celebrity credibility and did not use fictitious celebrities to increase external validity, thus prior attitude toward the celebrity may influence the results of the study. Future study can use a wider variety of real celebrities, or use fictitious celebrities with certain scenarios. This study also only looked at celebrity good behavior, thus further investigation could include celebrity bad behavior. Future research could also examine other outcomes variables of celebrity endorser effect, such as ad attitudes, brand image, and purchase intention.

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The Selective Avoidance of Threat Appeals in Right-Wing Populist Political Ads: An Implicit Cognition Approach Using Eye-Tracking Methodology

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1 Introduction

Right-wing populist parties increasingly use political poster advertisements depicting negative and threatening images of foreigners, especially framing Muslims as a threat to Western European countries and culture (e.g. Betz, 2013; Marquart, 2013). For instance, parties such as the SVP in Switzerland, the FPÖ in Austria, the Fremskrittspartiet in Norway, or the NPD in Germany apply political poster ads that openly attack minorities and immigrants. These poster ads often depict simple, strongly emotional content, such as praying or screaming Muslims, or women in Burkas. Such advertising images appeal to cultural or symbolic threats which lead to the feeling that the in-group's system of values is being undermined by an out-group (Matthes & Marquart, 2013; Schmuck & Matthes, 2014; Stephan et al., 1998). In fact, a wide body of research (e.g., McConhay & Hough, 1976; Sidanius, Devereux, & Pratto, 1992) suggests that symbolic threats can create negative attitudes toward immigrants and ethnic minorities.

Even though large amounts of money are invested in these political advertising campaigns and they may have important consequences for integration and religious freedom, hardly any research has been concerned with their effects so far. In addition to that, advertising research has mostly ignored the underlying perceptual processes that take place when citizens are exposed to such negative, threatening images. Given the fact that approximately 85 percent of the population are reached by political poster advertisements in European countries (Lessinger, Moke, & Holtz-Bacha, 2003), we need to better understand how threatening ads are perceived and processed by audience members.

This study attempts to fill this pressing research gap and extends previous research in two important ways. First, rather than looking at the effects of such ads, we explore the perceptual processes of selection and avoidance of political threat ads. More specifically, and relying on theorizing in social and cognitive psychology, we distinguish between implicit and explicit attitudes (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006) in order to predict how viewers look at threatening ads. Explicit attitudes are those that people are consciously aware of, they are deliberative, and people can control them. Implicit attitudes, in contrast, are

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_12, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

"automatic affective reactions resulting from the particular associations that are activated automatically when one encounters a relevant stimulus" (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006, p. 693). Translated to the processing of threatening poster ads, we can theorize that implicit attitudes should predict the spontaneous allocation of attention in which people engage without much effort (Beattie & McGuire, 2012). In fact, political posters are often processed in passing (e.g., in public places) without people investing much cognitive energy. In situations such as these, implicit attitudes are especially strong predictors of human behavior (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). More specifically, psychological theorizing and some prior research (e.g., Beattie & McGuire, 2012) suggests that negative implicit attitudes toward an attitude object should lead to perceptual avoidance.

As the second innovation in research on right-wing populist political ads, we apply eye-tracking methodology in order to measure citizens' exposure to or avoidance of threatening ad images. Compared to self-reported recall or recognition measurements, this method's key advantage lies in the possibility for the researcher to unobtrusively track perceptual processes that recipients are not necessarily aware of. In fact, unconscious eye movements cannot be assessed with self-reports. In addition to that, eye-tracking allows us to measure perceptual processes in dynamic ways, which is to say that we are able to observe the processing of threatening ads in several phases of a reception process (i.e., initial versus overall attention allocation).

2 Implicit and Explicit Attitudes and Political Advertising Perception

There is a growing stream in consumer and advertising research that distinguishes explicit from implicit attitudes (e.g., Arendt, Marquart & Matthes, 2013; Dimofte, 2010). Explicit attitudes can be described as conscious, controlled, and intentional (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). The term "explicit" refers to the fact that this type of attitudes is based upon overtly expressed evaluations toward objects. In contrast, implicit attitudes are conceptualized as automatic affective reactions toward attitude objects and are the result of the activation of associations in the memory. This process of activation operates rather automatically (see Bargh, 1994), meaning that individuals are mostly unaware of it (i.e., lack introspective access to the process), that they have mostly no intention to start it (i.e., unintentional), that it is highly efficient (i.e., operating despite conditions of restricted cognitive resources), and mostly uncontrollable (i.e., cannot be altered or stopped). It comes as no surprise that research has revealed that implicit attitudes are related to our spontaneous evaluations of objects (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006), impulsive forms of behavior (Strack & Deutsch, 2004), and can guide rather spontaneous attention allocation (Beattie & McGuire, 2012). The latter is of primary importance for the present study: It is assumed that when a social stimulus is encountered in the (symbolic) environment (e.g., political ads), cues that activate one concept in memory (e.g., "foreigner") will also activate associated concepts (i.e., cognitive associations or affect, see Greenwald et al., 2002). Thus, when a social stimulus is associated with negative affect in memory, the mere (re)activation of the corresponding internal representation of this social stimulus will also elicit negative automatic affect when encountering this social stimulus in the (symbolic) environment.

To measure explicit attitudes, one can simply ask respondents to evaluate a stimulus (e.g., a brand, party, or social group). Implicit attitudes, in contrast, cannot be measured via introspection, but can be assessed by implicit attitude tests (e.g., the Implicit Association Test, Greenwald et al. 1998) or implicit choice tests, both of which limit the participant's opportunity to control her responses or behaviour.

The differentiation between implicit and explicit attitudes is beneficial for advertising research for several reasons. Research on implicit attitudes offers a theoretical model for understanding why people choose or buy brands without conscious control or deliberative reasons (e.g., Brunel et al., 2004). Implicit attitudes can even predict behaviours which are associated with a high level of deliberative thinking by common sense, such as voting (Glaser & Finn, 2013). Even more importantly, it has been demonstrated that implicit attitudes can explain approach or avoidance behaviour especially in low control and low cost situations with a limited amount of available resources, such as spontaneous product choices or spontaneous orienting reactions (Strack & Deutsch, 2004). However, when people engage in deliberative thinking, the effect of implicit attitudes on behaviour weakens (Strack & Deutsch, 2004).

When citizens are confronted with political poster ads in public situations, it is very unlikely that they invest much cognitive effort in looking at those ads. Since right-wing populist posters often depict negative, threatening images, implicit attitudes may predict whether and how people look at those ads. Based on implicit cognition theory (Strack & Deutsch, 2004), we can predict that positive implicit attitudes toward an attitude object increase approach behaviour. By contrast, negative implicit attitudes toward an attitude object should lead to avoidance behaviour. However, the predictive power of implicit attitudes is strongest when there is not much thinking or deliberation involved (Strack & Deutsch, 2004). When people are asked to look at an ad more attentively, in contrast, their implicit attitude (i.e., their automatic gut reaction) can be overridden by conscious thought.

Beattie and McGuire (2012) were the first to investigate the effects of implicit and explicit attitudes on approach and avoidance behaviour in the context of eye-movements. Their study on environmental images found that a person's implicit attitude is a "psychologically significant measure since it seems to connect to the pattern of unconscious eye movements towards or away from images connected with environmental damage and climate change. The explicit measures, on the other hand, were not good predictors of attentional focus" (p. 336). Even more importantly, the effects of implicit attitudes on eye-movements were especially present in the first 200 milliseconds after encountering a new stimulus. Translated to threat appeals in political poster ads, we can theorize that negative implicit attitudes toward foreigners should lead to avoidance of threatening images of negatively depicted outgroups such as foreigners.

This effect, however, should be especially present for the first fixation, that is, at the beginning of stimulus reception. It is well known that a fixation signifies the processing of information, and the first fixation measures the immediate reaction not driven by conscious thought (Gidlöf, Wallin, Dewhurst, & Holmqvist, 2013). When people have more time to look at a political ad, the effects of implicit attitudes should decrease. The reason is that, as time goes by, people start to engage in more elaborated and reflective processing. In other words, when individuals are confronted with political poster ads, automatic gut reactions should guide eye-movements only in the beginning, when a spontaneous reaction takes place. This process is at the heart of implicit cognition because it is rather automatic, unconscious, and fast (Strack & Deutsch, 2004). After this initial period, subjects are more likely to engage in conscious and reflective processing. It follows that implicit attitudes should predict the automatic allocation of attention during the first fixation of a poster. Explicit attitudes, in contrast, should have no effect on this fast, spontaneous, and automatic process. After this first spontaneous period of attention allocation, implicit attitudes should decrease and explicit attitudes should therefore increase in their importance. The reason is that explicit attitudes are based on propositional reasoning that may correct or override spontaneous responses to stimuli (Gawronski & Bodenhausen 2006). This leads to two our basic hypotheses:

H1: Negative implicit attitudes should predict the perceptual avoidance of a negative stimulus in the first phase of reception (i.e., first fixation).
H2: Negative explicit attitudes should predict the perceptual avoidance of a negative stimulus after the first period of reception (i.e., overall fixation).

3 Method

To test our hypotheses, we conducted an experimental laboratory study combining survey data with eye-tracking measurement and the Implicit Association Test (IAT). A total of 63 students of an introductory lecture at a large Austrian university were recruited in exchange for extra course credit. Of these participants, 18 had to be excluded from the analysis due to data lacking in one of the three individual parts of the study (i.e., no eye-movement data), resulting in 45 participants who ranged from 19 to 52 in age (M = 23.02, SD = 5.19; 30.4% male).

3.1 Procedure and Stimuli

Participants attended the study in individual sessions of 20 minutes each. In order to conceal the purpose of the investigation, the investigator told them that, due to time considerations, they were to participate in two independent studies. They first took the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwarz, 1998) and a short survey, after which they were asked to switch computers and take a seat in front of the eye-tracker. The investigator briefly explained the procedure and functioning of the eye-tracker, administered a calibration and then started displaying the stimuli. After the recording of eye movements, participants were debriefed and dismissed.

During the eye-tracking session, participants saw a total of 17 different poster ads (5 political posters of the right-wing populist Austrian Freedom Party, FPÖ, 6 posters of other political parties, and 7 commercial posters showing non-political, unrelated content) for 5 seconds each. The eye-tracking data were obtained with a stationary SMI iView X™ RED eye-tracker, and eye-positions were sampled at 120 Hz. The order of all posters presented was randomized, and a small fixation cross in between stimuli ensured that participants centered their glance after each poster. For the purpose of this study, we focus on reporting the findings of one political poster only. It showed the head of FPÖ party leader Heinz-Christian Strache in front of the Austrian national flag to the left, accompanied by three threatening photographs to the right (a group of furious men clenching fists and shouting; a large number of individuals bent forward and praying in a park; three veiled women in black burqas). In addition, a headline (“Our country for our children!”), three bullet points (“No Islamization of Austria; Deportation of criminal foreigners; Against over-foreignization”) and the party’s logo were depicted as well. The poster ad was designed for the purpose of this study, but bears resemblance to other political posters. The poster can be obtained by the authors upon request.

3.2 Measurement

The eye-tracker recorded participants’ eye movements during stimuli presentation permanently. However, for reasons outlined above, we especially looked at the duration of individuals’ first fixation on the three small threat images (i.e., the relevant area of interest). That is, the viewing time allocated to the area of the three threat photographs for the very first time before participants' gaze moved away was recorded in milliseconds (*M* = 180.0, *SD* = 124.32; see Gidlöf et al., 2013). In addition, we also measured overall duration of all fixations on the threat area of interest.

Participants' implicit attitudes were measured by taking the Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald, et al., 1998), in which individuals were asked to classify names as belonging either to the category "Austrian" or "Foreigner". In addition, they had to file attributes as belonging to either a "positive" or "negative" category, the underlying assumption being that categorization should be faster if the association between target (i.e. names) and attributes is more readily accessible in memory. In the analysis, a scoring algorithm was used, with higher values indicating a stronger negative automatic affective reaction toward foreigners (*M* = .548, *SD* = .375).

Individuals were asked for their explicit attitudes toward foreigners with two items (α = .63; 1 = very positive; 7 = very negative; *M* = 3.19, *SD* = .86). In addition to age and gender, several other controls were inserted into the model as well, including prior attitudes toward the FPÖ (1 = very positive; 7 = very negative; *M* = 6.22, *SD* = 1.04), respondents' country of origin (54% Austria), and frequency of contact to foreign citizens in their family, friends, neighborhood or at the university (4 items, α = .68; 1 = never; 7 = very often; *M* = 4.23, *SD* = 1.42).

4 Results

Results of a regression model explaining the duration of fixation is depicted in Table 1. As can be seen, the control variables do not explain the duration of looking at the threat appeal during the first fixation. In line with hypothesis 1, Table 1 reveals that implicit attitudes have a negative effect on the duration of the first fixation (b = -143.38, $p < .05$). That means, when subjects fixate those negative images for the first time after being presented the stimulus, people with negative implicit attitudes avoid the threat appeal. By contrast, the more positive the implicit attitudes toward foreigners are, the more likely subjects are to approach the threat images with their eye-movements. Also in line with implicit cognition theory, explicit attitudes have no effect on attention allocation during this first, spontaneous process. In total, 28% of the variance of the duration of the first fixation is explained by this model.

Also in line with what implicit cognition theory would suggest, implicit attitudes do not predict the duration of the fixation of the threat appeals for the whole period of five seconds. That is, as time goes by, implicit attitudes cannot explain approach and avoidance processes in eye-movements. Surprisingly, and in contrast to hypothesis 2, however, explicit attitudes could not predict the fixation time during the whole period of stimulus perception either (see Table 1). As an additional finding, Austrian students, as opposed to participants from other countries, tend to took longer at the threat appeal during the whole five seconds (i.e. country of origin being a significant predictor for overall fixation duration, $b = -376.14$, $p < .05$)

Moreover, we also looked at the amount of time it took participants to first center their eye-movements on our relevant are of interest (i.e., the three threatening images). It could be argued that negative implicit attitudes toward a threatening stimulus do also increase the speed it takes for individuals to locate and attend to the threat on a political poster, that is, the threat manages to grab participants' initial attention. However, this additional analysis shows that neither implicit nor explicit attitudes significantly predict the speed of attention allocation (i.e., entry time, not shown in Table 1) to the threatening pictures.

Table 1: Fixation Duration of Negative Threat Appeals

Independent variables	*Fixation Duration (First Fixation, in ms)*		*Fixation Duration (Overall, in ms)*	
	b	(SD)	B	(SD)
Gender	16.07	38.63	-21.23	-.02
Age	.563	3.48	1.91	.02
Country of Origin	-25.346	37.20	-376.14*	163.33
Party Identification	19.729	19.23	8.01	84.41
Contact with Foreigners	-9.14	13.09	50.39	57.47
Explicit Attitude	15.37	22.92	-14.27	100.63
Implicit Attitude	-143.38*	53.19	-352.29	233.50
R^2	.28		.199	

Note: * p < .05

Finally, in an exploratory fashion, we also looked at the effects of implicit and explicit attitudes on the fixation of the other parts of the advertisement (i.e., the candidate and the arguments). Yet neither explicit nor implicit attitudes could explain the amount of attention that people devoted to the image of Heinz-Christian Strache or the three text arguments that were depicted. It follows that implicit attitudes can predict initial attention allocation for threatening images, but not for the other non-threatening parts of the advertisements.

Furthermore, another exploratory analysis looked at the consequences of perceptual avoidance during the first fixation (as a result of implicit attitudes). Surprisingly, we found that avoiding the threatening images has no consequences for the eye-movements regarding the remaining parts of the advertisement. The duration of the first fixation is also unrelated to the duration of the first fixation of the Strache image as well the displayed text. This means that negative implicit attitudes make people to shy away from the whole ad content: They do not allocate their attention to other parts of the ad when they avoid the threatening images.

5 Discussion

This study is the first to demonstrate that implicit attitudes can guide the perception of threatening political advertisements. The key innovation is that we separated explicit thought-based attitudes from automatic gut reactions that guide our behaviour in spontaneous actions. Although the distinction between explicit and implicit attitudes is well established in consumer and advertising research, there are no studies investigating the consequences of implicit versus explicit attitudes in the context of political advertising. Moreover, rather than looking at the effects of political ads, we attempted to shed light on perceptual processes that have only gained little attention in political advertising research. Without studying the perception of ads, we cannot fully understand their effects on cognitions and attitudes.

We have investigated perceptual processes by applying eye-tracking methodology in order to answer the questions if and how people expose themselves to political threat ads. Such threat ads are increasingly used by right-wing populist parties throughout Europe. Explaining how people look at such ads is therefore of great practical and theoretical importance.

The findings of this study revealed that implicit but not explicit attitudes guide eye movements during the first fixation of the threat appeal. The first fixation is important because it is the first moment during the reception of the ad in which information is processed. One could argue that such a finding is not relevant in practical terms because there were no effects of implicit attitudes on overall fixation duration. However, we have to keep the nature of our design in mind. We exposed subjects to the ad for a total of five seconds. Five seconds of full attention is more than political posters are likely to get when shown in public places. Moreover, based on widespread advertising scepticism, most people try to avoid political poster ads and it is unlikely that they get full attention. In fact, political posters are usually processed in passing, and people rarely invest much cognitive energy when looking at them. In other words, we may look at political posters in the twinkling of an eye and, therefore, the processes that take place at the first fixation are of crucial importance. It was also interesting to learn that the avoidance of threat perception did not lead subjects to look at other parts of the ad, such as the slogan. One may conclude that an avoidance reaction based on implicit attitudes harms processing of the whole advertisment.

A number of limitations need to be noted. A total of N= 45 is small compared to experimental research but quite large in eye-tracking studies (Beattie & McGuire, 2012). However, the sample is problematic due to the lack of variance in education and age which are key variables in the context of right-wing populism (Matthes & Marquart, 2013; Schmuck & Matthes, 2014). At least, a number of important statistical controls that explain responses to political ads could be included. Also, given that our ad was created for the purpose of this study, generalization of our threat ad to other political ads needs to be tested in future research. Our ad was comprised of three main parts, the candidate, the threat images, and the campaign arguments. We cannot generalize our findings to other right-wing populist ads that do not employ threatening images.

These limitations notwithstanding, the study has some interesting practical implications. When right-wing populist parties use threat appeals in their campaigns, our findings seem to suggest that they may turn off especially those people they wish to reach with their ads: Those with negative gut feelings toward foreigners. Yet it is important to note that people with negative implicit attitudes toward foreigners are not necessarily those who openly support right-wing parties. Threat appeals in political ads may therefore discourage potential voters by preventing them from information processing during an important spontaneous initial phase of impression formation.

6 References

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The Effects of Gender Egalitarian Appeals in Advertisements on American Consumers

Barbara Mueller, Sandra Diehl, and Ralf Terlutter

1 Introduction

Fiske and Taylor (1991, p. 21) note that sex ranks alongside age as a "universal dimension for differentiating people." Differentiation of the sexes occurs by assigning differing and non-overlapping traits and roles to the two genders. Perhaps nothing has transformed women's lives in the last century more than the gender revolution. The empowerment of women has helped to redefine courtship, marriage, child-rearing and the role of women in the workforce (Fischer, 2013). Yet, some are beginning to question whether gender equality in the United States has stalled in recent years. For example, in 1990, the U.S. ranked sixth in female labor participation among 22 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which consists of most of the globe's wealthier countries. By 2010, the U.S. had fallen to 17th place, with about 30 percent of that decline a direct result of the failure to keep pace with other countries' family-friendly work policies (Coontz, 2013). The question addressed in this investigation is the degree to which gender egalitarianism (GE) is relevant to marketers in the crafting of advertising messages designed to appeal to American consumers. GE is one of nine cultural dimensions that GLOBE outlines to describe cultural variation among a large number of countries. It is defined as the degree to which a society minimizes gender role differences and women would be afforded the same opportunities as men within that particular society (House et al., 2010). Previous research demonstrated that a number of the GLOBE dimensions (assertiveness, performance orientation, humane orientation and future orientation) proved useful to advertisers in appealing to consumers (Terlutter et al., 2006; Diehl et al., 2008; Terlutter et al., 2010; Terlutter et al., 2012; Diehl et al., 2013a, Diehl et al., 2013b). This represents the first time the GLOBE dimension of GE has been explored in the context of advertising. In an experimental study conducted in the United States, we analyze how the portrayal of gender roles ("team", "female dominated", "male dominated") in an ad relates to the evaluation of that ad and to product evaluation, among female and male subjects.

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_13, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

2 Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Cultural Dimensions Related to Gender: One of the most fundamental ways in which societies vary is in the extent to which they prescribe and proscribe different roles for men and women (Hall, 1984). Masculinity versus femininity, one of several important cultural values identified in Hofstede's (1984) paradigm, has been found to explain significant variance in how message perceivers respond to advertisements (Chang, 2006a, 2006b). For example, it appears that information cues regarding product performance are favored more by individuals in masculine cultures than by those in feminine cultures (Tai and Chan, 2001). Chang (2006a) found that subjects from the U.S., considered a predominantly "masculine" culture, liked utilitarian appeal ads better than those employing image appeals. And, for individuals whose masculinity or femininity was chronically accessible, congruency between ad portrayals and self-ratings on these dimensions predicted more positive attitudes toward as ad (Chang, 2006b).

At its core, gender egalitarianism as defined by GLOBE, reflects societies' beliefs about whether members' biological sex should determine the roles that they play in their homes, at work, and in their communities. Societies with greater GE rely less on biological sex to determine the allocation of roles between the sexes. The GLOBE study revealed that societies that reported higher scores on GE practices (e.g. Sweden, Canada, France and Russia) tend to have more women in positions of authority, accord women a higher status in society, have a higher percentage of women participating in the workforce, have less occupational sex segregation, have higher female literacy rates, and have similar levels of education for men and women. In contrast, societies that reported lower scores (e.g. South Korea, Kuwait, India and Egypt) tend to have fewer women in positions of authority, afford women no or a smaller role in decision-making, have a lower percentage of women participating in the labor force, have more occupational sex segregation and have a lower level of education on average for women vs. men (Emrich et al., 2004). It is interesting to note that none of the 62 societies that participated in the GLOBE project reported scores reflecting a truly egalitarian society.

An important contribution of the GLOBE framework is that it explicitly differentiates between societal values and societal practices. The distinction between cultural values and cultural practices was incorporated to correspond with Schein's (2010) concepts of artifacts vs. espoused values as two unique levels of culture (House and Hanges, 2004). Artifacts are the visible products, processes and behaviors of a culture. They mainly reflect the current status and how issues are handled in a society, and therefore, the cultural practices. Espoused values are the individuals' or society's sense of what ought to be, as distinct from, what is. They primarily reflect how things should be and therefore, the cultural values. Both values and practices are often contradictory in a culture and are therefore seen as paradoxical values. Such paradoxical values are common in most cultures. Given the fact that values and practices in a society may be inconsistent and sometimes even contradictory, it is a major strength that GLOBE clearly distinguishes between both levels of cultures. Table 1 summarizes statistics for both GE societal level scales (House et al., 2004, p. 362). With regards to societal practices, across the 62 societies surveyed in GLOBE, the mean was 3.37. The maximum societal practices score was 4.08. No society in the GLOBE survey was perceived to be female dominated. The score of 3.37 suggests a modest cross-cultural reliance on biological sex in the allocation of roles between males and females. GLOBE respondents indicated that their societies should be (societal values) less male dominated than they are now (M = 4.51 vs. M = 3.37). Together, these two measures allude to the paradoxical world that we often live in. Here individuals indicate that biological sex dictates in part the roles that are appropriate for males and females, despite believing that biological sex should not, in fact, dictate these very same roles.

Table 1. Means for Gender Egalitarianism

	Mean	*S.D.*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
GE Societal Practices				
Average all 62 cultures	3.37	0.37	2.50	4.08
U.S.	3.34			
GE Societal Practices				
Average all 62 cultures	4.51	0.48	3.18	5.17
U.S.	5.06			

House et al., 2004, p. 362.

Gender (in)equality in the United States: According to the 2014 World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (Fairchild, 2014), the U.S. has a larger gender gap than 20 other countries, including the Philippines, Cuba, Latvia and South Africa. A surprising finding is that the U.S. ranks lower than some countries with considerably less economic development. For example, Rwanda and Nicaragua both have less than $9 billion in GDP, yet both rank among the top 10 countries in the world when in terms of gender equality. Iceland has the narrowest gender gap, followed by other Nordic countries like Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The report rates 142 countries on gender equality and factors in four categories: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. The highest possible score on the index is a 1 and means that a country has fully eradicated the gender gap in every category measured. No country has actually done so since the index was first published in 2006. While the U.S. scores high on education for women (women today make up almost 60 percent of U.S. college students and earn the majority of doctorates and master's degrees), this is apparently not reflected in earnings. In 2010, women became half of all the workers in the U.S., but in terms of income, women earned only about 79 cents for every $1 made by men, according to a survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. This gender pay gap is independent of occupation, experience and education. At the current rate of change, the average year-round full-time female employee would reach pay parity with the typical male worker by about the year 2063 (Bass and Oldham, 2012). Women are overrepresented in several industries and underrepresented in others. For example, in 2010, women represented 79 percent of the health and social service workforce and 68.6 percent of the education services workforce. However, women represented only 43.2 percent of the professional, scientific and technical services sector (International Labor Organization, 2011). Perhaps even more importantly, the percentage of managers who are women has only risen from 35 percent to 38 percent over the past two decades. And, in 2011, women ran only 12 of the Fortune 500 companies. Working mothers fare even more poorly. According to a Human Rights Watch Report that studied 190 countries and their parental leave policies, the U.S. was one of only three countries (along with Papua, New Guinea and Swaziland) that offer no legal guarantee of paid maternity leave. On the contrary, American women are still being fired for becoming pregnant and are being demoted when they return from maternity leave (Ferro, 2012). The U.S. also scores poorly on political empowerment. Not only has there never been a female American president, women make up only 18 percent of congress. And in its 220-year history, only four women justices have ever served on the Supreme Court. Clearly, the glass ceiling is not broken. "Assumptions about women's roles and men's roles are stubborn and pernicious" notes Lisa Maatz, director of public policy and government relations for the Washington-based American Association of University Women. "There is still absolutely a sense that women are the caretakers and so they are less-valuable employees" (Bass and Oldham, 2012).

As a culture and as individuals, we may value gender equality, but what we practice may not necessarily reflect this. For instance, though a couple may believe that males and females have equal rights and that there are no typically male vs. female roles (values) they might nevertheless relegate household duties and the rearing of children to the female, while the male is primarily responsible for bringing home the paycheck (practices). According to GLOBE, for the United States, societal practices scores are 3.34, just below the overall mean for all 62 societies. In contrast, the societal values score is 5.06, significantly higher than over overall mean for all societies and indeed very close to the maximum score (see table 1). This suggests that Americans believe their society should be significantly more gender egalitarian that it in fact is.

GLOBE provides data on GE on the societal level, but it does not provide data on the individual level. So the first research question addressed in this paper is whether and how individual and societal values and practices of GE are related. As individuals are socialized through values that are held and behaviors that are practiced in their cultures, it is likely that they adopt values and practices that are shared among members of that society (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Therefore we state the first research question:

RQ1: Do individual GE values and individual GE practices correspond to societal GE values and societal GE practices?

Gender Role Portrayals in Advertising: The manner in which males and females are portrayed in advertising is an important issue not only for marketers and consumer behavior researchers, but also for society in general – and as such has been studied since the 1970s (Caterall and Maclaran, 2002). Many of these investigations have focused on the portrayal of women and the degree to which these portrayals have altered in line with the evolving role of women in society (Goffman, 1979; Pingree et al., 1976; Maracek et al. 1978; Courtney and Whipple, 1983; Gilly, 1988; Ferrante, Hayes and Kingsley, 1988; Lovdal, 1989; Lazier-Smith, 1989; Ferguson, Kreshal and Tinkham, 1990). Content analysis has been used as the principal research method on gender role portrayals in advertising (An and Kim, 2007). Kacen and Nelson (2002), in replicating the content analyses of earlier investigations, found little change in the ways women were represented over the decades – they were still primarily shown as decorative objects or in the wife and mother roles. Some researchers also examined the ways in which males were portrayed (Skelly and Lundstrom, 1981; Kolbe and Albanese, 1996), and found that although men's roles in society were also changing (with males increasingly taking on household and childcare responsibilities), such roles were rarely portrayed in commercial messages. More recently, a variety of men's and women's characteristics, including their roles, relationships, conflict resolution strategies, ages, races, languages, goals and aspirations, sizes and weights have been examined through content analysis (Rudy, Popova and Linz, 2010). Since the late 1980s, researchers have also begun to explore gender role portrayals in international advertising (Shaw, Eisend and Tan, 2014) and such cross-cultural portrayals have become an increasingly important issue (Cheng, 1997). For example, in a comparison of television ads from Japan, Russia, Sweden and the U.S., Milner and Collins (2000) found that commercials from feminine countries featured more depictions of relationships for male and female characters than did masculine countries. A content analysis of U.S. and Korean web ads revealed a greater percentage of Korean ads featured characters in relationship themes, featured women as main characters, and employed them in family and recreational roles, supporting the application of this framework to the determination of appropriate ad appeals related to gender roles (An and Kim, 2007). Eisend (2010) reported a meta-analysis of 37 manuscripts covering 64 independent studies in 28 countries from 1971 to 2005. In general, females were four times more likely to be presented visually/not speaking than males. Further, females were more likely to be portrayed as product users, in a dependent role, at home or in a domestic environment, younger, giving opinions or non-scientific arguments, not giving end comments, and in a background setting. To summarize, dozens of cross-cultural content-analytic studies have shown considerable consensus that men and women are portrayed distinctly in the type of roles depicted in advertising across countries, and the degrees of the distinctions differ by country (Ping, Eisend and Tan, 2014).

To date, few examinations (Coughlin and O'Connor, 1985; Jaffe and Berger, 1994; Orth and Holancova, 2004; Chang, 2006b) of gender role portrayals have been experimental in nature and investigated the effects that gender portrayals have on recipients of advertising messages. The current investigation addresses how the perception of GE in an ad is related to ad evaluation and to product evaluation. A question of significant interest to advertisers is whether GE would be a promising appeal in advertising. Would addressing GE, for instance by choosing pictures depicting egalitarianism between the sexes, lead to improved evaluation of the ad or to improved evaluation of the product shown in the ad? Given that ads often appeal to consumers' aspirations (House et al., 2010, p. 130), it may be more important to consider values (as opposed to practices) associated with a specific cultural dimension in advertising communications. Exposure to ads incorporating GE appeals may make consumers aware of the discrepancy between the person that they are (actual self-state) and the person they desire to be in the future (ideal self-state). Virtually all 62 cultures surveyed by GLOBE (with the sole exception of Qatar) report higher GE values scores than GE practices scores. The gap between GE practices and GE values for all 62 societies is 1.14, whereas the gap between the two scores for the U.S. is significantly greater -- 1.72. With a societal values score of 5.06 – quite near the maximum for all societies measured by GLOBE, this suggests Americans highly value GE. For this reason, it seems to be very likely that if GE is displayed in an ad, it will likely be related to a better evaluation of that ad as well as to a better evaluation of the product displayed in the ad. Hence we hypothesize:

H1: Perception of GE in an ad is positively related to better ad evaluation.
H2: Perception of GE in an ad is positively related to better attitude towards the product.

In addition, it can be expected that the evaluation of an advertisement which presents males and females as equals will be more positive than will be the evaluation of an advertisement which portrays either a male or a female in a dominant role. We hypothesize:

H3: An advertisement which presents males and females as equals will be more positively evaluated than will be an advertisement which portrays either a male or a female in a dominant role.

Finally, we would like to explore whether the above mentioned relationships differ between female and male subjects.

RQ2: How do females and males differ in the relationships and evaluations?

3 Research Design and Methods

A non-student survey was conducted in the U.S. in order to test the above stated hypotheses. Face-to-face interviews were employed to explore responses to advertisements employing varying degrees of gender egalitarian appeals. Three full-page ads for a brand of wristwatch were developed. A fictional brand of watches ("Chronier") was employed in order to control for attitudes toward established or recognized brand names. The dominant visual in ad version "male dominant" portrays a male executive standing in the foreground with a team of four employees (both male and female) to his left. The headline reads: "In my position, time management, accuracy and precision are essential – that's why I rely on my Chronier watch. David Miller (Team leader at Media Power Inc.). The remaining copy highlights features of the watch and a visual of the watch along with the slogan "Stands the test of time" is presented. Ad version "team" portrays a team of four individuals (the same four employees – male and female -- portrayed in ad A). The copy reads: "In our position, time management, accuracy and precision are essential – that's why we rely on our Chronier watches. Call Center Team (at Media Power Inc.)." The remainder of the ad is identical to the first ad. The final ad version "female dominant" portrays a female executive standing in the foreground with a team of four employees (both male and female) to her left. The copy reads "In my position, time management, accuracy and prevision are essential – that's why I rely on my Chronier watch. Emma Miller, (Team leader at Media Power Inc.)." The remainder of the ad is identical to the first two advertisements. The ads were pre-tested to ensure that were indeed perceived as portraying a varying degrees of gender egalitarian appeals.

The current analysis is based on a total of 180 U.S. subjects (96 females). Ages of participants ranged between 18 to 70 years, with an average age of 30.3 years. A structured questionnaire was developed. Respondents were first asked about their attitudes toward watches. Next they were presented with the ad and asked to evaluate the ad as well as the product. Then respondents were asked some questions about their attitudes toward advertising in general. This was followed by questions related to their individual as well as to societal practices and values. The survey instrument ended with questions related to their household (who is responsible for taking care of the household), their income (who is primarily responsible for household income), child rearing (who is primarily responsible for raising the children), work outside the home (who is primarily responsible for work outside the household) and work within the home (who is primarily responsible for work within the household). Here respondents were questioned about their current situation vs. their ideal situation. Socio-demographic questions were also asked (sex, age, marital status, level of education, profession, and whether their position entailed leadership responsibilities). All interviewers received extensive training and were provided with standardized text to employ in approaching subjects. Interviewers informed subjects that the investigation explored consumer responses to advertising.

Individual and societal gender egalitarianism practices and values were conceptualized based on GLOBE (House et al., 2004; House et al., 2010). Scales were adjusted and extended for the current investigation. Participants were asked about their individual practices with the following seven items: 1) I avoid treating males and females differently, 2) I treat males and females as equals, 3) I behave as if males and females have equal rights, 4) I minimize gender role differences, 5) I behave as if there were no typically male vs. female roles, 6) I treat males and females equally in the workplace, 7) I rely on males and females equally when making decisions in the workplace. Subjects were asked to indicate to what extent the statements were applicable on a seven-point scale. A one-factor model was used. With regards to individual values, the same seven questions were asked, prefaced with "I should." For example, "I should try harder to avoid treating males and females differently." Both individual practices and values questions were asked on a seven-point scale (1 = not at all applicable, 7 = fully applicable). Questions were modified to address societal values and practices. Cronbach's α values were: individual practices = 0.930; individual values = 0.977; societal practices = 0.956; societal values = 0.979.

Perceived level of gender egalitarianism in the ad was measured via six questions. The questions were derived from descriptions of gender egalitarianism provided by House et al. (2010). Subjects were asked to assess the individuals portrayed in the ad. Questions read: "The people presented in the ad seem to suggest to me…" 1) males and females have equal rights, 2) equality exists between the sexes, 3) differences in the treatment of males vs. females have been avoided, 4) males and females are treated equally in the workplace, 5) males and females have equal opportunities in the workplace, 6) males and females have equal chances to establish their careers (7-point scale, 7 = high). A one-factor model for the gender egalitarianism measure was used. Cronbach's α value was 0.966.

Evaluation of the ad was assessed with four items, adapted from MacKenzie and Lutz (1989). They read: (1) "Overall, I find the ad …" "not at all good" (=1) to "very good" (=7) (7-point-scale); "The ad is …" (2) "interesting", (3) "likeable" and (4) "pleasant" (7-point-scale, 7 = high). Cronbach's α value was 0.921.

Attitude toward the product was assessed with four items, adapted from Mitchell and Olson (1981). They read: (1) "The product advertised in the ad is of high quality", "The product is…" (2) "pleasant" (3) "good" and (4) "attractive" (7-point-scale, 7 = high). Cronbach's α value was 0.902.

4 Results and Discussion

Regarding GE practices, correlation analysis revealed that individual practices and societal practices are significantly and positively related. The correlation coefficients are 0.260 ($p<0.01$) in the complete dataset and 0.228 ($p=0.026$) for females and 0.276 ($p=0.011$) for males. Hence, individual practices of GE are related to perceived societal practices of GE, but only to a moderate extent. Regarding GE values, correlation analyses showed that there is a significant, though even smaller correlation between individual and societal values of GE, too (0.184, $p=0.013$). When looking at a gender split, analyses revealed that GE values are significantly related among men (0.245, $p=0.025$), but not among females (0.087, n.s.) (see Table 2).

Table 2: Correlations between Values and Practices on an Individual and Societal Level

	Correlations and p-values		
	Complete Dataset	*Females*	*Males*
Individual Practices and Societal Practices	0.260 (p<0.01)	0.228 (p=0.026)	0.276 (p=0.011)
Individual Practices and Societal Values	0.184 (p=0.013)	0.087 (n.s.)	0.245 (p<0.025)

A closer look at the absolute value of GE values and practices on an individual and societal level revealed interesting results (see table 3). Firstly, societal GE practices (3.920, on a 7-point scale with 7 indicating high GE) are perceived as much lower than societal GE values (5.129). These findings are consistent with the findings as reported by GLOBE, though our practices are slightly higher than those reported by GLOBE. Secondly, individual GE practices (5.811) are evaluated as being much higher than societal practices (3.920). Obviously, subjects see themselves as being quite GE, but do not see this to be the case in the society in which they live. Likely as a consequence thereof, individual GE values are relatively low (3.039), but societal GE values are high (5.129).

Table 3: Mean of Absolute Scores of Values and Practices on an Individual and Societal Level

	Means of absolute scores		
	Complete Dataset	*Females*	*Males*
Individual Values	3.039	3.235	2.815
Societal Values	5.129	5.282	4.954
Individual Practices	5.811	5.734	5.898
Societal Practices	3.920	3.432	4.478

A gender split revealed additional interesting insights. Females show higher GE values than males, with regard to both individual and societal values (see table 3 for details). In addition, with regard to individual GE practices, both sexes have similar scores (f: 5.734; m: 5.898). However, the sexes evaluated the societal GE practices quite differently. Whereas females evaluate the societal GE practices in the U.S. as being relatively low (3.432), the males evaluate it as being much higher (4.478).

H1 suggested a positive correlation between perception of GE in an ad and ad evaluation. Correlation analysis in the complete dataset with the three ad versions indeed revealed a significant, though weak positive correlation (0.200, p<0.01). However, a closer look at the results reveals that height and significance of correlations depend on gender as well as on ad version (see table 4).

Table 4: Correlations between Perception of GE in Ad and Ad Evaluation

	Correlations and p-values		
	Complete Dataset	*Females*	*Males*
All three Ads together	0.200 (p<0.01)	0.237 (p=0.020)	0.163 (n.s.)
Ad version "Female Dominant"	0.419 (p<0.01)	0.416 (p=0.018)	0.436 (p=0.020)
Ad version "Team"	0.229 (p=0.079)	0.139 (n.s.)	0.359 (p=0.072)
Ad version "Male Dominant"	0.002 (n.s.)	0.193 (n.s.)	-0.040 (n.s.)

The correlation coefficients depicted in table 4 show that the correlation coefficient is significant for the ad version "female dominant", for both, female and male subjects (f: 0.416, p=0.018; m: 0.436, p=0.020), but correlations are not significant for the ad version "male dominant" (f: 0.193, n.s.; m: -0.040, n.s.). With regard to the ad version "team", the correlation for the male subjects is significant only at the 10%-level (0.359, p=0.072) and correlation fails to be significant for female subjects (0.139, n.s.). Hence, H1 is supported only for the ad version in which a female is displayed in a dominant form, but it is not supported for the ad version in which a male is displayed dominantly, or for the ad version in which both males and females were portrayed as a team.

Closer examination of the absolute values of perceived GE in the three ad versions revealed additional interesting insights when males and females are compared. Whereas males did not differ in their perception of GE in the three ad versions (F=0.796, n.s.), females differed significantly (F=3.833, p=0.025). Females perceived the highest level of GE in the ad version "team" (4.66), the lowest in the ad version "male dominant" (3.53), the ad version "female dominant" (4.07) was evaluated in between.

When looking at the relationship between the perception of GE in the ad and attitude towards the product, there is only one significant correlation in the subsamples (table 5). In the ad version "female dominant," we found a significant correlation coefficient among males (0.399, p=0.035). No such correlation was found among females. H2 is mainly rejected by the data.

Table 5: Correlations between Perception of GE in Ad and Product Evaluation

	Correlations and p-values		
	Complete Dataset	*Females*	*Males*
All three Ads together	0.107 (n.s.)	0.018 (n.s.)	0.163 (n.s.)
Ad version "Female Dominant"	0.272 (p=0.036)	0.167 (n.s.)	0.399 (p=0.035)
Ad version "Team"	0.002 (n.s.)	-0.006 (n.s.)	0.002 (n.s.)
Ad version "Male Dominant"	0.060 (n.s.)	0.051 (n.s.)	0.104 (n.s.)

H3 suggested that an advertisement which presents males and females as equals (ad version "team") will be evaluated more positively than an advertisement which portrays either a male or a female in a dominant role (ad versions "female dominant" and "male dominant). However, results revealed that there were overall no differences in the evaluation of the ad (F=1.203, n.s.). When looking into the data in greater detail, contrast tests in the subsample of males showed that the ad version "female dominant" is evaluated significantly better than the ad version "male dominant" (t=2.043, p=0.046). Ad version "team" is also evaluated significantly better than "male dominant", but only at the 10%-level (t=1.685, p=0.098). No differences were found among females in the contrast tests. So, with regard to the different sexes, males evaluate the ad version "female dominant" slightly better than the ad version "male dominant", "team" falling in between. Females do not have any preference. Hence, the data lends practically no support for H3.

It appears that Americans feel that on an individual level, they are already practicing gender equality, but they do perceive a lack of gender egalitarianism within their society. This is especially the case among female Americans. The degree to which this concern over gender equality is translated into a preference for ads which incorporate GE appeals is somewhat less clear. Overall, advertisers may wish to steer clear of traditional "male dominant" ads and opt instead for either "female dominant" or "team oriented" ads. However, based on the results of this investigation, gender egalitarian appeals in ads may, in fact, not matter all that much to American consumers.

5 Limitations of the Study and Directions for Further Research

This investigation focused only on a single country. Subsequent examinations of gender egalitarianism should compare multiple markets that differ significantly in their gender egalitarian values and practices. The distinction between values and practices also deserves further exploration. Given that virtually all 62 societies examined by GLOBE report higher GE values scores than GE practices scores, might a standardized ad portraying equality between the sexes in the workplace resonate in multiple markets? Gender egalitarianism should also be analyzed in the context of advertisements for additional product categories (both high and low involvement) as well as for services. Another area worthy of exploration is the influence of multiple dimensions of culture on advertising effectiveness. For example, future investigators might consider combining gender egalitarianism with the GLOBE dimensions of assertiveness and humane orientation in multiple cultures to arrive at more generalizable conclusions.

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An Examination of the Current Usage of Probability Markers in Print Advertising: A Content Analysis of Belgian Ads

Ivana Bušljeta Banks and Patrick De Pelsmacker

1 Introduction

Probability markers are specific words or phrases used to signal to which degree is it likely that a given claim or argument is true. They can indicate various levels of probable (hedges) or certain (pledges) truth, and can be used in advertising to reduce the consumers' tendencies to counter-argue the claim of the ad (Vestergaard and Schroder 1985) or to enhance the credibility of the claim (Areni 2002). Well-known examples of the usage of probability markers in advertising include a slogan used by Delirium Tremens ("Elected as best beer in the world"), numerous drug advertisements ("Nutra-Life Cold and Flu fighter may reduce the severity and duration of colds"), as well as cosmetics and skincare ads ("Oil of Olay - Proven to help you look revitalized").

Over the years, a number of researchers have contributed theoretical insights into the effects of hedges in advertising (Leech 1966; Geis 1982; Vestergaard and Schroder 1985; Cook 1992). However, empirical studies on the topic of probability markers have, until recently, been concentrated mainly in a study by Harris et al. (1993), and the works of Areni and his associates (e.g. Berney-Reddish and Areni 2005, 2006). The conclusions on the effects of probability markers have been far from unequivocal, with some researchers finding, for example, that hedges increase message acceptance (Geis 1982; Harris et al. 1993), and others suggesting a negative effect of hedges, and in some cases even of pledges, on persuasion (Leech 1966; Sparks et al. 1998, Berney-Reddish and Areni 2005, Durik et al. 2008). Recent studies (e.g. Bušljeta Banks and De Pelsmacker 2014; Bušljeta Banks et al. 2012) have renewed the interest in both types of probability markers (pledges and hedges), as well as possible moderators of their effectiveness, such as gender, involvement, and buying motivation, that might explain the variability of their effectiveness.

Although researchers agree that probability markers are often used in advertising (e.g. Geis 1982, Areni 2002, Bušljeta Banks and De Pelsmacker 2013), such assertions have yet to be empirically proven. A content analysis of existing advertisements is needed to fill this gap. The purpose of the present study is to provide an overview of the current situation in advertising practice with regards to the use of probability markers in Belgium. Specifically, we want to identify the context(s) in which they are most often used and how, and

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_14, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

examine to what extent the usage of probability markers in advertising is consistent with the findings of previous research that provides insights into how they function.

A content analysis of Belgian (Flemish) print advertisements from the period 2010-2011 was conducted on a large sample of ads.

2 Probability Markers in Advertising

Those markers that indicate probable, rather than absolute, truth of a claim are known as hedges, whereas the markers that indicate complete commitment to the truthfulness of the claim are known as pledges. Hedges, which can be adverbs ("possibly", "probably"), verbs ("can", "may", "help"), particles ("about", "sort of"), or other expressions ("9 out of 10", "85% of", etc.), weaken the impact of a claim by allowing for exceptions or avoiding total commitment (Erickson et al. 1978; Wright and Hosman 1983). Pledges, on the other hand, examples of which also include some adverbs ("definitely", "undoubtedly"), verbs ("will", "guarantee"), and other expressions ("have been proven to", "you can be sure"), are absolute in nature and signal total confidence in the truthfulness of the claim (Berney-Reddish and Areni 2005).

Researchers disagree with regards to the effects the use of probability markers in advertising copy has on the persuasiveness of the advertisement. On one hand, Leech (1996) claims that hedges should have no place in advertising, as they unnecessarily create ambiguity in the message and weaken its impact. Along the same lines, Berney-Reddish and Areni (2005) find that the use of both hedges and pledges reduces claim acceptance and results in more negative cognitive responses compared to ads without probability markers. On the other hand, Geis (1982) concluded that it would be unlikely for copywriters to use hedges so frequently if they really had a negative effect on persuasion. A study by Harris et al. (1993) shows that the use of hedges leads to greater claim acceptance by increasing credibility of the message.

To provide a detailed description of the usage of probability markers in current advertising practice, and ascertain to what extent this practice follows the extant research on the impact probability markers have on advertising effectiveness, in this study we will analyze the frequency and characteristics (size, part of speech, placement, and strength) of probability markers used in Belgian print advertisements. As previous research points to an important moderating role of involvement, hedonic or utilitarian buying motivation, and gender, these factors will also be measured in the study. Additionally, the type of appeal used in the ad (rational or emotional) and the focus of the advertisements on images or on information will also be coded. All the coded elements will be used to help us answer the following research question:

RQ1: How often are probability markers (hedges and pledges) used in Belgian advertising and in which way (in regards to the different types of probability markers, their strength, as well as placing in the ad)?

2.1 Culture

The effectiveness, or even basic acceptance, of the use of probability markers in advertising, due to their characteristics (such as expression of powerful vs. powerless language and degrees of certainty vs. ambiguity), could be dependent on culture. One of the most prominent cultural dimensions is uncertainty avoidance, defined by Hofstede as "the extent to which people feel threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity and try to avoid these situations" (De Mooij and Hofstede 2010). Since probability markers are linguistic expressions of various degrees of certainty vs. probability or ambiguity (i.e. uncertainty), the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance or tolerance for ambiguity could cause higher or lower acceptance of pledges and hedges in different cultures, and, therefore, influence the effectiveness of advertisements containing hedges or pledges on consumers from different countries. If they do, we expect that in a culture with a high Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI), such as Belgium, pledges will be used more often, and more prominently (with regards to their size and placement), and will be considered more powerful, than hedges.

H1: In Belgian advertisements in general, pledges will be used more often, and more prominently (with regards to their size and placement), and will be considered more powerful, than hedges.

2.2 Involvement, Buying Motivation, and Gender as Moderators

The results of Bušljeta Banks and De Pelsmacker (2012, 2014) show that both hedges and pledges, functioning as peripheral cues, have no impact on brand attitude or purchase intention when used in advertisements of highly-involving services. When placed in advertising claims of less involving services, however, probability markers do influence advertising effectiveness. We, therefore, expect that our content analysis should find a larger number of probability markers in advertisements featuring low-involvement products or services than in those for high-involvement ones.

H2: Probability markers appear more frequently in advertisements for low-involvement products or services than in advertisements for high-involvement products or services.

The above explained influence of involvement on probability marker effectiveness is further moderated by the buying motivation of the product/service advertised. Bušljeta Banks and De Pelsmacker (2014) have found that the use of hedges in ads for hedonic low-involvement services increases brand attitude and purchase intentions (as compared to the use of pledges or even no probability markers in advertising copy), while the use of claims containing pledges in advertisements of utilitarian low-involvement services results in the highest levels of purchase intentions. It would, therefore, be logical to expect that hedges would appear more frequently and prominently when the advertisements feature hedonic products or services. In the same way, when the product or service advertised is utilitarian, pledges should be more frequent and prominent than hedges:

H3a: Hedges appear more frequently and prominently than pledges in advertisements featuring hedonic products or services.
H3b: Pledges appear more frequently and prominently than hedges in advertisements featuring utilitarian products or services.

H3a will be tested on a sample of all advertisements that feature products or services coded as hedonic, none of which were also coded as low involvement. H3b will be tested on a sample of all advertisements that feature products or services coded a utilitarian, for consistency reasons. Additionally, H3b will also be tested on a sub-sample of only those advertisements that feature products and services that were coded both as utilitarian and low-involvement.

Berney-Reddish and Areni (2006) found that women respond negatively to the usage of either hedges or pledges in advertising copy, while for men pledges seem to have no effect on claim acceptance. Bušljeta Banks et al. (2012), on the other hand, show that men, but not women, are sensitive to the use of probability markers in advertising copy, greatly preferring advertising claims that contain hedges to those with pledges. One explanation for the fact that men seem to prefer hedges, which are thought to characterize women's speech (Bradac and Mulac 1984), can be found in the findings of Carli (1990) that both genders are more easily persuaded by the other gender's vernacular. Since, "in real life", hedges are characteristic of women's speech, while pledges characterize men's speech (Bradac and Mulac 1984), it is possible that this will be mirrored in advertisements as well. In that case, we predict that:

H4: Pledges are used more often in advertisements featuring male endorsers, and hedges in those where endorsers are female.

While the type (rational or emotional) of appeal the advertisement is based on, as well as the orientation or focus of the advertisement (as image- or information-oriented) are not directly connected with the moderators discussed above, for the sake of completeness and comprehensiveness of this analysis, they have been included in the study. Namely, as verbal elements of the advertisement, probability markers can logically be expected to appear more frequently in information-oriented advertisements and those that rely on rational appeals than in image-oriented or advertisements based on emotional appeals. We, therefore, also predict that:

H5a: Probability markers appear more frequently in information-oriented advertisements than in image-oriented ones.
H5b: Probability markers appear more frequently in advertisements that rely on rational appeals than in advertisements based on emotional appeals.

3 Method

All advertisements that appeared in Belgian periodicals over a period of two years (2010-2011) were downloaded from a comprehensive online database. Once all the duplicates and French-language ads were excluded, a total of 7941 Flemish advertisements were collected. A random sample was selected for analysis, resulting in a final sample of 3000 advertisements.

One expert coder was asked to extensively test the original coding instrument (written in English) on 35 advertisements that were not part of the final sample and identify possible coding problems, so they could be corrected prior to the start of the coding process (Perrault and Leigh 1989).

The operational definitions of the variables used in the coding scheme were based on relevant extant literature. The variables included are product/service category, probability markers (exact phrase, type, strength, size, placing), type of appeal used, focus, and endorser (type, number, gender). For the service/product category variable, a list of 30 categories was used, based on the inventories developed by Ferguson et al. (1990), Tan et al. (2002), and Verhellen et al. (2011). From the list of 30 categories, those that were the most clearly highly or lowly involving, as well as hedonic or utilitarian, were later chosen to test H2 and H3ab. A group of six expert marketing researchers was asked to look at a list of the 30 product/service categories included in the coding scheme and mark those that they considered to be distinctly high or low involving and hedonic or utilitarian. Only those categories that all six researchers agreed upon unanimously were ultimately analyzed.

In addition to coding the type of probability marker, if any, used in the advertisement (as hedge, pledge, or no probability marker) to enable a detailed description of probability markers in the analysis and answer RQ1, the coders were also asked to record the exact phrase used as the probability marker, as well as to classify it according to part of speech. The inventory used to classify probability markers according to the part of speech used to express them was developed on the basis of extant linguistic and marketing literature on the topic (e.g. Leech 1966; Geis 1982; Wright and Hosman 1983; Blankenship and Holtgraves 2005; Berney-Reddish and Areni 2005, 2006) and supplemented with a comprehensive list of examples used during the coder training and the coding process. While the inclusion of the superlative category into the inventory was debatable, the final decision to include it was made in consultation with the expert coder (a professor of linguistics) following the pre-testing of the coding scheme. Since it is possible that one advertisement contains more than one probability marker, the coders were instructed to treat each marker as a separate, and code the “ad code number” by adding the letters a, b, c, etc. to it.

The strength, placement, and size of font of the probability markers were recorded to test H1. The coders were further asked to record whether the coded advertisement relied on an emotional or a rational appeal, as well as whether it was more image- or information-oriented. Furthermore, to test H4, the existence of an endorser and his or her gender were coded. For descriptive purposes, the coders were also asked to record the type of endorser and number of endorsers present in the ad.

Two main coders (female business students enrolled in a marketing communications course) and a “tie-breaker” expert coder (a female marketing researcher) were thoroughly trained on ten advertisements that were not part of the final sample. The two main coders independently coded each of the advertisements. Inter-coder reliability was calculated, following the guidelines of Lombard et al. (2002), on the full sample using two indices, Cohen’s (1968) Kappa and Krippendorff's (1980) Alpha, for each variable. All coefficients were acceptable, ranging from .704 to .921. Cases of disagreement between two main coders were solved by the third “tie-breaker” coder, and the resulting data used in the analyses. The only exception was the “probability marker strength” variable, which was also the most subjective one to code. For this variable, the inter-coder reliability was somewhat lower (.605). As using the “tie-breaker” coder in this case would have simply given us a third subjective opinion, the mean value of the two original coders was used for the analysis (the same treatment of subjective responses was used in Pham et al. 2013).

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 General Characteristics of Coded Advertisements

The most frequently advertised category were retail stores, with 514 ads (17.1% of all coded advertisements). The other top product or service categories advertised were: media (13.2%), other services (12%), food and non-alcoholic beverages (6.4%), financial services (4.7%), and furniture (4.6%). The great majority of all coded ads, 73.8% of them, are based on rational appeal, while only 8.6% rely on a purely emotional appeal. The advertisements seem also to be rather largely information-oriented (82.4% of all coded ads). The majority of Flemish advertisements use some type of an endorser (60.4%) – usually there is only one endorser featured (in 57.9% of cases), and that endorser is most often a regular customer (73.7%). In 38.5% of the cases the endorser is female, 31.2% is male, and the rest appear in mixed-gender groups (Table 1).

Table 1: Most frequent advertisement elements of coded ads

Variable	%	N
Product/service category:		
retail	17.1%	514
media	13.2%	395
other services	12.0%	359
food & non-alcoholic beverages	6.4%	193
financial services	4.7%	140
furniture	4.6%	138
Advertising appeal:		
rational	73.8%	2215
mix	17.6%	528
emotional	8.6%	257
Focus:		
image-oriented	17.6%	529
information-oriented	82.4%	2471
Endorser:		
no	39.6%	1187
yes	60.4%	1813
one endorser	*57.9%*	*683*
regular customer	*73.7%*	*869*

Endorser gender:		
female	38.5%	454
male	31.2%	368
mixed gender groups	29.3%	345

4.2 Frequency and Manner of Probability Marker Usage

To answer RQ1, i.e. provide insights into how frequently probability markers are used in advertising, and in which way, the following variables were coded: the presence or absence of pledges and hedges in the advertisements, the exact phrase used, the part of speech, and the strength of the probability marker. A comparison of these variables between the two country samples also enables us to test H1ab.

Results show that in Belgium probability markers appear in only 12% of all the coded advertisements. Most of the probability markers found in the coded sample are either short clauses (62.2% of all hedges coded) or superlatives (65.4% of all pledges). Pledges are most frequently expressed through the superlative "the best" (22.3% of all pledges found) and the combination of an adjective preceded by "100%" (8.7%). Similarly, hedges are also most often expressed through the use of a certain percentage (under 100) followed by an adjective (29.7%).

In those ads where probability markers appear, pledges are more prevalent than hedges– a total of 286 pledges are used in 9.5% of the coded ads, whereas only 74 hedges are found in 2.5% ($p < .001$) of the advertisements. Thus, the prediction of H1 that pledges would be more frequent than hedges in Belgian advertisements is supported (Table 2).

Table 2. Characteristics of probability markers used in coded advertisements

Variable	Hedges		Pledges	
	%	n	%	n
PM type: verb	1.4%	1	10.1%	29
adverb	16.2%	12	9.1%	26
adjective	1.4%	1	5.2%	15
superlative	2.7%	2	65.4%	187
pragmatic	16.2%	12	3.1%	9
particle	62.2%	46	7.0%	20
clause				

PM strength: very weak	2.9%	2	6.6%	19
weak	54.3%	38	35.7%	102
neither weak nor strong	27.1%	19	35.3%	101
strong	11.4%	8	20.6%	59
very strong	4.3%	3	1.7%	5
PM placing: headline	12.9%	9	34.3%	98
baseline	11.4%	8	12.2%	35
copy	72.9%	51	50.3%	144
small print	2.9%	2	3.1%	9
PM size: small	65.7%	46	36.7%	105
medium	18.6%	13	38.1%	109
large	15.7%	11	25.2%	72

Furthermore, most of the hedges found in Belgian advertisements are set in a relatively small font size (65.7%), appear in the advertising copy (72.9%), and are perceived as either weak (54.3%) or neither weak nor strong (27.1%). Pledges also most frequently appear in the copy (50.3%), but are often found in the ads' headline (34.3%), as well. They are relatively equally distributed in all three font sizes (small, medium, and large). Similarly to the hedges, and rather surprisingly, most pledges were coded as either weak (2) (35.7%) or neither weak nor strong (3) (35.3%). The findings that pledges are set in large font more often than hedges (25.2% of pledges vs. 15.7% of hedges, $p = .060$), and appear more often in the headline (34.3% of pledges vs. 12.9% of hedges, $p < .001$), offer support for H1, namely that pledges are more prominent in Belgian ads than hedges. However, there seems to be no difference in the coded strength of hedges and pledges. The results of a t-test conducted on the means score (based on a 5-point scale, with 1 representing very weak and 5 very strong) of the coding category PM strength show that hedges ($M = 2.48$) and pledges ($M = 2.58$, $p = 1.00$), were coded as equally weak/strong. Thus, the assumption of H1 that pledges would be perceived as more powerful than hedges is not supported.

4.3 Differences in Probability Marker Usage Based on Product Category Characteristics

We also examined whether there are differences in the usage of probability markers in advertisements based on whether the product/service featured in the ad is more highly or lowly involving (H2), or more hedonic or utilitarian (H3ab). The test of the predictions of H2 that probability markers will generally be used more frequently in advertisements featuring low-involvement products or services (in our study, those include cleaning products, detergent, food and non-alcoholic beverages, as well as energy and fuel) than in ads for high-involvement products or services (automobiles and motorbikes, travelling, electronics, and fashion) show that probability markers in the coded sample are used equally frequently in the ads for low involvement products or services (14.7%) and for high involvement ones (10%) ($\chi2$ (2) = 3.297, p = .192) (Table 3). Thus, H2 is not supported.

Table 3. Frequency of probability marker usage in low and high involvement product/service categories

Probability marker used in the ad	Low involvement products/services		High involvement products/services	
	%	n	%	n
No	85.2%	208	90.0%	307
Yes	14.7%	36	10%	34

H3a predicts a more frequent and prominent usage of hedges in advertisements of hedonic products or services, whereas, according to H3b, in ads of utilitarian products or services pledges should be more prevalent and prominent. The product/service categories labeled as hedonic by the expert researchers were: perfume, jewelry, games, sports, relaxation and travelling, media, gambling, alcoholic beverages, and fashion. Those listed as utilitarian were: household appliances, cleaning products, medication, detergent, financial services, institutional services, opticians, and energy and fuel. To test H3ab, only those advertisements for hedonic or utilitarian products and services that contain a probability marker were analyzed. Only 17.1% of ads for hedonic products/services contain a hedge, with pledges being used considerably more often (82.9%, p < .001). In utilitarian cases, both hedges (44%) and pledges (56%, p = .142) are used equally frequently. These results are actually contrary to our expectations and do not support H3ab.

As far as prominence of probability markers in advertisements of hedonic and utilitarian products and services is concerned, advertising practice again seems contrary to our predictions. Namely, in advertisements of hedonic products/services, hedges never appear in the most prominent position (i.e. in the headline) nor are they ever set in large font. Pledges, on the other hand, while mostly set in small (43.1% of them) or medium (also 43.1%) font and incorporated into the copy (58.6%), do also appear set in large font (13.8%) and as part of the headline (22.4%). The results show no statistical difference between the prominence of hedges and pledges used in advertising claims for hedonic products or services (size p = 0.335, placement p = .105). Thus, the results do not support H3a.

Pledges are, however, more prominently used than hedges in Belgian advertisements of utilitarian products or services. While only 9.4% of hedges in these ads appear in the headline and 15.6% of them are set in large font, 35.7% of pledges are included in headlines and 33.3% are in large font (both $p < .001$). Hedges and pledges are used equally frequently, contrary to the expectations of H3b that pledges would be prevalent.

Table 4. Frequency and prominence of probability marker usage in hedonic and utilitarian product/service categories

	Hedonic			Utilitarian		
PM	Total	Headline	Large font	Total	Headline	Large font
Hedge	17.1%	0%	0%	44%	9.4%	15.6%
Pledge	82.9%	22.4%	13.8%	56%	35.7%	33.3%

The results show significant differences in the usage of probability markers with regards to the use and gender of endorsers. In H4, we predict that a pledge would appear most frequently in the advertisements in which a male endorser is featured, while hedges would be most prevalent in advertisements with female endorsers. Contrary to expectation, the results show that 54.5% of the advertisements with male endorsers and probability markers contain a pledge, with hedges appearing almost equally frequently (in 45.5% of such ads). In those advertisements that feature female endorsers, on the other hand, hedges and pledges are not used with the same frequency. As expected, hedges (68.0%) are more frequently used than pledges (32.0%). Thus, H4 is partially supported (Table 5).

Table 5. Frequency of probability marker usage in advertisements featuring endorsers

PM	male endorser		female endorser	
Hedge	45.5%	15	68.0%	193
Pledge	54.5%	18	32.0%	91

Finally, the last set of analyses was conducted to test the predictions of H5a that probability markers would appear more often in information-oriented advertisements than in image-oriented ones, as well as, as predicted by H5b, in advertisements based on rational appeals, rather than in those based on emotional appeals. H5a is supported: among the Belgian advertisements, 13% of those that are information-oriented contain probability markers, as opposed to only 7.3% ($p < .001$) of the image-oriented advertisements. Probability markers were found in 12% of advertisements based on rational appeals and only in 5.1% ($p < .001$) of those based on emotional appeals, as expected. Therefore, H5b is supported.

5 Conclusions, Implications, and Further Research

Probability markers appear in only 12% of advertisements in Belgium. Pledges are used more often than hedges, and the largest number of pledges is expressed through superlatives, especially phrases including the superlative "the best". Hedges are predominantly perceived as weak, which is in line with previous research that shows that consumers with lower levels of tolerance for ambiguity tend to dislike hedges (Bušljeta Banks and De Pelsmacker 2014). Pledges, on the other hand, are not consistently rated as either strong or weak, but are equally often perceived as neutral.

When probability markers are used in advertisements, they are not very prominently featured. This is especially true with regards to hedges, which are predominantly set in small font and most often appear in the advertising copy. The placing and typesetting of hedges in a manner that makes them less obvious in the advertisements, and thus easier to ignore, seems to support Geis' (1982) assertion that one of the reasons hedges are successful in advertising is that they are effectively ignored by the consumers.

Virtually no differences in the usage of pledges and hedges were found in relation to the category of the product/service advertised. There were no significant differences with regards to the level of involvement with the product/service advertised. This practice is not in accordance with findings that probability markers are more effective when used to advertise low involvement services than high involvement ones (Bušljeta Banks and De Pelsmacker 2014). With regards to the buying motivation associated with the product/service advertised (whether it is hedonic or utilitarian), the results again show that the practice does not always seem to be in line with the conclusions that hedges work best when combined with hedonic products or services, while the utilitarian products/services are most effectively advertised with the use of pledges in the advertising copy. More precisely, when probability markers are used in ads for hedonic products/services, they are more often pledges than hedges. In advertisements of utilitarian products/services, however, hedges and pledges are used with similar frequency.

We expected that a pledge would appear most frequently in the advertisements in which a male endorser is featured, while hedges would be most prevalent in advertisements with female endorsers. Contrary to expectation, however, the results of show that hedges and pledges appear almost equally frequently in ads featuring male endorsers.

As far whether the ad is information- or image-oriented, the results confirm our predictions. Namely, probability markers appear more frequently in information-oriented than in image-oriented advertisements. With regards to the type of appeal (emotional or rational) used, the results also support our predictions that probability markers would be more frequently used in advertisements based on rational than on emotional appeals.

As the current situation in Belgian advertising shows an equal distribution of probability markers in advertising claims for both high-involvement and low-involvement products or services, more consideration should be given to make better use of probability markers when advertising low-involvement products and services. Additionally, since both types of probability markers seem to appear equally frequently in advertising claims for utilitarian products and services, practitioners should consider using hedges in such ads less often, and, instead, increase the frequency of pledges. On the other hand, while currently pledges appear more often and more prominently in advertising claims of hedonic products and services than hedges do, Belgian advertisers should refrain from using hedges in this context, and focus more on incorporating hedges into advertising claims of hedonic products/services. Advertisers should also make more use of the findings relating to gender as a moderator of probability marker effectiveness (e.g., Bušljeta Banks et al. 2012). Especially in Belgium, more emphasis should be placed on using pledges instead of hedges when featuring male endorsers.

Future research that would compare the results of this study to the situation in other countries and for ads in other media is needed to paint a more complete picture of the usage of probability markers in advertising cross-culturally. Additionally, a longitudinal approach might be useful, repeating the present study under similar conditions at a future date. As most of the findings on the effectiveness of probability markers in advertising are rather recent, it would be interesting to test, in a few years, whether they have had any impact on the advertising practice.

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Towards a Revised Theory of Visual Signification

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1 Introduction

Technology has made it much easier to produce, use, and share visual content, so that communication has become increasingly visual-centric (McQuarrie and Phillips 2008). Visuals in commercial communication are also becoming more imaginative and complex than in the past (Phillips and McQuarrie 2002; Scott 1994). Visuals seem to assume an increasingly visually sophisticated individual who reads images like any other type of text. Images are being actively interpreted and do not merely copy some external reality (McQuarrie and Mick 1999; Scott 1994). But, what are the underlying cognitive mechanisms that govern individuals' interpretation of images? It seems that our theories still do not offer a full understanding or explanation of what it means to interpret an image.

Our paper has three goals. First, we examine the current debates in visual theory discourse about how images work in visual communication. From here, we propose a conceptual framework that disentangles visual signification based on Peirce's (1931-58) theory of signs. The proposed conceptual framework delineates the relations formed by the three basic elements of the sign system: the sign, the object, and the interpretant. Finally, in order to understand how individuals interpret visual imagery, we re-conceptualize the idea of literal and symbolic interpretation as a continuum ranging from no reclassification of objects to reclassification of semantically distant objects. Essentially, we lay the building blocks for a new theory of visual communication and interpretation that is based on categorization. That is, how individuals identify and categorize objects in the real world (Rosch et al. 1976).

2 Literature Review

A key debate in visual rhetoric theory revolves around the issue whether images signify through resemblance-based or convention-based associations. Implicit in past views of how visual images work in advertising was the assumption that pictures merely reflect reality (Scott 1994). Despite the intuitive appeal of the proposition that pictures copy reality, a number of eminent scholars have identified several limitations to this assumption (McQuarrie and Mick 1999; Mick and Buhl 1992; Mick and Politi 1989; Scott 1994). A key limitation is that past views failed to account for the richness of visual meaning

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_15, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

(Scott 1994). Research within text-interpretive and reader response approaches (Durand 1987; McQuarrie 1989; Scott 1994; Stern 1989; Mick and Buhl 1992; Mick and Politi 1989) paved the way for appreciating the complexity of visual meaning. This stream of research, however, only partly specified the causal relationships between visuals and consumers' responses (McQuarrie and Mick 1999).

Studies within a visual rhetoric context systematically tried to fill this gap (McQuarrie and Mick 1999). These studies paid closer attention to the image and articulated an alternative view to the assumption that pictures merely copy reality. In its more radical form, visual rhetoric suggested that visuals form a symbolic language that, like verbal language, ultimately forms a convention-based system (Scott 1994). Theories of visual rhetoric disentangled the various forms and styles found in visuals by introducing a new linguistic way of seeing visuals -for example, as metaphors (McQuarrie and Mick 1999; Phillips and McQuarrie 2002; Scott 1994). Although the level of specification regarding the identification of formal visual properties and their link to consumers' responses varied in studies of visual rhetoric, this stream of research effectively demonstrated that visuals might be as capable of communicating complex information about products as verbal language. Although understanding visuals to be complex messages in their own right was a great advance in the status of pictures in the literature, many researchers have noted that little progress has been made in developing a better understanding of how visual persuasion works (Garber and Hyatt 2003; Larsen 2008; Malkewitz, Wright, and Friestad 2003).

The terminology and the theoretical framework introduced by the visual rhetoric tradition underpinned many recent efforts to understand visual communication. However, more recent research has tended to move away from this tradition and its associated debates concerning resemblance and representational correspondence, seeing these issues as distracting attention from more central theoretical concerns (Pracejus, Olsen, and O'Guinn 2006). For example, some researchers recognized that despite the pervasive role of symbolic meanings in visual communication, such as in art (Hagtvedt and Patrick 2008), symbolic meanings do not subtract from the representational value of images (Hagtvedt and Patrick 2011). That is, their ability to signify out of resemblance. These later studies broadened the scope of visual research by showing, for example, how individuals derive meaning from the history of the use of visual objects (Pracejus et al. 2006). Similarly, recent studies highlighted the role of prior exposure to semantically and perceptually-related stimuli to the encoding of visuals by individuals (Labroo, Dhar, and Schwarz 2008; Labroo and Lee 2006; Lee and Labroo 2004) and stressed the role of consumers' interaction with visuals (Jiang et al. 2014; Phillips and McQuarrie 2010).

In a similar fashion, studies within embodied cognition and spatial metaphor (Barsalou 2008; Lakoff and Johnson 1980) further suggested that ostensibly unrelated factors might influence the interpretation of images. For example, a group's position on the vertical axis influences its perceived powerfulness (Schubert 2005). Powerful groups are more quickly and more accurately identified as being powerful when they appear at the top of a screen, above powerless groups, rather than below powerless groups (see also Giessner and Schubert 2007). Similarly, strangers were rated as being closer to God when their images appeared in higher rather than in lower vertical positions (Meier et al. 2007).

3 Conceptual Framework

The present paper articulates a framework as a way to understand how images work in visual communication. Our theoretical framework draws from Peirce's (1931-58) account of signification as a starting point for disentangling and analyzing the dichotomies and debates found in current theories of visual representation. Peirce understood the sign as a system consisting of three inter-related elements: the sign, the object, and the interpretant. A sign, as an element of the sign system, might be thought of as a vehicle. For example, an image of a table or the word "table" signifies its respective object. For Peirce, however, the object-sign relation forms only a part of the sign system. It can only be understood via the interpretant. In simple terms, the interpretant is what gives meaning to the object-sign relation. Peirce further classified the sign as-a-vehicle element into three major types: icons, symbols, and indexes. An icon signifies its object by sensuously resembling it such as in photographs. Symbols signify their objects out of conventions or set rules such as in the case of written words. Indexes signify their objects by means of a causal connection to them. For example, smoke might be seen as signifying fire.

We develop our theoretical framework of visual representation by analyzing the relations formed between signs, objects, and interpretants. These otherwise interconnected relations are separated only for the purpose of systematically investigating their relevance to the current debates in visual theory. We believe that many of the debates that have plagued visual theory development stem from the lack of consideration of the relations between these elements. Further, such an analysis might also help identify areas that are in need of further theoretical and empirical investigation. Finally, the proposed framework might ultimately help in developing a more complete account of visual communication. First, we discuss the object-sign relation, which has been inextricably linked to the issues of resemblance and representativeness in visual theory discourse. Next, we discuss the sign-interpretant relationship in terms of the signs' function to point to objects. Lastly, we analyze one of the most neglected relations -that between interpretant and object.

3.1 The Object-Sign Relation

Visual rhetoric discourse has devoted a lot of attention to the object-sign relation. Implicit in this debate was the underlying premise that the object-sign relation alone reflects the nature of representation in general. Part of the discussion about the way images represent was framed as a question of whether pictures copy reality (i.e., their objects) or individuals actually learn to identify associations between visual signs and objects (Scott 1994). In broader terms, whether images signify out of resemblance or do they function as a symbolic system of representation? Issues such as of representational correspondence and pictorial resemblance prevailed in theory development (Pracejus et al. 2006). The argument that individuals learn how to associate a visual sign to its object directly questions the importance of resemblance-based inferences in visual communication. It is mainly symbols such as written words that require learning in order to function as vehicles for objects. If images are unable to function as representation-bearers in their own right (Peirce 1931-58), it impoverishes the role of iconic associations in Peirce's theory of signs.

Three main arguments against resemblance in visual communication can be identified in the literature. The first argument is based on the observation that some images are so imaginative that they simply do not resemble reality (Scott 1994). The second argument posits that stylistic elements such as the point of view from which an object is depicted can always be interpreted in symbolic terms and therefore icons never simply resemble their objects (Scott 1994). The third argument against resemblance states that resemblance is a general function that cannot alone be used to indicate that something stands for something else - that is, resemblance cannot establish a representational function in the first place (Goodman 1976). We discuss each of the arguments against resemblance in order to reestablish the importance of resemblance-based inferences and better position iconic associations in a revised theory of visual communication.

3.1.1 Imaginative Images

Scott (1994) justifiably argues that some advertising images are so imaginative that it is difficult to think of real objects that correspond to these images. Scott (1994) characteristically observes that some images are so untypical of real situations that they cannot be found anywhere in real life. The reader of these images should employ symbolic thinking to understand the communicator's intention. Scott (1994) offers the example of a Clinique ad that shows an unusual image of a mascara and a lipstick placed into a glass of soda water signifying the product's refreshing or waterproof properties. Undoubtedly, it is difficult to think of a real situation with such a setting of objects.

The argument of Scott (1994) that some images are so imaginative that they simply do not resemble reality raises the question whether or not icons deserve a place in visual communication? Larsen (2008, p. 73) has tried to respond to this argument by noting that the same interpretation of the Clinique ad could have been reached even if the same objects appeared "as a counter display in a department store." That is, even if no pictorial signs were interferred in the interpretation. Larsen (2008) suggested that both icons and symbols exist in images and form a continuum of cases. The proposition that icons or symbols might co-exist in visual communication, however, does not answer the question of whether such imaginative images should be seen as symbols or icons. It seems that Scott (1994) raises a more fundamental epistemological issue around the nature of the object-sign relation in representation.

Scott's argument (1994) takes as its starting point the implicit assumption that the sign has to resemble readers' experiences with objects. It considers objects as something stable that signs are to be compared with. Peirce (EP2, 478), however, defines "a sign as anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object". Peirce seems to suggest that it is the object that determines its sign. This idea of an object determining its sign might be clearer in photography. Photographs derive their visual truth, at least before photo editing technology, from the supposition that photographs are at least partly determined by the photographed objects (Messaris 1997). In the more difficult case of highly imaginative drawings like cartoons, it might still be suggested that it is the object that the artist has in his/her mind that determines the drawing.

The anchoring point in representation might not be the sign, but the object. Readers of visuals know that what the sign primarily represents is not their own experiences. This is not to state that the reader does not have to associate the sign with his or her own experiences. However, the proposition that signs have to resemble objects as experienced in readers' mind goes slightly against the informative nature of communication (Grice 1975). This proposition restricts communication to the function of reactivating readers' existing knowledge structures. However, taking the object as being the starting point in the object-sign relation, then it might be proposed that it is not the image itself, but rather the object that is imaginative. Signs might be primarily thought of as resembling the communicators' experiences. The extent to which the communicators' and readers' experiences coincide reveals the similarity of their experiences (of objects) rather than the similarity between an object and its sign.

3.1.2 Stylistic Properties

The second argument against resemblance states that stylistic elements, like angle of view, might always be interpreted symbolically (Scott 1994). For example, Meyers-Levy and Peracchio (1992), in order to explain the effects of camera angle on consumers, draw inter alia on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) metaphor account. Meyers-Levy and Peracchio (1992) propose that camera angles can refer to other natural world visual experiences. For instance, low-angle shots can be conceptually related to the positive view of looking up at our parents when we are children, whereas high-angle shots are suggestive of looking down on younger siblings, which generally are associated with a negative and subordinate view of the object. Similarly, Scott (1994) refers to a lipstick ad where the depicted products are arranged in the ad's photo in such a manner that the advertised brand is being heroized by means of resembling such categories as "a colonnade, a church choir, or a parliamentary seating arrangement" (Scott 1994, p. 255).

So far, the present chapter has suggested that visual signs that do not resemble readers' experiences do not necessarily defy iconicity. The argument about angle of view further suggests that there is no single way of depicting reality -the communicator inescapably has to choose a certain angle of view to depict it. Yet, the fact that there is no single way to depict reality does not mean that the sign does not resemble a reality. Taking as a starting point the object in the object-sign relation, the image might still be thought of as representing the communicator's reality. The argument about stylistic properties, however, points to the observation that often images can only be fully understood if read symbolically. The implicit premise is that the iconic function of images is not sufficient for understanding visual communication. The latter argument, rather than questioning the existence of icons, questions their value in communication. Do, however, symbolic interpretations undermine the value of icons? Recent research indicates that individuals could still view works of art as a mere illustration (Hagtvedt and Patrick 2011). That is, icons still keep their representational function despite any additional symbolic meanings attached to them.

The argument that symbolic meanings undermine the representation value of icons entails the implicit premise that symbolic interpretation equals symbols. A symbolic interpretation, however, might not render the sign a symbol. Similarly, a symbol might not be the same as a symbolic interpretation. Symbols refer to the way an object is associated with its sign. For example, a symbol like the word "table" does not resemble a table, but it is only conventionally associated with the idea of a table. Yet, we do not commonly understand the interpretation of words as being symbolic. We will suggest that this is because what is being interpreted symbolically is not the sign itself, but the object of the sign. For example, a table might be symbolically associated with the idea of family gatherings. In this case, it is the sign's referent that symbolically represents family gatherings rather than the vehicle that evoked the "table" concept. The way the table was initially evoked by means, for example, of a symbol like a written word or an image might be kept distinct from its symbolic interpretation. It seems that it is the initial literal referent that a sign intended to convey that is being interpreted symbolically. It is in the light of this that symbolic or literal interpretation might be better analyzed via the object-interpretant relation.

3.1.3 Representational Function

The third argument against resemblance can be traced back to Goodman's (1976) conventionalism theory. The theoretical underpinnings of the view that images do not copy reality can be found in Goodman (1976), who rejects resemblance as a general quality that cannot itself establish a relationship of reference. For example, Goodman (1976) observes that all the cars coming off an assembly line resemble one another, but nevertheless none is a picture of any of the others. That is, resemblance might exist without representation. Therefore, he concludes that conventionalism better explains the representational function of signs. That is, individuals recognize that something represents something else based on conventions -a function that resemblance alone cannot attain (Files 1996). However, Goodman (1976) seems to demand from resemblance (a dyadic relationship) more than it necessarily seeks to offer -that is, a complete triadic account of representation (Files 1996).

While the argument about the need for an interpreting mind seems justified, Goodman (1976) leaves the interpreting element of Peirce's (1931-58) system of signs out of his analysis when he construes conventionalism as a dyadic symbolic relation between a sign and an object (Files 1996). Goodman (1976) seems to suggest that symbols incorporate a representation function because they themselves, by definition, stand for something else. Symbols point to their object by means of conventions or rules established over a long period -a function that icons might not be able to accommodate on their own. The question then is whether a representation function is actually built into symbols because their purpose is to represent another concept?

As Goodman (1976) suggests the establishment of a representation function requires the recognition of a communicative purpose. A representation function, however, might be kept distinct from the type of association (Files 1996). A car cannot represent another car because it cannot alone act as a representation bearer. Conventions dictate whether resemblance serves a communicative purpose. For example, the individual should know whether the car is being used to refer to another car. We would argue, however, that in the same way that resemblance needs an individual to recognize a representation function, there is nothing inherent in symbolic associations that make them point to their objects. Although symbolic associations might be thought of as automatically pointing to a referent, the fact that a symbolic association might be drawn does not suggest that this will have an effect on an individual.

Peirce's idea of signs, objects and interpretants as indispensable elements of the sign system points to the incompleteness of a theory of representation without all three elements being brought together. Icons, symbols, or indexes as types of associations alone, however, might not be sufficient to explain representation. For such associations to function as representation bearers they should have an effect on an individual (Peirce 1931-58). As Goodman (1976) suggests these dyadic relations require a cognitive agent to function as signs of something else. Individuals might have to identify whether a sign should act as representation bearer out of convention-based or resemblance-based associations. There seems to be nothing inherent in symbols or icons that indicate whether one type of association should be preferred over the other. For example, the sign "I" can be read as a column or as the word "I". It seems that a linguistic code still needs to be identified as such for the code to function as a symbol. The identification process might involve such issues as whether a linguistic mark resembles a symbol. For example, whether "I" appears along other linguistic marks in a printed page or within a painting or whether "I" itself resembles more a linguistic mark rather than a real column. This is information that rests outside the linguistic code. Yet, the observation that resemblance-based inferences might be required for linguistic codes to be recognized as such does not make them icons.

It suggests, however, that for a sign to function as a representation bearer, individuals should recognize such a function and identify the type of association (iconic, symbolic, or indexical) for signs to have an effect. This discussion might indicate that both icons and symbols function out of convention (Scott 1994). This might be a valid proposition. But, conventions might not make resemblance less useful for a theory of representation. Conventions might not govern whether a sign resembles its object, but rather whether representation should function out of resemblance-based associations. Similarly, conventions might dictate when conventional-based associations should be used in representation, but this might not make symbols any more or less conventional. Icons or symbols materialize when they manage to have an effect whereas resemblance or convention-based associations describe the route to such an effect. It is not clear why a theory of communication should dismiss different types of association in favor of an undifferentiated idea of a purely conventional system of representation.

A purely conventional approach to visual representation, in a similar way to a copy approach to visuals, seems to extend a type of relationship (i.e., symbolic) between a sign and an object to the relationship between sign and interpretant (i.e., symbolic interpretation). Put another way, the argument against resemblance often frames the problem in terms of the nature of the relationship between a sign and its object (Scott 1994). The main drawback, however, in past research might not have been the misidentification of the form of this relationship, but the belief that interpretation should be limited to the identification of the visual objects (Kosslyn and Chabris 1990). The copy view of visuals prescribed the effect the sign should have on individuals based on the nature of the relation between the sign and its object. That is, imitation was seen as the main purpose of visual representation. In a similar way, conventionalism sees symbolic object-sign relations as dictating interpretation.

3.2 The Interpretant-Sign Relation

Peirce suggested that signs (icons, symbols, and indexes) signify their objects in distinctly different ways. Different types of associations, however, might co-exist in visual representation. Typography might be such an example. Research on the style of lettering indicates that the way a word is written can be interpreted symbolically based on the similarity of its physical appearance to other experiences (Doyle and Bottomley 2006; McCarthy and Mothersbaugh 2002). Such resemblance-based associations might fundamentally be categorized as icons because what signifies is the special way of writing a word -the particular way of rendering the code or its physical features- rather than the linguistic code itself. Similarly, the way a word sounds might also attach additional meaning to its object (Lowrey and Shrum 2007). This stream of research indicates that signs have a physical existence of their own based upon which individuals can attach additional similarity-based associations (Tufte 1997).

In a similar vein, convention-based associations might be attached to an icon. For example, a heart might conventionally signify love. It seems worthy of investigation to explore the factors that make these alternative routes likely to have an effect on individuals. For example, what initiates the individual to draw on their cognitive environment to seek meaning out of alternative routes? It might be hypothesized that such a process requires additional effort on the part of the individuals. Further, it is difficult to imagine that individuals will make all possible associations that can be based on a sign. Some restrictions would seem to apply to this process in order for it to be economically feasible in cognitive terms.

A regular theme in the definition of alternative sign interpretations is the idea of breaking some rules or the perception of some incongruity (McQuarrie and Mick 1996). What makes things difficult is that alternative readings are often called symbolic or metaphoric. The use of symbolic interpretation conflates with the idea of convention-based associations (i.e., symbols). Yet, additional meanings seem to be initiated by a perception of incongruity. For example, Kennedy (1982) defines visual metaphor as the deliberate contradiction of standard canons of depiction in order to make a point, but not to revise or reject the standard canon. Kennedy's (1982) definition of visual metaphor implies that the visual sign system evolves. That is, Kennedy is trying to differentiate visual metaphor from actions that try to revise or reject the standard canon. In that respect, Kennedy’s (1982) view coincides with Scott (1994) idea of conventional ways of depicting objects. For example, Scott (1994) eloquently discusses how visual language has evolved from realism to abstract representation.

Although it is not difficult to accept that the sign system evolves, it seems debatable whether visual theory should abandon the effort to investigate the essential nature of mediation between signs and objects. For example, it is hard to deny that there are different degrees of arbitrariness in the relation between the sign and its object in different visual representation styles. Even if we learn how to identify similarities between an object and a sign, this might inform the degree to which an association is based on resemblance or conventions (Larsen 2008) rather than rejecting similarity judgments.

Incongruity might be analysed in terms of representativeness. The idea that symbolic intepretations question the association between a sign and its object rather than the representativeness of the object might stem from the fact that additional meanings are attached to the object. This might be seen as questioning the established association between the sign and its object. For example, the metaphor "man is a wolf" simultaneously points to a real person and a wolf (and all the knowledge associated with these objects), but it might also be seen as disregarding the convention that the word “man” should refer to a person not a person-wolf entity. The object (man) has been informed (by means of associating it with a wolf). Therefore, “man” in this particular communicative context is no longer a typical member of what we would commonly categorize as “man”. We might therefore locate incongruity in the discrepancy between what the symbol “man” conventionally signifies and what “man” refers to in the metaphor "man is a wolf". What ultimately is being indicated here does not seem to be the type of association, but the effect the symbol “man” has on the interpreter.

Similarly, a highly imaginative hybrid image of a person and wolf still has to point to known objects. At the same time, however, the reader is invited to see the person as wolf. The person depicted no longer represents a typical member of the category “man”. The depicted person is unrepresentative of other persons. Thus, what is being violated is not so much the standard canons of depiction

(Kennedy 1982) rather than our standard canons of categorization. This reflects the intuitive idea that the sign is not representative of a real object (Scott 1994). However, it is the object that is unrepresentative of other similar objects rather than of the canon of depiction. The sign still represents this particular untypical object or person.

A number of studies have tried to categorize visuals based on surface differences -for example, distinguishing between juxtaposition and hybrid images (Forceville 1996; Gkiouzepas and Hogg 2011; McQuarrie and Mick 1999; Phillips and McQuarrie 2004). Such accounts, however, rather than categorizing surface differences in depiction, they identify violations of our knowledge structures. For example, a hybrid image of a wolf and a person challenges our basic knowledge that these two objects do not commonly form a single entity. In the light of this, Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) suggestion that metaphor is a matter of cognition rather than of language might be extended to the visual domain (Forceville 2002). Two more or less dissimilar objects are combined in a more or less unrealistic fashion. Relational violations (Biederman, Mezzanotte, and Rabinowitz 1982), however, might merely be part of our knowledge about how objects are related to each other in a given context.

This might further suggest that juxtaposition or hybrid types of images do not reflect visual categories per se. Visual rhetoric types might better be seen as categorizing the contexts within which violations of our knowledge structures are to be judged. Thus, such categorizations might be highly sensitive to the objects that are included (Gkiouzepas and Hogg 2011) and to the communicative context. For example, in a replacement visual a single object is replaced by another less expected object whereas in a hybrid image a part of a single object is replaced by a part of another object (Gkiouzepas and Hogg 2011). We experientially know that hybrid objects are less likely to be observed in real settings because they violate a more fundamental relation. That is, the context in which violation is judged in hybrid images is that of the unity of an object. Under such an account of visual incongruity, stylistic mannerisms might be seen as still another type of violation. Stylistic elements, however, do not introduce a single entity, but rather an atypical attribute such a low angle of view. Such an attribute can only define an abstract category such as “objects seen from a low angle of view” (e.g. parents, skyscrapers, powerful others, etc).

Ultimately, the reasoning underlying such categorizations of visual types seems to be inductive. That is, individuals, based on past observations, judge the extent to which a particular visual arrangement coincides with their knowledge about the world, without, however, ever being able to completely exclude such a possibility that there is no real world equivalent (Rips 1975). This might be because we do not commonly consider our experiences as forming a finite population. We are aware of the fact that our experiences are only a sample of the universe of instances. However, we also have beliefs about how strongly attributes and objects are associated with each other (Rosch et al. 1976). What might deserve more attention in research on visual rhetoric types is the extent to which the individual sees such irregularities as justifying the expenditure of cognitive resources to re-categorize the depicted object as something else in order to be able to interpret the visual imagery.

3.3 The Object-Interpretant Relation

In visual communication theory, the relation between the interpreter and the represented object has received little attention. We suggest that interpretation, either literal or symbolic, might not be characterized by the nature of the relationship between a sign and its object. For example, an image of a heart might be seen as resembling an organ or as representing love. In both cases, however, it is the sign's referent (i.e., heart) that is categorized in an individual's cognitive environment as an organ or as an emotion. Peculiar to abstract concepts such as love is that no clear perceptual features can be associated with them. Interpretation might be seen as starting from the recognition of such an association; and relies on whether or not the individual accepts this (literal) interpretation as sufficient for understanding its meaning in a communicative context, or if a re-categorization of the identified object is required.

Categorization studies posit that individuals identify objects at a basic level category, commonly characterized by the name of the object such as "hammer" or "chair" (Rosch et al. 1976). Categories below the basic level are subordinate categories, for example, "claw hammer" or "kitchen chair". Subordinate categories contain many attributes that overlap with other categories. In contrast, superordinate categories do not refer to specific objects, but to more abstract concepts such as "tools" or "furniture". The members of a superordinate category have fewer attributes in common. The process of judging the identity of objects is based on the validity of a given perceptual or functional cue/attribute (x) as a predictor of a given category (Rosch et al. 1976). For example, the cue validity of the motor action of sitting down on a chair might be high for the category of "chairs". Both functional and perceptual information inform the cue validity of an entire category, which might be defined as the summation of cue validities for each of the attributes of the category (Rosch et al. 1976).

Symbolic processing might be understood in terms of the relation between an object and an interpreting mind. The essence in symbolic processing, however, is that the represented object is understood in a different way. A clear example where individuals are invited to interpret an object in a new way is that of metaphor. Metaphor has been defined as understanding one thing (i.e. the target) in terms of another (i.e. the source). The definition of metaphor implies that symbolic processing might be analyzed in terms of the target object, the source object, and the process involved in understanding the former in terms of the latter.

What does it mean, however, to understand objects in new ways? The category-transfer model (Glucksberg and Keysar 1990) posits that individuals, in order to understand metaphor, have to form an ad hoc category. For example, the metaphor "my job is a jail" induces a general category which includes objects that are confining or unpleasant. The feature-matching model (Ortony 1979) adds to our understanding of metaphor comprehension by suggesting that the source of the metaphor (e.g., jail) possesses highly salient features (e.g., involuntariness, confinement) that are not as highly salient in our understanding of the target (e.g., jobs). Finally, the structural alignment model (Gentner, Bowdle, Wolff, and Boronat 2001) suggests that the objects are first matched for higher order (similar) relations and then lower order (but otherwise dissimilar) local matches are projected from the source to the target of the metaphor. For example, confine(prisoners) might be matched to confine(employees).

In the present paper, we propose a categorization-based (Rosch et al. 1976) model of interpretation that draws from current accounts of metaphor. In particular, objects might be seen as being either literally interpreted when they are being identified within established categorizations and/or seen in terms of symbolic interpretation when the cue validity of an existing (or a new) attribute is being increased in the established categorization of an object. For example, in the metaphor "my job is a jail" the cue "lack of freedom" increases its validity in the new ad hoc categorization of jobs as compared to its validity in the established categorization. A literal interpretation, however, might only be possible in theory because whenever an object is categorized within established categorizations, the cue validity of its associated attributes are more or less being reinforced.

Cue validity is an important concept in our theory because it suggests that not every attribute is equally likely to anchor a new ad hoc category, but only those attributes that have the higher cue validity for that category. The cue validity of the attribute(s) anchoring the ad hoc category might also explain why some salient features of the sources remain unmatched (Camp 2006). An attribute of high cue validity in the source domain does not guarantee that the level of its validity will remain the same in the ad hoc category. This is because the attribute has the role of predicting (unifying) new members (e.g. jail and job) in the new category while still discriminating that category from others.

The validity the common attribute had in established categorizations might also play a role in symbolic processing. That is, individuals might prefer those attributes that still preserve, to an extent, the literal or established (and therefore proven in time) categorizations of objects. All things being equal, features that are more salient (have a high cue validity) for a given target (i.e. having discriminative power) might also be preferred over less salient features. The underlying premise is that it is to individuals' advantage to maintain the overall structure of their cognitive environment. This might explain the difficulty category-based models (Glucksberg and Keysar 1990) had in explaining why different effects might be produced when the same source is applied to different topics (Camp 2006). For example, "my marriage is a jail" might not produce the attribute "living in a small cubicle" as compared to the metaphor "my job is a jail" (Camp 2006). This might be because the validity of the "small cubicle" cue might be less than other possible features (e.g., lack of freedom) in the marriage domain. This is not to suggest that only attributes having a high cue validity in the target domain will be preferred -which might account for the idiosyncratic nature of some interpretations in symbolic processing (Phillips 1997).

Idiosyncratic meanings might be considered as such because the attribute selected might have lower cue validity than other possible matches in the target domain. For example, choosing the attribute "unbroken" as a likely attribute to be transferred in marriages might even sound counter-intuitive because the attribute might not have the same cue validity (context notwithstanding) for marriages as "lack of freedom". In turn, such as an idiosyncratic selection will result in lower cue validity for the ad hoc category. For example, it might not predict the new ad hoc category as effectively as the attribute "lack of freedom" might predict the new members (jail and marriage). In a similar vein, an idiosyncratic interpretation might reflect a selection of an attribute (e.g., being served tasteless food) that does not have high cue validity in the source domain. This is because the ad hoc category has also to predict the source of the metaphor (e.g. jail).

Our conceptualization of symbolic and literal processing might also explain the idea of metaphor informativeness. For example, selecting highly salient attributes that result in ad hoc categories and that have high total cue validity might not be considered informative. This is because objects that share highly salient attributes might already have been accounted for or associated within established knowledge structures. In fact, such matches come close to a literal categorization. However, metaphors might point to features that were not noticed or (being even more informative) they might introduce new features to the target. Therefore, the idea of informativeness points to new knowledge -that is, features not previously highly associated to the target.

This might explain why not all metaphors are equally informative. For example, just pointing to an already highly salient attribute does not significantly alter established knowledge structures as compared to the introduction of new features or the increase of the cue validity of a previously low salient attribute. Therefore, informativeness might be defined mainly in terms of the magnitude of change in the cue validity of the target attribute. The cue validity of a new attribute, for example, will have to increase from zero in the target domain. It is in this light that a literal or a symbolic interpretation might be understood in categorization terms. Further, the higher the magnitude of change, the more symbolic the interpretation. Put another way, the greater the magnitude of change the more distinct will be the ad hoc category as compared to the established categorizations of the object.

Magnitude of change might also be understood in terms of the metaphor's source. Ortony (1979) suggested that a high salient source attribute that matches a low salient attribute of the target increases perceptions of metaphoricity. We further suggest, however, that salience imbalance might ultimately be understood in terms of the magnitude of change in the validity of the target attribute. In particular, a high salient source attribute reflects individuals' beliefs about how strongly this attribute is associated with its object. Thus, the strength of association in the source domain might moderate the resulting magnitude of change in the target attribute (Gkiouzepas and Hogg 2014).

However, theories of metaphor are trying to account for the whole set of attributes that could possibly be transferred in a metaphor or for cross-domain mappings (Bowdle and Gentner 2005). In the metaphor literature, aptness reflects the extent to which a metaphor source captures important features of the target of a metaphor – thus, aptness might be strongly influenced by attributes that fail to map onto the target of a metaphor. Aptness and conventionality (metaphor familiarity) were thought of as being orthogonal. For example, a metaphor can be apt without being conventional "Beavers are lumberjacks", but also a metaphor can be conventional without being apt "The clue is a red herring" (Thilbodeau and Durgin 2011). Aptness is, however, a problematic notion because it correlates with metaphor conventionality and manipulations of processing fluency (Thilbodeau and Durgin 2011).

Although the metaphor and analogy literatures are not strictly linked to each other, the notion of aptness in metaphor is related to the idea of analogical soundness (Gentner, Rattermann, and Forbus 1993). In the analogy literature, however, soundness refers to the subjective perception of a structural match between the domains compared in an analogy. That is, the extent to which the domains share a relational system (i.e., common relations between attributes or other relationships). Although it is well documented that structural similarity increases perceptions of analogy soundness, structural similarity is commonly contrasted with surface physical similarities between attributes such as in the analogy "the glass gleamed like water" (Gentner et al. 1993).

Further, the analogy literature tends to hold an undifferentiated view of relational similarity. For example, when comparing a film-based camera to a digital camera, the objects button and flash from the film-based camera can be mapped onto their counterparts in the digital camera (Moreau, Markman, and Lehmann 2001). Similarly, in the analogy "a battery is for a mobile phone what an energy drink is for an individual", individuals might align the battery to the energy drink and the mobile phone to the individual based on the relational similarity that both of them provide energy to their objects. However, individuals might not only have "beliefs about properties of category members, but also have beliefs about the properties of such properties" (Rips 2001, p. 824). Therefore, similarity might extend beyond a general match between objects' features (Gregan-Paxton and Moreau 2003) to the equivalence of the experiences (or attributes) compared in a metaphor.

For example, the energy provided by a battery to a mobile phone might be perceived as being different from the energy a drink offers to an individual -for instance, being of a different kind or serving different functions. An individual, for instance, might use the energy to run whereas the mobile phone might use the energy to serve as a camera. The equivalence of the attributes might then go beyond surface perceptual or relational similarities between components and involve the nature, functions, agents, or goals commonly associated with these properties. Structural relationships therefore might not be able alone to explain the effects of attribute equivalence. Attributes are not independent from their respective domains, but neither are they necessarily reducible to a general structural match.

Related to this, Heit and Rubinstein (1994) have found that individuals were more willing to make the inference that "whales have a liver with two chambers that act as one" when based on the premise that bears have the same anatomical property as compared to the premise that tunas have the same anatomical property. However, they were more likely to infer that "whales usually travel in a back-and-forth or zig-zag trajectory" based on the premise that tunas rather than bears behave in the same way. That is, inferences were stronger when the kind of property (anatomical or behavioral) matched the kind of similarity between the animal categories (anatomical or behavioral). This research might suggest that the attributes selected are based on the validity of the common attribute -that is, its power to unify the new category while discriminating the new category from others.

Thus, judgments of cue validity might not only involve a general match between features, but also include knowledge about the attributes themselves. The finding that metaphor conventionality is highly correlated to the construct of aptness (Thilbodeau and Durgin 2011) is not surprising given that some conventional metaphors might only reflect the extent to which the common cue is highly salient in the source ("The clue is a red herring") and successfully predicts the members (clue and red herring) of the ad hoc category. Deception is a highly salient feature of the "symbolic" meaning of red herring. However, it fails to capture other attributes of the "clue" domain. That is, the total cue validity (all common attributes considered together) in the ad hoc category formed by the analogy "The clue is a red herring" might be lower than for the "Beavers are lumberjacks".

However, the former metaphor might not be as apt as the latter because the common attribute (deception) might be experientially less equivalent in the clue-red herring than in the beaver-lumberjack coupling -not least because the attribute of deception is only "symbolically" related to red herrings. Yet, it efficiently captures "deception" in the abstract target domain (i.e. clues). Conventional sources might capture important features of the target, but the common attribute might not be experientially similar (i.e. less apt). Apt metaphors might have common attributes that are experientially similar and thus increase judgments of familiarity. However, aptness in this latter case might not be a sufficient condition for a metaphor to become conventional because the metaphor is experientially redundant.

In terms of the structural alignment model, it might be suggested that the higher order relation deception(red herring) and deception(clue) might not be as identical as the relation saw(beavers) and saw(lumberjacks). This might reflect individuals' knowledge about these functional cues. For example, the object of the "saw" function in beavers and lumberjacks is similar (i.e., a tree). Thus, relational and feature similarities might not be as independent as the structural alignment model seems to suggest. Higher order relations might reflect individuals' extended knowledge of cues –that is, feature similarity need not be bound to perceptual properties. In sum, the structural alignment model might be seen as deepening our understanding of symbolic processing by proposing a way to structure and hierarchize the cues that might be selected for categorization

4 Discussion

The present paper presented a unified theory of visual communication based on Peirce's system of signs. In particular, we described the visual domain as a system of interrelationships between signs, objects, and interpretants. Some time was devoted to trying to define visual communication in terms of the relation between signs and objects and the corresponding issues of representational resemblance and correspondence. This stream of research has advanced visual theory by pointing to the richness of visual meaning. Despite these efforts, however, visual theory might have missed the essence of visual communication, which might be about pointing to the world outside the visual domain.

What might be more fundamental in trying to understand how visual communication works in visual imagery (such as advertisements) is to try and grasp the relationship between objects and interpretants. To that end, the present chapter has proposed a new way of conceptualizing literal or symbolic interpretation based on a basic human function –that of identifying and categorizing objects in the world by clustering attributes together (Rosch et al. 1976). We conceptualized literal and symbolic interpretations not in terms of the object-sign relation, but as the extent to which a sign induces established knowledge structures or invites individuals to alter those structures about the depicted object. We believe that the way attributes are clustered together and metamorphosed seems to be a promising way of conceptualizing visual communication that can inform our theories of symbolic processing. We hope that our paper helps visual theory move beyond the debates over representational realism and initiates debates about theories of how individuals' knowledge structures work

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Message Strategy Typologies: A Review, Integration, and Empirical Validation in China

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1 Introduction

Formulation of an appropriate advertising creative strategy is crucial for any successful advertising campaign (Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992) to the extent that some researchers have called it 'perhaps' the most important marketing decision for many consumer goods marketers (Frazer, 1983) and one of the most important decisions for advertising creatives (Belch and Belch, 1990, p. 458; Clow et al., 2002). Frazer (1983) defines creative strategy as 'a policy or guiding principle which specifies the general nature and character of messages to be designed' (p.36). Some authors distinguish between creative (or message) 'strategy' (*what* the message will communicate) and creative 'tactics' (*how* the message strategy will be executed), (e.g., Frazer, 1983; Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992; Taylor, 1999; Belch and Belch, 2007). Others contend that creative strategy incorporates both message strategy and execution format (e.g., Ray, 1982; Laskey et al., 1989; Arens et al., 2008, p. 257). While it is necessary to conceptually and theoretically distinguish between message *strategy* and *tactics*, it is of course important for advertising practitioners and researchers to consider both the strategy and tactics of ad campaigns. In order to assist planning, development, and analysis of creative (or message) strategy and tactics, researchers have developed a number of classification typologies[2]. However, because typologies that include both message strategy and tactics would become unwieldy and be of little practical value, most creative strategy typologies focus on messages rather than on executional tactics (Laskey et al., 1989). Accordingly, in this paper we will limit our discussion to the message strategy aspects of creative strategy.

Laskey et al. (1989) argue that an acceptable classification of message strategy should be useful for advertising practitioners, researchers and educators. However, the generally *prescriptive* and pragmatic needs of practitioners looking for detailed *how-to* manuals on creating effective advertising messages often contrast with the generally *descriptive*, theoretical and explanatory needs of academic researchers. Academic researchers are interested in the answers to questions about the nature (the *what*) of advertising message strategy and its effects, and in the underlying theories (the *why*) that link advertising with

[2] In this paper we will be using the terms 'typology', 'scheme', and 'framework' as synonyms.

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_16, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

consumer behavior. Advertising educators need to cover both theoretical/descriptive and practical/prescriptive aspects of advertising in their teaching. These differences in orientation often make a one-size-fits-all approach to typologies impractical. In this study, we primarily focus on developing a message strategy typology for academic research purposes. We do this by first conducting a review of the main extant *prescriptive* typologies on message strategy developed either for (or by) practitioners on the one hand, and *descriptive* frameworks developed for academic research purposes on the other. We then revisit the hierarchy-of-effects theory that underlies the practitioner-based FCB Grid and propose to incorporate the behavioral (conative) element into the academic models of message strategy, which generally only focus on the cognitive and affective aspects of advertising message strategy. We then synthesize elements from academic typologies and propose a modified typology based on the two-stage typology developed by Laskey et al. (1989) and extend it to include conative strategies. Finally, to test our typology and simultaneously validate its applicability in a non-Western context, we use it to analyze Chinese television ads.

2 Extant Message Strategy Typologies

Advertising researchers and practitioners have developed various classification schemes to plan, develop or analyze advertising message strategies. We will first review those frameworks developed either by practitioners or mainly with advertising managers in mind. The first type of practitioner-oriented frameworks use the “grid” format and are popular among practitioners due to their ease of application (Rossiter et al, 1991). Vaughn (1980, 1986) introduced the FCB Grid, an advertising planning model that he had developed at advertising agency Foote, Cone & Belding. It classifies consumer decision-making for products and services according to two dimensions: *low* versus *high involvement* purchases and *think* versus *feel* type of decision-making. Accordingly, advertising strategies can be classified to match four types (or grid quadrants) of consumer decision-making: high involvement think, high involvement feel, low involvement think, and low involvement feel. Different types of products are positioned in each quadrant and advertisers can use the grid to develop corresponding message strategies for each type of product. While the FCB Grid has greatly contributed to simplifying and structuring advertising and media planning, it has been criticized for its mixed conceptualization of consumer involvement (Rossiter et al., 1991). In addition, Ratchford (1987) points out that the grid is unable to capture and account for the influence of social factors in the buying process and that this somewhat limits its usefulness.

The Rossiter-Percy Grid (Rossiter and Percy, 1987; Rossiter et al., 1991) extends the FCB Grid by adding brand awareness to the model and narrows the operationalization of the involvement construct to one based on perceived risk. Similarly to the FCB Grid, it includes two dimensions: involvement (high versus low) and type of motivation (informational versus transformational), the latter corresponding to the think/feel dichotomy of the FCB Grid. It helps advertising creatives concentrate on target consumers' involvement with purchasing decisions and the motivation that drives their behavior. Both "grid" frameworks were primarily designed as managerial tools for advertising planning and development. Unlike the FCB Grid, the Rossiter-Percy Grid also includes recommendations on executional tactics and thus combines advertising strategy and tactics.

Frazer (1983) developed a typology of creative strategy for advertising managers consisting of seven creative strategic alternatives and a description of the conditions under which they are most suitable. The strategies are ranked according to their level of evolutionary sophistication based on the historical evolution of the consumer goods field: generic, preemptive, unique selling proposition (USP), brand image, positioning, resonance, and affective. While Frazer does not explicitly link these strategies to the implicitly underlying think/feel dichotomy, the generic, preemptive, USP, and positioning strategies can be considered to represent 'think' strategies, whereas the brand image, resonance and affective strategies can be considered to represent 'feel' strategies (cf. Taylor, 1999). While the typology was originally developed for use in advertising planning, Frazer et al. (2002) used it to compare creative strategies in U.S. and Australian television commercials. However, the ambiguity of operational definitions and low inter-coder reliability when used for content analysis (Laskey et al., 1989), and the lack of exhaustiveness of its categories (Clow et al., 2002) make Frazer's classification scheme less useful as a tool in academic research.

Taylor (1999) proposed a comprehensive typology of message strategies for advertising planning and development presented as a 'strategy wheel', which consists of six segments representing different types of consumer motivations. The right half of the wheel represents the so-called 'Ritual View' which corresponds with 'feel' or affective strategies and consists of three segments: Ego, Social and Sensory. The left half is called the 'Transmission View' which corresponds with 'think' or rational strategies and which also consists of three segments: Routine, Acute need and Ration. This model suggests advertising managers and creative to focus on buying situations and on the influence of social factors in the buying process. However, the lack of operational definitions of the strategies suitable for each segment makes this typology less useful as a tool for content analysis. In fact, Taylor uses Frazer's (1983) typology to show which of the creative strategies would fit which segment. Thus, in the context of academic content analysis –rather than replacing Frazer’s typology– Taylor’s strategy wheel segments can be used as a complementary framework for explaining the types of consumer motivations advertisers are targeting by linking them to Frazer’s strategies.

The second type of research on advertising message strategy that we will review below consists of studies that develop frameworks primarily for use in academic analysis. Aaker and Norris (1982) distinguish two basic types of message strategy: image/emotional/feeling versus informational/rational/cognitive. Puto and Wells (1984) adopt this basic dichotomy of cognition-based versus affect-based advertising strategy and call the respective types informational and transformational advertising. Informational advertising focuses on important factual information to potential consumers whereas transformational advertising connects the experience of using the advertised product to a set of psychological characteristics. The main difference between emotional and transformational advertising is that an emotional ad only becomes transformational if consumers explicitly relate the affective elements to the *experience* of using the brand, which is not necessarily the case. According to Puto and Wells (1984), for an ad to be considered transformational consumers need to explicitly relate affective elements in the ad to the experience of owning or consuming the brand. They thus use the term transformational from the perspective of consumer interpretation and perception. However, this makes the concept less useful from the perspective of academic content analytical research where it is crucial to document the content of advertising objectively rather than subjectively. An additional limitation of both the Aaker and Norris and Puto and Wells typologies is that they do not offer detailed sub-strategies.

Simon (1971) proposed a typology consisting of 10 creative strategies: information, argument, motivation with psychological appeals, repeated assertion, command, brand familiarization, symbolic association, imitation, obligation, and habit starting. This typology is the first elaborate classification and is frequently used as a coding framework in content analytical studies (e.g., Reid et al., 1985; Martenson, 1987; Zandpour et al., 1992; Okazaki and Alonso, 2003; Wei and Jiang, 2005). However, Simon’s typology has been criticized for mixing elements of message strategy and creative execution (Laskey et al., 1989; Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992). In addition, the typology lacks an underlying theoretical structure like the cognitive-affective dichotomy found in the typologies proposed by Aaker and Norris (1982) and Puto and Wells (1984) and thus lacks the simple but intuitive structure of these frameworks.

To improve on the low intercoder reliability when using Frazer’s (1983) framework, Laskey et al. (1989) developed a two-stage typology in which an advertisement is first categorized into either informational or transformational strategy based on the overall thrust of the message and then into a specific sub-strategy. Informational sub-strategies consist of hyperbole, preemptive, USP, comparative or generic-informational, whereas transformational categories are brand image, user image, use occasion or generic-transformational. Several studies have used this typology (e.g., Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992; Tai, 2004).

Clow et al. (2002) developed a two-stage classification scheme based on the typologies developed by Frazer (1983) and Laskey et al. (1989). This scheme addresses one of the shortcomings of most academic frameworks reviewed above by adding a conative strategy category to the cognitive and affective categories of the extant frameworks. Conative strategies include action-inducing and promotional strategies and are used to persuade customers to engage in a specific behavior or to support other sales-promotional activities. Inclusion of the conative strategy borrows from consumer behavior theories and incorporates the conative or behavioral aspect of the traditional advertising functions (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961) and hierarchy-of-effects models (cf. Vaughn, 1980; 1986) also found in some of the practitioner-originated planning models such as the FCB grid discussed above. Clow et al. (2002) however, do not provide any theoretical rationale for including the conative strategy but include it in a rather matter-of-fact fashion. In addition, Clow et al. (2002) include brand strategies as a fourth type of strategy, which we believe should rather be included as part of affective strategies as originally suggested by both Frazer (1983) and Laskey et al. (1989). Moreover, their treatment of brand strategy as a separate strategy also departs from the hierarchy-of-effects logic of the other strategies included in their framework.

Regarding the mutual exclusiveness of the informational and transformational strategies, Laskey et al. (1989) found that coders had difficulty allocating only one strategy alternative to some advertisements. This is because ads may utilize a combination of informational and transformational (or affective) elements (Puto and Wells, 1984; Rossiter, Percy and Donovan, 1991), in addition to conative elements. Normally, a television commercial or print advertisement contains both verbal copy and visual elements. We believe that it is preferable to allow coders to select multiple strategic elements if these are present, rather than to instruct them to only select the dominant strategy. This allows researchers to more precisely capture the complex nature of message strategy.

3 A Modified Message Strategy Typology

Based on the above review, we feel that none of the extant typologies fully meets our need to capture the entire conceptual range of possible message strategies that advertisers employ. While the typology developed by Laskey et al.

(1989) comes close, it lacks some elements described by other typologies. We therefore use this typology as our basis and supplement it with elements of other typologies on message strategy (i.e., Simon, 1971; Aaker and Norris, 1982; Frazer, 1983; Puto and Wells, 1984; Clow et al., 2002) to create a modified two-stage typology. As discussed above, we believe that for the purpose of content analysis the term affective as a contrasting concept to informative is preferable to the term transformational, which is associated with consumer subjective perception and interpretation of and ad's successful linking of feelings with use of the brand, and thus we propose to use the term affective instead. We will now describe the main elements of this typology and their operational definitions.

Table 1 also lists the main strategies and sub-strategies and provides brief definitions for each of them.

The first stage of the typology consists of the following three main strategies: Cognitive, affective, and conative. The second stage consists of the respective sub-strategies.

Cognitive strategies focus on factual product claims and benefits and are usually verbal descriptions. Cognitive sub-strategies include generic, hyperbole, factual description, preemptive, comparative, and USP. Generic strategy presents facts or information that apply to an entire product class. It is usually used in combination with other strategies. Hyperbole strategy focuses on factually based but exaggerated claims, assertions, or messages that are not objectively verifiable. A claim such as 'the leading brand in the industry or product category' that does not back this up with facts or data should be coded as 'hyperbole'. Factual description strategy presents unadorned facts without detailed description of product features, ingredients or benefits. It also does not claim superiority and offers merely 'news about' the product in question. Preemptive strategy focuses on the objectively verifiable nature of product attributes or benefits-in-use without any claim of uniqueness or comparisons with competing brands. The only problem with this strategy is that it is difficult for coders to judge whether the advertiser's claim is preemptive or not as coders would need to know, whether other brands claim to offer similar benefits. Similarly, comparative strategy also focuses on the verifiable nature of product attributes or benefits-in-use without any claim of uniqueness. However, it always includes a comparison: direct comparisons with competing brands in the category, or indirect comparisons with previous versions of the same brand. USP strategy focuses on explicit claims of uniqueness involving an objectively verifiable product attribute or benefit-in-use. 'The only' are the key words that differentiate USP from preemptive or comparative strategies. Nevertheless, USP could be considered a type of implicit comparison: if a product has a unique characteristic it means other products do not have it.

Table 1: A modified typology of message strategies

Message strategy	*Operational definition*
Cognitive [a b]	Focuses on verifiable factual product claims and benefits. Cognitive messages are usually verbal descriptions.
Generic [d e]	Facts or informational message focusing on product class.
Hyperbole [e]	Factually based but exaggerated claims, assertions, or messages that are not objectively verifiable.
Factual description [c]	Presents unadorned facts without detailed description of product features, ingredients or benefits or any assertion of superiority, and offers merely 'news about' the product.
Preemptive [d e]	Objectively verifiable product attribute or benefit-in-use without any claim of uniqueness or comparisons with competing brands.
Comparative [d e]	Uses either direct comparisons to named or unnamed (brand X, other brands) competing brands in the category, or indirect comparisons to previous versions of the same brand.
USP [d e]	Focuses on explicit claims of uniqueness involving an objectively verifiable product attribute or benefit-in-use.
Affective [a b]	Associates the advertised brand or corporation with a feeling, mood, emotion, or image.
Generic [d e]	Affective or emotional messages focusing on the product class
Emotional [b d]	Uses ambiguity, humor, or appeals to a range of feelings (e.g., joy, sadness, fear, peace of mind, pride, nostalgia, anger, endearment).
Brand users [b e]	Focuses on brand users and their lifestyles. The main thrust of the ad is on people who use the brand, rather than on the brand itself, conveying the notion that a certain type of person will choose the brand.
Brand image [b d e]	Focuses on the image of the brand itself in developing a brand personality such as quality, status, and prestige. The product is the focus and is always displayed. People may not be shown or are not the focus.
Use occasion/resonance [b d e]	Focuses on the experience of using the brand or on those situations or circumstances where use of the brand is the most appropriate. The ad tries to associate the product with a particular experience or previous experience to create a bond between the consumer and the brand.
Corporate image [b]	Focuses on building a positive corporate image in consumers' minds. Normally the ad does not concentrate on a particular product.
Conative [b]	Tries to persuade consumer to engage in a specific behavior or to support other promotional activities.
Action inducing [b c]	Tries to persuade consumers to engage in a specific action, e.g., call a toll-free number, visit a Web site, consult a physician, or make a purchase.
Sales promotional [b c]	Provides support for other promotional activities, such as special offers, contests, sweepstakes, or coupons.

a: adapted from Puto and Wells (1984); b: Clow et al. (2002); c: Simon (1971); d: Frazer (1983); e: Laskey et al. (1989).

Affective strategies associate the advertised brand or the corporation with a feeling, mood, emotion, or image. Both verbal (spoken and written words) and nonverbal (music, songs and pictures) message elements may be used in affective strategy. Affective sub-strategies include generic, emotional, brand users, brand image, use occasion/resonance, and corporate image. Generic strategy uses affective or emotional messages focusing on the product class. ‘People can’t live without coffee’ would be a typical example. Emotional strategy uses ambiguity, humor, or appeals to a range of feelings (e.g., joy, sadness, fear, peace of mind, pride, nostalgia, anger, endearment). A brand user strategy focuses on brand users and their lifestyles. The main thrust of the ad is on people who use the brand, rather than on the brand itself, conveying the notion that a certain type of people will choose the brand in question. In this strategy, people (ordinary people or celebrities) are always shown and focused on. A brand image strategy focuses on the image of the brand itself and tries to develop a brand personality for the product such as being of high quality, prestigious, hip, outgoing, fashionable, adventuresome, sportive etc. The product is the focus and is always displayed. People may or may not be shown, but are not focused on. A use occasion/resonance strategy focuses on the experience of using the brand or on those situations or circumstances where use of the brand is the most appropriate. The ad tries to associate the product with a particular experience or previous experience to create a bond between the consumer and the brand. People may or may not be shown using the product, but are not the focus of the advertisement. Corporate image strategy focuses on building a positive corporate image in consumers’ minds. Normally the ad does not concentrate on a particular product. ‘We are protecting the environment’ and ‘we are leading innovation’ would be typical examples.

Conative strategies try to persuade consumers to engage in a specific behavior or to support other promotional activities. Conative sub-strategies are action inducing and sales promotional strategies. An action inducing strategy tries to persuade consumers to engage in a specific action, such as calling a toll-free number, visiting a Web site, consulting a physician, or making a purchase. A sales promotional strategy provides support for other promotional activities, such as special offers, contests, sweepstakes, coupons, etc. to encourage consumers to try, repeat purchase, or buy more of the advertised brand. ‘Buy this product and win discount coupons,’ ‘Buy one and have the chance to get one more for free,’ ‘Get two for the price of one’ are examples of this strategy.

4 Empirical Validation of the Modified Typology

The next step is to empirically validate our typology. One issue is that the extant message strategy schemes that form the basis for our typology all have been developed in Western cultures. While we expect that the typology and each of its subcategories should be universally applicable, it is nevertheless necessary to put it to the test in a non-Western context. The reason we chose China as the country for conducting our empirical test, is that it is a market that has increasingly drawn attention from international advertising practitioners and academics in recent years. In addition, to date very little is known about the use of message strategies in Chinese advertising and we think it is important for practitioners and academics to acquire knowledge on this topic.

4.1 Method – Content Analysis

Using the modified message strategy typology as our coding framework, we conducted a content analysis of Chinese television commercials. We systematically collected a sample of commercials during the year 2010. We recorded once a week in an interval of 8 days, i.e. January 1st (Friday), January 9th (Saturday), January 17th (Sunday), and so forth. We selected Channel 1 and Channel 2 of China Central Television (CCTV), the largest national television broadcaster with coverage of over 97% of the PRC's population. In order to cover the time slots with the highest audience concentration we recorded all programming during the six hours from 18:00 to 24:00. In order not to bias the sample towards high GRP advertisers and following Stern and Resnik (1991), the unit of analysis was each unique (non-duplicated) Chinese TV commercial. Public service ads and ads for TV programs were excluded from the sample. The final sample consisted of 1439 commercials.

Three Chinese native speakers fluent in English coded the sample. The training of the coders was conducted in both English and Chinese in order to minimize the risk that coders would misunderstand the key variables and their operationalization, especially since message strategy tends to be abstract and perhaps difficult to grasp in a foreign language. Coders were thus trained with detailed bilingual instructions containing coding procedures, detailed definitions, and explanations of all message strategies. Furthermore, in order to be able to capture the use of multiple strategies in the same ad, we instructed coders to code all message strategies and not only the dominant strategy for each ad (cf. Wei and Jiang, 2005). As part of the training, coders jointly coded 20 Chinese commercials that were not part of the sample. Disagreements and misunderstandings were resolved through discussion and retraining. To establish the inter-coder reliability, which was determined as the percentage of agreement among the three coders, each of them then independently coded 70 commercials randomly selected from the sample. The actual proportion of agreement for each coding variable in this study was between 0.80 and 1.00. Based on the proportional reduction in loss (PRL) approach suggested by Rust and Cooil (1994), and given the number of coders (3) and the number of categories (2), the PRL reliability measures for all the coding variables were over 0.93. Therefore, we deemed coding reliability satisfactory. Each coder then independently coded a different part of the sample.

4.2 Empirical Results

Table 2 shows the usage frequencies and percentages for each of the main and sub message strategies in Chinese television commercials.

Table 2: Usage frequencies and percentages of message strategies

Strategy	*Frequency (n=1439)*	*%* [a]
Cognitive	**779**	**54.1**
Generic	3	0.2
Hyperbole	103	7.2
Factual description	192	13.3
Preemptive	492	34.2
Comparative	113	7.9
USP	25	1.7
Affective	**1185**	**82.3**
Generic	1	0.1
Emotional	12	0.8
Brand users	49	3.4
Brand image	344	23.9
Use occasion/resonance	697	48.4
Corporate image	116	8.1
Conative	**172**	**12.0**
Action inducing	143	9.9
Sales promotional	50	3.5
Cognitive & Affective	545	37.9
Cognitive & Conative	102	7.1
Affective & Conative	111	7.7
Cognitive & Affective & Conative	58	4.0
Only Cognitive	190	13.2
Only Affective	587	40.8
Only Conative	17	1.2
No strategy	3	0.2

[a]: The sum is over 100% due to the fact that ads sometimes use more than one message strategy.

Results indicate that with regard to main message strategies, 82.3% of Chinese television commercials use an affective message strategy and 54.1% of commercials use a cognitive strategy, while 12% of commercials use a conative strategy. Furthermore, 37.9% of commercials employ a combination of cognitive and affective strategies while only 4% of commercials use all three categories of message strategies. In addition, 13.2% of commercials employ only a cognitive strategy and 40.8% of commercials employ only an affective strategy, while 1.2% of commercials use only a conative strategy. With respect to specific message strategies, the three most frequently used strategies are use occasion/resonance (48.4%), preemptive (34.2%), and brand image (23.9%). The less frequently used strategies are both types of generic, emotional, USP, brand users, and sales promotional, each accounting for less than 5% of the total. Only three (0.2%) of the 1439 commercials could not be classified with the typology.

5 Discussion and Future Study

As Laskey et al. (1989) stated, there is no one best approach to the classification of message strategies. Frazer (1983) also argues that message strategy alternatives are no doubt evolving and future researchers should yield new strategic options adapted to changing market conditions. In this study we conducted a review of extant typologies on message strategy and suggested a modified classification scheme by combining elements from current state-of-the-art typologies.

Laskey et al. (1989) expound that a good typology should be exclusive, exhaustive, and operational. In terms of operationalizability, we have provided detailed definitions as well as relevant examples for each strategic alternative. Further, coding results additionally substantiate the operationalizability and exhaustiveness of our modified typology. However, we decided not to follow the suggestion that a typology should be exclusive. We believe that pursuing exclusiveness does not allow us to precisely capture the nature of ads, because message content is often complex and is comprehensively perceived and interpreted by both the left and right hemispheres of the human brain. This proposition is further supported by the results of this study that over one third of the sample commercials employ both cognitive and affective strategies. Consumers often make purchase decisions based on both rational and emotional motives, and attention must be given to both elements in developing effective advertising (Belch and Belch, 2009, p. 287). Therefore, in many situations the decision facing creative specialists is not whether to choose a cognitive, affective, or a conative message strategy but rather to determine how to combine and balance the three types of strategies.

The typology presented here is primarily useful as an analytical framework in academic research. Nevertheless, it will also be helpful for advertising practitioners and advertising educators for the same reasons that the typologies on which it is based have been useful.

This study is not the final word on message strategy typologies. Future studies should explore how the typology may be refined further.

While the results of this study indicate that the typology is applicable to Chinese television advertising, future research should also examine whether this typology can be applied to advertisements from other non-Western countries.

Results of our empirical study show that the majority of Chinese ads use an affective strategy and that advertisers in China use affective strategies more frequently than cognitive strategies. Future studies should apply our framework to compare Chinese advertising with advertising in other countries to explore whether the predominant use of affective strategies and the ratio of main and sub-strategies differ in other nations.

Finally, future research should also explore the effect of product category on the use of message strategies.

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Understanding Employee Perceptions of Advertising Effectiveness

Niklas Bondesson and Sara Rosengren

1 Introduction

This paper sets out to understand what drives employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness. More specifically, it explores the drivers of perceived advertising effectiveness of consumer advertising among employees at a large retailer.

To our knowledge, only a handful studies have investigated the role played by consumer advertising for employees. These studies show that consumer advertising, in addition to the customers it is primarily intended to influence, also has an internal audience and that it can have beneficial effects on employees in terms of motivation, identification, and behaviors (Gilly and Wolfinbarger 1998; Hughes 2013; Wolfinbarger and Gilly 2005). In a recent study we disentangle the role played by employee reactions to advertising in fostering organizational identification (Bondesson and Rosengren 2014). Using an experimental study design we find that employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness (i.e., their perceptions of whether the consumer ads used by their employer will have a positive influence on its customers, Celsi and Gilly 2010) have a positive impact on employee organizational identification. This finding is in line with empirical findings by Gilly and Wolfinbarger (1998) and shows the potential in using consumer advertising to get employees “on board” (Bondesson and Rosengren 2014).

In the present paper we build on these results. More specifically, given the importance of employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness in building organizational identification we explore what drives such perceptions. Whereas previous research on employees as an internal audience of consumer advertising adapts an *internal perspective*, focusing only on employee reactions specific to that of being an employee (for example, ad portrayal accuracy and value congruence, Celsi and Gilly 2010), we test whether it is useful to also include an *external perspective*, looking at general advertising reactions that have been found to be important in advertising effectiveness among consumers. We do so by adding ad attitude (e.g., Haley and Baldinger 2000) and perceived advertising effort (e.g., Dahlén, Rosengren, and Törn 2008) as antecedents to employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness. Because these perceptions influence

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_17,

how consumers are affected by advertising, we argue that they can also be expected to influence employees.

The current paper makes several contributions. First, it integrates the literature on employee reactions to advertising (e.g., Celsi and Gilly 2010) with key findings in the advertising effectiveness literature with regards to the importance of ad attitudes (e.g., Haley and Baldinger 2000) and perceived advertising effort (e.g., Modig, Dahlén, and Colliander 2014). Second, it presents preliminary empirical evidence that the employee reactions to advertising are not too different from that of consumers. Third, on a more general level, the paper contributes to the growing literature on different stakeholder reactions to consumer advertising and adds a broader picture of how advertising contributes to firm performance, beyond influencing consumers.

It should, however, be noted that the present paper is exploratory in nature. Further research is needed in order to develop a more in-depth theoretical understanding of these reactions. It is our hope that the exploratory findings presented in the current paper will inspire such efforts.

2 Understanding Employee Perceptions of Consumer Advertising

Given that advertising is primarily intended to create business value by communicating to existing and potential customers, most advertising research tends to focus on reactions and effects on this specific target audience. In the current study we are, however, interested in the reactions of employees advertising primarily intended to influence the customers of their employer. In the following we will refer to this type of advertising as consumer advertising to distinguish it from advertising directed primarily to employees (e.g., employer branding advertising and corporate advertising).

Our interest in employee reactions to consumer advertising aligns with recent research showing that focusing only on consumer reactions might offer a limited view of the business value created by advertising. Studies adopting a shareholder perspective to advertising have clearly shown that advertising has effects other than those solely connected to customers and sales (e.g., Srinivasan et al. 2009; 2011). For example, both investors (Joshi & Hanssens 2007) and employees (Rosengren and Bondesson 2014; Wolfinbarger and Celsi 1998) have been found to react to advertising in a way could benefit a firm, and that is not fully explained by the effect that advertising has on consumers.

When it comes to employee perceptions of consumer advertising research clearly shows that employees pay attention, and react, to consumer advertising – even when they are not the intended audience for it (Acito 1980; Gilly & Wolfinbarger 1998). This research also shows that the reactions employees have can influence their behaviors as employees, for example in terms of customer focus (Celsi & Gilly 2010) and sales performance (Hughes 2013).

In line with these findings the current study sets out to better understand how employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness are formed. The focus on perceived advertising effectiveness is based on previous research showing that this perception is important as it affects organizational identifications of employees (Bondesson and Rosengren 2014; Gilly and Wolfinbarger 1998). High levels of organizational identification fosters beneficial employee behaviors such as cooperation inside and competitiveness outside the organization (e.g. Dutton et al. 1994) and employees who identify with their organization have been found to become more customer oriented, more committed, and more likely to act as corporate ambassadors (Friedman 2009; Riketta 2005; Van Dick et al. 2006;Wieseke, et al. 2007). Given the benefits of organizational identification and the role played by employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness in fostering such identification a better understanding of perceived advertising effectiveness is warranted.

2.1 The Importance of Perceived Advertising Effectiveness

The key goal for most advertisers is to achieve desired responses in the market place, in terms of target group attitudes and behaviors and/or market performance (sales, market share, profits etc.). The degree to which advertising actually succeeds with this goal can be described as advertising effectiveness. In the present context, however, the focal interest is whether employees *believe* their organization’s advertising will be effective in the market. For example, whether employees believe that ads will be successful in gaining consumer attention and generating sales (Bodesson and Rosengren 2014; Celsi and Gilly 2010).

As suggested by Gilly and Wolfinbarger (1998), perceived advertising effectiveness is important because: a) employees believe that advertising effectiveness is related to organizational success and b) advertising images prompt employees to consider whether or not their organization is likely to be viewed positively or negatively by family, friends, and customers who view the advertising. The assertion that advertising effectiveness matters to employees has also been empirically confirmed by the same authors (Celsi and Gilly, 2010) as well as in a recent study by Bondesson and Rosengren (2014). Moreover, a recent study by Hughes (2013) indicates that a salesperson’s judgment of how a brand’s advertising is evaluated by consumers will influence the effort he or she puts on selling that specific brand. This, in turn, influences actual performance in terms of sales. This suggests, then, that in order to capitalize on the internal effects of advertising employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness are key.

2.2 *Perceived Advertising Effectiveness from an Internal Perspective*

Existing literature on employee reactions to advertising suggest that these are mainly formed based on employees adapting an insider perspective (e.g., Celsi and Gilly 2010; Gilly and Wolfinbarger 1998). More specifically, this literature focuses on reactions to advertising based on the employee being a part of an organization. The basic premise of this research is that when employees encounter an image of their organization they start considering their role as employees (Celsi and Gilly 2010). This, in turns, leads them to reflect on the fit between the organizational image and their own identity (Scott and Lane 2000). Consequently, this line of research has focused on the reactions that employees have in relations to the advertising as members of the organization.

Celsi and Gilly (2010) identify two internal reactions are important for explaining employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness, namely: ad promise accuracy and ad value congruence.

Ad promise accuracy refers to perceptions with regards to how likely it is that the organization will consistently fulfill the claims made in ads (Celsi and Gilly, 2010). Employees tend to have extensive knowledge about their organizations, making them more able than consumers to evaluate the accuracy of ads (Gilly and Wolfinbarger 1998). Perceptions of ad promise accuracy are thus based on the knowledge and experiences that employees have about their organization, and a negative evaluation can occur when they feel they cannot deliver on the promises made in the advertising (Gilly and Wolfinbarger, 1998). A related concept is employee portrayal accuracy, relating to ads where employees are featured and reflecting the degree to which the employees feel the featured employees are similar to those in the organization (Celsi and Gilly, 2010). In the present study, this concept will not be included since the empirical case does not include ads featuring employees.

Ad value congruence is the similarity between personal values and values highlighted in an ad (Celsi and Gilly, 2010, p. 521). Consumer advertising makes both implicit and explicit statements about organizational values and this prompts employee reactions. Qualitative research suggest that employees judge whether or not the statements made in consumer advertising reflects the true value of the organization as well as of themselves as members of it (Gilly and Wolfinbarger 1998), and, that higher ad value congruence leads them to perceive advertising as more effective (Celsi and Gilly 2010).

Theoretically, promise accuracy and value congruence has been said to affect perceptions of ad effectiveness because a) employees are more likely to feel that their organization can fulfill promises when they are accurate (Gilly and Wolfinbarger 1998) and b) when employees share the values portrayed in the ad, they are more likely to support the ideas and promises in the ads and believe that other employees in the organization will do so as well (Celsi and Gilly 2010).

Both these factors should, then, make the advertising more effective in the eyes of the employees.

2.3 Perceived Advertising Effectiveness from an External Perspective

Interestingly, the theoretical argumentation and empirical evidence of what drives employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness thus suggests that these perceptions are rooted in internal effects only. Whereas the usefulness of an insider perspective to explain employee reactions to advertising has been empirically supported using both qualitative (Gilly and Wolfinbarger 1998) and quantitative (Celsi and Gilly, 2010) methods, these studies do not consider that perceptions of advertising effectiveness might, in part, be the consequence of employees using an outsider perspective. By this we mean that employees, in addition to advertising reactions based on their membership of the organization, also react to consumer advertising in based on their ability to see themselves as customers of the organization. In fact, in many situations, such as retailing, employees are customers too. In the current study we will consider two ad perceptions that have been found to drive advertising effectiveness among consumers, namely: attitude towards the ad and perceived advertising effort.

Ad attitude (or ad liking) reflects “a pre-disposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion” (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989, p. 49). It has been found to be one the most important drivers of advertising effectiveness, correlating strongly with brand attitude, purchase intention and actual sales (cf. Haley and Baldinger, 2000; Brown and Stayman, 1992). Consequently, it should potentially have an effect on employees as well. In the present paper, we therefore complement previous work by including employee’s own attitude to the ad as one potential driver of their perceptions of advertising effectiveness.

Perceived advertising effort refers to perceptions of the amount time and thought that has been put into making the ad. This perception has been found to function as a marketing signal, in that it foster perceptions of seemingly unrelated aspects of an organization such as product quality (e.g., Rosengren and Dahlén 2012), product development (e.g., Dahlén et al 2008), customer care (Rosengren et al 2014), and even the development possibilities offered to its employees (Rosengren and Bondesson 2014). In the current study we include advertising effort to incorporate the possibility of employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness to also be susceptible to a signaling effect.

Theoretically, ad attitude and perceived advertising effort should influence employee judgments of ad effectiveness due to employee tendency to form their own attitudes based on the attitudes they believe other people are having (cf. Festinger, 1954). More specifically, research on social psychology has shown that people systematically overestimate the extent to which other people have the same attitudes as themselves, which is referred to as “the false consensus effect” (Ross et al., 1977). There are several reasons behind the effect, but one is the underlying psychological strive to reduce cognitive dissonance. In the present context, the assumption would then be that when employees evaluate their organization’s advertising as outsiders, this strive makes them assume that other outsiders (i.e. consumers) will make a very similar evaluation as themselves. (Whether they are right or wrong is of course an intriguing question that can be answered after an campaign, but the answer has no influence on how the assumption if formed a priori).

3 Research Question

Based on the theoretical discussion above the paper asks the following research question:

RQ: To what extent are employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness based on employee’s internal (i.e., ad claim accuracy and ad value congruence) and external perceptions (i.e., ad attitudes and ad effort) of consumer advertising?

4 Method

The study was conducted in cooperation with a large food retailer. This allows us to study real employees and their reactions to real consumer advertising. A total of 314 employees participated in the study (74% women). 78% worked in a store and the remaining 22% in the head office. The average employment tenure was 15 years (median 12 years).

4.1 Procedure

Participants were contacted through e-mail addresses provided by the retailer. The were invited to participate in an online study and those who agreed followed a link where they were shown a consumer ad of their employer and then asked to answer several questions with regards to it.

To increase generalizability six different advertisements were used in the study. The ads were selected based on discussions with three representatives from the retailer (the executive brand manager, a market analysis director, and an advertising manager) as well as representatives of their media agency. This stimuli sampling approach was included to give us more variation in terms of the ad perceptions created by consumer advertising. The allocation to the different ads was random.

By using several ads we reduced the idiosyncratic effects of specific ad messages and executions. As we are interested in overall patterns of reaction, however, we will only present results on an aggregated level.

4.2 Measurements

Our dependent variable, *perceived advertising effectiveness*, was measured with four items: I believe the ad will increase sales of [retailer X], I believe that the ad will be well liked by customers, The ad effectively raises the visibility of [Retailer X], The ad is effective measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1=do not agree / 7=fully agree). This measure was taken from Celsi and Gilly (2010) and responses were averaged into an index (Cronbach's alpha =.95).

Internal reactions were assessed in terms of ad promise accuracy and ad value congruence taken from Celsi and Gilly (2010). Again, answers were given on a 7-point Likert scale (1=do not agree / 7=fully agree) and averaged into indices. *Ad promise accuracy* was measured with three items: [Retailer X] is not as good as it is shown in the ad, The ads make exaggerated claims, The ads promise more than [retailer X] actually delivers (Cronbach's alpha =.81). *Ad value congruence* was measured with three items: I'm proud of the values expressed in the ads, The organizational values implied by the ads are the values and beliefs we should be highlighting in our ads, The values featured in the ads are similar to my own values (Cronbach's alpha = .94) .

External reactions was measured in terms of attitude towards the ad and perceived ad effort. *Ad attitude* was measures by "What is your general impression of the ad you just saw?" with answers given on seven-point semantic differential (bad/god, negative/positive, unappealing/appealing). This measure has previously been used by (c) (Cronbach's alpha =.95). *Perceived advertising effort* was measured with three items: A lot of time was invested into making the ad / A lot of thinking was invested into making the ad / A lot of money was invested into making the ad (Cronbach's alpha = .90 , adapted from Dahlén et al 2008).

5 Results

To answer the research question we used multiple regression analysis. More specifically, we specified three different models for explaining employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness. The first model was the internal model with ad promise accuracy and ad value congruence used in previous research on employee reactions to advertising (Celsi and Gilly 2010). The second model was the external model based on consumer reactions to advertising in terms of ad attitudes and ad effort (Modig et al 2014). The third model was a full model including both internal and external perceptions as independent variables.

Preliminary analyses showed no violation of the assumption of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity. All three models were significant and the results are presented in table 1. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the ability of the external perceptions (attitude towards the ad and ad effort) to explain employee perceptions of ad effectiveness after controlling for internal perceptions (ad promise accuracy and ad value congruence). More specifically, the internal perceptions were entered at Step 1, explaining 40% of the variance. After entry of the external perceptions at Step 2 the total variance explained by the model was 62% ($p<.01$). The two external perceptions explained an additional 23% ($p<.01$) of the variance, after controlling for internal perceptions. In the final model, all four independent variables were statistically significant (all *p*s <.01), with the external perceptions (attitude towards the ad=.53, ad effort =.21) recording higher beta values than the internal perceptions (ad value congruence = .17, ad promise accuracy =.10). Reversing the order of the hierarchical analysis an adding internal perception to a model of external perceptions leads to a small, albeit significant increase in variance explained (R2 Change =.03, p.<01). Taken together this suggests that external perceptions are key to understanding employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness.

Table 1: The impact of advertising reactions on perceived advertising effectiveness

	Internal model	*External model*	*Full model*
Ad value congruence	.62**		.17**
Ad promise accuracy	.10**		.10**
Attitude towards the ad		.66**	.53**
Ad effort		.21**	.21**
Adj R2	.40	.60	.63
Std.error of estimate	1.21	0.99	0.96
F	106**	238**	132**
Df	313	313	313

Notes.: *=p<.05, **=p<.01

6 Discussion

The findings of the present show that both internal and external perceptions of consumer advertising influence employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness. As such the study suggest that external reactions should be added to internal reactions in order to better understand how employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness are formed. In fact, the findings clearly show that external perceptions are important to understand employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness than are the internal perceptions studied in previous research (e.g., Celsi and Gilly 2010). More specifically, by adding attitudes towards the ad and perceived ad effort in the explanation of employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness the explanatory power of the model is improved by more than 40% (i.e., R2 increases from .40 to .63). What is more, ad attitude is found to be the most important independent variable, followed by ad effort and then ad value congruency and ad promise accuracy.

This paper contributes to advertising research by integrating the literatures on employee reactions to advertising (e.g., Celsi and Gilly 2010) with key findings in the advertising effectiveness literature with regards to the importance of ad attitudes (e.g., Haley and Baldinger 2000) and perceived advertising effort (e.g., Modig et al 2014). The findings show that employee reactions to advertising are quite similar to those of consumers. In fact, they suggest that the perception of advertising effectiveness is not primarily based on employees comparing ads internally against the organization, its values and what it actually delivers to customers. Instead, the employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness seem to be based on the personal attitudes and opinions of employees following logic along the line of "If I like it, our customers will". It should, however, be noted that this result might be specific to the retailer setting used in the current study. In this setting, most (if not all) employees are, indeed, customers to the organization.

The findings of the current study have managerial implications. A better understanding of employee perceptions of advertising effectiveness is useful given that these perceptions can help foster organizational identification (Bondesson and Rosengren 2014; Wolfinbarger and Gilly 1998). Interestingly, our findings indicate that ad attitude, in addition to being considered one of the most (if not the most) important driver of advertising effectiveness among customers (Haley and Baldinger 2000), is highly relevant also as in internal measure. This implies that companies might want to consider tracking advertising campaigns internally much in the same way as they do externally. Doing so should be important for marketing managers struggling with increasing demands on accountability. Adding an employee perspective in advertising evaluations can be a way to further highlight the value of advertising internally. Since we know that marketing departments' ability to measure performance dictates their influence within the firm (O´Sullivan & Abela 2007), it should be fruitful to measure how consumer advertising motivates existing employees.

On a more general level, the paper contributes to the growing literature on stakeholder reactions to consumer advertising (e.g., Joshi and Hanssens 2007; Rosengren and Bondesson 2014). In doing so, it adds a broader picture of how advertising contributes to firm performance, beyond influencing consumers. A better understanding the extended effects of advertising is warranted, as it leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the role played by advertising in business.

7 Limitations

To conclude it should be noted that the study relied on responses to employees of one food retailer, which limits generalizability. It should also be noted that the present paper is exploratory in nature, and that further research is needed in order to develop a more in-depth theoretical understanding of these reactions. Given the importance of ad attitudes among customers and employees it would also be interesting to explore whether or not these two audiences tend to like the same consumer advertising or not. It is our hope that the exploratory findings presented in the current paper will inspire such efforts.

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The authors gratefully acknowledge the generous financial support provided by the Jan Wallander's and Tom Hedelius' Foundation that made this research possible.

Part III. The Subtle: Mixing Advertising and Content

The Immediate and Delayed Effect of an Advertiser Funded Program on Consumers' Brand Attitudes: A Field Study

Yann Verhellen, Patrick De Pelsmacker, and Nathalie Dens

1 Introduction

As marketers are looking for new, more effective ways to promote their brand, hybrid advertising formats that merge commercial content with media content (e.g., brand placement) are becoming increasingly important (Pqmedia, 2012; Verhellen et al., 2013). As the practice of hybrid advertising is maturing, branded products are no longer just 'placed'; but are deliberately woven into entertainment content. The outcome is a concept the advertising industry has coined branded entertainment, or more recently, content marketing, a convergence of advertising and entertainment content (Hudson and Hudson, 2006; Rose, 2013). The purpose of a branded entertainment program is to give a brand (henceforth referred to as the sponsoring brand) the opportunity to communicate its image to its target audience in an original way, by creating positive links between the brand and the program. The global expenditure on branded entertainment amounted up to $54.58 billion in 2009, and is forecasted to grow with 9.2% in 2014 (Pqmedia, 2010). Yet, beyond "regular" brand placement, there is surprisingly little research on the workings and the effectiveness of more sophisticated and elaborate branded entertainment strategies. Furthermore, existing research on hybrid advertising strategies is often based on a single forced exposure to the message in a laboratory setting (e.g., Roehm et al., 2004), thus limiting the ecological validity of research results. As expressed in the field studies of Russell and Stern (2006), Wilson and Till (2011) and Dens et al. (2012), more naturalistic research designs are needed in order to understand the true effects of hybrid advertising as it operates in real life. Moreover, extant research on hybrid advertising is exclusively cross-sectional (Kamleitner and Jyote, 2013), thus ignoring the long-standing call for more academic research on the long-term impact of commercial communication (Vakratsas and Ambler, 1999; Wiles and Danielova, 2009). Apart from these methodological shortcomings, research is yet to empirically establish a firm explanatory framework of the effects of hybrid advertising. Theoretically, the impact of hybrid advertising on brand attitudes has been explained by its fit or connectedness with the message content (Russell, 2002; Russell and Stern, 2006). However, as noted by Wiles and Danielova (2009) the specific nature of this link, or how a brand fits the message (e.g., a movie or a television program)

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_18, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

is yet to be unveiled. The present study wishes to address these knowledge gaps by conducting a longitudinal field study on the short-term and longer-term effects on brand attitude of a real-life branded entertainment television show, and specifically explore the role of brand-program fit for the development of brand attitude.

2 Literature Review and Hypotheses

Existing research on hybrid advertising has mainly focused on the phenomenon of brand placement, i.e., the paid inclusion of brands or brand identifiers in media content (Balasubramanian, 1994). As Mccarty (2004) theorizes, brand placement can create a connection between the brand and the context (the movie or program they are placed in). Consumers learn to attach meaning to brands by observing their relationship with the context (Cooper et al., 2010). As proposed by Russell (1998), this induces a transformational process in which context-related feelings and thoughts spill over to placed brands. The transfer of context-induced affect to attitudes toward advertised brands has been well established in traditional advertising literature (e.g., De Pelsmacker et al., 2002; Moorman et al., 2002; Moorman et al., 2006) and literature on brand placement (Russell et al., 2004). As branded entertainment can also be considered as a type of brand placement that is deliberately built around a brand, we expect that if the branded entertainment program evokes positive affect and positive thoughts, these may spill over to viewers' attitudes toward that brand.

H1: Program liking has a positive effect on the attitude towards the sponsoring brand.

Weaving the brand into the program content can have beneficial effects on brand attitude, but these effects are likely to vary depending on the strength and nature of the connection that is forged. Russell (2002) demonstrates that plot connection, the degree to which a brand is connected to the plot of a sitcom, positively impacts brand attitude. Similar findings emerge from studies by D'astous and Seguin (1999) and Dens et al. (2012). Plot connection can be regarded as a component of the more general concept of 'fit' between the brand and the program. Literature on source and context effects in advertising suggests that a good perceived fit between the brand and the source/context is a vital condition for positive attitudinal effects (Till and Busler, 2000). Schema congruity theory (for an overview, see Meyers-Levy and Tybout, 1989) can explain this phenomenon. Through branded entertainment, brand managers highlight the congruity of their brand with the sponsored program. Schema congruity theory predicts more favorable attitudinal responses if the associated attitude objects are congruent. For instance, Kamins et al. (1991) show that brand attitudes and purchase intention improve when a television program and an embedded advertisement elicit consistent moods.(Kamins et al., 1991). Russell (2002) found that brand placements that are perceived as incongruent with a television program are perceived as out of place and result in lower brand attitude. In summary, branded entertainment should lead to a perceived congruity between a brand and a program. Congruity theory then predicts that viewers will more easily assimilate the brand with the program and develop more favorable brand attitudes.

H2: The perceived fit between the brand and the branded entertainment program positively impacts brand attitude.

Furthermore, we expect the perceived fit between the branded entertainment show and the sponsoring brand to moderate the effect of program liking on brand attitude. This assumption is also grounded in schema congruity and associative network theory (Gawronski and Bodenhausen, 2006). As argued above, we expect program liking to spill over to viewers' attitude toward the sponsoring brand. Research on celebrity endorsement and source effects shows that the attitudinal spillover between two objects is driven by how well they fit together in the mind of the consumer (Till and Busler, 2000). A strong perceived fit implies that the associative networks of both objects converge to the extent that congruence is achieved (Till and Busler, 2000; Till et al., 2008). Congruent objects are strongly connected through shared associations (i.e., nodes in their respective associative networks), which facilitates the process of forming attitudes about one object (i.e., the integrated brand) based on attitudes toward the other object (i.e., the entertainment program) (Gawronski and Bodenhausen, 2006; Gawronski and Bodenhausen, 2007). Consequently, the spillover of positive program related attitudes will be stronger when there is high perceived fit between the branded entertainment show and the sponsoring brand. Adversely, when a brand is perceived as less fitting with the program, it is unlikely that program related attitudes will influence brand attitudes. In this case there is no inherent connection between the schemas of the brand and the program, meaning that attitudinal spillover is less likely to occur. We expect:

H3: The effect of program liking on brand attitude will be reinforced by viewers' levels of perceived fit between the sponsoring brand and the program.

The focus of the present study is not solely on explaining the short term effects of a branded entertainment program on brand attitude, but also on explaining its longer-term effects. Existing studies investigating longer-term advertising effects have mostly used market response data (e.g., Moschis and Moore, 1982). According to Vakratsas and Ambler (1999) there is a distinct need of studies based on individual-level data, in order to truly understand the long term impact of advertising campaigns on brand attitude. As aforementioned, the perceived convergence between the cognitive schemas of the brand and the program will impact brand attitude formation in the short run. Cognitive schemas, however, are not robust to temporal variation or even extinction. Even when stored in longer-term memory, certain associations in cognitive schemas weaken or disappear over time (Gawronski and Bodenhausen, 2007). For instance, consumers may simply forget learned links between the brand and the program, thus diminishing the impact of both program-related perceptions and perceived fit on brand attitude.

H4: The effects of program liking and perceived fit on brand attitude for the sponsoring brand will diminish over time.

3 Method

3.1 Procedure

A field study was set up for the Flemish version of 'Project Runway', a 10-episode branded entertainment fashion designer competition, aired on commercial television and sponsored by the Belgian fashion retailer JBC. The winner of the competition got to design his/her own clothes collection, which would be sold in JBC stores. As such, the brand was an essential part of the competition and the program. The brand was also given a lot of visibility throughout the program (i.e., brand placements, company visits and sponsorship disclaimers). Short-term and longer-term program effects were measured through an online questionnaire using a two-wave design, one week (N = 717) and one month (N = 456) after the program finale was broadcast. Both samples were collected by a Belgian market research agency to be representative of the program's audience profile. Only consumers who had viewed at least 10 minutes of the program were considered. Both samples are unique, meaning that wave 2 does not contain respondents from wave 1 and vice versa. Tables 1 and 2 provide a socio-demographic description of the two samples.

Table 1: Sample characteristics (wave 1)

	Gender		
Age category	Male	Female	Total
-20 yrs.	12 (7.9%)	124 (21.9%)	136 (19%)
21 – 30 yrs.	60 (39.7%)	237 (41.9%)	297 (41.1%)
31 – 40 yrs.	26 (17.2%)	100 (17.7%)	126 (17.6%)
41 – 50 yrs.	29 (19.2%)	73 (12.9%)	102 (14.2%)
51 – 60 yrs.	15 (9.9%)	26 (4.6%)	41 (5.7%)
+ 60 yrs.	9 (6%)	6 (1.1%)	15 (2.1%)
Total	151	566	717 (100%)

Table 2: Sample characteristics (wave 2)

	Gender		
Age category	Male	Female	Total
-20 yrs.	3 (2.7%)	27 (7.9%)	30 (6.6%)
21 – 30 yrs.	35 (31.0%)	108 (31.5%)	143 (31.4%)
31 – 40 yrs.	28 (24.8%)	100 (29.9%)	128 (28.1%)
41 – 50 yrs.	24 (21.2%)	72 (21.0%)	96 (21.1%)
51 – 60 yrs.	16 (14.2%)	31 (9.0%)	47 (10.3%)
+ 60 yrs.	7 (6.2%)	5 (1.5%)	12 (2.6%)
Total	113	343	456 (100%)

3.2 Measures

In order to build in a statistical control for exposure frequency, the online questionnaire first measured ‘viewing frequency’ (how many episodes of the program respondents had seen, between 1 and 10).. Secondly, respondents’ liking of the program was measured on a 6-item, 5-point Likert scale (e.g., ‘I really enjoyed watching De Designers’ $\alpha_{wave\ 1} = .912$, $\alpha_{wave\ 2} = .922$). Afterwards, respondents had to indicate their attitude toward the sponsor brand on a 6-item, 5-point Likert scale (e.g., ‘… is a good brand’, $\alpha_{wave\ 1} = .968$, $\alpha_{wave\ 2} = .964$).. Subsequently, respondents indicated their perceived fit between the sponsoring brand and the program on a 4-item, 5-point Likert scale (e.g., ‘… matches De Designers’, $\alpha_{wave\ 1} = .944$, $\alpha_{wave\ 2} = .914$)

4 Results

Before running the analyses, the impact of age and gender on brand attitude were checked in order to identify potential biasing effects. Brand attitude is significantly higher for women than for men (wave 1: $t(703) = -3.735$, $p < .001$; wave 2: $t(703) = 1.885$, $p = .060$). In addition, respondents' age category significantly impacts brand attitude in both waves (wave 1: $F(5, 704) = 4.934$, $p < .001$; wave 2: $F(5, 704) = 3.805$, $p = .002$). In order to control for these effects, age and gender were included as controls in subsequent analyses.

The hypotheses were tested separately on the data from wave 1 and wave 2. Two multiple OLS regression model were estimated with the attitude towards the brand as the dependent. Gender, age category and viewing frequency were entered as control variables. Gender was included as a dummy variable (1 = female). Age category was indicator coded into 4 dummy variables, according to the procedure prescribed by Aguinis (2003), using the youngest age group as a reference category. Viewing frequency was a continuous variable. The independent variables were program liking, perceived brand-program fit and their interaction. These variables were mean-centered. The model for wave 1 explains a significant amount of variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .355$, $F(10, 531) = 30.183$, $p < .001$). Variance Inflation Factor scores demonstrate good discriminant validity (range: 1.040 – 1.918). As shown in Table 3, viewing frequency did not impact brand attitude, while gender and one of the age categories (31-40) did. The regression model was also tested using data collected in wave 2, one month after the program finale. The model explains a significant amount of variance in brand attitude ($R^2 = .293$, $F(10, 256) = 10.195$, $p < .001$). Variance Inflation Factor scores demonstrate good discriminant validity (range: 1.045 – 3.082). Table 5 shows that viewing frequency, again, does not impact brand attitude, but gender and several age categories do.

Program liking has a significant positive influence on brand attitude in wave 1 ($b = .180$, $t = 3.733$, $p < .001$), but not in wave 2 ($b = .103$, $t = 1.453$, $p = .148$). H1 is thus supported only for wave 1. Perceived fit between the brand and the program has a significant positive impact on brand attitude in wave 1 ($b = .469$, $t = 12.192$, $p < .001$) and wave 2 ($b = .315$, $t = 5.437$, $p < .001$), which confirms H2. The interaction effect between program liking and perceived fit is also significant in wave 1 ($b = .114$, $t = 3.089$, $p = .002$) and wave 2 ($b = .194$, $t = 3.539$, $p < .001$). As shown in Figures 1 and 2, the positive main effect of program liking on brand attitude is indeed reinforced by perceived fit. Further analyses of the conditional effects of program liking at different values of perceived fit were conducted using PROCESS (Hayes, 2012). This procedure tests the effect of program liking at values plus and minus one standard deviation from the mean of perceived fit by generating asymmetric bootstrap confidence intervals for statistical inference (see Preacher and Hayes, 2008 for discussion).

For the data of wave 1, as shown in table 4, these tests reveal that program liking does not significantly impact brand attitudes when perceived fit is low (b = .062, t = 1.270, p = .205). The impact of program liking on brand attitude is, however, significant at the mean level of perceived fit (b = .157, t = 3.702, p < .001) and when perceived fit is high (b = .253, t = 4.494, p < .001). These findings are shown in Figure 1, and are in full support of H3.

Table 3: Model for wave 1 (H1, H2 and H3)

	Unstandardized coefficients		**Standardized coefficients**		
	B	Std. Error	β	*t*	Sig.
Constant	3.066	.176			
Program liking	.159	.030	.180	3.733	< .001
Perceived fit	.364	.043	.469	12.192	< .001
Program liking x fit	.086	.028	.114	3.089	.002
Gender	.205	.088	.084	2.324	.021
Age [21-30]	-.010	.079	-.006	-.122	.903
Age [31-40]	.248	.099	.108	2.511	.012
Age [41-50]	.162	.105	.062	1.536	.125
Age [51-60]	.244	.176	.051	1.387	.166
Age [+60]	.202	.290	.025	.696	.487
Viewing frequency	-.011	.014	-.037	-.789	.431

For the data from wave 2, analysis of the conditional effects show that program liking only exerts a significant effect on brand attitude when perceived fit is high (b = .251, t = 3.031 , p = .001, see Table 6 and figure 2 for overview of conditional effects). These results indicate that program liking only impacts long term brand attitude when the perceived fit between the brand and the program is high, whereas in the short term, a moderate level of perceived fit suffices. Findings from wave 2 also support H3.

Table 4: Conditional effects of program liking on brand attitude at different levels of perceived fit (wave 1)

	Effect size	**Std. Err.**	**t**	**Sig.**
Low fit (- 1SD)	.062	.049	1.270	.205
Medium fit (Mean)	.157	.043	3.702	< .001
High fit (+1 SD)	.253	.056	4.494	< .001

Table 5: Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression model for wave 2 (H4)

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	β	*t*	Sig.
Constant	2.916	.373			
Program liking	.088	.061	.103	1.453	.148
Perceived fit	.258	.047	.315	5.437	<.001
Program liking x fit	.162	.046	.194	3.539	<.001
Gender	.289	.118	.137	2.442	.301
Age [21-30]	.301	.301	.176	1.875	.015
Age [31-40]	.658	.658	.347	3.905	.062
Age [41-50]	.323	.323	.178	1.982	<.001
Age [51-60]	.500	.500	.187	2.513	.049
Age [+60]	.503	.503	.068	2.513	.013
Viewing frequency	-.114	.110	-.072	-1.037	.240

H4 is supported for program liking, as this factor is no longer significant in wave 2. For perceived fit, which had a significant impact on brand attitude in both waves, the drop in effect size was tested by comparing the regression coefficients of both waves using the z-test procedure recommended by Paternoster et al. (1998). Although there is a decrease in the effect size of perceived fit (0,364 vs. 0,258), this drop is not significant ($Z = 1.664$, $p = .096$). As the effect size of the interaction effect increases over time, H4 is not supported for perceived fit and its interaction with program liking.

Table 6: Conditional effects of program liking on brand attitude at different levels of perceived fit (wave 2)

	Effect size	**Std. Err.**	**t**	**Sig.**
Low fit (- 1SD)	-.064	.075	-.8536	.394
Medium fit (Mean)	.094	.061	1.540	.125
High fit (+1 SD)	.251	.076	3.309	.001

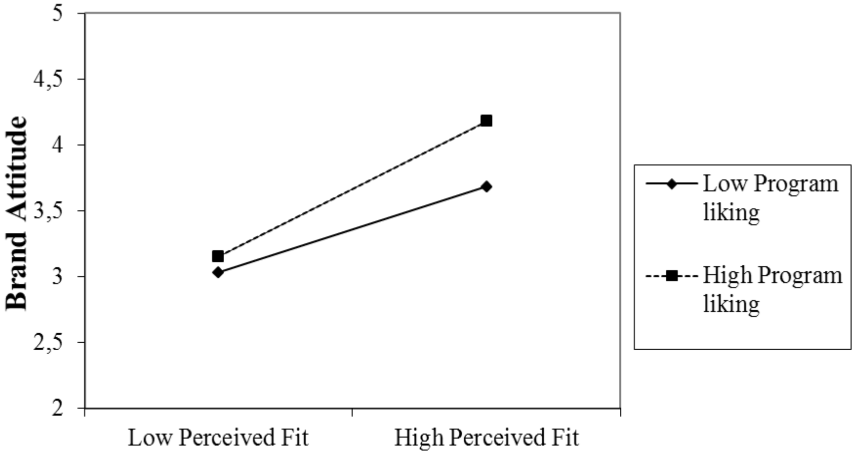

Figure 1: Interaction plot showing the effect of program liking on brand attitude at different levels of perceived fit (wave 1).

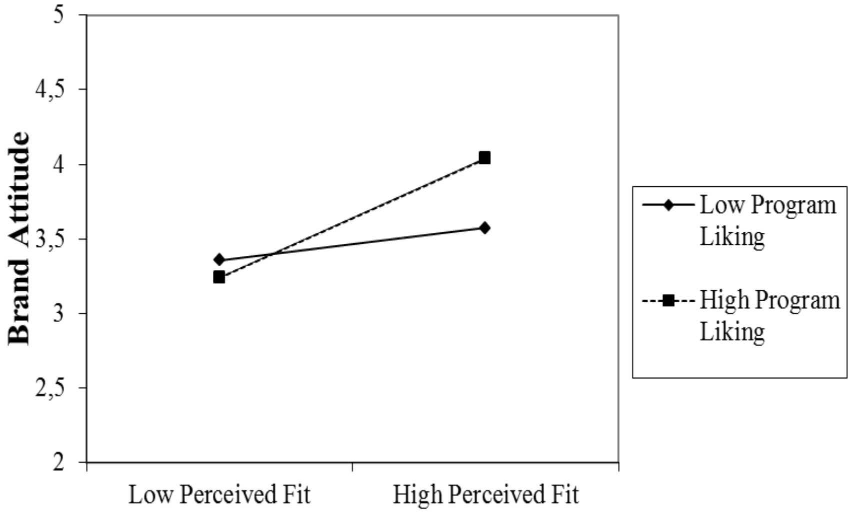

Figure 2: Interaction plot showing the effect of program liking on brand attitude at different levels of perceived fit (wave 2).

5 Discussion, Limitations and Managerial Implications

The results demonstrate the crucial role of perceived fit between a branded entertainment program and its sponsor brand. Embedding brands in well-liked entertainment content is not enough. In accordance with prior research (e.g., Van Reijmersdal et al., 2010), we find that liking for the context spills over to attitudes for embedded brands only if there is a good perceived match-up between the program and the brand. If not, program related attitudes do not influence brand attitude. These findings support the notion that congruence between the cognitive schemas of the integrated brand and the branded entertainment program is a vital prerequisite for spillover to take place. Indeed, a higher degree of perceived fit implies a higher level of convergence and connectedness between the schemas of the brand and the program, which facilitates the process of brand attitude formation through program relevant associations (Gawronski and Bodenhausen, 2006; Till and Busler, 2000). Moreover, data collected one month after the end of the program show that the importance of perceived fit may increase over time. The main effect of program liking on brand attitude dissipates one month after the show. However, program liking still exerts a positive influence on brand attitude for respondents who perceive a good fit between the brand and the program. As perceived fit ties both attitude objects together through convergent schemas (Teichert and Schöntag, 2010) and strengthens their linkage, it makes this link more robust to temporal deterioration. This means that creating a high perceived fit between the brand and the program is crucial to warrant long term effects of program liking an brand attitude.

The present research has a number of limitations that can be taken into account by future researchers. First, only one form of branded entertainment is explored, which limits its generalizability. Branded entertainment and content marketing incorporate a large diversity of content types with their own idiosyncratic characteristics and contextual background, e.g., company videos, exclusive online content for customers, etc… (Rose, 2013). Further exploration of other branded entertainment formats is necessary. Another limitation relates to the selected methodology. Field research is characterized by a trade-off between enhanced external validity and lower internal validity. While the present study has higher ecologically validity than a laboratory experiment, it is limited in the amount of control it has over external variables. For instance, we had no way of controlling for exposure to other brand communications for the sponsoring brand, outside of the program.

Finally, this study offers several managerial implications for practitioners involved in the production or management of branded entertainment content. Although building entertaining content around a brand is beneficial by itself, a good match-up between the brand and the content is vital in order for the brand to benefit from the entertaining character of the content. Managers should pay close attention to matching their product to the right type of content before investing in a branded entertainment campaign. This particularly holds true when looking at the longer-term impact of branded entertainment. In the long run, the beneficial effect of program induced liking on brand attitude dampens, unless consumers perceive the brand as a good fit with the program.

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Children's Advertising Literacy for New Advertising Formats: The Mediating Impact of Advertising Literacy on the (Un)Intended Effects of Advergames and Advertising Funded Programs.

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1 Introduction

To be able to stand out in today's crowded advertising environment and to reach children more effectively, advertisers are adopting new advertising venues, such as advergames, product placements, branded websites, or mobile applications (Calvert, 2008; Moore, 2004). Three important characteristics of these new advertising formats are a longer exposure time to commercial content, the integration of commercial content into the media content and the interactive engagement of the user with the commercial content (Rozendaal et al., 2012). In the current paper, we will investigate children's advertising literacy level, purchase requests and materialism level after exposure to either an advertiser funded program (AFP, defined as a program produced by an advertiser) or an advergame (defined as a simple game specially designed by an advertiser). These ad formats differ in their degree of interactivity, since an advergame is highly interactive, whereas an AFP is not. In both formats the brand is integrated in the media format. In addition, the current study will investigate whether an advertising literacy training session may improve children's advertising literacy and thereby attenuating both intended (purchase requests) and unintended advertising effects (level of materialism).

Various studies have already shown that new advertising formats can generate more positive brand attitudes and purchase requests compared to traditional formats, especially with children. As such, a study by Panic et al. (2013) shows that an advergame generates more positive brand attitudes with children compared to a traditional television commercial. However, new advertising formats may also increase the unintended effects on children, such as lower well-being or more materialistic values. This can be explained by the fact that children do not fully understand the persuasive character of these formats while they love them, leading to less irritation and resistance towards such advertisements. In other words, children appear to have lower levels of cognitive and affective advertising literacy for such new formats (defined as the skills of analyzing and evaluating persuasive messages across a variety of contexts and

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_19, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

media; Rozendaal et al., 2012). This limited advertising literacy may lead to a higher impact of these formats, both in terms of intended (i.e. purchase requests) and unintended effects (i.e. materialistic values).

Previous studies on children's advertising literacy level for new advertising formats mainly focused on traditional TV ads and advergames. However, these studies did not investigate the impact of the level of interactivity with the commercial content on advertising literacy and (un)intended effects of advertising. Hence, in the current study, we will compare children's advertising literacy level for an advergame versus an AFP. While both formats are characterized by the embedding of commercial content into media content, the AFP does not interactively engage the users with this content whereas an advergame does. In addition, we will investigate how these two formats affect children's purchase requests for the brands endorsed in these formats (measured by their pester power, cf. the intended effect) and their materialism level (cf. the unintended effect). To conclude, this study will investigate how children's advertising literacy level for these new formats can be improved by giving the children a traditional advertising literacy training session. Teaching children about advertising and the commercial purposes and techniques advertisers use, has shown to increase the level of advertising literacy. However, most of these studies are conducted in a traditional ad context. In the current study, we will investigate how a training session may increase children's advertising literacy for these new advertising formats.

2 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Defining Advergames and Advertiser Funded Programs

AFPs are a type of branded entertainment in which the brand plays a leading role throughout the storyline of a television program. The program is entirely created and/or funded by the advertiser (Hang and Auty, 2010; Hudson and Hudson, 2006). An advergame is defined as *'a form of branded entertainment that features advertising messages, logos and trade characters in a game format'* (Mallinckrodt and Mizerski, 2007, p. 87). It is a customized online game that promotes the brand of a company (Lee and Youn, 2008; Lee et al., 2009). Advergames are playful and fun, and require little skills to play (Williams and Clippinger, 2002). AFPs and advergames have a longer exposure time (compared to many other ad formats) and they are both characterized by an integration of the commercial message into the media content. The most important difference between both formats is that advergames require an active player and interactively engage the viewer with the content (Van Reijmersdal et al. 2012), whereas an AFP does not.

2.2 Children's Advertising Literacy Level for Advergames versus Advertiser Funded Programs

Cognitive advertising literacy is generally described as the skill that individuals recognize advertising, and their understanding of the persuasive intent and the techniques that are used to influence them. People may use this skill as a defense mechanism that enables them to critically process advertisements (Gunter et al., 2005; Knowles and Linn, 2004). Research has shown that advertising literacy goes hand in hand with the cognitive development of children (Piaget, 1929), implying that the younger the children are the lower their level of advertising literacy, and consumer socialization (John, 1999). Both advergames and AFPs integrate the persuasive message into a highly entertaining content. This makes it difficult for children to recognize the commercial message in both formats. However, playing an advergame requires more cognitive resources from children than watching an AFP due to the interactivity. As children's ability to process information is limited (Buijzen et al., 2010) and playing a computer game demands a lot of cognitive resources related to the interactivity of the game itself (Yuji 1996), we can expect that children's cognitive advertising literacy level is lower for an advergame than for an AFP.

H1a: Children have less cognitive advertising literacy for an advergame than for an AFP.

Playing an advergame is fundamentally different from watching an AFP based on the interactive nature of advergames (Glass, 2007; Moore, 2004; Van Reijmersdal et al., 2010). Because of this interactive nature, children are strongly involved with the game, resulting in a higher focus and the feeling of immersion in the online game (Cauberghe and De Pelsmacker, 2010; Escalas, 2004; Hsu and Lu, 2004). Although both AFPs and advergames might be very liked by children, the absortion and potential state of flow caused by the interactivity may affect children's affective advertising literacy level, that is described as their critical attitude towards the advertising format (Boerman et al., 2012; Rozendaal et al., 2012), more strongly and in a negative way (Escalas, 2004) (Privette, 1983). When playing an advergame, children's critical processing of an embedded ad is less likely, than when passively watching an AFP.

H1b: Children have less affective advertising literacy for an advergame than for an AFP.

2.3 Intended and Unintended Effects of Advergames versus Advertiser Funded Programs

Research on the effectiveness of advertising distinguishes between intended and unintended effects. Intended advertising effects refer to the impact that advertising may have on brand memory, attitudes, but also, and especially with children, on purchase requests. Advertisers try to incite children to request the advertised brands with their parents. These purchase requests are also referred to as pester power. Research has shown that children who were frequently exposed to advertising, request the brands that are shown in these advertisements more often to their parents (Buijzen and Valkenburg, 2003). We expect that this pester power may be even higher for advergames than for AFPs due to children's lower level of cognitive and affective advertising literacy.

H2a: Advergames will incite a higher pester power than AFPs due to lower cognitive and affective advertising literacy.

However, next to the intended effects, advertising may also generate unintended effects with children. In this respect, previous research confirms that exposure to advertising can arouse higher materialistic values with children (Buijzen and Valkenburg, 2003; Chia, 2010). The reason for this is the fact that advertising propagates that possessions are important and that several desirable qualities (e.g., fun, hapiness, status,…) could only be obtained by acquiring material goods (Pollay, 1986; Wulfemeyer and Mueler, 1992). We expect that these unintended effects on children's materialism may be even stronger for advergames as children have lower levels of cognitive and affective advertising literacy than for AFPs.

H2b: Advergames will incite a higher materialism level than AFPs due to lower cognitive and affective advertising literacy.

2.4 The Moderating Impact of Advertising Literacy Training Sessions

Research has shown that children's advertising literacy level can be improved by involving them into an advertising literacy training session (e.g., Wollslager, 2009). Most of these educational packages focus on the cognitive facets of advertising literacy by teaching pupils how to recognize advertising and learning them to understand the persuasive intent of advertising and the techniques that advertisers use to persuade them. Teaching children about advertising and the commercial purposes and techniques advertisers use, could increase the level of advertising literacy and could eventually diminish its impact (Calvert, 2008; Eagle, 2007; Moses and Baldwin, 2005). This is in line with the 'cognitive defense view' which states that once consumers are in possession of knowledge about the persuasive intent of advertising, they become more critical about the advertiser's ulterior motives. This vision also assumes that advertising literacy could serve as a filter and a defense mechanism that reduces the susceptibility towards advertising (Gunter et al., 2005; Knowles and Linn, 2004). Nevertheless, only a few studies empirically tested the effectiveness of training sessions for new advertising formats. Wollslager (2009), for instance, found that children better recognize and identify advertising in an online context after an advertising literacy training session. Based on this research we expect that:

H3a: The advertising literacy training session will improve children's cognitive advertising literacy, regardless of the ad format.

The Reactance Theory (Brehm, 1966) predicts that people will show resistance against the persuasion attempt when they perceive that someone is trying to influence them. Based on this theory, we can also expect that:

H3b: The advertising literacy training session will improve children's affective advertising literacy, regardless of the ad format.

3 Materials and Method

3.1 Design

An experimental study using a 2 (Advertising format: AFP versus Advergame) by 2 (Course: Advertising literacy training session versus regular course) between-subjects factorial design is conducted to test the hypotheses. An advergame and an AFP were selected for the same brand, The Efteling, a famous Dutch theme park. Half of the children received a regular course (unrelated to adlit), while the other half received an advertising literacy training session before they were exposed to one of the ad formats. The study investigated 1) the level of cognitive and affective advertising literacy of children; 2) how advertising literacy mediates the effect of advertising format on pester power and materialism and 3) whether an advertising literacy training session improves the advertising literacy of children.

3.2 Stimulus Material

Two existing advertisements promoting the same brand, the Dutch theme park 'Efteling', were selected. The children who were exposed to the AFP saw a television show 'De Schatkamer' that was fully built around the 'Efteling' and partly recorded in the theme park. The children who were exposed to the advergame had to play a game that was built around one of the most popular show places in the Efteling 'De sprookjesboom' (see figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Efteling Advertiser Funded Program De Schatkamer

Figure 2: Efteling Advergame De Sprookjesboom

The advertising literacy training session was constructed in the form of an instructional group conversation, a commonly used method in primary schools.

A PowerPoint presentation was constructed to guide the training session and all children were stimulated to actively participate in the training sessions by asking them questions and stimulate them to give examples. The advertising literacy training session focused on both cognitive and affective aspects of advertising literacy. The regular course was not related to advertising nor advertising literacy.

3.3 Procedure

First, half of the children participated in a twenty minutes advertising literacy training session while the other half participated in a twenty minutes regular course. After the children took part in this training session or course, they were either instructed to play an advergame or watch an AFP, both for three minutes (to obtain uniform exposure time). Afterwards, children were asked to complete a short questionnaire to measure their advertising literacy level, advertising effectiveness and socio-demographics.

3.4 Participants

Children between the age of seven and nine from two different elementary schools in a Western European country were recruited to participate in this study. Only children whose parents provided consent, participated in the study. In total, 133 seven- to nine-year-old children (54.9% boys, Mage= 7.95) participated in this study.

3.5 Measurement Instrument

The questionnaire was adapted to the age of the children (e.g., response categories took the form of smileys; Mallinckrodt and Mizerski, 2007). First, advertising literacy was measured. To measure cognitive advertising literacy an existing three-item scale was used following Van Reijmersdal et al. (2012) ('Who do you think put De Efteling in the game/fragment? The teacher, the producer, De Efteling, …'; 'Why do they show De Efteling in this game/fragment? To like the game/program, to like De Efteling, to make me happy, …'; 'Does the game/fragment want you to go to De Efteling? Yes, no'). The correct answers were summated.

To measure affective advertising literacy, the item 'How much do you like playing such games/watching such program's?' was used, answered on a five-point likert scale.

To measure pester power the item 'Will you ask your parents to go to the Efteling?' was used, answered on a five-point likert scale (Buijzen, 2007).

Finally, materialism was measured using a shortened three-item version of the Material Value Scale for Children (Opree et al., 2011) (e.g. 'Do you think it is important to have expensive things?'; 'Does buying expensive things make you happy?')

4 Results

To test hypothesis one a and b, two independent T-tests are performed using the advertising format (AFP versus advergame) as independent variable and the cognitive and affective advertising literacy level as dependent variables.

The results do not confirm H1a as children's cognitive advertising literacy level does not differ for the AFP (M = .62, SE = .04) versus the advergame (M = .63, SE = .04; (t(130) = -.31, p = .76).

However, hypothesis 1b is supported in that children have a higher level of affective advertising literacy for the AFP (M = 3.40, SE = .14) than for the advergame (M = 4.10, SE = .14; (t(131) = 3.36, p = .001). Children are thus more critical and skeptical towards the AFP than towards advergames.

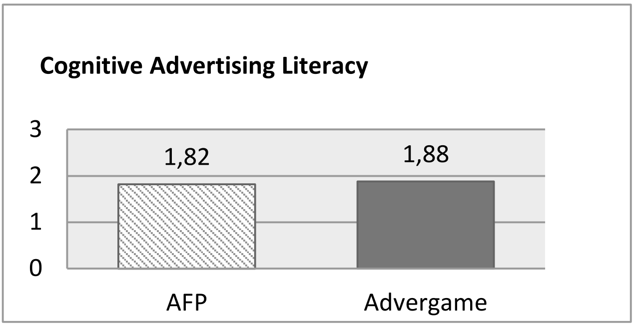

Figure 3: The Impact of Ad Format on Cognitive Advertising Literacy

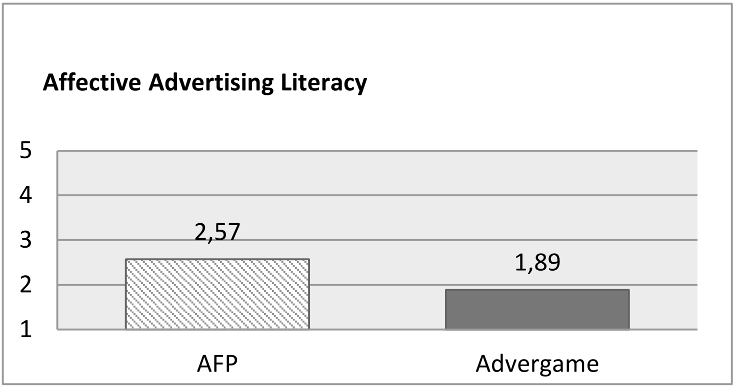

Figure 4: The Impact of Ad Format on Affective Advertising Literacy

To test hypothesis two, a multiple mediation analysis is conducted to test the mediating effect of cognitive and affective advertising literacy on pester power and materialism (Hayes, 2013; PROCESS, model 4, 5000 bootstrap resamples). This analysis shows that the affective advertising literacy significantly mediates (B = .2953, SE = .1097, 95% CI = [.1197, .5562]) the effect of advertising format on purchase request, but cognitive advertising literacy does not (B = .0178, SE = .0596, 95% CI = [-.0965, .1473]). The same results were found for materialism. Affective advertising literacy mediates (B = .0281, SE = .0164, 95% CI = [.0038, .0704]) the impact of advertising format on materialism, but cognitive advertising literacy does not (B = -.0003, SE = .0052, 95% CI = [-.0140, .0087]). Hypothesis two is thus only partly confirmed in that only affective advertising literacy mediates the effects of format on pester power and materialism and cognitive advertising literacy does not.

Hypothesis three was tested using a two-factor multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with the advertising literacy training session and the advertising format as independent variables and cognitive and affective advertising literacy as dependent variables. The results show a significant main effect of advertising literacy training session on cognitive ($F(1, 131) = 20.32$, $p < .001$) and affective advertising literacy ($F(1, 132) = 14.61$, $p < .001$) confirming hypothesis three a and b. Children who took part in the training session (M = .74, SE = .04) showed a higher level of cognitive advertising literacy compared to children who received a regular course (M = .51, SE = .04). Also children who received the training session (M = 3.40, SE = .14) showed a higher level of affective advertising literacy than children who did not receive the training session (M = 4.10, SE = .13). Both for cognitive ($F(1, 131) = .32$, p

> .05) and affective advertising literacy (F(1, 132) = .05, p = .83) there are no significant interaction effects of the format and the training session

5 Discussion and Conclusion

The results show that the effect of the two tested advertising formats on (7-to-9-year old) children's advertising literacy is significantly different. Advergames evoked a lower level of affective advertising literacy than AFPs. However, they do not ensure a lower level of cognitive advertising literacy. This means that while children are more critical towards an AFP, they have no better understanding of the persuasive intent of an AFP in comparison to an advergame. A possible explanation is that because both advertising formats integrate the commercial message into the media content, a ceiling effect is reached concerning the difficulty of understanding the persuasive intent of these formats. However, the level of interactivity, which is the main difference between both formats, seems to relate more to the affective component of persuasion knowledge because of the feelings of fun and escapism with which it is associated (Escalas, 2004). Also, the results show that the impact of advertising format on pester power and materialism is mediated by affective persuasion knowledge, but not by cognitive persuasion knowledge. This is in line with previous research (e.g. Hudders et al., 2014).

When children followed an advertising literacy training session before the exposure of an advergame or AFP, they reported higher levels of cognitive and affective advertising literacy. This is in line with the Reactance Theory of Brehm (1966) that states that children become more critical towards advertising when they perceive a persuasion attempt.

The limitations of the current study provide directions for further research. Further research should work with fictitious and unknown brands to avoid previously formed brand attitudes. Also, to efficiently examine the differences of advertising effectiveness, a comparison should be made of a service and a product, while the present study only focuses on a service (cf. the theme parc). In addition, there was only a single exposure to the advertising format in an unnatural setting. It is recommended to investigate the effects of these formats after repeated exposure to the stimuli.

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Distinguishing Implicit from Explicit Brand Attitudes in Brand Placement Research

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1 Introduction

Brand placement is a popular topic, both in business and academia. Brands are placed in a wide-ranging array of media, including television programs, movies, radio shows, magazines, games, music videos, and websites. Expenditures on brand placement are still growing (PQ Media, 2013), as well as the number of scientific studies on the effects of brand placements (for reviews see Balusubramanian, Karrh, & Patwardhan, 2006; Van Reijmersdal, Neijens, & Smit, 2009). These studies have contributed to the knowledge about explicit (deliberative, conscious, or intentional) brand placement effects, but little is known about whether and how brand placements affect consumers' implicit (associative, unconscious, or automatic) responses toward the placed brand.

1.1 Brand Placement Research in a Nutshell

A large number of studies have shown that brand placements affect consumers' responses toward the placed brand, such as their memory of the brand (e.g., Russell, 2002; Van Reijmersdal, 2011; Scott & Craig-Lees, 2010), their attitudes toward the brand (e.g., DeGregorio & Sung, 2010; Miles Homer, 2009; Redondo, 2012) and their intention to purchase the brand (e.g., Morton & Friedman, 2002; Van Reijmersdal, Jansz, Peters, & Van Noort, 2010). These studies have examined different types of placements and consumer responses, but they share one characteristic: a focus on self-report measures of brand placement effects. That is, participants were instructed to explicitly list the brands they remembered from a previously presented program, to rate their liking for these brands and to report their intention to buy the brands.

However, brand placements are embedded in the media content and thus do not receive viewers' sole or main focus of attention. As a result, brand placements might not always affect explicit consumer cognitions and evaluations, but could still have an impact by means of more low-attention or implicit processes. Any such implicit effects could be highly beneficial for a brand, because implicit processes have shown to better predict certain (more automatic) behaviors than explicit processes (Dovidio, Kawakami & Gaertner,

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_20,

2002; Galdi, Arcuri & Gawronski, 2008; Shapiro & Krishnan, 2001). Only a limited number of studies have investigated implicit brand placement effects so far (e.g., Auty & Lewis, 2004; Hang, 2012; Law & Braun, 2004; Van Reijmersdal, Rozendaal & Buijzen, 2012; Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007), most of which focused on implicit brand memory or implicit choice measures, neglecting implicit attitude effects (for an exception see Redker, Gibson, & Zimmerman, 2013). Therefore, more research is needed to investigate these implicit brand placement processes, especially on the level of brand attitudes.

1.2 Overview of the Chapter

The goal of the present chapter is to shed more light on the role of implicit evaluative processes in brand placement effects by discussing the importance of studying effects of brand placement on implicit brand attitudes. The next part will present a short background on the distinction between implicit and explicit attitudes, and predictions are discussed for the effects that different types of brand placements might have on these two types of attitudes. Then, example studies testing brand placement effects on explicit versus implicit attitudes are discussed in light of these predictions. The chapter closes with a summary of the most urgent directions for future research in this area.

2 Distinguishing Implicit from Explicit Attitudes

2.1 Processes, Measures, and Outcomes

According to dual-process models of attitudes (e.g., Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006; Strack & Deutsch, 2004), evaluations can be the outcome of two distinct processes that affect different types of attitudes. From these perspectives, explicit attitudes are the outcome of propositional or rule-based processes, whereas implicit attitudes are based on associative processes. The first evaluative process is characterized by propositional reasoning and results in explicit validation or rejection of beliefs and evaluations. Applied to brand placement, having seen your favorite soap actor consuming Coca Cola might induce the following thought process: “I like character X + character X likes Coca Cola = I like Coca Cola”. As a result of this propositional reasoning, you indicate a favorable attitude toward Coke on a questionnaire.

The second evaluative process is based on associative processes that require little cognitive capacity or effort. Associative evaluations are defined as the affective reactions that become automatically activated when encountering a stimulus (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). For example, imagine a program in which a brand logo is repeatedly displayed in the vicinity of an attractive character. The positive reactions evoked by the attractive character may become associated with the brand by means of affective transfer or misattribution. When people are later exposed to the brand, these positive associations are automatically re-activated, which can manifest in the performance on indirect attitude measures.

Thus, explicit attitudes should be distinguished from implicit attitudes, both of which are the result of different evaluative processes and can be measured with distinctive procedures. The defining difference between measurement procedures of explicit and implicit attitudes is that the first are direct assessments of attitudes using self-report and introspection, whereas the second are indirect assessments, meaning that responses on a task are used to *infer* the attitude (Nosek, Hawkins, & Frazier, 2011). Examples of indirect measures of implicit attitudes are reaction-time measures based on categorization principles such as the Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) or on priming techniques such as the Evaluative Priming Task (Fazio, Sanbonmatsu, Powell, & Kardes, 1986). For further explanation of these tasks see the chapter of Vandeberg, Wennekers, Murre, and Smit in this book. Importantly, explicit and implicit attitudes have been found to predict different kinds of behaviors. Explicit attitudes have been found to influence deliberative behaviors that people have considered carefully, whereas implicit attitudes guide more spontaneous or impulsive behaviors (Dovidio et al., 2002). Within consumer behavior, deliberative product choices or purchase intentions could be distinguished from impulsive purchases or choices made while being distracted (Friese, Hofmann, & Wänke, 2008; Gibson, 2008).

Research on implicit processes has become prominent in many areas of psychology in the past decades (for a review see Nosek et al., 2011). Within consumer research, the study of implicit processes is still in its infancy (Dimofte, 2010). A reason might be that several researchers have highlighted that implicit and explicit measures in a consumption context are relatively highly correlated (Perkins, Forehand, Greenwald, & Maison, 2008). Still, instances in which this is not the case are of crucial interest, because they imply that different processes are at play. A call for research by Madhavaram and Appan (2010) emphasizes the need for more research on implicit attitudes in the context of marketing communications. This need is especially urgent in brand placement research, since there are interesting hypotheses regarding effects on implicit attitudes and thus far only few studies that have started to explore these predictions.

2.2 Predictions for Brand Placement Research

As discussed above, implicit and explicit attitudes are the result of different processes and should thus be susceptible to different kinds of influences or manipulations. Applied to brand placement research, several predictions can be made for the impact of different kinds of placements on these two types of attitudes. Two important factors emerge from the literature: prominence of the placement and influence of the valence of the placement context.

2.2.1 Brand Placement Prominence

Prominence has been defined in different ways, but a primary characteristic in these definitions is centrality of position of the placement. That is, Gupta and Lord (1998) consider a placement to be prominent when the brand is at the center of attention, and Gibson, Redker and Zimmerman (2014) emphasize that prominence is increased when a brand is centrally connected to the plot, used by a central character, talked about, or is one of the few brands used in the program. Previous papers have highlighted that implicit processes are especially likely to occur when the placements are not prominent (Van Reijmersdal, 2009), but more subtle instead, such as in the background of the media program (Redker et al., 2013).

This prediction is also in line with the notion of associative and propositional processes underlying implicit and explicit attitudes. That is, propositional thought is especially likely when people deliberatively process the placement, which is more likely in prominent placement situations. Thus, prominent placements should impact explicit brand attitudes. Whether these effects on explicit attitudes are positive or negative depends on the content of people's thoughts. These could be affected by their liking of the show and the character using the brand, or their persuasion knowledge (e.g., Van Reijmersdal, 2009). In contrast, more associative processes could come into play for subtle placements. These placements may not be processed intentionally or even consciously, but may be analyzed automatically or preattentively (Krugman, 1977). The associations that result from this automatic processing should become apparent from implicit measures.

To summarize, the following prediction can be made for the effect of placement prominence on explicit and implicit attitudes.

Prediction 1: Placement of a brand in media content will predominantly affect a) explicit brand attitudes in case of prominent placements and b) implicit brand attitudes in case of subtle placements.

2.2.2 Valence of the Brand Placement Context

Regardless of whether the focus is on explicit or implicit brand attitudes, for brand managers it is of utmost importance to gain insight into the direction of brand placement effects. In other words, does the placement affect attitudes in a positive or negative way? One of the questions of interest is whether the context of the placement – such as the media content in which the brand is placed –

affects subsequent brand attitudes. For example, does placement in a positive context (e.g., a comedy show or a scene with a positive valence) affect attitudes positively, whereas placement in a negative context (e.g., a drama series or a scene with a negative valence) negatively impacts brand attitudes? Evaluative conditioning principles predict such a transfer of affect; repeatedly coupling a stimulus with a positive or negative stimulus results in a change of evaluation of the original stimulus, such that repeated coupling with a positive [negative] stimulus makes the original stimulus more positive [negative] (e.g., De Houwer, Thomas, & Baeyens, 2001).

The question is whether such evaluative conditioning effects occur in brand placement and whether it affects explicit and/or implicit attitudes. De Houwer (2007) describes evaluative conditioning as an effect that can be a result of distinct processes that range in nature from propositional to more associative (see also Jones, Olson, & Fazio, 2010). As a result, in cases where the placement is prominent and clearly linked to positive or negative information, valence is expected to transfer to explicit brand attitudes. Oppositely, in cases of subtle placements the link between the brand and the (valence of the) media content is less obvious. However, brand attitudes could still be affected by valence of the media content through associative processes, which should become apparent on implicit attitude measures.

Prediction 2: Valence of the media content in which the brand is placed could predominantly transfer to a) explicit brand attitudes in case of prominent placements and b) implicit brand attitudes in case of subtle placements.

However, there is a possible alternative prediction, namely that brand attitudes are not susceptible to the valence of the media content. Potentially, mere exposure principles have a stronger effect than evaluative conditioning principles, such that repeated exposure to a brand results in more positive evaluations, regardless of the context in which the brand is presented. These effects are most likely to occur when people do not explicitly remember the placements (Zajonc, 1980; 2001), such as when the placements were subtle. As a result, mere exposure principles rather than evaluative conditioning effects may mainly affect implicit attitudes. This alternative prediction is formulated as follows:

Prediction 2_alternative: Valence of the media content in which the brand is placed might not transfer to implicit brand attitudes in case of subtle placements. Instead, mere exposure to subtle brand placements – compared to *no placement - affects implicit brand attitudes positively (regardless of valence of the media content).*

3 Implicit versus Explicit Attitudes in Brand Placement Research

In the previous section, hypotheses have been generated regarding the effects of brand placements on implicit versus explicit attitudes. In the present section, available studies will be reviewed to provide preliminary tests of these hypotheses. A quick Web of Science literature search with the terms 'implicit attitudes' and 'brand placement' generated 18 results. Of these articles, 11 focused on implicit memory instead of implicit attitudes, and 4 were theoretical in nature. In fact, only 3 articles studied effects of brand placement on implicit brand attitudes. These articles will be reviewed briefly in this section, supplemented with our own work in progress on implicit versus explicit brand attitude effects of brand placements. This section follows the outline of predictions from the previous section.

3.1 Testing Prediction 1: The Effect of Brand Placement Prominence on Explicit and Implicit Brand Attitudes

3.1.1 Prominent Brand Placements

The brand placement literature contains many demonstrations of effects of prominent brand placements on explicit attitudes. However, most of these studies did not measure implicit brand attitudes and thus do not allow for a direct comparison of effects on these two types of attitudes. A recent article by Gibson and colleagues (2014) is an exception. In two experiments, they studied the effects of prominent placements (of sports brand Nike by a central character of TV-show *Friends*) on explicit brand attitudes (7-point semantic differentials) and implicit brand attitudes (IAT). Participants watched one of three episodes that either included a visual and verbal brand placement (i.e., the use and mentioning of the brand), a visual only brand placement (i.e., the use of the brand without mentioning), or no brand placement. After the episode they completed a brand recall measure, and the explicit and implicit attitude measures. In both experiments, the sample as a whole showed no effects of (the type of) brand placement on both explicit and implicit attitudes. However, exploratory analyses on a smaller subset of the sample showed that for people who recalled seeing the brand, explicit brand attitudes were more positive than for people who did not recall seeing the brand (note that recall differed between types of placement, see for details Gibson et al., 2014). This same pattern was found for implicit brand attitudes in the first experiment, but no effects on implicit brand attitudes were found in the second experiment. Thus, clear explicit effects of prominent brand placements emerged, but the implicit findings are yet inconclusive. Interestingly, the second experiment also contained a persuasion knowledge manipulation, which affected the direction of effects for explicit brand attitudes. For people that were not primed with persuasion knowledge, those who recalled seeing the brand had more positive explicit brand attitudes than those who did not recall seeing the brand. However, the opposite occurred for people that were primed with persuasion knowledge, such that explicit brand attitudes were less positive for those who recalled seeing the brand.

The results of this article are thus largely in line with prediction 1a that prominent placements should predominantly predict explicit brand attitudes. However, more research is needed to further study potential effects of prominent placements on implicit brand attitudes.

3.1.2 Subtle Brand Placements

Redker and colleagues (2013) were the first to compare effects of subtle brand placements on implicit and explicit brand attitudes. Specifically, they studied whether peoples' liking of a movie genre affected their implicit and explicit brand attitudes after watching a movie that did or did not contain background brand placements. Based on a pre-test, lovers and haters of science-fiction movies with no pre-existing preference for either Coca-Cola or Pepsi were invited to participate in the main study. In the experiment, they watched a 45-minute clip of science-fiction movie *Blade Runner,* which either contained 4 short background placements of Coca-Cola or did not contain Coca-Cola placements. The results showed that in the no-placement control condition, haters and lovers of the movie genre had similar implicit attitudes toward Coca-Cola versus Pepsi. In the placement condition, the genre lovers had more positive implicit brand attitudes toward Coca-Cola versus Pepsi than the genre haters. Thus, subtle brand placements affected implicit brand attitudes as a function of movie genre liking. No effects of the placement or liking of the movie genre were found on explicit brand attitudes.

In our own work (Wennekers, Vandeberg, Zoon, & van Reijmersdal, in progress), we manipulated subtle brand placements by repeatedly placing logos (of water brand Evian) in the periphery (corners of the screen) of a reality TV-show (*MasterChef*) for a short duration of time. Implicit attitudes (Single-Target IATs) toward the placed brand versus a non-placed competitor were affected positively by subtle brand placements compared to a no-placement control condition. Thus, subtle brand placements had a positive impact on implicit brand attitudes. No effects of the placement were found on explicit brand attitudes (7-point semantic differentials).

Together with the Redker et al. (2013) study, these results are in line with prediction 1b that subtle brand placements predominantly affect implicit brand attitudes. In fact, in both studies peoples' explicit attitudes remained unaffected by the subtle placements.

3.1.3 Conclusion

In short, the studies discussed in this section suggest that brand placement prominence indeed differently affects explicit and implicit brand attitudes. In line with our predictions, the available evidence shows that prominent placements mainly affect explicit brand attitudes, whereas subtle placements mainly impact implicit brand attitudes. Still, empirical tests of these predictions are scarce and future studies are necessary to enhance insight into the influence of placement prominence on explicit versus implicit brand attitudes. Specifically, varying degrees of prominence should be directly compared. Moreover, implicit and explicit effects on brand attitudes should be tested with a direct comparison of prominent and subtle placements.

3.2 Testing Prediction 2: The Effect of Valence of the Brand Placement Context on Explicit and Implicit Brand Attitudes

3.2.1 Prominent Brand Placements

The brand placement literature to our knowledge does not contain studies investigating whether valence of the media content (differently) affects explicit versus implicit brand attitudes towards prominently placed brands. The research from an unpublished Master thesis from our own institute (Ten Buuren, 2013) sheds some light on these effects. In an online experiment, real and prominent placements were used from a well-known brand (Jaguar) within the popular television series *Mad Men*. They differed in terms of the valence of the context in which they were placed (positive or negative). Three compilations of *Mad Men* scenes were created, in which only the scenes that included Jaguar differed, but all other scenes were identical and emotionally neutral. In the positive compilation, Jaguar was praised verbally and emotionally by one of the main characters of the series in a marketing pitch for the brand. He described the ultimate feeling of driving a Jaguar car. The negative compilation included a scene with a Jaguar car that failed to start, scenes in which the brand Jaguar is linked to prostitution and corruption, and a scene in which the characters talk about bribing someone at Jaguar. The neutrally-valenced control clip did not include Jaguar, but this clip did contain other brands (Heinz, New York Times, Clearasil) that were not discussed by the main characters.

After watching one of these *Mad Men* clips, participants completed a measure of implicit brand attitudes (Single-Target IAT), followed by self-report measures of explicit brand attitudes (7-point semantic differentials). As expected, the explicit attitudes were affected by the valence of the prominent placement. Particularly, explicit attitudes toward Jaguar were significantly more negative after seeing the negative compilation compared to the neutral compilation (and marginally significantly compared to the positive compilation). No such effect occurred in a positive direction. Thus, in the case of this very prominent placement and clear negative portrayal of the brand, explicit brand attitudes are negatively affected. The analyses of the implicit brand attitudes did not show any valence effect, with equal implicit attitudes toward Jaguar across the valence conditions. These findings should be interpreted with some caution, because the implicit attitude measure was conducted online, which could have led to unreliable timing of stimulus presentation and response recording for the implicit attitude measure. Still, the preliminary results of this first study are in line with prediction 2a that valence primarily spills over to explicit brand attitudes in the case of prominent placements.

3.2.2 Subtle Brand Placements

Two studies could shed light on the effects of valence on explicit versus implicit brand attitudes as a result of subtle brand placements, of which one published study focuses on valence transfer in the specific case of advergames (Waiguny, Nelson, & Marko, 2013). In this experiment, effects were studied of a negative (violent combat) versus neutral (racing) content of advergames on the explicit and implicit attitude towards the placed brand. The two valence conditions consisted of an advergame for either a familiar brand (LEGO) or an unfamiliar brand (Toyota's brand Scion). After playing the game, participants completed an implicit brand attitude measure (IAT), followed by explicit attitude measures (7-point semantic differentials). For the familiar brand, the analyses did not show a valence effect on implicit brand attitudes. Interestingly, the implicit attitudes toward the unfamiliar brand were negatively affected by the violent game. Unfamiliar brands - which lack a pre-existing attitude - were thus affected by valence of the content in which they are placed. Explicit attitudes toward the brands were not affected by the valence of the content of the game.

In our own study described in section 3.1.2 (Wennekers et al., in progress), we also address the issue of valence transfer to implicit attitudes towards subtly placed brands. In this experiment, we included three brand placement conditions that differed in terms of valence of the media content. For this purpose, three different compilations of the reality TV-show *MasterChef* were created, resulting in a positive, negative and neutral clip. The positive clip consisted of scenes of successful cooking, positive judging, and the nomination of winners, whereas the negative clips contained scenes of clumsy cooking, criticism by the judges, and the elimination of a contestant. The neutral clip included the introduction of candidates, glimpses of the cooking, tasting without explicit judging, and the introduction of the final selection without focusing on the winners or losers. Manipulation checks showed that the clips indeed differed in terms of valence. However, analyses showed that this valence did not transfer to viewers' implicit and explicit brand attitudes. That is, both implicit and explicit attitudes toward the placed brand did not differ between the positive, negative, or neutral condition.

Thus, prediction 2b is not supported by the available evidence except for unfamiliar brands in the study of Waiguny et al. (2013). As posited in section 2.2, there is a possible alternative explanation, which would predict that implicit brand attitudes are not susceptible to the valence of the media content. That is, prediction 2_alternative suggests that mere exposure principles may have a stronger influence than evaluative conditioning principles, such that repeated exposure to a brand results in more positive evaluations, regardless of the context in which the brand is presented. This prediction cannot be tested for the Waiguny et al. (2013) paper, because this experiment did not include no-placement control conditions. Our own experiment (Wennekers et al., in progress) did include such a control condition and thus allows for a preliminary test of this prediction. The results showed that implicit brand attitudes were positively affected by the brand placement (as compared to the no-placement condition), but that the implicit brand attitudes did not differ across the three valence conditions. Thus, subtle brand placements positively affected implicit brand attitudes, regardless of the valence of the context in which the brands were placed. These findings provide preliminary evidence for the alternative prediction that implicit brand attitudes may improve due to mere exposure to subtle brand placements, rather than being affected by evaluative conditioning in which valence of the context spills over to implicit brand attitudes. However, further direct tests of this hypothesis are needed to support or reject this preliminary conclusion.

3.2.3 Conclusion

To conclude, few studies addressed the question of valence transfer of brand placements on explicit versus implicit brand attitudes. Still, the (published and unpublished) studies reviewed here provide some interesting preliminary insights. For prominent placements, findings indicate that valence transfers to explicit but not implicit brand attitudes. For subtle placements, results are mixed. Two studies using familiar brands show no effects of valence of the media content on implicit brand attitudes, whereas one study using unfamiliar brands does find implicit valence transfer effects. Across these studies, explicit attitudes remain unaffected by valence. Interestingly, in one study we found indications for mere exposure findings over evaluative conditioning effects. That is, merely exposing people to a familiar brand in media content with a positive, negative, or neutral valence seemed to positively affect implicit brand attitudes, regardless of the valence of the media content. Future studies should be performed to further test these suggestions about valence transfer in brand placement research. Such work should measure explicit versus implicit brand attitudes and investigate potential boundary conditions, such as familiarity of the brands.

4 General Conclusion and Future Research Agenda

The goal of this chapter was to discuss the role of implicit evaluative processes in brand placement effects. We started this chapter emphasizing the distinction between explicit and implicit attitudes. In sum, these two types of attitudes are the result of different evaluative processes (propositional versus associative), should be measured with distinct procedures (direct self-report measures versus indirect behavioral measures), and they predict different types of behaviors (deliberative versus impulsive). Next, we discussed how different kinds of brand placements might differently affect explicit and implicit attitudes, resulting in two predictions that were tested using existing (published and unpublished) brand placement studies. Even though there are only a few studies so far including measures of implicit brand attitudes, this short review of the literature provides some interesting preliminary insights.

First, prominence of the placement seems to play a role in the type of attitudes that are affected by brand placements. Existing findings are in line with the prediction that prominent placements mainly affect explicit brand attitudes, whereas subtle placements mainly have an effect on implicit brand attitudes. These findings underscore the importance of including implicit brand attitude measures in brand placement studies, especially when the placements are subtle. Including only explicit brand attitude measures could result in the false conclusion that subtle placements do not affect consumers' evaluative responses toward the placed brand, and are thus ineffective. The use of implicit attitude measures suggests that the opposite may be true: The findings discussed in this chapter demonstrate that subtle placements affect implicit brand attitudes. As explained in section 2.1, implicit attitude measures have been found to impact automatic or spontaneous behaviors, whereas explicit attitude measures mainly affect controlled and deliberative behaviors. Because many real-life consumer behaviors are not deliberative (think about impulsive consumption, see for example Dijksterhuis, Smith, van Baaren, & Wigboldus, 2005), implicit attitude measures are essential to gain novel insights into how subtle brand placements affect consumer behavior. Future research should further study the effect of prominence of the placement on explicit versus implicit brand attitudes, and how these different attitudes affect impulsive consumer behaviors.

Second, this chapter explored effects of valence of the brand placement context on explicit and implicit brand attitudes. In order to efficiently use brand placements as a marketing tool, it is important to know whether the strategy enhances consumers' explicit and/or implicit brand attitudes. A relevant question is to what extent the media content in which the brand is placed affects the outcomes. Especially, could placement in a negative context have negative effects on brand attitudes? The findings discussed in this chapter provide some insight into this question. Preliminary findings suggest that prominent placements and explicit negative reference to a brand could harm viewers' explicit brand attitudes. Implicit brand attitudes were not affected by the negative placement, but more research is needed to draw stronger conclusions.

For subtle brand placements a different picture is painted by existing studies. Familiar brands do not seem to be harmed by negative placements. In fact, one study suggests that mere exposure to subtle brand placements might result in positive implicit brand attitudes, irrespective of the valence of the context. Still, findings of another study suggest that unfamiliar brands might be negatively affected by negative placements. For these brands, people do not yet have evaluative associations, and the negative associations that are activated by the media content then could transfer to these unfamiliar brands. However, these findings were obtained for placements in games, so it needs to be investigated whether these effects generalize to placements in television programs. Future research is also needed to further investigate valence transfer in brand placements, specifically to study different levels of valence extremity and to address the potential moderating role of brand familiarity.

To conclude, this chapter shows the value of studying implicit brand attitudes in brand placement research. Still, available evidence is scarce and this chapter also emphasizes the need for more research in this area. The predictions and suggestions for research directions from this chapter are provided to spark ideas for future investigations of brand placements effects on explicit and implicit brand attitudes and subsequent consumer behavior.

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Implicit and Explicit Measures: What Their Dissociations Reveal about the Workings of Advertising

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1 Introduction

Consider a scenario in which you participate in a study on advertising effects. You are instructed to attend to an advertisement, after which you are asked about your memory for the advertisement and advertised brand, your attitude towards the ad and brand, and your intention to purchase the advertised brand. Sometimes, you will also be asked to reflect about the proposed process that is considered to underlie advertising effects, with questions along the lines of 'do you think that this advertisement has affected your attitude about the brand?' or 'do you think the music in the advertisement affected how positive you feel about the brand?'.

The default in marketing and advertising research is to use explicit measures, like the self-report measures from the scenario above, to examine the impact of advertising on consumer cognitions, attitudes, and behavior. However, such explicit measures have three potentially disadvantageous consequences when examining consumer responses to advertisements, namely that 1) asking the questions reminds participants about their prior exposure to the advertisements, 2) answering the questions requires their conscious recollection and elaboration of this exposure, and 3) answering the questions might even require insight into the potential (psychological) effects of this exposure. As a result, the responses to these measurements are driven by peoples' conscious, controlled, deliberative, and reflective thoughts on how advertisements affect them.

We argue that this way of measuring advertising effects is suitable when researchers are interested in *explicit* advertising effects (e.g., in situations where people are expected to deliberatively encode, retrieve and evaluate advertisements) as well as *perceived* advertising effects (e.g., how people think advertisements affect them). However, explicit effects do not necessarily generalize to real-life situations, because people often do not think back to or elaborate about advertisements in daily life, but rather process them in a shallow way (e.g., Heath, 2001). Also, the measurement of perceived effects is highly susceptible to biases and strategies, for example because they give people insight into the experimenters' hypothesis, because people provide socially desirable answers, or because they post-rationalize what happened during exposure. To get better insights into *actual* advertising effects, it is important to adopt

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_21, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

measures that tap into the processes at work in real-life situations in which people are not questioned about their experiences. This would allow the more subconscious, automatic, associative, and impulsive processes that drive behavior to manifest.

Implicit measures are designed to tap into exactly these processes because 1) they do *not* require recollection or elaboration of prior experience (e.g., exposure to an advertisement) and 2) the impact of the experience is *inferred* from performance on a seemingly unrelated task (cf. Schacter, 1987). First, because implicit measures do not require recollection of exposure to the advertisement, they are less likely to induce people to think back to the exposure and elaborate about it, or to evoke thoughts about the processes that may have been triggered by the exposure. Second, because the effect of the advertisement is inferred from ostensibly unrelated task performance, it is less likely that the responses are driven by the described biases and strategies, including socially desirable responses and post-rationalization. We therefore argue that it is necessary to add implicit measures to advertising research when the aim is to examine what actually and spontaneously affected people, not what they *believe* affected them or only affected them because they were prompted by the research (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Schwarz, 1999; Wilson & Brekke, 1994).

Although implicit measures are less susceptible to the problems described above, they are not immune to them. That is, it is possible that explicit (conscious, controlled, or deliberative) processes “contaminate” implicit measures (Bowers & Schacter, 1990; Gawronski, LeBel, & Peters, 2007; Gawronski & LeBel, 2008; Gawronski, 2009). Therefore, when aiming to distinguish associative (implicit) from deliberative (explicit) processes or when aiming to eliminate the possibility that deliberative strategies are responsible for the results of a study, it is wise to adopt both implicit and explicit measures (Jacoby, 1991; Merikle & Reingold, 1991). Though the outcomes of both measures may be similar, they may also diverge. Any such dissociation (divergence) between the outcomes of the two types of measures then reveals unique information about which processes are responsible for advertising effects. For example, finding implicit but not explicit effects indicates that associative (implicit) processes must have played a part in people’s response to an advertisement, whereas the opposite dissociation pattern suggests that deliberative (explicit) processes drive people’s ad responses.

For this reason, this chapter will discuss advertising studies that have added implicit measures to oft-used explicit measures. The presented literature will be organized along the lines of two domains, namely implicit measures of memory (developed in cognitive psychology) and implicit measures of attitudes (developed in social psychology). For each line of research, we first introduce the implicit measures that were used in the advertising studies, after which we compare their findings with those of the explicit measures. Finally, we interpret the diverging findings of the two types of measures and discuss what they reveal about how advertising does and does not work.

2 Memory

2.1 Discussed Implicit Measures

Well-known types of implicit memory measures are the so called word fragment completion tasks or picture identification tasks (Tulving, Schacter, & Stark, 1982; Warrington & Weiskrantz, 1968). Participants are first exposed to the information of interest (e.g., an advertisement), and then presented with fragmented words or pictures. They are instructed to complete or identify the words and pictures, without any reference that these words and pictures were related to the prior learning episode. Research on patients suffering from amnesia has shown that these measures effectively reflect implicit rather than explicit retrieval from memory (Warrington & Weiskrantz, 1968).

2.2 Applications in Advertising Research

Several studies in advertising have used word fragment completion or picture identification tasks in combination with explicit measures, such as recall and recognition. The explicit measures ask people about their memory for the advertisement they saw earlier, whereas the implicit measures derive people´s memory from their performance on the completion and identification tasks. Research on the placements of products and brands in movies and games, for instance, examines brand memory in response to those placements. Here, results have shown that both explicit and implicit brand memory are positively affected by exposure to brand placements (versus no placements). However, subtle brand placements resulted in lower explicit memory than prominent placements, whereas implicit memory for these subtly placed brands remains intact (van Reijmersdal, Rozendaal, & Buijzen, 2012; Yang, Roskos-Ewoldsen, Dinu, & Arpan, 2006; Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007). This shows that explicit advertising effects require prominent brand placements, but implicit effects occur regardless of whether brand placements were subtle or prominent.

Work on the impact of cross-media advertising has also adopted both types of measures (Vandeberg, Murre, Voorveld, & Smit, forthcoming). Findings from this study show that presenting two advertisements for one brand in different medium types (versus in a single medium type) improves explicit but not implicit brand memory. In other words, whereas advertising in a single medium impairs explicit retrieval of brand information compared to advertising across media, implicit retrieval remains stable.

Similarly, studies on memory for banner advertisements on web pages have used both implicit and explicit tests. They demonstrate that lower levels of attention for banner advertisements produce relatively poor explicit memory, but that implicit memory is robust (Yoo, 2007; Yoo, 2008). Thus, implicit ad memory is not negatively affected under low (versus high) attention to banner advertisements, but explicit ad memory suffers from low levels of attention.

2.3 What Memory Dissociations Reveal

In all, combining the findings from explicit and implicit memory measures in advertising research suggests that implicit brand memory remains unaffected in cases when presentation of brands is subtle (versus prominent), occurs within a single medium (versus across media), or occurs under low (versus high) levels of attention to banner advertisements. Under these circumstances, explicit brand memory is deteriorated. This evidence from advertising research perfectly matches early findings in cognitive memory research demonstrating that the different measures of memory for prior events reflect different types of memory retrieval processes (Graf & Mandler, 1984; Graf, Squire, & Mandler, 1984; Graf & Schacter, 1985; Jacoby & Dallas, 1981; Schacter, 1987; Tulving et al., 1982; Warrington & Weiskrantz, 1970). The combined findings from both fields make a strong case for the notion that implicit memory remains intact in conditions where explicit memory suffers. Given that consumers often make their decisions under circumstances in which they do not draw upon explicit memory retrieval, implicit memory measures may better match consumers' real-life situations than explicit memory measures (Duke & Carlson, 1993). As a result, implicit measures are assumed to be better predictors for consumer judgments and behavior because "implicit memory is closer to the behavioral predispositions of a consumer and is a form of memory used in everyday situations" (Shapiro & Krishnan, 2001).

Circumstances that have a negative impact on memory (such as processing brands in the background of a TV show, in a single medium, or under low attention) might not be so negative for advertising after all. Given that implicit memory a) does not seem to be affected by these circumstances and b) is more closely related to the real-life situations of consumers, the discussed dissociations may provide good news for advertisers. However, further research is needed to gain wider support for this conclusion.

3 Attitudes

3.1 Discussed Implicit Measures

Two well-known and oft-used attitude measures that will be discussed are the Implicit Association Test (IAT, Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) and affective priming tasks. For both tasks, participants are instructed to categorize pictures or words that are presented on a computer screen, by pushing designated keys on the keyboard as fast and accurately as possible. The IAT was originally designed to measure which (evaluative) associations are linked to a certain concept in memory. In this task, participants categorize two target categories (e.g., pictures of the two brands Coca Cola and Pepsi) and two attribute categories (e.g., positive or negative words) into two blocks using overarching combinations (using the one key for Coca Cola and positive words and the other key for Pepsi and negative words, or vice versa). The rationale behind this test is that a faster categorization for one combination block (Coca Cola with positive words and Pepsi with negative words) over the other (Pepsi with positive words and Coca Cola with negative words) reveals stronger associations between the concepts and attributes of that category over the other (more positive associations with Coca Cola than Pepsi). Research has shown that IATs provide a valid test of consumer preferences (Brunel, Tietje, & Greenwald, 2004; Maison, Greenwald, & Bruin, 2004).

Affective (Hermans, De Houwer, & Eelen, 1994) or evaluative (Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995) priming tasks are based on the affective priming principle, which holds that a stimulus can evoke positive or negative affective reactions without virtually any deeper cognitive processing (Fazio, 2001; Zajonc, 1980). In affective priming tasks, people are generally presented with a prime that requires no response (such as a brand name or logo), after which they are presented with a target that does require a response (e.g., words and pictures which need to be evaluated as either positive or negative). The rationale is that if the prime facilitates the response to the target (e.g., if responses to a positive target are faster after a Coca Cola prime than a Pepsi prime), this indicates that the affective associations between these two concepts are congruent (meaning that Coca Cola activated positive associations to a greater extent than Pepsi, which facilitated responses to positive targets).

3.2 Applications in Advertising Research

The studies that will be discussed in this section have adopted explicit measures that ask people about their attitudes towards the advertisements and brands they saw earlier, and implicit measures in which people´s attitudes are derived from their performance on the IAT or affective priming tasks. Both implicit measurement methods have demonstrated to be able to tap into associative, automatic brand attitudes. For example, Gibson (2008) has used the IAT to examine whether evaluative conditioning is able to affect people's attitudes towards mature brands such as Coca Cola or Pepsi. In the evaluative conditioning procedure, participants with no strong initial preference for either brand were presented with the brands that were either paired with positive or negative stimuli. The results show that the valence of the presented stimuli spills over to peoples' implicit, but not explicit, attitudes towards the presented brands. This demonstrates that people's implicit associations with the brands were affected by the context in which they were presented, whereas their explicit associations had not changed.

Similarly, studies examining whether subtle brand placements in TV shows affect peoples' brand attitudes have used implicit (IAT) and explicit (bipolar scales) attitude measures (Redker, Gibson, & Zimmerman, 2013; Wennekers, Vandeberg, Zoon, & van Reijmersdal, 2015 in this issue). They demonstrate that implicit, but not explicit, brand attitudes improve as a result of mere exposure (Wennekers et al., 2015) or liking of the genre (Redker et al., 2013) after watching content that contained subtle brand placements.

Furthermore, a study on the effect of celebrity voice-overs in TV commercials also found a dissociation between explicit and implicit attitudes (Forehand & Perkins, 2005). The results showed that, the more positive peoples' implicit brand attitudes towards the celebrities of the voice-over, the more positive their implicit brand attitudes were. The relation between explicitly measured celebrity and brand attitudes was also positive, but only when participants were unable to identify the celebrity. When the celebrities were identified, the effect of explicit celebrity attitudes on explicit brand attitudes was negative (which likely resulted from deliberative negative thoughts about persuasion, by the authors referred to as a "resetting" of the perceived influence from irrelevant cues). Thus, the effect of celebrity voice-overs on explicit brand attitudes was moderated by celebrity identification, whereas the effect on implicit brand attitudes was positive regardless of celebrity identification.

Other dissociations between implicit and explicit attitude measures have been found in studies using (tasks based on) an affective priming task. For example, one study used an affective priming task in combination with explicit attitude measures to examine the effect of skinny or full-figured models on product liking (Häfner & Trampe, 2009). Here, findings show a positive effect of skinny (versus full-figured) models on implicit product evaluations, but a negative effect on explicit product evaluations. The results also showed that the explicit effect was fully mediated by viewers' liking of the advertisement, such that full-figured models induced more ad liking than skinny models. Thus, the effect of models on explicit (deliberative) product evaluations is fully mediated by the likeability of the advertisements, whereas implicit (spontaneous) product evaluations depended directly on the models and not on ad liking.

Furthermore, studies in political communication research have used related priming tasks to examine how political campaigns affect voter's implicit and explicit attitudes towards the candidates. For example, Carraro, Gawronski, and Castelli (2010) found that negative (versus positive) campaigning by one of the candidates leads to less favorable implicit attitudes towards both political candidates, whereas explicit attitudes only become less favorable for the candidate who negatively campaigned about his opponent. In other words, explicit attitudes toward the candidate who produced the negative information, but not the candidate being talked about negatively, became less favorable. Implicit attitudes, however, were less favorable for both candidates. This suggests that negative associations instigated by the (candidate presenting the) negative campaign associatively transferred to the candidate who was portrayed negatively.

3.3 What Attitude Dissociations Reveal

In all, combining the two types of attitude measures suggests that advertising may have different effects on implicit brand attitudes than explicit brand attitudes. Such dissociations between explicit and implicit attitude measures have been attributed to different types of evaluative processes that affect people's (changes in) attitude (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006; Strack & Deutsch, 2004). Whereas implicit attitude measures are assumed to tap into more associative (impulsive, automatic) evaluative processes, explicit attitude measures are assumed to tap into more propositional (deliberative, controlled) evaluations.

Mapping this notion onto the findings from the advertising literature leads to interesting implications. Although the discussed dissociations in attitude research are less straightforward than those in the discussed memory research (in section 2.2), they do reveal how advertising may differently affect associative and propositional processes. The studies that found advertising to have an impact on implicit but not explicit attitudes (Gibson, 2008; Redker et al., 2013; Wennekers et al., 2015) manipulated relatively subtle contextual cues in either an evaluative conditioning procedure or by subtly placing a brand in a TV show. Such subtle contextual cues would indeed be expected to be too weak to elicit elaborative propositional evaluation processes, but would be very well capable of affecting associative processes that require no elaboration of the presented stimuli.

The studies that found advertising to have a different impact on implicit than explicit attitudes (Carraro et al., 2010; Forehand & Perkins, 2005; Häfner & Trampe, 2009) can also be explained in terms of the different evaluative processes. In these studies, there were rather obvious cues that the intention of the advertisement was to persuade people (think about the celebrity voice-overs, the skinny models, and the negative campaigns of political candidates). This could have resulted in negative propositional thoughts about the subject of the advertisement to resist the perceived persuasion attempt, which would explain the negative explicit attitudes. Implicit attitudes, on the other hand, are shaped by the mere activation of associations and are therefore less affected by negative propositional thoughts. This explains why the implicit attitudes toward celebrity voice-overs and thin models were not negatively affected. Furthermore, associations are triggered by a spread of activation, which does not specifically target the subject of the campaign but spreads to any associated concepts. This would explain the findings that not only the political candidate who promoted the negative campaign, but also the candidate that was attacked evoked implicitly negative attitudes. Although these preliminary conclusions should be tested extensively, this interpretation nicely suggests how advertising may target implicit and explicit processes in different ways.

How do these different processes shape actual advertising effects? Research from different domains has shown that implicit attitude measures can be more predictive of people's overt behavior than explicit attitude measures (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002; Galdi, Arcuri, & Gawronski, 2008). It has for example been shown that changes in implicit attitudes (under stable and neutral explicit attitudes) affect brand choices that are made under cognitive load (Gibson, 2008). This provides support for the idea that consumer choices may be driven by associative rather than deliberative processes. Other studies have also found evidence for associative effects on consumer behavior. For example, Fitzsimons et al showed that exposure to a brand can affect peoples' behavior in a way that is in line with the brand's characteristics, without people being aware of this influence (Fitzsimons, Chartrand, & Fitzsimons, 2008). Such findings have strengthened the view that consumer behavior is largely driven by implicit evaluative processes (e.g., Chartrand, 2005; Chartrand & Fitzsimons, 2011; Dijksterhuis, Smith, Van Baaren, & Wigboldus, 2005). Given that implicit attitudes a) are affected differently by advertising than explicit attitudes and b) are likely of greater influence on spontaneous consumer behavior than explicit attitudes, the need for adding such measures to the broad field of advertising research is urgent.

4 Conclusion

This literature review suggests that implicit measures tap into advertising effects that are often overlooked by explicit measures. As the combined findings from advertising and psychological research suggest, the processes that are detected by implicit measures are highly relevant for advertising effects, which is supported by research demonstrating that implicit measures are able to predict important real-life behaviors that are difficult to predict with self-report measures. Given that the main aim of marketing and advertising strategies always is to affect consumer behavior, we argue that adding implicit measures is essential for the field to move forward. Only in this way will we be able to disentangle the mechanisms responsible for the impact of advertising on real-life consumer behavior.

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Hindering Facial Mimicry in Ad Viewing: Effects on Consumers' Emotions, Attitudes and Purchase Intentions

Peter Lewinski, Ed S. Tan, Marieke L. Fransen, Karolina Czarna, and Crystal Butler

1 Introduction

Recent findings in consumer psychology demonstrate that embodied cognition and bodily mimicry may influence consumers' attitudes, intentions, and behavior (e.g. Hung & Labroo, 2011; Howard & Gengler, 2001). For example, when two friends (Bill and John) watch a funny advertisement and they both smile this might facilitate each other's expressiveness and subjective emotional experience. However, when Bill unexpectedly sneers at the funny ad this can be perceived as an incoherent reaction and could therefore interfere with John's initial cheerful expression. This might reduce his concomitant subjective positive feelings subsequently affecting responses towards the advertisement and the advertised product.

In a consumer context, Martin and Gray (1996) found, for example, that adding audience laughter to radio recordings increases its funniness and enjoyability ratings. Hence, people are affected by the emotions that others express. This might be explained by the process of mimicry. Although many studies have demonstrated various enhancing effects of mimicry on consumer behavior (e.g. Tanner et al., 2008) no studies yet examined how co-viewers' facial expressions of emotions interfere with responses towards television commercials. In the present research, we therefore examine whether facial behavior of a co-viewer that facilitates or interferes with the target person's initial facial expressions and subjective feelings affects how the target person reacts towards an advertisement.

2 Facial Mimicry

Why do people mimic other people? Mimicking serves a social function - people like each other more when mimicking and mutual liking fosters relationship with others (see Lakin et al., 2003). In a consumer context, van Baaren et al. (2003) found that staff mimicking the customers received larger tips. Wang (2009) found that consumer' emotions, satisfaction with service personnel and brand attitude are influenced by personnel-displayed emotions in the retail service context. In the current paper, we focus specifically on *facial*

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_22, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

mimicry because the face is a rich source of information with over 10,000 possible facial movement combinations (Ekman & Rosenberg, 1997)

Facial mimicry is an activity in specific muscles in response to conspecific facial expressions (Bush et al., 1989). The mere task of perceiving facial expressions of emotions of others activates observers' facial muscles (measured by facial electromyography) that correspond to the perceived emotion (Dimberg, 1982; Lundqvist, 1995). Facial mimicking occurs fast - within 300 ms after stimulus presentation (Dimberg et al., 2002). Hindering or facilitating facial mimicry modulates the accuracy of emotion perception (Oberman et al., 2007; Neal & Chartrand, 2011). In the example of the friends, Bill's diminished facial expression of amusement decreases his fun. This finding is consistent with the idea of facial feedback (Buck, 1980), which shapes emotional experiences (see also McIntosh, 1996) modifies intensity of humor responses (Strack et al., 1988), increases feelings of sadness (Larsen et al., 1992) and modulates emotion perception accuracy of others (Neal & Chartrand, 2011).

In a consumer context, facial reactions while viewing an advertisement were shown to predict post-viewing attitudes toward the advertisement as well as the brand (Lewinski, Fransen, & Tan, 2014). When people smile during advertisement exposure, they like the ad and the brand more. It is, however, interesting to examine possible moderates of this relationship.

A previous study examined whether consumers are able to control their facial expression. Lewinski, Fransen, Tan, Snijdewind, Weeda and Czarna (June, 2014) found that instructing participants to exaggerate (i.e. facilitate) or to inhibit (i.e. hinder) their facial reactions through emotion regulation resulted in higher or lower reported attitudes toward the advertisement respectively. What has not yet been investigated is whether natural situational factors such as a *conspecific*'s expressions may also facilitate or hinder facial behavior and in turn influence consumers' attitudes and intentions as in the virtual example of the friend watching an ad..

We hypothesize that congruence of a co-presented facial expression stimulus with the expression elicited by a stimulus ad affects the ad's targeted emotional expression and concomitant attitudes. That is, given an amusing ad, a view of a sneering person inserted into the screen's edge decreases advertising effectiveness by hindering consumers' facial expressions of happiness. On the other hand, a laughing person would increase ad's effectiveness by increasing one's expressiveness.

3 Method

In this study we set to test a mediation model where boosting or inhibiting facial expressiveness leads to accordingly more or less facial expressions of happiness of the viewer. In turn, expressed happiness should lead to higher or lower attitude scores of advertising effectiveness.

Design and procedure. Participants were recruited through MTurk. Participants who agreed to participate, were redirected to a platform where the experiment was conducted and were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions (facilitating/hindering/still/control). Importantly, there were no instructions as to how to behave while watching the ad. Participants were provided with information on how to set-up their camera. We used the objective measure of emotions by recording facial expressions of happiness analyzed by automatic facial coding software - Noldus FaceReader (Noldus, 2014). We will describe this procedure in more detail below.

*Participants***.** A sample of 156 participants recruited through MTurk was included in the study (Men = 76, Women = 80, average age = 31.54; *SD* = 11.44): 40 in the facilitating, 37 in the hindering, 40 in the still and 39 in the no avatar condition. The target population from which the sample was selected consisted of U.S. residents with a minimum age of 18. Participation was voluntary and required signing an informed consent.

Stimulus. We used an amusing video advertisement (30-seconds) - a commercial of Doritos chips (*Doritos Goat for Sale Ad*) which was pre-tested: *M* amused = 5.91, *SD* = 1.30 at a 7-point Likert scale, n =11. For our avatar manipulations, we created an elaborative set of virtual faces based on real people generalized reactions towards the commercial. These virtual faces were added in the right-bottom corner of the screen of the Doritos commercial and differed in terms of expressed emotions. Dependent on the condition, a smiling (*facilitating*), sneering (*hindering*) or neutral (*still*) face was used. In the fourth, control condition there was no face.

The three stages of the face development were a) generation of a 3-dimensional digital representation of an actor capable of producing facial movements based on the Facial Action Coding System (FACS) (Ekman et al., 2002); b) determination of an optimal set of expressions temporally mapped to previously gathered facial reaction data for the stimuli advertisement; c) and animation of the face for addition to the video frame of the ad. See Figure 1 for the final stimuli visualization.

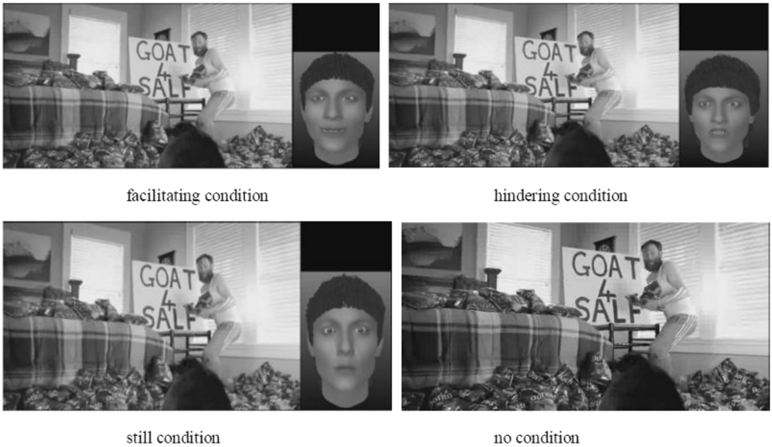


Figure 1: Commercial with a Pre-recorded Virtual Avatar Used in the Studies to Create Four Conditions: Facilitating Condition; Hindering Condition; Still Condition; No Avatar (Control) Condition

*FaceReader***.** FaceReader (Noldus, 2014), an artificial neural network software that automatically analyzes facial expressions of emotions once they are recorded by a computer camera, was used in order to measure emotions expressed by participants. FaceReader proved to be a reliable and objective tool (Lewinski, den Uyl & Butler, in press). It shows to what extent facial expressions of emotions (Ekman, 1972) are displayed by recorded participants in every frame of the recording. As a measure of happiness expression intensity we used average scores of the top 10% peak values (Lewinski et. al, 2014) provided by FaceReader for every participant.

Consumer attitudes and intentions. We measured attitudes toward the advertisement, attitude towards the brand and purchase intention following the Advertising Effectiveness Model (Mitchell & Olson, 1982). Participants answered how much they agreed with the statements concerning the advertisement (α = .96), brand (α= *.97)* and purchase intentions (α = .96). Both attitude measures consisted of seven items and purchase intention was measured with three items. The mean scores served as the dependent variables.

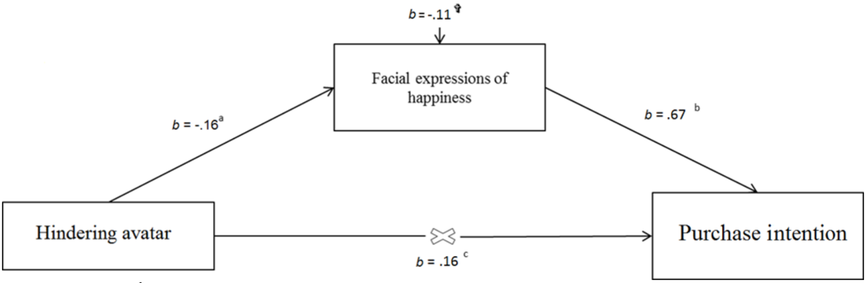
4 Results

In order to test the influence of the expressive faces on purchase intentions and attitudes, we used Preaches and Hayes' method (2008) that estimates path coefficients in a mediator model. The 10'000 bootstrapped samples were generated to estimate bias corrected and accelerated confidence intervals

(BCACI). We tested the total and specific indirect effects of the experimental conditions on attitude toward the advertisement, toward the brand and on purchase intentions through facial expression of happiness. The variable differentiating participants in terms of experimental condition was dummy coded, which resulted in three independent coding schemes - (a) facilitating; (b) hindering and ;(c) still condition - each coded versus all the other conditions. The results showed that only the hindering avatar decreased facial expressions of happiness, which lead to lower attitudes and lower purchase intentions. No such results were found for all other conditions. In all analyses, we controlled for the influence of emotion regulation strategies.

*Attitude toward the advertisement***.** The hindering avatar condition had a negative effect on facial expressions of happiness (*b* = -.16; *p* = .07) and they were positively related to attitude toward the advertisement (*b* = 1.02; *p* = .0003), which resulted in a significant indirect effect (IE) (IE = -.16, SE = .10, 5% BCACI [-.42, .00]). No direct effect was found, so the hindering avatar had no direct influence on attitude towards the ad (*b* = -.14; *p* = .64).

*Attitude toward the brand***.** Analogical results were found when testing attitude toward the brand as an outcome variable. The hindering avatar condition predicted less facial expressions of happiness (*b* = -.16; *p* = .07) and facial expressions of happiness predicted attitude toward the brand (*b* = .64; *p* = .012; IE = -.10, SE = .07, 5% BCACI [-.31, .00]) with no direct effect found (*b* = -.11; *p* = .70).



[a] – *p* = .0674; [b] – *p* = .0739; [c] – *p* = .70; ✝- significant indirect effect (5% BCACI [-.37, .01]), controlling for gender and emotion regulation strategy.

Figure 2: Total and Specific Indirect Effects of the Hindering Avatar Condition on Purchase Intention Through Facial Expressions of Happiness

*Purchase Intention***.** The hindering avatar condition did not have a direct effect on purchase intention (*b* = .16; *p* = .70). It influenced, however, facial expressions of happiness (*b* = -.16; *p* = .07), which were positively related to purchase intention (*b* = .67; *p* = .07). There was also an indirect effect (IE = -

.11, SE = .09, 5% BCACI [-.37, .01]). See Figure 1 for an example of the model with effects of the hindering avatar condition on facial expression and purchase intention.

5 Conclusions

We demonstrated that the stimuli we created - the expressive faces of a conspecific – indeed has profound effects on consumers. We measured and automatically coded consumers' facial expressions of emotions. We tested if the manipulation of the expressive avatars influenced the emotions consumers express while watching an amusing commercial.

We demonstrated that the hindering condition leads to less expression of happiness, which in turn resulted in lower attitudes and purchase intentions. As adding "fake" audience laughter tends to boost enjoyability ratings of radio recordings (Martin et al., 1996), adding "disgusted" audience dampens expressions of happiness and hence effectiveness of the advertisement. We could rule out mere presence of a still face as an alternative explanation because dynamic qualities of the hindering condition outperformed the still condition.

When watching commercials consumers seem to be affected by the facial expression of others who watch together with them. Since people have a natural inclination to mimic others, the emotional expression of others impacts their own feelings and expression. Through an internal feedback process, these expressed emotions affect attitudes and intentions. Our findings have important implications for both advertisers and consumers. First, advertisers often use amusing advertisements to persuade consumers to like and buy their products. The present findings reveal that the positive effects of these advertisements might diminish or even disappear when watched together with someone who dislikes the ad, or at least demonstrates expressions that are incongruent with the intended emotions. It would therefore be beneficial for advertisers to be aware when consumers watch advertisements together with others, and with who they watch them.

Second, consumers may benefit from our findings since they propose that not smiling at an amusing commercial might help them resist (unwanted) persuasion by ads. When motivated to resist persuasion, a consumer may profit from the presence of another person who shows skepticism or disapproval through facial expression of disgust.

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Part IV. The Alternative: Advertising on Products, Floors and Carts

Creative Media Use Increases Online Sharing of Your Ad (but Seems Less Effective for Your Brand)

Jiska Eelen and Roxana Seiler

1 Introduction

When you order a drink at your local juice bar, you notice that the flexing part of the straw has a picture of a woman who is holding her hands up. As you flex the straw, the woman bends backwards. This is a clever ad for a yoga center that also presents the link to its website. To what extent do consumers talk about such creative advertising? And what do they say about it? Do they mention the brand name, or focus only on the clever execution? Research has shown that creative media advertising, of which the drinking straw is an example, may have a positive effect on consumers' attitudes and brand recall (Dahlén et al. 2009). But do creative media also lead to an increase in word of mouth? And to what extent is this word of mouth linked to the brand itself?

Given the increasing importance of consumer and marketing initiatives on social media, we investigate how valuable the strategy of creative media advertising is for (electronic) word of mouth (= WOM). When consumers like an advertisement they may share it online, or speak positively about it, and are thereby offering a brand earned – hence free and additional – media space (Muntinga et al. 2011; van der Lans et al. 2010). Moreover, earned media space can greatly boost sales and trigger even more buzz (Stephen and Galak 2012). Importantly we also examine the consequences of online sharing for the brand. Is any-brand related content spoken about among consumers?

In general, positive communication effects of creative media use have been documented (e.g., Dahlén et al. 2009), but these have seldom been replicated by other researchers and there has been limited attention to the question of what the driving factors of these effects are. Hence, we focus on replicating prior findings and will be looking at the processes that underlie the effects. More specifically, we investigate whether creative media use is effective because of its novelty (i.e., spillover of the positive feeling of surprise) and/or because of the positive thoughts that arise when consumers solve the implicit link between the message and the medium? The answers will help marketers to use creative media in the right context.

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_23, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

2 Theoretical Framework

Creative media advertisements can be considered a special case of *guerilla marketing* or *ambient marketing* (Hutter and Hoffmann 2011). Advertisers regularly implement promotional material into media that are not seen as traditional carriers of advertisements, such as waste bins, elevators and eggshells. What distinguishes creative media from guerilla marketing however is that the creative medium is chosen specifically to communicate the message itself. A creative medium is a non-traditional, novel medium that implicitly communicates the message (Dahlén 2005). A pillow, with associations such as sleep and relax and comfort, becomes a creative medium when it promotes a product or service that stresses similar features. Think for example of an insurance company that wants to convey helping you to relax and sleep well, because they take away your worries. The associations with the medium may then spillover to the brand (Dahlén et al. 2009).

Overall, Dahlén and colleagues have reported positive affective responses of creative media use in advertising. In comparison with a traditional medium, a creative medium increases ad attitude (Dahlén 2005; Dahlén and Edenius 2007; Dahlén et al. 2009) and brand attitude (Dahlén 2005; Dahlén et al. 2009). Also, more cognitive positive effects have been demonstrated. A creative medium captures attention better (Dahlén et al. 2009) increases the strength of brand associations over time and makes it more likely that people recall the brand (Dahlén et al. 2009). But why do these positive effects occur? And how do they trigger (electronic) word of mouth about the ad and the brand? We propose that creative media advertisements are surprising and that two mechanisms of surprise play a role in predicting positive affective outcomes for online sharing: transfer of positive feelings and increased positive elaboration.

Surprise is the emotion with which we react to unexpected things, such as an advertisement in a creative medium. From an evolutionary perspective, surprise readies the body and mind to explore and learn about the unknown. It comprises physiological reactions, behavioral responses and a subjective feeling (Meyer et al. 1991). There is a debate about the valence of the feeling of surprise (Noordewier and Breugelmans 2013) being neutral, positive or negative. We follow a recent review about the impact of surprise in advertising and assume that surprise is a neutral emotion that colors or amplifies ongoing evaluations (Hutter and Hoffmann 2014). The more positive (vs. negative) an unexpected ad is experienced, the more positive (vs. negative) ad attitudes become (Ang and Low 2000). It has been argued and demonstrated that subtle novelty is pleasantly arousing and instigates curiosity and exploration (Berlyne 1950; Eelen and Verlegh 2013). Therefore, we believe that the feeling of surprise in the context of creative media is positive. The process of *affective priming* (Murphy and Zajonc 1993) indicates that those feelings can spill over to the advertised brand or product. Research has indeed shown that a creative medium induces a feeling of surprise that positively influences the evaluation of the brand (Dahlén 2005; Hutter and Hoffmann 2014), but this has not been validated in the context of online sharing. There is evidence that surprise is one of the driving forces of diffusion in (electronic) word-of-mouth (WOM). The presence of surprise increases people's will to share news items (Berger and Milkman 2012), product and service experiences (Derbaix and Vanhamme 2003), and advertising content with others (Dobele, Lindgreen, Beverland, Vanhamme, & van Wijk, 2007). We expect that the positive feeling of surprise mediates the impact of creative media use on the likelihood of sharing an advertisement online and speaking positively about it.

H1**:** Creative media use leads to (a) a higher willingness to share an ad online, and (b) a more positive valence of word of mouth than traditional media use, mediated by an increase in surprise.

However, surprise in creative media may not only give rise to positive feelings that spillover to online sharing, it may also trigger increased elaboration. The creative medium calls for exploration of its meaning. Being confronted with the medium, consumers may wonder why the medium was chosen to promote the product or service. This is exactly one of the behavioral components of surprise, namely that ongoing processes are interrupted to increase attention towards the unexpected event in order to *solve schema incongruity* (Schützwohl 1998). Resolving the mystery and "getting it" (i.e., the link between the message and the chosen medium) might lead to positive affect. This was found in research about humor in advertising (Strick et al. 2013). Hence we predict that creative media use will lead to more positive thoughts and subsequently to a higher likelihood of sharing the advertisement online and speaking positively about it than traditional medium use.

H2: Creative media use leads to (a) a higher willingness to share an ad online, and (b) a more positive valence of word of mouth than traditional media use, mediated by an increase in positive thoughts

Besides these effects on feelings and attitudes, there might also be more "cognitive" responses to creative media. It has been shown that surprise increases attention (Meyer et al. 1991) and that creative media capture attention better than traditional media (Dahlén et al. 2009). Hence, it could be speculated that creative media use attracts more attention towards the brand and increases the chance of sharing brand-related information with other consumers. But capturing attention in itself may not be sufficient for all ad elements to be elaborated upon. It is possible that "solving the puzzle" that is posed by the ad absorbs most of consumers´ cognitive resources and hinders attending brand-related information (Strick et al. 2010). In other words, presenting consumers with a puzzle might not help when you want them to think about your brand and its attributes. It might even distract them. In that case consumers may even be less likely to speak about the brand when they share the ad. Because of these opposing ideas, it is a research question how creative media use affects the ad content that is shared online. The proposed mechanisms of effectiveness are depicted visually in Figure 1.

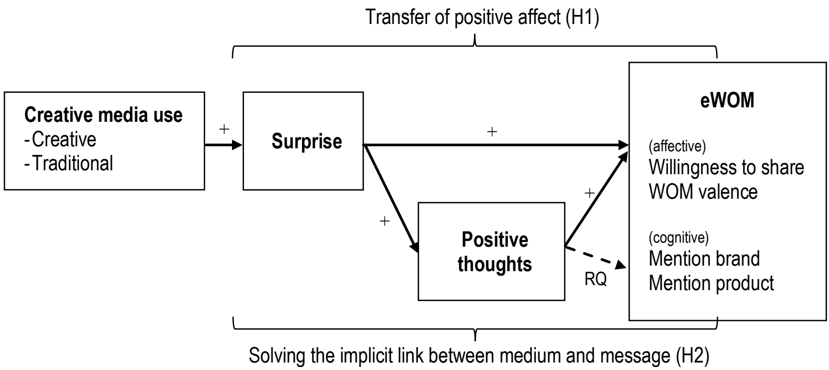

Figure 1: Conceptual model

To examine the proposed mechanisms, we conducted an experiment in which participants were confronted with either a creative or a traditional print advertisement. We explored how likely it was that the advertisement was shared, and we examined what was said about the advertisement. Additionally, ad attitude, brand attitude and recall measures were included to see if prior findings on creative media effectiveness could be replicated.

3 Method

3.1 Design and Sample

The study was designed as a completely randomized online experiment with one factor (creative media use: creative versus traditional print advertisement). Participants were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk (Micu et al. 2011), an online platform that provides manpower for human intelligence tasks.

Participants were required to be US residents and earned 0.40 USD by participating in the study which took on average 15 minutes to complete. In total 303 MTurk workers participated in this study. Participants who did not follow instructions (n = 7), who scored low on English language proficiency (n = 2), who indicated they had seen the ad before (n = 3), or who had an outlying ad viewing time (n = 5), were excluded from further analyses (see Measures). The final sample hence consisted of 287 participants (188 women, 99 men) between 18 and 76 years of age (M_{Age} = 38.42, SD_{Age} = 14.25). Observations were still equally balanced across the ad type conditions ($n_{traditional} = 140$, $n_{creative} = 147$, $\chi^2 = 0.17$, $p > .67$). For less than 1% the highest education degree was primary education, for 11% secondary education, for 33% post-secondary education, for 41% a bachelor degree, for 11% a master degree, for 3% a doctoral degree.

3.2 Stimulus Development

To ensure a naturalistic context, we adapted a picture of an existing creative advertisement and translated it into an equivalent traditional ad (see Figure 2). Although exposure to a picture of an advertisement is a different experience than being confronted with an ad in the actual medium, this technique has successfully been used in prior research about creative media (Dahlén 2005; Dahlén and Edenius 2007). Moreover, pictures are often shared online through social media. As a consequence people are confronted more often with a copy of the creative medium than with the medium itself. Therefore exposure to a picture creates a realistic setting for studying online sharing of ads.

Figure 2: Stimuli used in the pretest and study. Left: advertisement in a creative medium with added mock-up website. Right: print advertisement created in line with the ad on the straw

The chosen creative advertisement was a picture that showed a hand holding a drinking straw on which a woman in gym clothing was printed together with the company name “Y+ yoga center”. The straw promoted a yoga center in China and was therefore expected to be unknown to U.S. residents. The female figure was placed on the spot where the straw could be flexed, such that the user could make the woman bend into an actual yoga pose. A short mock-up website address “www.yplus.com” on the straw was added to increase the actionability of the advertisement. The website would allow consumers to look up further information about the yoga center. Next to the creative ad, a traditional print advertising with the same message was created.

In a pretest, 20 participants (M_{Age} = 26.50, SD_{Age} = 7.06, age range 21-52, 12 women) rated both the traditional and creative advertisement. Perceived creativity was measured with the novelty and originality dimension of the creative product semantic scale (CPSS) (White et al. 2002). The scale consisted of five bipolar 7-point scales anchored with opposing adjectives (*over used – fresh, predictable – novel, usual – unusual, unique – ordinary, original – conventional*), α = .88, *M* = 5.18, *SD* = .77. A paired sample t-test showed that the average perceived creativity of the ad on the drinking straw (*M* = 6.21, *SD* = 0.78) was higher than the perceived creativity of the ad in the traditional medium (*M* = 4.26, *SD* = 0.89), $t(19) = 8.00$, $p < .0001$). Participants also compared the ads directly (on bipolar 7-point scales, one sample t-tests indicate whether each result was different from the midpoint). They evaluated the ads as resembling (versus *unresembling*, *M* = 5.15, *SD* = 1.60, $t(19) = 3.22$, $p = .005$) and conveying similar textual information (versus *different*, *M* = 6.55, *SD* = 0.69, $t(19) = 16.62$, $p < .0001$). The visuals were not considered highly similar, but not different either (*M* = 4.50, *SD* = 2.04, $t(19) = 1.10$, $p = .287$). The developed creative ad and its traditional counterpart were found appropriate to be used for the main study.

3.3 Procedure

Participants were requested to imagine being in a juice bar and ordering a drink. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the medium type conditions. In the traditional ad condition, participants imagined flipping through a magazine while enjoying their drink and noticing a print ad in it. In the creative ad condition, participants imagined enjoying their drink and noticing an ad on their drinking straw. As in real life, participants could determine the length of exposure to the ad on their own, by clicking through to the next section at their own pace. After exposure, ad-related measures followed (willingness to share, writing a message about the ad, attitude towards the ad, surprise, attitude towards the brand, valence of WOM, manipulation check, ad thoughts, recall of ad elements). Finally, participants responded to control questions (ad familiarity, interest in yoga, manipulation check) and provided demographic information. Participants were debriefed and reminded of contact details of the researchers.

3.4 Measures

3.4.1 Length of Ad Exposure

We measured length of exposure in seconds from the start of exposure until participants clicked on the "next" button. Values were then log transformed (i.e., natural logarithm) to obtain a normal distribution. Outlying ad viewing times were excluded per condition (n = 3 for traditional ad, n = 2 for creative ad) according to the interquartile distance criterion of Tukey (1977) to ensure that all observations represented natural viewing times. On average, participants took 17.29 seconds to look at the advertisement (min = 3.53, max = 81.45; in ln seconds: $M = 2.85$, $SD = 0.58$).

3.4.2 Willingness to Share

Participants indicated their willingness to share the advertisement online for two types of messages, public and private sharing, on a 7-point Likert scale with the endpoints *strongly disagree* (1) and *strongly agree* (7) (based on Huang, Lin and Lin 2009). The two statements were "I would pass along/ share the just seen ad online to a bigger audience, e.g. as a Facebook status", and "I would pass along/ share the just seen ad online in a private message" ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.85$). These items could be taken together, $r = .67$, $p < .0001$, $M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.70$. Overall, half of all participants wanted to share the message (31% both publicly and privately, 10% only privately, 9% only publicly), and half did not want to share the message publicly or privately.

3.4.3 Word of Mouth Content

Participants were requested to imagine they would forward the ad on their favorite social network site and to make up a short accompanying message. Through an automated text analysis that accounted for incorrect spelling, each message was afterwards coded for mentioning the topic yoga (41%), and mentioning the brand (3%).

3.4.4 Word of Mouth Valence

At the end of the survey participants were confronted with the message they had written and were requested to rate its valence (Cacioppo et al. 1997) on a 7-

point scale from *very negative* (1) to *very positive* (7). Overall, the messages had a positive tone (M = 5.38, SD = 1.51).

3.4.5 Attitude towards the Ad

Attitude towards the ad was assessed using three bipolar 7-point scales, anchored (a) *bad – good*, (b) *unpleasant – pleasant*, and (c) *unfavorable – favorable* (Dahlén, 2005; Dahlén, 2009), α = .95, M = 5.45, SD = 1.52.

3.4.6 Attitude towards the Brand

As suggested by Dahlén (2005), attitude towards the brand was measured by three 7-point bipolar scales, anchored (a) *bad – good*, (b) *unsatisfactory – satisfactory*, and (c) *negative – positive*, α = .95, M = 5.47, SD = 1.36.

3.4.7 Surprise

The 7-point Likert scale (*strongly disagree – strongly agree*) contained five items to assess how surprising the ad was, and seven filler items (adapted from Holbrook and Batra 1987). The five items were (a) surprising, (b) astonishing, (c) exciting, (d) expected, and (e) mundane. The latter two were coded reversely. The scale was considered reliable, α = .78, M = 4.45, SD = 1.27 (mean-centered for analyses).

3.4.8 Number of Positive Thoughts

In one essay box participants were requested to list the thoughts they had while viewing the ad (Cacioppo et al. 1997). None of the listed thoughts seemed unrelated to the study. Responses were coded blind of hypotheses for number of thoughts (M = 2.17, SD = .92), number of positive thoughts (M = .92, SD = .85) and number of negative thoughts (M = .46, SD = .72). Each measure was mean-centered for analyses. Literature suggests that different psychological processes may underlie generating positive and negative thoughts and combining both into one score reduces the chance of detecting those different processes (Cacioppo et al. 1997). However, we found almost inverse results with both measures: overall, an increase in number of positive thoughts co-occurred with a decrease in number of negative thoughts, which led to the same outcomes. The total number of thoughts did not account for the results.

3.4.9 Recall

In an open question, participants were requested to write down all elements of the ad they remembered. We coded all answers for recall of the element "website" (0 not mentioned, 1 mentioned) and its specific URL (0 incorrect, 1 correct), and recall of the element "brand" and its specific name. Those were the only persuasive elements present in the advertisements. Recall of these elements facilitates action in favor of the brand (e.g., online search for further information). Few participants recalled the specific URL (12, 4%) or brand name correctly (10%). The presence of a website address was mentioned by 31% of all participants, and the presence of a brand name was mentioned by 41% of all participants.

3.4.10 Demographics and Control Questions

Additionally, several demographics were assessed. Next to gender, age, interest in yoga, nationality and highest level of education completed, proficiency in English was assessed. We excluded participants from analyses with a beginner's level of English (n = 2), because their understanding of the questions may have been poor and could bias the findings. At the end of the study, participants indicated how interested they were in yoga (on a 7-point Likert scale from *not interested at all* until *very interested*, $M = 3.89$, $SD = 2.08$), how common they considered the ad (on a 7-point Likert scale from *very common* to *very uncommon*, $M = 4.57$, $SD = 2.24$) and whether they had seen the ad before (on a five-point scale ranging from *definitely yes* to *definitely not*, $M = 4.87$, $SD = 0.50$). Participants who were exposed to the creative ad considered the ad more uncommon ($M = 6.25$) than those who were exposed to the traditional ad ($M = 2.80$), $F(1, 285) = 416.87$, $p < .0001$. In line with the conducted pretest, this finding indicates that the manipulation was successful. Three participants indicated they had seen the ad before and were excluded from analyses.

4 Results

To investigate the overall effectiveness of creative advertising, we first looked at the overall effect of creative medium use (= CM use) on ad and brand responses, without taking into account the underlying processes of surprise and elaboration. Subsequently, we investigated the mediation pattern for each dependent variable by means of the process macro of Hayes (2013). The findings reported below focus on the impact of CM use on eWOM, and on whether the effects are driven by the feeling of surprise and/or by positive thoughts (see Table 1). All further details (e.g. parameter estimates) can be found in Table 2.

4.1 Surprise

As expected, it was found that the creative ad scored higher on surprise than the traditional ad, $a_1 = 1.44$, $t(286) = 11.70$, $p < .0001$ (see Table 1).

4.2 Positive Thoughts

The overall influence of CM use on the number of positive thoughts was positive, with the creative medium condition generating on average .54 more positive thoughts than the traditional ad condition, $t(286) = 5.66$, $p < .0001$. When surprise was added to the regression as a predictor (see Table 1), the impact of creative media use on elaboration decreased, $t(286) = 1.92$, p = .06. With increasing surprise, the number of positive thoughts increased as well, $d_{21} = .23$, $t(286) = 5.15$, $p < .0001$. As expected, the finding indicates that the surprising character of the medium calls for exploration of its meaning.

Table 1: The impact of creative media use on surprise and positive thoughts

		Surprise ($R^2 = .32$)				Positive thoughts ($R^2 = .18$)		
Antecedent		Coeff.	*SE*	*p*		Coeff.	*SE*	*p*
Creative media use (X)	a_1	1.44	.12	< .0001	a_2	.21	.11	.06
Surprise (M_1)					d_{21}	.23	.04	< .0001
Constant	i_1	-.02	.06	.78	i_2	-.002	.05	.95

4.3 Willingness to Share

We found that the creative ad was more likely to be shared ($M = 3.87$) than the traditional one ($M = 2.58$, $F(1, 285) = 48.41$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .15$). Next, we investigated whether that effect was driven by surprise and positive thoughts. In support of hypothesis 1, an indirect positive effect of creative media use on willingness to share the ad through surprise was found. All other variables held constant, the creative ad scored higher on surprise than the traditional ad, and more surprising ads were more likely to be shared. In support of hypothesis 2, an indirect positive effect of creative media use through surprise and positive thoughts was also found. The creative ad increased surprise which in turn increased the number of positive thoughts and subsequently participants′ willingness to share the ad. Moreover, there remained a positive effect of creative media use through positive thoughts directly which calls for other explanations than the influence of surprise. Finally, there was a direct positive effect of creative media use left that could not be ascribed to the underlying processes of surprise and elaboration.

4.4 Word of Mouth Valence

The findings for valence were similar to those of willingness to share. Participants wrote a more positive message about the creative ad ($M = 5.68$) than about the traditional ad (M = 5.04, $F(1, 284) = 13.22$, $p = .0001$, $\eta^2 = .04$). Hypothesis 1 was confirmed by the indirect positive effect of creative media use through surprise, and hypothesis 2 was confirmed by the indirect positive effect through surprise and positive thoughts. Again, the remaining positive indirect effect through thoughts indicates that the number of positive thoughts was not only triggered by surprise. For word of mouth valence, there was no direct effect of creative media use left.

4.5 Mentioning the Brand in WOM

Overall, the chance of mentioning the brand name explicitly in the message, $\chi^2(1) = 0.62$, $p = .43$ was not affected by the medium used. The creative advertisement did not increase sharing brand-related information in WOM. The findings even point in the direction of an inverse effect: there was an indirect negative effect of creative media use through surprise and thoughts. This indicates that higher surprise and more positive thoughts reduced the chance of speaking about the brand in the shared message.

4.6 Mentioning the Product in WOM

Participants who saw the creative ad had a lower chance of speaking about yoga (M = 27%) than those who saw the traditional ad (M = 56%, $\chi^2(1) = 26.91$, $p < .0001$). This overall negative effect of creative media on mentioning yoga in the shared message could not be ascribed to surprise and/or positive thoughts, because none of the indirect effects were significant. The direct remaining effect of creative media use was still negative.

4.7 Ad Attitude, Brand Attitude, and Product Interest

In general, the pattern of findings for these affective measures reflects that of the affective eWOM measures. Overall, the creative ad was liked more (M = 5.63) than the traditional one (M = 5.26, $F(1, 285) = 4.31$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2 = .01$). Moreover, the creative ad led to a slightly higher interest in yoga (M = 4.11) than the traditional ad (M = 3.66), $F(1, 285) = 3.40$, p = 07, $\eta^2 = .01$. Brand attitude on the other hand was unaffected by creative media use, $F(1, 285) < 1$, $\eta^2 = .003$. For all three measures a positive indirect effect of CM use through surprise was found (in line with hypothesis 1). For ad attitude and brand attitude, a positive indirect of CM use through surprise and positive thoughts was also found (in line with hypothesis 2) but the remaining direct effects of CM use were negative. There were no indirect effects of CM use through positive thoughts directly.

4.8 Recall of the Brand Name and the Website

As for the cognitive eWOM measures, the recall measures did not show beneficial effects of CM use. Exposure to the creative ad led to a lower chance of recalling the brand name (M = 7%) than exposure to the traditional ad (M = 14%, $\chi^2(1) = 4.13$, $p < .04$). This effect was not mediated by surprise, neither by surprise and positive thoughts, nor by positive thoughts directly. The direct impact of CM use on recall of the brand name remained marginally significantly negative. Recall of the website URL was unaffected by CM use, $\chi^2(1) = 1.14$, $p < .28$. There were no indirect effects.

Table 2: Overview of the impact of creative media use on the different outcome variables mediated by surprise and positive thoughts

	Overall effect		Full regression model				Indirect effects		
	CM use		CM use (X) (direct effect)	Surprise (M_1)	Pos. thoughts (M_2)	Constant	$X \to M_1 \to Y$	$X \to M_2 \to Y$	$X \to M_1 \to M_2 \to Y$
Outcome (Y)	c	R^2	c'	b_1	b_2	i_3	a_1b_1	a_2b_2	$a_1d_{21}b_2$
eWOM									
- Willingness to share	1.29^{***}	.24	$.55^{***}$	$.42^{***}$	$.26^{*}$	3.23^{***}	.60 (.15)	.06 (.04)	.08 (.04)
	(.19)		(.21)	(.09)	(.11)	(.09)	[.33,.89]	[.0004, .16]	[.02, .18]
- Message valence	$.64^{***}$	.21	-.15	$.37^{***}$	$.48^{***}$	5.37^{***}	.53 (.12)	.11 (.06)	.16 (.04)
	(.17)		(.20)	(.08)	(.10)	(.08)	[.30, .79]	[.005, .24]	[.09, .26]
- Mention brand (L)	-.58	.10	.57	-.50	-.79	-3.99^{***}	/	/	-.26 (.50)
	(.74)		(.92)	(.34)	(.66)	.51			[-2.15, -.02]
- Mention product (L)	-1.28^{***}	.13	-1.40^{***}	-.01	.23	-.38	/	/	/
	(.25)		(.31)	(.13)	(.17)	(.13)			
Evaluation									
- Ad attitude	$.37^{*}$	.34	$-.77^{***}$	$.55^{***}$	$.63^{***}$	5.46^{***}	.80 (.12)	/	.21 (.05)
	(.18)		(.18)	(.07)	(.09)	(.07)	[.58, 1.06]		[.12, .31]
- Brand attitude	.15	.28	$-.75^{***}$	$.41^{***}$	$.57^{***}$	5.47^{***}	.60 (.11)	/	.19 (.05)
	(.16)		(.17)	(.07)	(.09)	(.07)	[.40, .83]		[.11, .29]
- Interest in product	$.45^{\dagger}$	.05	-.12	$.33^{***}$	.19	3.89^{***}	.47 (.17)	/	/
	(.25)		(.30)	(.12)	(.16)	(.12)	[.12, .82]		
Memory									
- Recall brand name (L)	$-.77^{\dagger}$	.04	$-.88^{\dagger}$	-.03	.29	-2.25^{***}	/	/	/
	(.41)		(.50)	(.19)	(.25)	(.21)			
- Recall website (L)	.67	.02	.46	.13	.07	-3.20^{***}	/	/	/
	(.62)		(.75)	(.32)	(.37)	(.31)			

Creative medium (= CM) use was treated as an effect-coded discrete between subjects variable (traditional = -0.5, creative = 0.5). Unstandardized b-coefficients are presented with standard error between parentheses. The b-coefficients of a_1, a_2 and d_{21} are presented in Table 1. The indirect effects are estimated using 5000 bias corrected bootstraps [with confidence interval between square brackets]. Only significant indirect effects are reported. For the logistic regression models (L), the Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 is provided. N = 287. † $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

5 Conclusion and Discussion

We explored the impact of creative media use on online sharing of advertisements. Earlier research has shown the potentially advantageous communication effects of creative media advertising. The use of a creative medium can reduce resistance, lead to more favorable responses, increase the amount of brand-related thoughts, and increase sales (Dahlén 2005; Dahlén and Edenius 2007; Dahlén et al. 2009; Hutter and Hoffmann 2014). In the current study, we sought to broaden the existing knowledge about creative media by examining whether the effects could be extended to (electronic) word of mouth. Many consumers share branded content with others through online social media platforms (Muntinga et al. 2011). Therefore it is important to find out whether marketers can use creative media to earn more media space and reach more consumers. Importantly we investigated the underlying mechanisms that are involved in the processing of advertisements in a creative medium, as they might boost or hamper the effectiveness of creative media.

We found evidence that a creative media advertisement was surprising and that this led to a spillover of positive feelings to WOM (i.e., higher willingness to share the advertisement online, more positive valence of WOM) and to the evaluation of the advertisement, the brand and the promoted product, in comparison with a traditional print advertisement. This is in line with the idea that surprise amplifies feelings (Hutter and Hoffmann 2014) that spillover to the evaluated advertisement and product (Murphy and Zajonc 1993) . Furthermore, we also found that the unexpected, surprising creative medium generated more positive thoughts and that this in its turn led to more and more positive WOM, as well as a more positive evaluation of the ad and brand. In line with our expectations, this suggests that consumers think harder about a creative medium advertisement to find the link between the medium and the message and that they enjoy solving it. "Getting it" led to transfer of positive affect to the evaluated advertisement (Strick et al. 2013). Taken together, our findings suggest that creative media have the potential of leading to greater and more positive earned media space due to surprise and subsequent increased positive elaboration. From our findings it cannot (yet) be concluded that online sharing of the creative ad will trigger overall positive effects for the brand. First, the advertised product and the brand itself were not mentioned more often in WOM. Greater amounts of positive thoughts even seemed to hinder mentioning the brand in the message. Second, creative advertising led to lower recall of the brand name than traditional advertising. Interestingly, our findings indicate that creative media use in the context of online sharing is beneficial for the advertisement itself, but not necessarily for sharing brand-related information and (explicit) brand knowledge.

One of the limitations of our study is that we made use of an online experiment that may say more about consumers' sharing intentions rather than about real sharing behavior. However we made use of implicit measures (i.e., coding of messages) to reveal how participants felt and thought about the advertisement they were exposed to, thereby reducing the chance of finding biased results. The explicit measures were used to facilitate comparison with prior research. The benefit of our approach was that we could study underlying mechanisms of creative media effectiveness with single source data in depth. However, adding field experiments or analyzing secondary data of social media platforms would definitely be a required next step to advance our understanding of electronic word of mouth for creative advertising.

Our research has major contributions for both theory and practice. First, we replicated and extended research findings about creative media independent of the original work by Dahlén and colleagues. We have replicated the overall beneficial effect of creative media use for ad attitude (Dahlén 2005; Dahlén and Edenius 2007; Dahlén et al. 2008b; Dahlén et al. 2009) and have extended it to word of mouth (some preliminar evidence for WOM intention in Dahlén et al. 2008a). We did not find an overall positive effect for brand attitude (in contrast with Dahlén 2005; but in line with Dahlén et al. 2008b; Dahlén et al. 2009). Importantly, our measures of mentioning the brand and product in WOM and recall did not show positive cognitive outcomes of creative media use in advertising. We even found some indications that creative media use can have negative consequences for explicit memory. Prior research has shown mixed results (null effect for brand identification, Dahlén et al. 2008b; positive effect for brand evocation, Dahlén et al. 2009). It should be investigated further whether finding the link between the medium and the message hinders attention for the irrelevant context, as suggested by research about humor in advertising (Strick et al. 2013). Thus, it could be investigated in depth whether a creative ad can be "too" absorbing and fun such that it blocks further exploration of the product and brand information. Our finding that consumers wrote more positive messages about the creative ad may point to this idea. Another possibility is that beneficial effects for the brand may only occur after a time delay (Dahlén et al. 2009). Furthermore, it could be studied whether implicit brand knowledge remains intact. It is possible that brand information was only processed by consumers at the unconscious level and could not be retrieved by explicit measures such as recall (Vandeberg et al. in press). Note however that conscious recall would be necessary for a consumer to undertake any further action online towards buying a product or making use of a service. Further research could make use of more implicit memory measures to find out whether creative media use is truly detrimental for the brand. Eye tracking data may unravel implicitly how much attention consumers dedicate to the brand and product.

We also moved beyond prior findings that concentrated on effects, by focusing more on the (potential) underlying mechanisms of surprise that make creative media work. Even though this seems mainly important for theory building, it points to important boundary conditions (of when and why creative media work) that are relevant to practitioners. So far, our findings show that the positive creative media effects were triggered mainly by the novelty of the advertisements. There was an immediate transfer of positive affect through surprise. This indicates that the effects found might wear out over time, when the creative medium used is no longer considered surprising. Hence, it is clear that advertising creativity should constantly be reinvented. The surprising character of the medium also led to increased elaboration and solving the link between the message and the medium (measured by the amount of positive thoughts). Therefore, advertisers might need to be aware that mental resources should be readily available when consumers encounter the creative ad, such that they have the opportunity to understand and appreciate the cleverness of a campaign. If consumers need to decipher the message of the advertisement that is left implicit, the effects of creative advertising may only hold for target groups consisting of individuals who are motivated to think hard, or have the opportunity to do so.

Our research suggests that creative media use is a powerful instrument in the arsenal of an advertiser to surprise consumers, attract their attention, and instigate positive feelings and elaborative processing about the advertisement.

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The Underlying Processes of Creative Media Advertising

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1 Introduction

Consumers are exposed to a large volume of advertising messages on a daily basis. This excess of commercial messages is called advertising clutter. Marketers are searching for new innovative advertising strategies to break through this clutter and creative media advertising is considered as one of them. Whereas traditional media advertising uses traditional media vehicles (such as TV, newspapers, social network sites, and so on), creative media ads display promoted messages on media vehicles that (1) are not previously used for advertising and (2) have an associative overlap with the promoted brand (Dahlén, 2005). Empirical research findings support the notion that creative media advertising is an effective advertising strategy. These studies reported more positive campaign outcomes for this advertising strategy, in comparison with traditional media advertising, on responses such as brand and ad attitudes and ad credibility (Dahlén, 2005; Dahlén, Friberg, & Nilsson, 2009).

However, up till now it is unclear how these effects can be explained. Previous studies have suggested several underlying processes, however hardly any of them are actually tested. Therefore the aim of this study is to contribute to our understanding of how creative media ads are processed. Based on Schema Theory (Roedder & Whitney, 1986), we propose that creative media ads are processed differently than traditional media ads. More specifically, in this chapter we systematically relate Schema Theory to the two criteria of creative media advertising, which are: (1) unexpected media vehicle, and (2) associative overlap between media vehicle and the promoted brand. Subsequently, we explain how these unique characteristics could affect the processing of a creative media ad. Last, we propose three psychological processes (i.e., perceived surprise, perceived humor, and perceived persuasive intent) that might be responsible for the positive outcomes of creative media advertising.

In the remaining part of this chapter we first delve into the concept of creative media advertising and provide explanatory examples. Next, we relate Schema Theory to characteristics of creative media advertising and formulate hypotheses on the processing of creative media advertising as compared to traditional media advertising. After that, we present our online study in which we examined whether exposure to a creative media ad activates our three

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_24,

proposed psychological processes. The findings are a venue for future research and practical implications.

2 Theoretical Section

2.1 What is Creative Media Advertising?

Creative media advertising (also known as *creative media choice*) was for the first time described by Dahlén, in 2005. It is a relatively new advertising format, which can be classified as a form of guerilla marketing. Guerilla marketing is an umbrella term that refers to all types of unconventional advertising formats that make use of low-cost marketing tactics (Hutter & Hoffmann, 2011). The key principle of a guerilla marketing campaign is to attract the attention of as many consumers as possible by surprising them with unexpected activities or messages. An example of a successful guerilla marketing campaign was the ‘Bavaria Dress’ stunt organized by the Dutch beer brewer Bavaria during the 2010 FIFA World Cup (BBC, 2010). During the match between the Netherlands and Denmark, thirty-six Dutch women were supporting their national squad while they were wearing the Bavaria Dress (i.e., a mini dress in the national colors of the Netherlands). The press noticed the Dutch beer stunt and it was discussed all over the world, which yielded the beer brewery an enormous amount of publicity.

Like guerilla marketing, creative media advertising is an advertising format that is relatively low budget, and it tries to attract the attention of consumers by placing advertisements on unexpected locations (i.e., non-traditional advertising media), for example on eggs, bananas, in golf holes, and on elevators (Dahlén, 2005; Dahlén et al., 2009). The unexpected location is a non-traditional advertising medium, a medium that is not previously used for advertising.

For a medium to be creative, there are two criteria that the medium needs to fulfill according to Dahlén (2005). First, a creative medium needs to be a non-traditional advertising medium. However, not every non-traditional advertising medium can become automatically a creative medium because, as the second criterion, the medium also needs to have an associative overlap with the brand that is placed on it. Thus, there needs to be a connection between brand and medium that consumers are able to identify. Consequently, a creative medium is not solely an unexpected location for advertising, but the medium itself also implicitly communicates important brand associations of the brand exposed on it. A well-known example of a successful creative media campaign is the KitKat-bench that was designed by JWT London (See Figure 1). The bars of the bench had a chocolate brown color, resembling the bars of a KitKat biscuit. Further, the slogan of KitKat (‘Have a break, Have a KitKat’) was written on the lower

Figure 1. Left: the guerilla marketing campaign organized by Bavaria: the Bavaria Dress. Right: the creative media ad for KitKat: the KitKat-bench.

bar of the bench. The KitKat-bench fulfilled both criteria that were set by Dahlén (2005). First, the bench was a non-traditional advertising medium because a bench is not a typical location for advertising. Second, the common association between the brand KitKat and a bench is the 'having a break'-association, because you take a KitKat when you are 'having a break' and a bench is a typical place to relax and take a break.

Summarizing, the present study uses the following definition of creative media advertising: creative media advertising means that an ad is placed on a creative medium, which is a medium that is unrelated to advertising and has a strong connection with the advertised brand.

2.2 Differences in Processing a Creative Media Ad versus a Traditional Media Ad

A creative media ad and a traditional media ad differ from each other on two important aspects: (1) the location of the ad (creative: a non-traditional medium vs. traditional: a traditional medium) and (2) the presence of an associative overlap between brand and medium (creative: present vs. traditional: absent). We expect, in the light of Schema Theory, that these two unique aspects of creative media advertising could potentially be the source of to elicitation of several psychological processes (i.e., perceived surprise, perceived humor, and perceived persuasive intent). Before we address how Schema Theory explains the impact of creative media advertising on these processing variables, we will first discuss in this paragraph how the general principles of Schema Theory apply to the specific context of creative media advertising.

According to Schema Theory, the information in a person's long-term memory is stored and organized in multiple cognitive frameworks of related information. For example, if you see the logo of a grey apple with a bite taken out, you will probably immediately think of: Apple, Steve Jobs, electronic devices, iPhone, and so on. These frameworks are called schemata (Roedder & Whitney, 1986; Warlaumont, 1997). For the identification of a commercial message as advertising, consumers rely on two schemata: their advertising schema and their brand schema. The advertising schema is a person's complete knowledge and understanding about advertising, such as its recognizable features (Dahlén & Edenius, 2007; Warlaumont, 1997), and its commercial intent (Friestad & Wright, 1994). The brand schema is a person's knowledge and perceptions about a specific brand based on all the previously processed brand-related information (Dahlén, Rosengren, Törn, & Öhman, 2008). These two schemata will be activated during the processing of an ad, but only if the information communicated by the ad is in line with the information that is stored in one's brand and advertising schema (i.e., schema congruent information; Graf & Mandler, 1984; Warlaumont, 1997). Once a schema is activated, the information that is stored inside can then be used for the interpretation of the stimulus. However, if the communicated information by the ad is not congruent with the information in the schema (i.e., schema incongruent information), schema activation will not occur (Desai & Gencturk, 1995; Speck, 1991).

An important difference between processing a creative media ad and a traditional media ad is that only in the case of traditional media advertising both the brand and the advertising schema will be activated. Both advertising formats predominately communicate familiar brand information (i.e., schema congruent information), resulting in the activation of the brand schema. However, as stated in the beginning of this paragraph, creative and traditional media advertising use different media types to place their ad on. In the case of traditional media advertising, the ad is placed on a medium that is commonly used for advertising and therefore consumers easily recognize the advertising format, which activates a person's advertising schema. However, in the case of creative media advertising, the ad is placed on a medium that is not previously used for advertising (Dahlén, 2005). Consequently, consumers are not able to recognize the advertising format and the activation of the advertising schema does not occur.

Thus, the difference in processing a creative media ad versus a traditional media ad is that only in the case of traditional media advertising a consumer can rely on both his brand and advertising schema, while in the case of creative media advertising only a person's brand schema will be activated.

2.3 The Selection of the Underlying Processes

2.3.1 Perceived Surprise

One's primary reaction to schema incongruence is surprise, which is a neutral and short-lived emotion (Alden, Mukherjee, & Hoyer, 2000). Because of the incongruence in creative media advertising at the ad level we therefore expect that exposure to a creative media ad will elicit a feeling of surprise (H1).

2.3.2 Perceived Humor

According to Speck's (1991) incongruence-resolution process, people like to solve an incongruence and the resolution may elicit a humorous response. Humor is a multifarious concept that is commonly used in advertising (Weinberger & Gulas, 1992). Unfortunately, the concept lacks of a widespread definition in scientific research. For the purpose of this study we follow the definition of Long and Graesser (1988), who defined humor in its broadest sense: "Humor is anything done or said, purposely or inadvertently, that is found to be comical or amusing." Because of its incongruence at the ad level, we expect that creative media advertising is perceived as more humorous than its traditional (i.e., congruent) counterpart (H2).

2.3.3 Perceived Persuasive Intent

Persuasion knowledge is a person's knowledge about the motives and tactics of advertisers (Panic, Cauberghe, & De Pelsmacker, 2013). Based on this knowledge, consumers develop an advertising schema that enables them to quickly recognize an advertising message and to identify its persuasive or commercial intent (Friestad & Wright, 1994; Roedder & Whitney, 1986). Perceived persuasive intent is the degree to which consumers recognize and understand the persuasive purpose of an advertising message (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Obviously, the advertising topography is better recognizable for traditional advertising formats than for more novel types (Dahlén & Edenius, 2007; De Pelsmacker & Neijens, 2012). For example, an ad placed in a newspaper can be easily distinguished from its editorial context according to the differences in content presentation (e.g., text font/color/size, type of images, use of models). However, for new advertising formats such as creative media ads this is more difficult. Therefore, we expect that consumers perceive creative media advertising as less persuasive than traditional media advertising (H3)

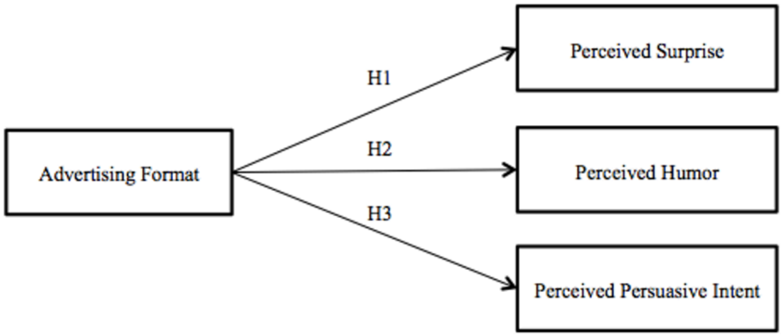

Figure 2: Hypotheses 1- 3 visualized

3 Method

3.1 Design and Participants

An online experiment was conducted with a one-factor (advertising format: creative media advertising vs. traditional media advertising) between-subject design in order to test the hypotheses of the study (see Figure 2). Participants who were at least 18 years of age and who did like liquorice were recruited by direct mail or with notifications on Facebook. Liking of liquorice was a requirement, because a liquorice brand was used for our stimulus materials. In total 79 participants filled in the online questionnaire. Of these, 3 participants were excluded from the sample because they were younger than 18 years of age, and another 8 participants were excluded because they reported that they did not like liquorice. This left a final sample of 68 participants (70.6% female) with their ages ranging from 18 to 55 (M = 24.34, SD = 6.82).

3.2 Stimulus Materials

For the online experiment, two advertisements (creative vs. traditional) were created for the brand Autodrop, a popular liquorice brand in the Netherlands. The brand is especially known for its car shaped and named after candies (e.g., *Red Cadillacs* and *Double-Decker Buses*). A familiar brand as Autodrop was chosen so that people's brand associations were relatively homogeneous (see the pretest results). The most popular Autodrop product is the *Red Cadillac*, which was therefore used in our Autodrop advertisements.

According to Dahlén (2005) and Dahlén et al. (2009), our creative medium choice had to fulfill the following two criteria: (1) there had to be an associative overlap between the brand and the medium and (2) the medium had to be not previously used for advertising. Based on Autodrop's car-association, a shopping cart was chosen, because it has some clear resemblances with a car (e.g., it has a similar shape, you can drive it, and it has wheels) and it was not previously used for advertising in the Netherlands. The ad that was connected on the cart was designed as a steering wheel and a dashboard, in order to further strengthen the car-resemblance of the shopping cart. The steering wheel contained the brand logo and slogan of Autodrop, while in the dashboard the image of a Red Cadillac candy was integrated together with the slogan: 'Don't you prefer a Red Cadillac instead of a shopping cart?'

In the traditional condition a poster was chosen, which is a commonly used advertising medium in supermarkets. The poster contained an image of the Autodrop product Red Cadillacs, the brand name, the brand slogan, and the supporting phrase that was also included in the creative media ad.

3.3 Pretest

A pretest was conducted to ensure that: (1) consumers are familiar with the brand, (2) associate Autodrop with cars, and that (3) the stimulus materials successfully manipulated the advertising format ($N = 52$; female = 51.9%; $M_{age} = 24.00$, $SD = 5.07$). First, brand familiarity was tested by asking participants whether they were familiar with Autodrop (dummy coded: 0 = no, 1 = yes), and whether they had previously purchased products of it (dummy coded: 0 = no, 1 = yes). As expected, the pretest results showed that brand recognition among the participants was very high (98%), and that 90% had bought a product of the brand at least once. Consequently, we concluded that Autodrop is indeed a familair brand among consumers.

Second, the strength of the brand's car-association was measured by asking participants "How strongly do you associate Autodrop with cars?" (1 = 'weak association', 7 = 'strong association'). The car-association received a mean score of nearly 6, indicating that the participants strongly associated Autodrop with cars ($M = 5.85$, $SD = 1.00$). So, as expected, these results confirmed that the car-association of Autodrop is very strong.

Third, we also tested in the pretest whether participants were able to identify the associative overlap (i.e., the fit) between our chosen creative medium (the shopping cart) and Autodrop, or that a supporting phrase was necessary to clarify this connection. Therefore, a 2 (advertising format: creative vs. traditional) x 2 (supporting phrase: present vs. absent) factorial between-subject design was applied. Following Dahlén (2005), the fit between brand and medium was measured with two questions on a 7-point semantic differential: ‘match/do not match’, ‘fit well/do not fit well’ (r = .87, p < .001). The supporting phrase stated: ‘Don’t you prefer a Red Cadillac instead of a shopping cart?’ As intended, the results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that participants only identified a fit between brand and medium in the two creative conditions (see Table 1). The traditional medium was not perceived as a well fit. This result validated our choice of the shopping cart as the creative medium. Further, for every condition a one-sample t-test was conducted to test whether the mean scores differed significantly from the midpoint of the scale (scale midpoint = 4.00). The mean fit scores for both traditional conditions were significantly lower than the scale midpoint; however, for the creative conditions, only the condition with the supporting phrase had a mean fit score that was significantly higher than the scale midpoint (see Table 1). Because it is important that consumers are able to identify the associative overlap between brand and medium, we decided to integrate this supporting phrase into our stimulus materials.

Table 1: Significance from the Midpoint of the Fit Scale

Condition	*M*	*SD*	*Significance (p) from Midpoint of the Scale (4)*
Traditional	1.71*	0.91	< .001
Traditional + Supporting Phrase	2.82*	1.54	.013
Creative	4.32	1.76	.507
Creative + Supporting Phrase	5.10*	1.49	.044

Note. *M* = mean score; *SD* = standard deviation; * = significant difference from midpoint of the scale

3.4 Procedure

Participants were approached by direct mail or with a notification on Facebook, with a request to participate in an online study on ‘brands in supermarkets’. By opening the link in the mail or notification, participants were redirected to the online study and randomly assigned to one of the experimental conditions (N_{creative} = 37; $N_{\text{traditional}}$ = 31).

First, participants were exposed to three pictures of different supermarket scenes in the following specific order: (1) someone taking a shopping cart, (2) supermarket aisles, and (3) someone paying at the cash register. Every picture was accompanied with texts like: ‘Imagine yourself going to the supermarket and grabbing a shopping cart when entering the store.’ Participants were able to

Figure 3. The pictures of the supermarket scenes in which the stimulus materials were integrated. Left picture = creative condition; Right picture = traditional condition.

view every picture as long as they preferred, with a forced minimum of three seconds. In the traditional condition, the Autodrop poster was integrated in the second picture. In the creative condition, the creative ad (i.e., the steering wheel and dashboard) was displayed on the shopping carts in the first picture (see Figure 2). By showing participants several pictures of typical supermarket scenes we tried to give the participant the feeling as if he was actually walking through a supermarket. We choose this scenario-based approach in order to evoke the most natural response towards the ad.

After exposure, participants first had to indicate whether they had seen the ad (100% reported ‘yes’), and subsequently they had to answer a series of questions that measured our three processing variables (i.e., perceived surprise, perceived persuasive intent, and perceived humor towards the ad), control variables, demographic characteristics, and the manipulation check of the study. Finally, all the participants were thanked for their participation.

3.5 Measures

3.5.1 Processing Variables

Perceived surprise was measured with the surprise subscale from the *Differential Emotions Scale* (Izard, 1977; in: Derbaix & Vanhamme, 2003, p.111). Participants had to indicate on a 7-point Likert-scale how ‘surprised’, ‘amazed’, and ‘astonished’ they were by the location of the Autodrop ad (1 = ‘not at all’; 7 = ‘a lot’). All the items loaded on one factor that proved to be a reliable scale (EV = 2.50; R^2 = .83; α = .90; M = 3.11, SD = 1.73). *Perceived humor* was measured with six items on a 7-point semantic differential scale based. The bipolar ends included ‘not humorous/humorous’, ‘not playful/playful’, ‘not funny/funny’, ‘not amusing/amusing’, ‘not dull/ dull’ and ‘not boring/boring’ (the fourth and fifth item were reversed; Chattopadhyay & Basu, 1990). All the items all loaded on one factor that proved to be a reliable scale (EV = 3.85; R^2 = .64; α = .88; M = 4.38, SD = 1.24). *Perceived persuasive intent* was measured with three items on a 7-point Likert-scale (1 = ‘strongly disagree’; 7 = ‘strongly agree’). The items were: ‘The aim of the Autodrop ad on the poster/shopping cart is to sell more Autodrop’, ‘The aim of the Autodrop ad on the poster/shopping cart is to make me buy more Autodrop’, and ‘The Autodrop ad on the poster/shopping cart has a commercial purpose’ (Dahlén & Edenius, 2007). All the items all loaded on one factor that proved to be a reliable scale (EV = 1.99; R^2 = .66; α = .72; M = 6.24, SD = 0.85).

3.5.2 Manipulation Check

The fit between brand and medium was measured with the same 7-point semantic differential scale that was also used in the pretest. The bipolar ends included ‘match/do not match’, and ‘fit well/do not fit well’ (r = .54, p < .001; M = 3.54, SD = 1.57).

3.5.3 Control Variable and Design Check

Marketing research showed that consumers’ campaign responses are sometimes affected by their general attitude towards advertising (e.g., Tan & Chia, 2007), which was therefore examined as a confound check. *General attitude towards advertising* was measured on a 7-point semantic differential scale based on the ad attitude scale of Zhang (1996). The bipolar ends included ‘unlikeable/likeable’, ‘unpleasant/pleasant’, ‘not interesting/interesting’, and ‘not irritating/irritating (the fourth item was reversed). All the items all loaded on one factor that proved to be a reliable scale (EV = 2.58; R^2 = .64; α = .78; M = 3.14, SD = 0.97). *Liking of liquorice* was measured as a design check, by asking participants the question: “Do you like liquorice?” (dummy coded: 0 = no, 1 = yes).

4 Results

4.1 Control Variables and Manipulation Check

The two conditions did not differ with respect to participants’ gender ($F(1, 66) = 1.00$, $p = .322$), education ($F(1, 66) = 0.95$, $p = .333$), and general attitude towards advertising ($F(1, 66) = 1.41$, $p = .239$). Age of the participants, on the other hand, was not equally distributed over the conditions ($F(1, 66) = 5.67$, $p = .020$, $M_{traditional} = 22.26$, $SD = 3.44$ vs. $M_{creative} = 26.08$, $SD = 8.36$). However, no significant correlations were found between age and any of the dependent variables (all *p*’s > .05), therefore it was not necessary to include age as a covariate in subsequent analyses. Differences across both experimental conditions regarding the dependent variables can thus not be ascribed to variations in these background variables.

Next, with our manipulation check we tested whether participants were able to identify an associative overlap (i.e., fit) between brand and medium. As expected, the results of the manipulation check revealed that participants in the creative condition experienced a significant stronger associative overlap ($F(1, 66) = 7.50$, $p = .008$, $M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.41$), than participants in the traditional condition ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.60$). The manipulation was therefore considered successful.

4.2 Activation of the Processes

To test which psychological processes are activated when someone is exposed to a creative media ad, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed with advertising format as the independent variable and the processing variables as the dependent variables. The MANOVA revealed a significant result ($F(3, 64) = 19.27$, $p < .001$, Wilk’s λ .53, partial $\eta^2 = .48$). Subsequently, the univariate analyses of variance, described hereafter, revealed which of the processes were activated.

4.2.1 Activation of Perceived Surprise

In Hypothesis 1 we proposed that creative media advertising would be perceived as more surprising than traditional media advertising. The results of the MANOVA demonstrated a significant main effect for advertising format on perceived surprise ($F(1, 66) = 57.90$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .467$), showing that, compared with the traditional media ad, the creative media ad was perceived as more surprising ($M_{creative}$ = 4.19, SD = 1.48 vs. $M_{traditonal}$ = 1.83, SD = 0.97). Hypothesis 1 is therefore supported.

4.2.2 Activation of Perceived Humor

In Hypothesis 2 we proposed that creative media advertising would be perceived as more humorous than traditional media advertising. However, in contrast to our expectations, the results of the MANOVA demonstrated a non-significant effect of advertising format on perceived humor ($F(1, 66) = 0.12$, p = .733, partial η^2 = .002; $M_{creative}$ = 4.43, SD = 1.31 vs. $M_{traditonal}$ = 4.33, SD = 1.18). No support was therefore found in our study for Hypothesis 2.

4.2.3 Activation of Perceived Persuasive Intent (PP_{intent})

In Hypothesis 3 we proposed that creative media advertising would be perceived as less persuasive than traditional media advertising. However, our findings showed that in both conditions the score on PP_{intent} was very high ($M_{creative}$ = 6.16, SD = 0.97 vs. $M_{traditonal}$ = 6.33, SD = 0.68), resulting in a non-significant main affect of advertising format on PP_{intent} ($F(1, 66) = 0.68$, p = .441, partial η^2 = .010). Thus, no support was found for Hypothesis 3.

5 Conclusion and Discussion

Previous studies on creative media advertising showed that creative media campaigns outperformed traditional media campaigns in several ways (Dahlén, 2005; Dahlén et al., 2009). For example, exposure to a creative media ad, in comparison with a traditional ad, resulted in stronger and more persisting brand associations, more positive ad and brand ad attitudes, and greater ad credibility. However, even though several underlying processes were proposed to explain these differences in effect, nearly any of these were actually tested for their presence. As a consequence, this study was designed to test which psychological processes are activated when someone is exposed to a creative media ad. In total, the activation of the following three psychological processes was tested: perceived surprise, perceived humor, and perceived persuasive intent.

First, confirming our expectations and in line with the findings of Dahlén (2005), the results demonstrated that the creative media ad (i.e., the shopping cart) was perceived as more surprising in comparison with the traditional media ad (i.e., the poster). So, we can therefore conclude that exposure to the creative media ad resulted in the activation of the psychological process perceived surprise.

Second, against our predictions, no significant difference in perceived humor was found between the experimental conditions. So, the results did not confirm our assumption that exposure to a creative media ad activates the psychological process perceived humor. An explanation for the non-activation of perceived humor in the creative condition could be that participants did not recognized the connection between the brand and the creative medium. This explanation is further strengthened by the fact that in the creative condition the fit score of the manipulation check was only 4.00 (on a 7-point scale), which was a relatively low score in comparison with the fit score that was found in our pretest (M = 5.10). However, participants in the pretest were specifically asked to process the ad carefully, an instruction that was not given during the online scenario-based study in order to increase external validity. The discrepancy between the fit score of the pretest and the fit score of the online study could imply that solely a picture of a creative media ad is not able to stimulate participants to process the ad in depth. Consequently, it seems therefore logical that participants were not able recognize the congruence of the brand with the creative medium, which was a necessity for the elicitation of a humorous response (Speck, 1991). So, participants' inability to solve 'the creative puzzle' could have hindered the activation of perceived humor.

Third, also against our expectations, both the creative media ad and the traditional media ad were perceived as equally persuasive. Thus, exposure to the creative media ad did not activate the psychological process perceived persuasive intent. Probably, the reason for the non-activation is the same as for perceived humor: participants were not able to fully understand the connection between the brand and the creative medium. As a consequence, the creative media ad would have been processed in the same way as the traditional media ad, which explains why both advertising formats were perceived as almost equally persuasive. However, another explanation could be that the shopping environment (i.e., the supermarket) functioned as a commercial prime, which spilled over to the ad and increased perceived persuasive intent. This would explain the relative high scores on this measure in both conditions (both means > 6).

6 Context of the Study and Future Research

The present study was the first to investigate whether the psychological processes perceived humor and perceived persuasive intent could potentially explain the effectiveness of creative media campaigns. Next, we also tried to replicate the findings of Dahlén (2005), by testing whether a creative media ad was perceived as more surprising than a traditional media ad. Although our findings made an important contribution to the existing literature on creative media advertising, they need, however, to be seen in the light of the research context, which could be the starting point for future research.

First, we used in this study an online scenario-based experiment. Consequently, participants were not able to actually experience the creative medium (e.g., driving the shopping cart) in its natural context (i.e., a supermarket). This experience could have delivered participants additional cues that could have helped them to understand the connection between brand and medium and to solve the ‘creative puzzle.’ Also, we expect that an actual experience would trigger subjects more to process the ad in depth in order to figure out to what they are confronted. We therefore strongly suggest that in future research on creative media advertising a field experiment needs to be preferred over an online experiment. Also, a replication of our study by using a field experiment is therefore necessary. However, a disadvantage of a field experiment is that there are many variables in a natural setting that cannot be controlled by the researcher, which could affect advertising processing. For example, in a supermarket context, factors that could disturb the processing of an ad could be: crowdedness of the supermarket, duration of the shopping trip, shopping alone versus shopping with others, and so on. Thus, a field experiment improves external validity, but it can also weaken the internal validity of the current study, which is important to keep in mind.

Next, in our study we demonstrated the activation of perceived surprise. However, this does not automatically guarantee that perceived surprise is the underlying mechanism of the positive effects that were found by Dahlén (2005) and Dahlén et al. (2009) on outcome variables such as ad attitude, brand attitude, and brand associations. Future research should try to replicate the findings of these studies and test whether they are mediated by, for example, perceived surprise. Based on the results of this study and the attention-grapping ability of surprise (Warlaumont, 1997), we expect that a creative media ad will be perceived as more surprising than a traditional media ad, which will have a positive effect on cognitive campaign outcomes.

In sum, in light of the above mentioned research context, this study demonstrated that exposure to a creative media ad activates the psychological process perceived surprise. However, no evidence was found for the activation of perceived humor and perceived persuasive intent. Following the words *‘Creativity is contagious, pass it on’* (a quote ascribed to Albert Einstein), we would like to encourage researchers to be actually creative, create real advertisements, and to test our theoretical framework in a real life setting.

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Creative vs. Traditional Media Choice: Effects on Word-of-Mouth and Purchase Intention

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1 Introduction

Nowadays, consumers are daily confronted with dozens of advertising messages due to an explosive media and advertising growth during the past decades. Compared to the 1970's, where consumers where daily exposed to about 500 ads, today they are faced with approximately 5,000 ads a day (Johnson, 2006). Taking into account this enormous mass of advertising messages, which is also known as advertising clutter, it is only logical that consumers protect themselves by selectively paying attention to the advertising jungle they are living in.

In fact, existing research shows that consumers increasingly avoid traditional advertising (Speck & Elliot, 1997). As a result, advertisers have to do or die in order to obtain consumers' attention to their message and to stand out of all other advertising messages. An important way of catching the eye of consumers and distinguishing from competing advertising messages is using guerilla marketing, which is defined as an unconventional way of performing marketing activities on a very low budget in non-traditional media (Levinson, 1984; Levinson and McLaughlin, 2005). Although the term "low-budget" is essential to this definition, the last few years have witnessed "an increased use of expensive non-traditional media campaigns" (Dahlén, Granlund & Grenros, 2009, p. 156). Campaigns containing a creative media choice, that is "employing a novel medium that makes a statement in itself" (Dahlén, Friberg & Nielson, 2009, p. 121) are an example for these sort of campaigns.

Until now, only a few studies have empirically compared the new advertising phenomenon creative media choice with traditional ads. Creative media choice has a number of potential advantages. First, building on associative learning theory, it is known that due to an associative overlap between the brand and the novel medium (e.g. a park bank that looks like KitKat chocolate with the slogan "Have a break, have a KitKat" on it), the medium in itself communicates the message rather than the logo or slogan on it (Dahlén et al., 2009). Second, the creative medium produces more persisting brand associations than ad placement in a traditional medium (Dahlén et al., 2009), and it may even become "a cue that evokes the brand in consumers' mind at future exposures, even when the brand is no longer featured in the medium" (Dahlén et al., 2009, p. 121). Third,

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_25, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

using a creative medium enhances the perception of target brand associations and it increases ad credibility and ad and brand attitudes (Dahlén, 2005).

In spite of these promising findings regarding the effectiveness of a creative media choice, still unanswered is the question to what extent a creative media choice has an effect on consumers' intention to engage in positive word-of-mouth (WOM) (i.e. "informal communication among consumers about products and services" (Liu, 2006, p. 74)) and on their intention to purchase the advertised product. Obviously, this is a gap in existing scientific literature which has to be filled, because WOM and purchase intention are important constructs for both researchers and marketers due to two reasons: First, WOM can play a significant role in influencing consumers' purchase behavior (Arndt, 1967; Brown & Reingen, 1987; Chakravarty, Liu & Mazumdar, 2008) and it may even have the most influence among all the sources of information that consumers use before making a purchase decision (Day, 1971; Lazarsfeld & Katz, 1955). Second, purchase intention is the most widely used conative measure in advertising effectiveness research (Andrews, Akhter, Durvasula & Muehling,1992; Beerli & Santana, 1999). Flowing from this, the first aim of this study is to investigate whether and how a creative media choice (vs. traditional media choice) influences consumers' WOM and purchase intention.

Moreover, earlier research on creative media choice did not yet show for which type of brands, familiar or unfamiliar ones, creative media choices work best. However, consumers' familiarity with the advertised brand may play an important role in consumer behavior, as it is "one of the most differentiating features among brands" (Delgado-Ballester, Navarro, Sicilia, 2012, p. 31) and since it has been found that familiar brands have communicative advantages over unfamiliar brands (Lange & Dahlén, 2003). Therefore, examining the effect of a creative media choice on consumers' WOM and purchase intention also requires scrutinizing the extent to which consumers' familiarity with the brand moderates this effect, because it could be that the effect is more pronounced for familiar than unfamiliar brands. Examining this is the second aim of this study.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Effects of Creative and Traditional Media Choices on Consumers' Positive WOM Intention

Until now, existing literature on the effectiveness of creative media choices demonstrates that a creative medium produces more persisting brand associations than ad placement in a traditional medium (Dahlén et al., 2009a) and that it may even become "a cue that evokes the brand in consumers' mind at future exposures, even when the brand is no longer featured in the medium" (Dahlén et al., 2009a, p. 121). Moreover, research has shown that using creative, non-traditional media enhances consumer-perceived value (Dahlén, Granlund, Grenros, 2009b), that is "a cognitive assessment of the value consumers drive from the ad" (Dahlén et al., 2009b, p. 156).

According to a meta-analysis of de Matos and Rossi (2008), perceived value is an important driver of positive or negative WOM. In the marketing literature, WOM refers to the "informal communication among consumers about products and services" (Liu, 2006, p. 74). Many organizations have re-visited positive WOM as a powerful marketing tool (Brand Science Institute, 2005; Kilby, 2007) and several studies have even cited WOM as "the most effective form of communication in influencing consumers" (Yang, Hu, Winer, Assael & Chen, 2012, p. 952). This is because interpersonal communication has a strong influence on consumers' purchase decisions as it is perceived to be more credible and as it acts as a promotional attraction (Swanson & Kelly, 2001; Sweeney, Soutar & Mazzarol, 2008).

Flowing from this, it seems as if there would exist a relationship between the effects of a creative media choice and the drivers of positive WOM intention, which is based on consumer-perceived value: Therefore we hypothesize: *Consumer-perceived value will mediate the positive effect of media choice (creative vs. traditional) on positive WOM intention (H1).*

2.2 Effects of Creative and Traditional Media Choices on Consumers' Purchase Intention

Next to influencing consumers' positive WOM intention, exposure to a creative medium could also affect consumers' purchase intention, which is defined as "a transaction behavior consumers tend to exhibit after evaluating a product" (Wang, Cheng, Chu, 2012, p. 359). According to the theory of reasoned action, behavior is caused by behavioral intention, which is in turn determined by the consumer's attitudes toward purchasing or using a brand and by a normative value or subjective norm (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In line with this theory, several studies (e.g. Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1990; Bush, Smith, & Martin, 1999) found that consumers' attitude influences their purchase intention, meaning that when consumers possess a positive attitude toward an ad, brand, product or service they will be more willing to buy the product than if they have a negative attitude toward it.

Research on the effectiveness of creative media choices has demonstrated that using a creative media choice enhances consumers' ad and brand attitudes more than a traditional medium (Dahlén, 2005). Hence, we hypothesize: *Ad and* *brand attitude will mediate the positive effect of media choice (creative vs. traditional) on purchase intention (H2).*

2.3 The Moderating Role of Brand Familiarity

In this study we expect that the effect of employing a creative medium enhances consumer-perceived value and ad and brand evaluations (hereafter referred to as ad and brand evaluations) which, in turn, positively influence positive WOM and purchase intention. Based on human associative memory theory (Anderson & Bower, 1973), creative media are effective when consumers have built an associative network between the medium and the message in their minds. This associative network is more limited or weaker for unfamiliar brands and stronger, more sophisticated and accessible for familiar brands (Campell & Keller, 2003). This is because when a brand is familiar to a consumer, then he or she has already stored some associations or knowledge about the brand in memory, whereas this is not the case when a brand is unfamiliar to the consumer. Research has shown that familiar brands are commonly better liked, because due to their stronger associative networks, consumers have to put less effort in processing information about familiar brands and brand information is more easily retrieved and stored (Kent & Allen, 1994; Dahlén & Lange, 2004). Based on this, we hypothesize: *Brand familiarity moderates the mediation effect of media choice on positive WOM intention and purchase intention via brand and ad evaluations (H3).*

The model proposed here is depicted below.

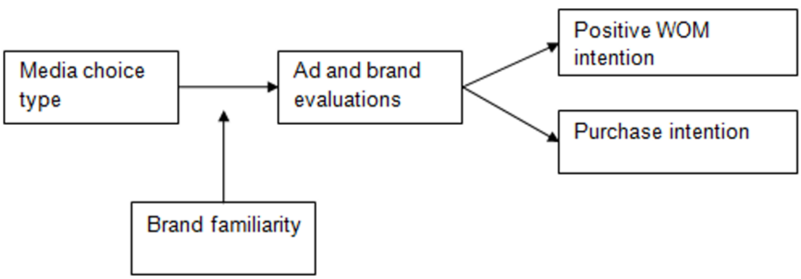

Figure 1: Tested moderated mediation model: Effect of media choice type on positive WOM intention and purchase intention via ad and brand evaluations and brand familiarity.

3 Method

3.1 Participants and Procedure

To test the model we conducted a field experiment with a 2 (Media choice: creative vs. traditional) x 2 (Brand familiarity: familiar vs. unfamiliar) between-subjects factorial design, that resembled Dahlén et al.'s (2009a) fire-extinguisher experiment. Participants ($N = 89$ students, $M_{age} = 21.10$; 76.4 % female) were recruited during 11 lectures given at the University of Amsterdam. To allow for a natural variation in attention, respondents were incidentally exposed to the stimulus material (either a fire extinguisher or a poster ad) before the start of each lecture. The material was arranged in the participants' visual field next to the entrance of the respective lecture hall. At the end of the first half of the lecture, respondents were encouraged to participate in the study which was masked as a study on media and brands. After having signed an informed consent, participants filled in the questionnaire, which measured ad recognition, purchase intention, positive WOM intention, attitude toward the ad, brand attitude, perceived value, manipulation checks concerning media choice, brand familiarity, perceived realism, and control questions on product use, product involvement, and demographics. After completing the questionnaire, the researchers thanked the participants and they explained that they will receive an e-mail by the end of the next day in which they will be debriefed.

3.2 Stimulus Materials

Media choice served as the first between-subjects factor and it could take on the value creative media choice or traditional media choice. As in Dahlén et al. (2009), in the creative media condition only the label of a salsa sauce bottle and the slogan 'Burning Sensation' were glued on a fire extinguisher so that it resembled a salsa sauce bottle. In the traditional medium condition the same label and slogan were printed on an A3 poster. The format and size of the label on the fire extinguisher and on the poster ad were kept equal among all conditions (see figure 2).

Brand familiarity was the second between-subjects factor which could take on the value familiar or unfamiliar brand. The factor was manipulated by depicting in the creative and the traditional medium condition either an unfamiliar or a familiar brand. The unfamiliar brand was the brand 'Jeff's Hot Sauce' and the familiar brand was 'Mc. ILHENNY & CO. Tabasco Sauce'.

Figure 2. Stimulus material. Traditional vs. creative medium and familiar vs. unfamiliar brand.

3.3 Measures

Purchase intention was measured using three items on a seven-point semantic differential scale adapted from Smith, MacKenzie, Yang, Buchholz and Darley (2007) (*M* = 3.06, *SD* = 1.63). *Positive WOM intention* was measured through a reliable combined scale consisting of three items taken from Alexandrov, Lilly and Babakus (2013) and three items from Babin, Lee, Kim and Griffin (2005) which were all measured on a seven-point Likert-scale (1 = *very unlikely*, 7 = *very likely; M* = 2.82, *SD* = 1.27) . Moreover, a reliable measure for ad and brand evaluations was constructed from eight *ad attitude* items adapted from Ajzen (2002), three *brand attitude* items adapted from Dahlén (2005) and three *consumer perceived value* items adapted from Ducoffe (1995) (*M* = 3.34, *SD* = 1.02). Brand familiarity was assessed with one item on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = a*bsolutely not,* 7 = a*bsolutely*): 'I am familiar with the advertised brand'. To check for a successful manipulation, questions on realism, perceived congruence between the brand and the media choice and brand familiarity were posed. Finally, control variables such as recognition, product use and product involvement and demographics were assessed.

4 Results

Manipulation checks revealed that there was no significant effect between the type of media choice and the degree of perceived congruency, ($t(86) = 1.23$, $p = .22$). However, there were significant effects of media choice on respondents' ad and brand evaluations ($t(84.10) = 2.50$, $p < .05$). Participants who were exposed to the creative medium evaluated the ad and brand more positively ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.12$) than participants who were exposed to the traditional medium ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.83$), indicating that the media choice manipulation was successful after all. Moreover, there was a significant effect between the type of brand familiarity and perceived familiarity ($t(66.39) = 10.31$, $p < .001$). Respondents who were exposed to the familiar brand experienced more familiarity ($M = 5.16$, $SD = 1.45$) than respondents who were exposed to the unfamiliar brand ($M = 1.45$, $SD = 1.09$), suggesting that the type of brand familiarity manipulation was successful, too.

Confound checks revealed that product use was significantly related to positive WOM intention ($r(88) = .41$, $p < .001$) and purchase intention ($r(88) = .44$, $p < .001$). Moreover, perceived realism was significantly related to purchase intention ($r(88) = .23$, $p < .05$) and positive WOM intention ($r(88) = .27$, $p < .01$). Finally, product involvement had a significant relation with positive WOM intention ($r(88) = .70$, $p < .001$) and purchase intention ($r(88) = .65$, $p < .001$). All three variables were therefore included as covariates in subsequent analyses.

The hypotheses were tested using Hayes' PROCESS macro (2012), which uses 10,000 bootstrap samples for estimating the bias corrected confidence intervals for the moderated mediation models specified in this study. To test the effect of each media choice type a dummy variable was created for this variable.

In total, two moderated mediation analyses were conducted, in which media choice always served as the independent variable, ad and brand evaluations as the mediator and brand familiarity as the moderator. Purchase intention functioned as the dependent variable in the first model and positive WOM intention in the second model.

Table 1 shows the results for the moderated mediation models. In both models, the creative media choice had a marginally positive effect on ad and brand evaluations. Moreover, the effect of employing a creative media choice on purchase intention was positively mediated by ad and brand evaluations, confirming H2. However, ad and brand evaluations did not mediate the effect of media choice on positive WOM intention, rejecting H1. Finally, brand familiarity did not moderate the mediation effect of media choice on positive WOM and purchase intention, rejecting H3, but brand familiarity had a direct positive effect on positive WOM intention.

Table 1: Effects of media choice on ad and brand evaluations (mediator), purchase intention (dependent variable) and positive WOM intention (dependent variable) and of the through brand familiarity moderated mediator ad and brand evaluations.

Model 1	*Mediator: Ad and brand evaluations*		*Dependent variable: Purchase intention*	
Predictors:	*B*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*
Independent variable: Media choice	.35†	.19	-.27	.28
Moderator: Brand familiarity	-.01	.04	.09	.07
Mediator: Ad and brand evaluations			.34†	.19
Model 2	*Mediator: Ad and brand evaluations*		*Dependent variable: Positive WOM intention*	
Predictors:	*B*	*SE*	*b*	*SE*
Independent variable: Media choice	.35†	.19	-.09	.21
Moderator: Brand familiarity	-.01	.04	.13**	.04
Mediator: Ad and brand evaluations			.22	.13

Unstandardized *b*-coefficients with boot *SE*; $n = 89$; † $p < .10$, ** $p < .01$.

5 Conclusion and Discussion

This study examined the effects of creative or traditional media choices on consumers' purchase and positive WOM intention and the role ad and brand evaluations and brand familiarity play in this relationship. The results of the field experiment show that ad and brand evaluations mediate the effect of media choice on purchase intention. Employing a creative medium leads to higher ad and brand evaluations, which leads, in turn, to a higher intention to purchase the advertised product. This conclusion extends the results of Dahlén et al. (2009a), Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard (1990), and Bush, Smith, & Martin (1999): whereas Dahlén et al. (2009a) showed that using a creative medium enhances brand and ad evaluations, Engel et al. and Bush et al. demonstrated that consumers' attitude influences their purchase intention. To our knowledge, it was never empirically proven that creative media choice influences purchase intentions and through which mechanisms this effect took place.

In addition to that, brand familiarity did not moderate the expected mediation effects, but it had a direct effect on consumers' positive WOM intention. The more familiar consumers were with the advertised brand, the more likely they were to engage in positive WOM intention. An explanation for this finding could be that consumers are not familiar with the novel advertising tool used by the familiar brand, which surprises them and which influences therefore their intention to talk positively about the brand.

Apart from that, this study also has some limitations, which are induced by its field experimental design: the most important one is probably that only one fourth of the participants indicated having seen the material in front of the classroom, which means that the majority had seen the material only on a black and white picture that was depicted in the survey. This might have had a negative effect on the study's results, because seeing the material on a photo is something different that seeing it in reality. Future research could try to avoid these problems by presenting the material more prominently so that it is guaranteed that everyone is exposed by it or by conducting the same experiment in a laboratory setting in order to control for possible confounding factors.

Until now, only a limited amount of research has focused on the new advertising phenomenon 'creative media choice'. Despite its limitations the current study contributes to this knowledge by demonstrating that using a creative media choice has a positive effect on purchase intention, which is mediated by ad and brand evaluations. This finding is not only essential for scientists working on this phenomenon but also for advertisers and marketers, because it shows that using a creative medium might be more profitable than using a traditional medium.

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The Effects of Floor Advertising Directed to Children in a Food Retail Environment

Bruno Veloso and Luisa Agante

1 Introduction

Floor advertisements, are a form of point-of-purchase advertising, and consist on self-adhesive billboards placed on the retailers' floors, usually in front of the product display (Prentice, 2001; Shimp, 2010). Its use has been growing over the last years and, according to Moore (2008), in the United States point-of-purchase advertising was expected to reach 8% of the marketing budgets by 2010. As more and more decisions are made in store (according to POPAI[1] in-store decision rate went from 70% in 1995 to 76% in 2012), this type of advertisement is receiving an increasing attention form marketers. However, there is a significant lack of research about this technique, particularly concerning its effects on children.

The objective of this study is to understand the effects of floor advertising on children's purchase influence attempts, brand preference, brand choice and in grabbing children's attention. However, it has also an ethical purpose: to know if they are able to understand that floor advertisements are a type of advertising and to recognize its persuasive intent.

2 Literature Review and Hypothesis

2.1 Children's Cognitive Development and Consumer Socialization

The most well known theory that explains the development of a child is Piaget's theory (Piaget and Inhelder, 2000) that proposes the existence of four cognitive development stages: sensorimotor (0 - 2 years), preoperational (2 - 7 years), concrete operational (7 - 11 years) and formal operational (11 - adulthood). During these different stages, children develop diverse intellectual abilities that help them to understand our world.

The indicated ages are average ages because each child is different and can exhibit different patterns but, on average, all children of all cultures follow the

[1] Point of Purchase Advertising International (POPAI) is the global association for research and promotion of the in-store marketing industry – www.popai.com

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_26, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

same stages. During these phases, children also develop skills and knowledge to become consumers, a process that is known by consumer socialization (Ward, 1974). According to McNeal (1992) this process occurs with the contribution of parents and marketers starting when children begin accompanying their parents to the stores (an activity known as co-shopping). Furthermore, children who co-shop more often are more conscious about brands and prices (Shim et al., 1995) and have more discussions with parents about advertising (Grossbart et al., 1991).

2.2 Point-of-Purchase Advertising and Floor Advertising

Point-of-purchase advertising is mostly used when the objectives are behavioural, for instance to generate brand choice (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961; Rossiter and Belman, 2005). Although research about its effects on children is scarce, French et al. (2001) found that labels and signage on vending machines of secondary schools have a positive impact on sales. In other study, Rexha et al. (2010) tested the effect of an advertising poster in a school canteen and found out that it can affect children's choices.

There are not enough studies to prove the effects of floor advertising, although the existing literature reports a sales lift around 10,2% and 30% (Beresford, 1997; Rickard, 1994). Some researchers argue that this technique might be effective since consumers do not expect to find advertisements on the floor (Benady, 2005). On the other hand, others argue that shoppers tend to browse sideways, and not to look down (Furber, 2001). However, according to Coughlin and Wong (2002), children have a field of vision different from adults, which makes floor advertising effective in grabbing children's attention.

Taking into account these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed: H1: Floor advertising is more effective in grabbing children's attention than adults'.

2.3 Brand Preference and Brand Choice

Past research proved that children exposed to point-of-purchase advertising are more likely to choose the advertised products (French et al., 2001; Rexha et al., 2010). However, studies about the impact of this advertising technique on brand preference were not found. Brand preference is considered to be "a favourable attitude toward the brand and, relatively, preference for it over the other brands" (Rossiter and Bellman, 2005: 26).

Moreover, as older children have greater cognitive skills (Piaget and Inhelder, 2000), one of the objectives of this study was also to understand if younger children are more susceptible to the floor advertising effects. Bearing all these arguments in mind, we formulated the following hypothesis.
H2a: The exposure of children to floor advertising will increase their brand choice but not to affect their brand preference.

2.4 Influence Strategies

Children can use two types of influence (McNeal, 1992): direct (making a purchase influence attempt) and indirect (when parents consider children's preferences). A purchase influence attempt is defined as a "child's attempt to influence purchases by making an independent request for an item (by asking, pointing, putting it in the shopping cart, or grabbing), buying an item with his or her own money, or making a decision when given a choice by the parent." (Galst and White, 1976: 1091).

Children are more likely to make a purchase request when they are in the presence of stimuli related with products (McNeal, 1992). This is why the majority of the requests are made at home, where they watch advertisements, and at stores (Isler et al., 1987; McNeal, 1992), mainly in front of the product display (Isler et al., 1987).

As children get older their parents are more likely to yield to their influence attempts (Buijzen and Valkenburg, 2008; Rust, 1993), probably because older children accompany their parents less often to the stores (Isler et al., 1987; McNeal, 1992) and because the number of requests have a tendency to decrease with age after the age of 6 (Buijzen and Valkenburg, 2008; Ebster et al., 2009).

Taking the findings from previous research into account the following hypothesis is proposed:
H2b: Children's exposure to floor advertising increases the number of purchase influence attempts made by children for the advertised product.

2.5 Children's Ability to Recognize an Advertisement and its Intent

There are no studies about children's ability to recognize the presence of a floor advertisement or other kind of point-of-purchase advertisements, neither about the understanding of its persuasive intent (if children understand that advertisements are made to make them buy a product). Past research addressed mostly TV advertising, and showed that parents with higher educational backgrounds teach their children more about advertising (Gunter and Furnham, 2001; Kapoor, 2003).

Taking all the previous arguments in consideration the following hypothesis is proposed:
H3: Children's understanding of advertising will increase with the age of the child but, in general, will be relatively low.

3 Methodology

To ensure the protection of children's best interests, all ethical recommendations provided by UNICEF (2002) were followed. Adults and children were informed about the nature of the research, the methods and the confidentiality and they gave authorization to use the data.

Participants were children from 6 to 11 years old and their accompanying adults that were passing by the chocolate breakfast cereals for children aisle in the retail store. Each time an adult was passing by, with a child that apparently was in the target age group, they were approached (after observing their behaviour) to confirm the age of the child and their willingness to participate in the study. Participants were divided in an experimental group, exposed to the advertisement, and a control group, not exposed to the advertisement and we tried to ensure that we had a minimum amount of 30 children from the control and experimental group, equally distributed by the two age groups.

3.1 Experiment

A floor advertisement (83 cm x 160 cm) was designed and installed in front of the product display in a *Continente* store (figure 1 and 2), the biggest hypermarket chain in Portugal. The advertisement had an hopscotch, with which children could interact, and the chosen brand was Chocapic[2], the leader of the chocolate breakfast cereals for children market. The development of a game for the advertisement follows the trend that can be seen in the strategies used by marketers, which use fun and play in order to get the engagement of children.

The retailer's selling space is not usually designed to be a fun place for children (Barrey et al., 2010), and, therefore, it was expected that the use of a game would make the advertisement attractive in this environment.

[2] The international name of these cereals is Koko Crunch.

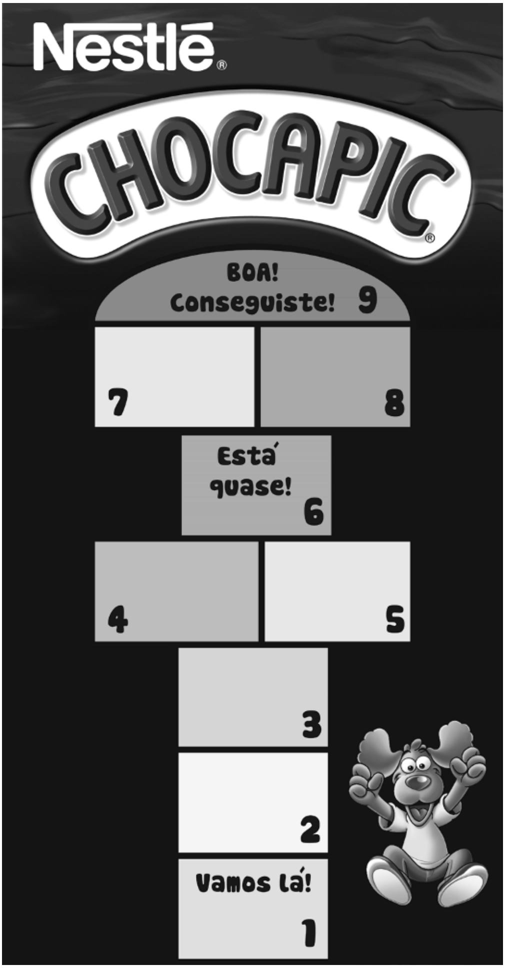

Figure 1: Floor advertising used in the experiment

Figure 2: Placement of the floor advertisement in the store

3.2 Methods

Two techniques were used to collect data: direct observation and questionnaires.

Direct observation was used because it is a good technique to understand how children behave in their normal environments since children are very reactive to strange people and situations (Greig et al., 2007). The sample units did not know that they were being observed and observations were made during 10 days (5 days for the experimental group and another 5 for the control group), from Thursday to Monday.

After the observation, questionnaires were applied: one for the adult and one for the child and, afterwards, the observation data were shown to the adult and child.

The questionnaires directed to children used pictures because verbal measures may not allow to getting a full picture of the child's abilities (Gunter and Furnham, 2001; Macklin, 1987).

3.3 *Measures*

In order to measure *Attention* we used an observation checklist to record if participants fixated their look on the advertisement at least once. This list was an adaptation from Chandon et al. (2009).

For *Brand Preference* children were asked in the questionnaire to select the products they preferred between pairs (Borzekowski and Robinson, 2001; Kaufman and Sandman, 1983), comparing Chocapic with Nesquik (second brand in the segment) and Chocapic with Continente (the private label). A rank order scaling was also used, in order to know the overall preference (they had to rank the three brands between 1 and 3, being 1 the preferred brand). *Brand Choice* was measured by observation, considering that the product was chosen if placed in the shopping cart or in the child's hands (Ebster et al., 2009).

An observation checklist was used to record the *Purchase Influence Attempts* made by children for Chocapic and other substitute products.

In order to measure the *Understanding of Advertising* presence children were asked to classify the sticker as a game, an advertisement or a decoration. As for the *Understanding of Advertising Persuasive Intent* children were asked about what they thought the ones who put the sticker wanted them to do and they had to choose between several options (a method used by Donohue et al., 1980 and Macklin, 1987): "Play hopscotch", "Buy Chocapic", "Eat cereals" or "Become a friend of Pico" (the brand mascot). They were also asked about the advertising source (Oates et al., 2003), in which they had to choose between three options: "Continente", "Chocapic" or "Pico" (the character from Chocapic).

We also collected other socio-demographic variables and other control variables like the child's age, parents' educational level, the co-shopping experience (applying the 5 point scale used by Grossbart et al., 1991), the television viewing hours, on weekdays and weekends, and the children's consumption of breakfast cereals (Chocapic, Nesquik and Continente).

3.4 *Sample*

The sample was composed by 123 dyads that were divided in the two age groups: preoperational (6/7 years old) and concrete operational (8/11 years old). Although the sample had children with all the ages between 6 and 11 years old, the number of children in the second stage was higher (40 vs 83 – Table 1). All groups were equally balanced regarding parents level of education (on average 53,5% had a degree), co-shopping frequency (on average the sample has 47,5% of lighter co-shoppers and 52,5% of heavier co-shoppers), viewing hours of TV (on average the sample had 56,6% lighter TV viewers and 43,4% heavier viewers, with light <3 hours per day), and gender (56% boys and 44% girls).

Table 1: Composition of the sample

Group	*Cognitive Development Stage*		*Total*
	Preoperational	*Concrete Operational*	
Experimental group	20	43	63
Control Group	20	40	60
Total	40	83	123

4 Results and Discussion

Regarding Attention (H1), the majority of children and adults did not look to the advertisement. However, the percentage of children who did it was higher (46% of children against 7,9% of adults) being this difference significant (χ^2=23,202; p=0,000). The results of this study suggest that floor advertising is more effective in grabbing children's attention than adults', supporting H1. Despite this finding, only 6,5% of children in the experimental group interacted with the advertisement. We investigated if this could be due to the hopscotch being considered a feminine game and this fact could influence the results, but girls and boys did not differ in their behavior towards the game.

Regarding the questions pertaining to Brand Preference, in which children were asked to choose between a pair of products, there were more children who preferred Chocapic in the experimental group. However, the chi-square tests revealed that the association between the variables was not significant (χ^2 = 0,074; p = 0,786 and χ^2 = 1,682; p = 0,195). In the rank order question, children exposed to the advertisement gave Chocapic a higher mean ranking (closer to 1) than the control group (1,36 against 1,47) and a lower mean ranking to Nesquik and Continente. However, the Mann-Whitney tests revealed that the differences were not significant (U=1669, 500; p=0,317; U=1743,500; p=0,879 and U=1735; p=0,549). Analyzing Brand Choice, by the number of participants who bought Chocapic, one can conclude that the dyads from the experimental group chose more often the product (23,8% against 10%). The chi-square test revealed that the two variables are dependent (χ^2 = 4,139; p = 0,042). Therefore, the exposure to the floor display affected children's brand choice but not their brand preference and thus supporting H2a. Since the advertised brand is a market leader, we believe it would be very difficult to change brand preferences with just one exposure. In addition, we compared the brand choice from regular Chocapic customers (children who consume Chocapic at least once per week) with non-regular customers (children who never consume it or consume it once in a month) and concluded that the differences between experimental and control groups in Brand Choice are motivated mainly by children who already consume the brand, and not so much by attracting new users (among the dyads in the experimental group that chose the product, 7,4% were non-regular Chocapic customers and 36,1% were regular customers).

The mean number of Purchase Influence Attempts for Chocapic was higher in the experimental group (0,25 against 0,08) and the mean number of purchase influence attempts for substitutes (other chocolate breakfast cereals for children) was higher in the control group (0,06 against 0,23). A Mann-Whitney test supported this hypothesis (H2b) since it revealed that the two groups are significantly different (U=1650; p = 0,048 and U=1657,500; p = 0,038). It was also interesting to observe that the number of influence attempts was not very high because, according to some parents, their children do not ask for chocolate breakfast cereals since they already know that their parents will not buy them (they consider it unhealthy).

Analysing Understanding of the Advertising Presence by the answers of the question "What do you think this is?" the majority of children did not classify the floor advertisement as an advertisement (only 14,3%) and most of them said it was a game (82,5%). Regarding the Understanding of the Advertising Persuasive Intent, only 27,4% of children recognized the selling intent of floor advertising by answering "Buy Chocapic", with some recognizing the consumption intent ("Eat cereals" 17,7%) but the majority thought it was to "Play hopscotch" (46,8%). Nevertheless, the majority of children (53,2%) understood that the advertisement was placed in the store by Chocapic. All in all results suggest that the understanding of the advertising presence and persuasive intent is low, thus supporting H3.

Although there were age differences in both the understanding the advertising presence (older children 18,6% against 5% of younger children), and the understanding of the persuasive intent (considering only the buy option 45,5% against 15%), these differences were only significant in the second type of understanding ($\chi^2 = 4{,}546$; p = 0,033).

From an ethical point-of-view, the results of this research are very valuable since children in the age range considered do not understand that floor advertising is a type of advertising neither its persuasive intent. Therefore, these conclusions can be helpful for legislators, who should take into account that children are unconsciously exposed to this kind of messages, and companies that target this age group, when selecting their target and the communication-mix.

An explanation for these results can subsist in the fact that the retailing environment is full of colours, brand logos and signs, so perhaps it is difficult for the child to identify floor advertisements and distinguish them from the remaining stimuli. Moreover, according to Ward et al. (1977) the awareness of the different advertising media increases with the child's age and, therefore, children in this age range may not associate the advertising concept with this kind of advertisements. The fact that the advertisement blended advertisement with a game could also have disguised children into its true intent.

During the observation it was also interesting to notice parents' reactions about the naïve answers of their children. Some of them just laughed while others talked with their children explaining that the advertisement was put there to make them buy the product.

A summary of the results of the hypothesis can be found in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Results

Hypothesis	*N*	*Expected impact*	*Observed impact*	*Results*	*Decision*
H1: Children's attention	126			p=0,000	Not reject
H2a: Advertisement impact on brand preference	123	0	0	p=0,786; p=0,195; p=0,317; p=0,879; p=0,549	Not reject
H2a: Advertisement impact on brand choice	123	+	+	p=0,042	Not reject
H2b: Advertisement impact on influence attempts	123	+	+	p=0,048 p=0,038	Not reject
H3: Understanding of advertising presence	63	Low	Low	14,3%	Not reject
H3: Age's impact on understanding of advertising presence	63	+	+	p=0,120	Reject
H3: Understanding of persuasive intent	63	Low	Low	27,4%	Not reject
H3: Age's impact on understanding of persuasive intent	63	+	+	p=0,033	Not reject

5 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

It is relevant to notice that Chocapic had a different type of replenishment system: instead of single units on shelves, the product was available in a big box over a small pallet (Figure 2). Moreover, Chocapic and other substitute products were, as usual, doing promotions, namely premiums and bonus packages (both control and experimental groups were exposed to the same conditions).

In addition, the advertisement was placed in the cereal aisle and, as some purchases are planned, several consumers only went there to buy a specific brand. Thus, it would be interesting to perform a similar analysis in a high-traffic area, for example a gondola end.

Moreover, the advertisement contained a game and this could have contributed to confuse children. Perhaps if an advertisement with no possible interaction was used, children would have given more correct answers to the question “What do you think this is?”. Nevertheless, in this case the objective was to conduct a study with an advertisement that could be really used by a company and it is known that, nowadays, new types of advertisements are being used, particularly in the point-of-purchase, stimulating, for instance, physical contact. Therefore, the purpose was to study a commercial message that can explore the naivety of children and be easily confused with decorative elements or entertainment materials.

Additionally, it would also be interesting to have a sample with a bigger age range, which would include older children, so that we could understand at what age can children detect the advertising presence and persuasive intent. However, the hopscotch may be considered as a childish game and, not so attractive to older children, so the stimulus might have to be changed.

Finally, the advertisement’s effect on brand choice was evident mainly on children who already consume the brand. So, it would be helpful to perform a similar analysis but with a brand with a lower market share to better understand the differences.

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Effects of Multilingual Product Packaging on Product Attitude, Perceived Quality, and Taste Perceptions

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1 Introduction

Today's consumers are confronted with a growing number of products with multilingual packaging. Let us exemplarily look at the German market: Besides product information in German, consumers will find additional foreign languages such as English, French, Spanish, Dutch or Greek on the products they use in their daily lives. A request to the customer service department for the brand Nivea revealed that multilingual product packaging is used because some products such as bath care and soap products are produced in one country and distributed in several other countries. The customer service employee stated that increasingly integrated European and international markets caused the introduction of more international product descriptions on packaging.

From the marketer's perspective, multilingual packaging is an effective cost-cutting tool: one standardized product – also with respect to its packaging – is distributed in a multinational market instead of offering different monolingual versions for every single country or language area. While the cost saving effect of multilingual packaging is obvious, it is rather unclear how foreign languages on product packaging affect consumers' perceptions and product evaluations. Until now, these effects have not been extensively researched. In this paper, we investigate the effect of adding product information in a foreign language on a product's packaging in addition to information in the native language of the country the product is sold in. An additional language can be seen as a cue or hint that points to another country or culture. We argue that its effect may be different depending on the relation or fit of the language to the product category.

This study contributes to the literature by examining a cue pointing to a country or culture, which is less explicit than the well-researched phenomenon of country-of-origin-information. It has hardly been examined how these language cues are processed by consumers and affect product evaluation and purchase decisions. Thus, the phenomenon is interesting from a theoretical perspective. In addition, this topic is highly relevant for practitioners since multilingual packaging is omnipresent in the marketplace. While marketers aim at saving costs, foreign language cues may cause harmful effects that backfire by decreasing the sales of a product. Our findings indicate that this will indeed be

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_27, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

the case when the language elicits associations that do not fit to the product category.

In the following sections, we will firstly present theoretical considerations and, secondly, provide an overview of related prior research. Subsequently we will describe our experimental study and discuss the results. It should be mentioned that we do not investigate the special case of foreign language use that is obviously targeting ethnic minorities living in a country. In such cases, different effects might occur.

2 Theoretical Background

Literature assumes that national and cultural stereotypes can influence the perceptions of objects (Maheswaran 1994). When an individual learns about a foreign country or culture (e.g., through spending holiday abroad, meeting inhabitants from a country, or from other sources of information), s/he is likely to form abstractions of this information into a specific country image (Han 1989) which includes stereotypes (Tucker 1961). According to Fiske and Taylor (1991), stereotypes represent individuals' cognitive associations and expectations about any societal group. Thus, this can also be expected to apply for national or ethnic groups. To show an example, it is often referred to France, which is associated with attributes such as high elegance, sophisticated style, fascination and charm (Haarmann 1989). Similar to brand associations that are transferred to the products that are offered under a common brand name (Aaker and Keller 1990; Broniarczyk and Alba 1994), these country or culture associations can be transferred to a product by using appropriate cues. Such a cue can be a country-of-origin-information, as extensive research has shown (e.g., Bannister and Saunders 1978; Roth and Romeo 1992), but also texts or words in the language of the respective country or culture (Kelly-Holmes 2000; Leclerc et al. 1994). According to Hornikx and Starren (2006) and Hornikx et al. (2007), cultural associations and stereotypes carried by a foreign language can be transferred to products when the language and the product is presented simultaneously. In their "model of symbolic associations of foreign languages in advertising", these authors postulate the following effect: In cases when associations are relevant for the product category or of positive value for it, the product evaluation benefits from the associations the language evokes. In other words, when there is a perceived fit or congruence between the country associations and the product category, a positive effect with respect to product evaluation occurs. This phenomenon has also been termed product-country-match in the country-of-origin-literature (Roth and Romeo 1992). We argue that besides using language cues in advertising and country-of-origin-information, foreign languages that are printed on product packaging will also elicit the described effect.

Moreover, cognitive consistency theories provide additional support for the notion that a high fit or "consistency" between country and product category associations is favorable (Festinger 1957). Since consumers also tend to make inferences about product quality from a country's image (Han 1989), we do not only propose that a perception of fit positively affects the attitude toward the product, but also quality perceptions. We test:

H1: When the language on a product packaging refers to a country or culture that fits to the product category, a more favorable attitude towards the product results compared to cases in which the country does not fit to the product category

H2: When the language on a product packaging refers to a country or culture that fits to the product category, higher quality perceptions result compared to cases in which the country does not fit to the product category

Moreover, research has shown that in the case of food and beverage products, information that is given about the product can also affect the sensory perception, especially the taste of the product (Elder and Krishna 2010; Pechmann and Ratneshwar 1992; Wansink and Park 2002).

Similar to the rationale of well-known dual process models (e.g. the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Petty and Cacioppo (1986)) sensory experiences can be formed either heuristically or more deliberately. Depending on the degree of ambiguity of a taste experience and susceptibility to external influences in forming overall taste perceptions, sensory evaluation is created by top-down or bottom-up processing. According to Elder and Krishna (2010), both processes may occur simultaneously and interact with one another. While bottom-up processing implies that intrinsic cues are processed more automatically with a heuristic character, top-down describes the processing of external information provided about the food in a cognitive manner (Smith and Kosslyn 2007). It is assumed that the impact of extrinsic cues on taste experiences increases with rising ambiguity regarding taste judgments due to a lack of experience with the product (Hoch and Ha 1986). In the top-down context, beliefs, desires, or expectations are reflected (Lee, Frederick and Ariely 2006). Before trying food or beverage products intrinsic cues are not yet reachable and expectations about the taste or flavor of the product are formed with the help of available extrinsic cues by using knowledge and memories associated with them (Okamoto and Dan 2013). Cognitive aspects are therefore able to moderate the effect of intrinsic cues and shape flavor experiences. To show an example, an experiment conducted by Carling Brewing Company revealed, that the disclosure of a favorite beer brand through labeled bottles led to higher taste ratings in comparison to the evaluation of the same beer, in which the identifying labels were removed in form of a blind test (Allison and Uhl 1964). Moreover, Hoegg and Alba (2007) demonstrated that among other extrinsic cues the reputed region of origin had an impact on perceived taste differences of orange juices even though the same juice was compared.

Therefore, we assume that the positive effect resulting from a high fit between language associations and product category also transfers to consumers' taste perceptions and postulate:

H3: When the language on a product packaging refers to a country or culture that fits to the product category, better taste perceptions result compared to cases in which the country does not fit to the product category

3 Prior Research

Several streams of research seem to be relevant for our topic. Firstly, we review studies that provide insights into the effects of multilingual product packaging in general without addressing the effect of fit between language and product category.

3.1 Research on Multilingual Product Packaging

To the best of our knowledge, there are two papers on multilingual product packaging. However, they investigate cases were the reason for the additional foreign language is to target an ethnic minority (i.e. Spanish in addition to English to target Hispanics living in the U.S.; Gopinath and Glassman 2008; Gopinath et al. 2013). The authors of these studies showed that adding Spanish in addition to English information on packaging impairs the product evaluation of Non-Hispanic U.S. consumers. (The aim of targeting the minority group was clear to the respondents participating in these studies.) Another finding was that the negative effect of the Spanish language disappears when the respondents are low in ethnocentrism. The procedure of these studies was as follows: In the first experiment of Gopinath and Glassman (2008), respondents were exposed to different versions of photographs of a refrigerator packaging containing either English only or English and Spanish information (results on product evaluation: M_{Engl}=4.53 vs. $M_{\text{Engl/Span}}$=4.12 on a 7-point scale; p<.01). In the second study, Gopinath et al. (2013) supplemented the described design by an additional English/Spanish/French-condition and manipulated photos of microwave packaging as test stimuli. They could replicate the findings described above and additionally showed that the detrimental effect of printing information in Spanish in addition to English is reversed by adding French (means of product evaluation: M_{Engl}=4.23; $M_{\text{Engl/Span}}$=3.75; $M_{\text{Engl/Span/Fren}}$ =4.29). Since we investigate the use of languages that do not explicitly target ethnic minorities but rather refer to additional markets consisting of other countries, it is questionable if these findings are transferrable to our research question. However, it is interesting that adding French reverses the negative effect found in the English and Spanish-condition. It can be summed up that adding a foreign language on the packaging did not improve product evaluations in any case but adding Spanish in addition to English had a negative effect.

3.2 Country-of-Origin (COO) Research

Since we argue that an additional language on a product packaging represents a cue pointing to a foreign country or culture, the COO literature seems to be relevant for our research as well. However, the aim of a COO information is more evident: It informs the consumer where the product comes from and is therefore often interpreted as a quality signal (Sullivan and Burger 1987; Veale and Quester 2009) what in turn, may not be the case for a foreign language. However, since a COO label is not only expected to trigger inferences about quality but also about national culture, geography and citizens' lifestyles (Kelman 1965), we assume that the findings from the COO literature are at least partially useful with respect to our postulated country/product category fit effects. One major finding of the COO research stream is that positive effects occur if the country of origin fits to the product category, what is found to be the case for German cars or French shoes, to name just two of countless possible examples (e.g., Bluemelhuber et al. 2007; Roth and Romeo 1992).

3.3 Research on Foreign Branding

Another experiment that seems to be relevant addressed the use of foreign branding cues. Leclerc et al. (1994) investigated how French and English brand names affect consumer's evaluation of brands and products. Since a brand name is also a cue consisting of language, the findings may be interesting for our research questions. The authors used brand names that can be pronounced in either French or English (e.g., Verner, Massin, Randal). They found that when the name was pronounced in French rather than English, attitudes toward the brand were significantly more positive for hedonic products (fragrance and nail polish). For utilitarian (foil wrap and gasoline) and so called "hybrid" products (hair shampoo and deodorant), brand attitudes did not differ. A similar second experiment in which the authors compared effects of foreign brand names with those of COO-cues replicated the effects just described and did not find analogous effects of the COO-cues (“made in France” vs. “made in the U.S.”). The authors explain this finding with a transfer of positive associations that fit to the product categories. They argue that the stereotype of France and the French culture elicit associations such as aesthetic sensitivity and sensory pleasure that fit to hedonic products. Therefore, these products can benefit from connecting them with the French country stereotype. It is interesting with respect to our study that these authors build this connection by using language cues in form of brand names.

Note that we refrain from reviewing literature on bilingual advertisements on the reaction of ethnic minorities (e.g., Koslow et al.1994) and on ad processing of bilingual consumers (e.g., Luna and Peracchio 2001) since this research focuses on reactions of special target audiences.

4 Experimental Study

In our experimental study, we examine the effect of foreign languages printed on product packaging. We used orange juice and tea as test products. English and Spanish were the foreign languages that appeared on the product packaging in addition to the language of the country the experiment was conducted in (German). English represents the language with a high fit to the product category tea and Spanish represents the high-fit language for orange juice. These fit combinations were derived on the basis of pretest results. The respondents in our main study were confronted with the packaging of our test products and tasted the products (i.e. they were served a glass of either orange juice or tea). Subsequently, they evaluated the product. We used a 3 (foreign language: English, Spanish, absent) × 2 (product category: orange juice, tea) between-subjects factorial design to test our hypotheses.

4.1 Pretest to Identify Language/Product Category-Combinations

To identify language/product category-combinations with a high and low fit, we used a sample of 35 students (M_{age} = 23.8 years; 51.4% females) of a German university. For several product categories, we assessed which countries these categories are perceived to be typical for by using a 7-point scale. The scale ranged from “not at all typical” to “very typical”. Based on the respondents' ratings, we selected orange juice and tea as test products because in the case of orange juice, perceived typicality for Spain was high and typicality for England was rather low (5.60 vs. 3.66; paired *t*-test: $t_{(1,34)}$=8.923; p<.001). Contrarily, tea was perceived to be highly typical for England and less typical for Spain (6.46 vs. 2.80; paired *t*-test: $t_{(1,34)}$=-4.583; p<.001). Moreover, the pretest aimed at ensuring that the associations evoked by the chosen languages do not differ with respect to their valence in the population of our respondents. Thus, we asked for associations evoked by the languages by using an open-ended question. The results showed that the associations elicited by the languages English and Spanish were predominantly positive. English, for example, evoked associations such as “modern” and “reputable”. Examples for associations with Spanish are “exotic” and “melodious”. Only very few associations that can be classified to be negative were evoked by both languages English (e.g., “bog-standard”) and Spanish (e.g., “problem of understanding”).

4.2 Creation of Test Stimuli

In order to create the product packaging for our test products, we used real products and manipulated their packaging. For the orange juice, we designed several versions of a bottle label and stuck it on a plastic bottle of which the original label was removed. To design the label, we used existing labels of the brand “Rauch” and created altered versions in German only, German and English, and German and Spanish. In the bilingual versions, the same product information was given in German and in one of the additional foreign languages. The labels contained basic product information such as “orange juice, with 100% fruit content, no added sugar”. Similarly, for the product category tea, carton boxes containing tea bags were created. We altered the packaging of the German brand “Teekanne” and the box labels contained the information “flavored black tea, fresh – spicy, 20 tea bags in envelopes”. Pictures of the packaging labels are presented in Figure 1 for the orange juice and Figure 2 for the tea bag boxes. Photographs of the manipulated bottles and boxes as they were used in the experiment are depicted in Figure 3.

Both of the used brands are neither the top-of-the-market brand nor a low-quality brand within the category. Additionally to our reported experimental design, we created two version for each of the bilingual condition that differed with respect to the order of the languages. Since this factor did not turn out to cause any effects, these sub-conditions were collapsed according to the reported experimental design.

Additional language: English

Additional language: Spanish

Figure 1: Examples of test stimuli: labels of orange juice bottles

Additional language: English

Additional language: Spanish

Figure 2: Examples of test stimuli: labels of tea bag boxes

Orange juice bottles	Tea bag carton boxes

Figure 3: Examples of test stimuli: photos of some test products used in the study

4.3 Sample, Procedures, and Measures

We used a sample of 340 students in the field of business administration (M_{age} = 22.79 years; 50% females) and assigned them to the experimental conditions resulting from the language/product-combinations. The experiment was conducted on the campus of a German university. Note that we only selected respondents who reported to speak German as their native language. Interviewers presented the manipulated packaging of one of the test products to the respondents and offered them to try the product. Thus, depending on the condition the respondent was assigned to, s/he was either served a plastic cup of tea or orange juice. In all conditions, the same tea (or orange juice, respectively) was served and the same cups were used. While being exposed to the packaging, the respondents drank from the cup. Subsequently, they evaluated the product. We measured the taste of the product by using the bipolar item “The product tastes very bad/very good.” Attitude towards the product was assessed with two bipolar items (The product is… “unattractive/attractive”; “bad/good”; r=.635) and quality perceptions with the item “The product is of very low/very high quality”. We also assessed several control variables such as consumption frequency in the test product category, language skills and ethnocentrism. For the ethnocentrism construct, we used the 17-item-scale of Shimp and Sharma (1987).

4.4 Results

First, we conducted 2-way ANOVAs according to our 3×2 experimental design with the factors language and product category (see results in Table 1). We found significant language × product category-interactions for all dependent variables what is in line with our expectations. To test our hypotheses in which a positive effect of fit between language and product category was postulated, we compared the high language-category-fit conditions with the low language-category-fit conditions for each test product separately by using *t*-tests. The results are presented in Table 2 and reveal that a high fit between language and product category leads indeed to higher product attitudes and better taste perceptions for both test products. Therefore, H_1 and H_3 are confirmed. For quality perceptions, this relationship can only be found for one of the two test products (orange juice). Therefore, we can only partially confirm H_2. We found no differences between the compared test conditions with respect to our control variables.

Table 1: 3 (foreign language: English, Spanish, absent) × 2 (product category: orange juice, tea) ANOVA results on all dependent variables

Dependent Variable	ANOVA Factors		
	Language	Product	Language × Product
Attitude towards the product	$F_{(2,334)}$=.842; p= .432	$F_{(2,334)}$=3.876; p=.050	$F_{(2,334)}$=5.307; p=.005
Quality perceptions	$F_{(2,334)}$=1.719; p=.181	$F_{(2,334)}$=4.875; p=.028	$F_{(2,334)}$= 3.336; p=.037
Taste of the product	$\mathrm{F}_{(2,334)}$=.426; p= .653	$\mathrm{F}_{(2,334)}$ =1.863; p=.173	$\mathrm{F}_{(2,334)}$= 3.453; p=.033

Table 2: Results on the hypothesized effects

	Orange Juice			Tea		
Dependent variable	High-fit language (Spanish) n=68	Low-fit language (English) n=68	*t*-test[a]	High-fit language (English) n=68	Low-fit language (Spanish) n=68	*t*-test[a]
Product attitude (H_1)	**4.74** [b]	4.28	t=-2.176 (p=.016)	**5.09**	4.54	t=2.351 (p=.001)
Quality perceptions (H_2)	**4.82**	4.31	t=-2.309 (p<.001)	**4.99**	4.71	t=1.205 (p=.12)
Taste of the product (H_3)	**5.15**	4.72	t=-1.745 (p=.042)	**5.01**	4.51	t=1.864 (p=.033)

[a] one-tailed test; [b] Scales range from 1 = low/unfavorable to 7 = high/favorable

5 Discussion and Implications

Our findings indicate that printing foreign languages on product packaging can affect the consumers' product attitudes, quality perceptions and even taste perceptions. This study revealed that a language that points to a country with a rather low perceived fit to the product category could cause detrimental effects. It is consistent with theoretical assumptions that the weakest effect was observed on quality perceptions, since the language is no clear quality signal like a COO cue but affects quality by a transfer of associations only. Our results are important for marketers since multilingual packaging is widely used. Printing foreign languages on packaging to sell a standardized product in several countries in order to save costs can backfire since sales might drop in the case of non-fitting languages. On the other hand, marketers may consider using languages as a marketing cue to make a product more appealing to consumers. Adding the right language for a certain product category on product packaging may elicit favorable associations that transfer to the product's evaluation. Since a language is a rather subtle cue, we further assume that it is less likely to be interpreted to be part of a persuasion or manipulation tactic of a manufacturer compared to other, more obvious cues that point to countries or cultures such as cultural symbols, flags or COO-cues. However, this research can only be seen as an initial study examining the phenomenon of language use on product packaging. Further research is necessary which explores the effects of language/category-fit as well as the role of the favorability of country images in general in more depth. Moreover, effects of the number of foreign languages on product packaging are unclear and research has not yet analyzed consumer's inferences resulting from multilingual product packaging.

6 Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank M. S. Dangelmayr and F. Spengler for their assistance with conducting the study.

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The Power of Symbolic Packaging Cues

Iris van Ooijen

1 Introduction

Packaging can be considered as an element of communication in the marketplace. By communicating through packaging, marketers are able to appeal to consumers at the most crucial moment in the consumer decision journey: the point of sale. At the point of sale, consumers are able to consider the purchase of a product by evaluating the visual and tactile attributes of its packaging. Marketers increasingly become aware of the powerful role of packaging as a communication tool, which is reflected in the recognition of the capacity of packaging to create product differentiation and identity within product categories that are relatively homogenous, such as FMCG goods (Bertrand, 2002; Underwood, 2003). Moreover, some brands (e.g., Dorset Cereals and Innocent Smoothies) have managed to grow towards the top of the market by allocating their advertising budgets almost entirely to their packaging design. Indeed, visual attributes, such as aesthetic appearance but also logos and product claims on the package, have shown to affect product evaluation and preference (Deighton, 1992; Ford, Smith, & Swasy, 1990; van Grinsven & Das, 2014). In this chapter however, we argue that the power of "packvertising" goes beyond the view of packaging as a vehicle that communicates logos, product claims and product descriptions. More specifically, we propose that packaging has the ability to communicate symbolic meaning through unobtrusive features in its design. These features may affect product evaluations implicitly, by drawing from automatic associations that have developed during consumers' interactions with the world.

1.1 Symbolic Meaning of Packaging

Advertising on packaging is not only based on objective product attributes such as technical specifications or ingredients, but is also (or rather) based on the meaning that the brand should convey.

From a semiotic perspective, we interpret the meaning of a brand or product by the signs that are communicated by its packaging. An advertiser has the intention to communicate product identity or meaning through packaging, and therefore should select signs (packaging elements) that signal this meaning. Consumers interpret product identity by decoding these signs, which can be

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_28,

iconic or *symbolic* (Peirce, 1931). For an iconic sign, its meaning is physically identical to its image. For instance, when a pack of cookies contains a photograph of the product that it contains inside, the photograph is an iconic sign for the product. The photograph still remains a sign however, since the photograph is not actually a cookie. A symbolic sign does not obviously resemble a meaning in the same way as an iconic sign. Instead, its meaning is indirect or associative, and determined by common understanding, context or culture (Morris, 1946). For instance, *white* symbolizes happiness and purity in the United States, while it is a symbol for mourning and death in Japan (Jacobs, Keown, Worthley, & Ghymn, 1991). As a symbolic sign, the color white acquired this meaning within the context of the receiver, and is associated with its meaning because in daily life this sign and its meaning repeatedly occurred simultaneously with each other in time or space (De Houwer, Thomas, & Baeyens, 2001; c.f. Morris, 1946; Walther, 2002).

Similarly, visual packaging attributes such as color, size or shape, may communicate a symbolic meaning that consumers generalize to their product evaluations. These meanings may have evolved because consumers are repetitively exposed to the cue and an attribute within a consumer context. For instance, in marketing, the color blue is associated with trust and security. Therefore, brands with blue logos are seen as relatively more competent compared to other colors (e.g., Labrecque & Milne, 2012). By experiencing such a cue on the product package, its symbolic meaning is attributed to and associated with the product as a whole. Moreover, as Karjalainen (2007) argues, these ‘implicit’ cues elicit references that cannot be distinguished deliberatively, but ‘make sense’ when they are used in the correct manner (i.e., when they correctly communicate brand identity).

1.2 Consumers’ Associations with Packaging Color and Shape

Our aim was to investigate whether packaging is capable to communicate symbolic meaning through color and shape. First, we systematically investigated to what extent variations in color affect the meaning that is communicated by the product package. As argued by Labrecque and Milne (2012), there are few studies that address the meaning of color as a communicator of brand meaning, and discussions on the use of color are generally based on anecdotal evidence. Although marketers show a growing interest in the effects of packaging on brand experience (e.g., quality perception; healthiness), the use of color by marketers has been shown to be based more on gut feelings, rather than on color theory (Gorn, Chattopadhyay, Yi, & Dahl, 1997). Research from Ampuero and Vila (2006) may provide an exploration in the role of packaging color in creating brand associations. These authors conducted in-depth interviews with experts in packaging design, and found that in general, darker packaging colors were associated with quality, while lighter colors and the use of white were associated with budget. In the present study, we examined to what extent variations in packaging color are able to elicit associations with quality and price in consumers. Based on the findings by Ampuero and Vila, we propose that consumers perceive brightness and the presence of large white areas to be associated with lower quality (and prices).

Packaging color may have acquired its meaning concerning price and quality in a consumer context. That is, consumers may have learned to associate certain colors with certain attributes because of repetitive exposure in a consumption context. As a second packaging cue, we used associations with visual cues that have their origin outside of the consumption context, and predict that those visual cues have the ability to affect associations with the product. Specifically, we used shape associations to increase judgments of tastefulness and healthiness of the product. Unhealthy food (i.e., food containing high amounts of sugar and fat) is generally thought of as tastier, but is also associated with a bigger body size (Katz et al., 2004), and a higher and unhealthier waist-hip ratio (Price, Uauy, Breeze, Bulpitt, & Fletcher, 2006). In the case of waist-hip ratio, a ratio of .7 is seen as ideal and healthy, while ratios of .8 and .9 are seen as overweight and unhealthy. Therefore, mimicking (unhealthy) body shape with packaging may be an effective symbolic cue to communicate the healthfulness (vs. tastefulness) of a product. More specifically, we propose that packaging with a higher width-height ratio and a higher "waist-hip ratio" is associated with a high amount of fat, but also with a more tasty product. We examined these associations in two empirical studies.

2 Study 1: Packaging Cues with Reference

In Study 1, we tested whether increasing shape and color changes of the packaging affects associations with product quality, price, tastiness and amount of fat while presenting reference versions of the packaging. That is, we investigated the effect of changes in the packaging while participants are able to use the other versions as reference material, reflecting a real-life shopping situation where consumers are able to compare several products on the shelf.

2.1 Method

Thirty-seven participants were asked to fill in the short questionnaire, and received a financial compensation or a partial course-fulfillment for their participation. In the first part of Study 1, we were interested in the meaning of packaging color for perception of the concepts *quality* and *price*. Using Adobe Photoshop CS6, we manipulated packaging color for two different product categories, namely coffee and potato chips. This resulted in a 2 by 3 repeated measures design with color cue (brightness, amount of white) and level (high, medium, low) as within subject variables. To manipulate brightness, the brightness values of the packaging colors (blue for chips and red for coffee) were set to 100% (high), 70% (medium) and 10% (low). Amount of white was manipulated by altering the white space on the packaging to either 85% (high), 50% (medium), or 15% (low). All the six packaging versions were represented by two different products, resulting in a total of twelve products (Fig. 1).

In the second part of Study 1 we investigated the meaning of packaging shape for perception of the concepts *tasty* and *healthy*. Therefore, we manipulated packaging shape for the products salad dressing and yogurt drink using Adobe Photoshop. This resulted in a 2 by 3 repeated measures design with shape cue (width-height ratio, "waist-hip" ratio) and level (wide, medium, slim) as within subject variables. Width-height ratio was manipulated by increasing the width and decreasing the height with 10% and 15% respectively (wide condition), or the other way around (slim condition). All the packages contained a volume indication (350 ml). Waist-hip ratio was manipulated by altering the ratio between the width of the lowest point of the bottle and width of the middle of the bottle to either .7 (slim), .8 (medium), or .9 (wide condition). To make sure participants did not perceive one package to be bigger in volume than the other, the overall width of the .9 packaging was decreased a little, while the overall width of the .7 package was increased. Furthermore, we put a volume indication on the bottom of the packaging (350 ml). All the six packaging versions were represented by two different products, resulting in a total of twelve products (Fig. 2). Participants received the following instruction:

> *In the supermarket, packaging is the most important way to communicate product identity to the consumer. By its packaging, you can see for instance whether a product is a luxurious product, an organic product, or a budget product. For instance, think about organic products. For organic products, the color green is often used, and often the packaging is made of recycled carton or brown paper. Because of these attributes, you can often recognize an organic product at a glance.*
>
> *We would like to know to what extent you associate certain product properties with different kinds of product packages. The focus is on your intuitive, primary response and NOT on you rational thoughts.*

You will now see different product packages that always vary on one attribute. Other attributes that are often visible on packaging, such as text and logos, are not visible here because we are only interested in a single attribute. We would like to know to what extent this attribute tells you something about the properties of the product.

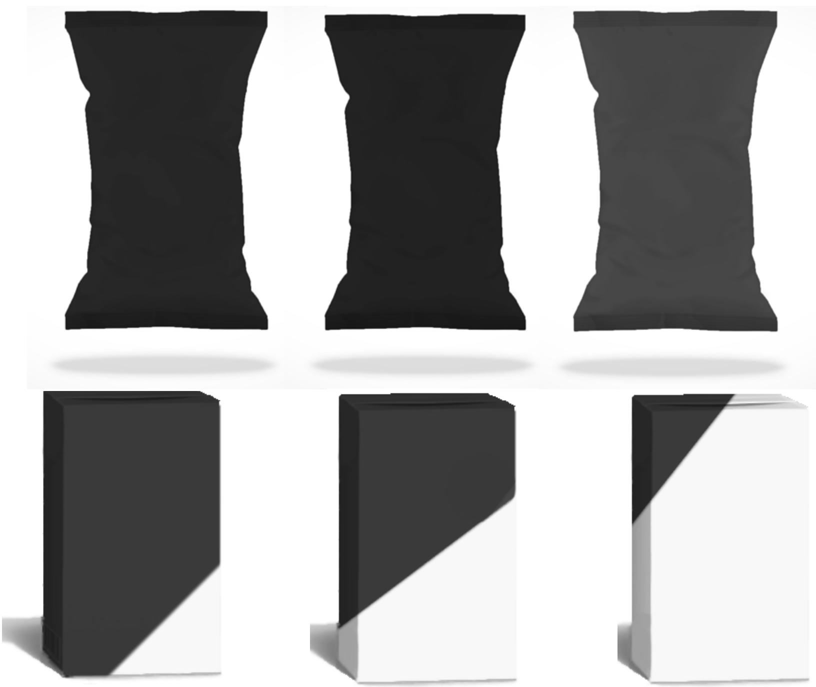

Figure 1: Part of the stimulus material from Study 1 and 2 – part 1: symbolic color. Color brightness and amount of white were manipulated for both the categories paprika chips and coffee. Depicted are the brightness X paprika chips (above) and amount of white X coffee (below) versions of the stimuli.

Figure 2: Part of the stimulus material from Study 1 and 2 – part 2: symbolic shape. Width-height ratio and "waist-hip ratio" were manipulated for both the categories yogurt drink and salad dressing. Depicted are the width-height ratio X yogurt drink (above) and "waist-hip" ratio X salad dressing (below) versions of the stimuli.

There were three trials within each product category. Within each trial, participants were presented with all three products simultaneously, while they were asked to rate only one of the three products. In the color brightness and amount of white conditions, they were asked to indicate on a 2-dimensional scale to what extent they thought the packaging communicated a low (1) vs. high (7) price, and an inferior (1) vs. superior (7) quality. In the width-height ratio and waist-hip ratio conditions, participants were asked to indicate on a 2-dimensional scale to what extent they thought the packaging communicated little taste (1) vs. much taste (7), and a low amount of fat per milliliter (1) vs. a high amount of fat per milliliter (7). The sequence of packages within a trial, as well as the sequence of product categories was randomly presented.

2.2 *Results*

2.2.1 Color

Compared to the medium and dark versions, the bright packaging version was rated as significantly lower in quality for both the coffee version, F (1,36) = 3.93, p = .055, η^2 = .10, and the chips version, F (1,36) = 6.54, p = .015, η^2 = .15. Furthermore, compared tot he medium and dark versions, the bright packaging was rated marginally significantly lower in price for the coffee version, F (1,36) = 3.15, p = .084, η^2 = .08, and significantly lower for the chips version, F (1,36) = 4.36, p = .044, η^2 = .11. For both product types, the medium and dark versions did not differ from each other on quality and price perception.

A comparable but stronger pattern was visible for the packaging where the amount of white was manipulated. Compared to the medium and low versions, the high amount of white packaging version was rated as significantly lower in quality for both the coffee version, F (1,36) = 8,78, p = .005, η^2 = .20, and the chips version, F (1,36) = 19.82, p < .0001, η^2 = .36. Furthermore, compared tot he medium and low versions, the high amount of white packaging version was rated marginally significant lower in price for the coffee version, F (1,36) = 9.84, p = .003, η^2 = .22, and significantly lower for the chips version, F (1,36) = 15.12, p < .0001, η^2 = .30. Again, for both product types, the medium and low amount of white versions did not significantly differ from each other on quality and price perception.

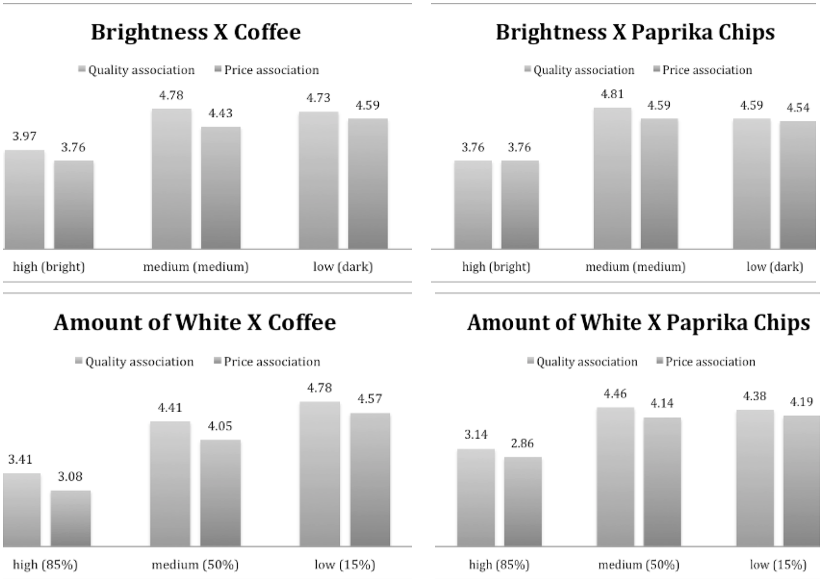

Figure 3: Graphical display of means for each combination of color and product version.

2.2.2 Shape

We found significant linear effects of width-height and waist-hip ratio on the expected amount of fat in the yogurt drink and salad dressing. An ANOVA with polynomial contrasts revealed a positive linear relationship between width-height ratio and expected amount of fat for both the yogurt version, $F\ (1,36) = 22.48$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .38$, and the dressing version, $F\ (1,36) = 7.00$, $p = .012$, $\eta^2 = .16$. Also, the higher the waist-hip ratio of the packaging, the higher participants estimated the amount of fat per Milliliter product. This was the case for the yogurt version, $F\ (1,36) = 29.40$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .45$, as well as the dressing version, $F\ (1,36) = 21.63$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .38$.

Contrary to our expectations, we did not find any significant differences in taste expectation among the different versions within width-height and waist-hip ratio.

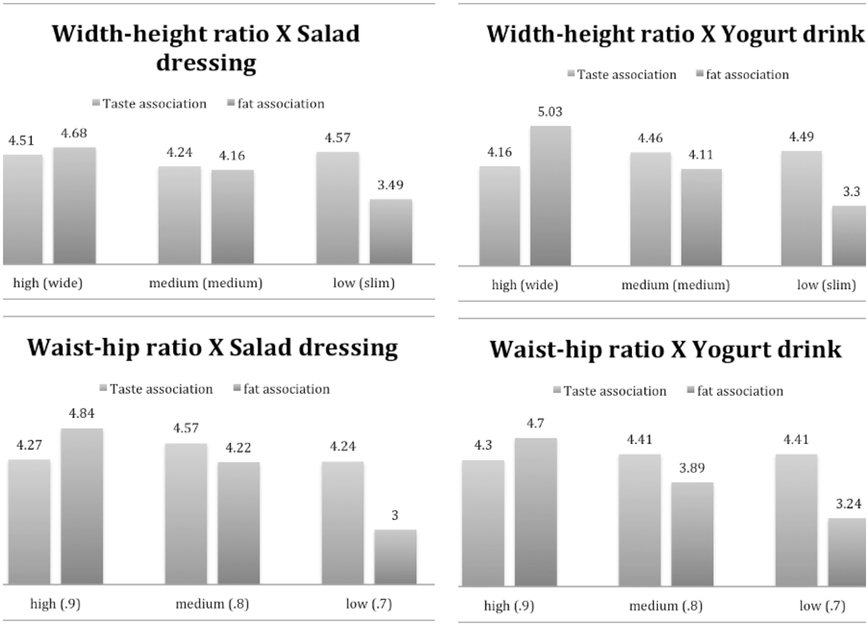

Figure4: Graphical display of means for each combination of shape and product version.

3 Study 2: Packaging Cues without Reference

In Study 2, we presented participants with the same stimuli as in Study 1. In this study, however, we presented only one version of the product packaging at a time, in order to study the influence of symbolic cues when packages are presented in isolation. We were interested whether the effects would hold when participants did not have the ability to use the other packaging versions as a reference category when rating the packages.

3.1 Method

Fifty-one participants were asked to fill in the short questionnaire, and received a financial compensation or a partial course-fulfillment for their participation. Likewise Study 1, we were interested in the meaning of packaging color and shape for perception of the concepts *quality* and *price*, and *tasty* and *price* respectively. This time however, we did not present the range of packaging versions within a condition at the same time. Instead, the different packaging versions were presented consecutively in randomized order. Participants indicated their response each time before continuing to the next packaging version.

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Color

In line with the results obtained in the first study, compared to the medium (M = 3.96) and dark (M = 3.80) version, the bright packaging version (M = 3.45) was rated as significantly lower in quality for the chips version, F (1,50) = 4,68, p = .034, η^2 = .09. Although the bright version (M = 3.59) of the coffee packaging was rated as lower in quality than the medium version (M = 4.28), F (1,50) = 9.03, p = .004, η^2 = .15, the dark version (M = 3.63) was rated as equally low in quality as the bright version, F = .01. The same pattern was visible for price expectations. The brightest chips packaging version (M = 3.29) was expected to be lower in price than the medium (M = 3.78) and dark version (M = 3.78), F (1,50) = 7.36, p < .0001, η^2 = .13. Also, the brightest coffee packaging (M = 3.35), was expected to be lower in price that the medium (M = 4.08) and dark (M = 3.86) version, F (1,50) = 7.03, p < .0001, η^2 = .12. Again, for both product types, the medium and dark versions did not differ from each other on quality and price perception.

A comparable pattern was visible for the packaging where the amount of white was manipulated. For the chips packaging, there was a negative linear relationship between amount of white and quality expectation (M_{high} = 3.19, M_{medium} = 3.73, M_{low} = 3.90), F (1,50) = 12.71, p < .0001, η^2 = .14, and price expectation (M_{high} = 3.63, M_{medium} = 3.33, M_{low} = 2.80), F (1,50) = 13.36, p = .001, η^2 = .21. Thus, the packaging with a high amount of white was associated with a lower product quality and price than the packaging with a medium amount of white, and in turn the latter was associated with a lower quality and price than the packaging with a low amount of white. The coffee packaging with a high amount of white was associated with a lower quality (M = 3.43) than the medium (M = 4.38) and high (M = 4.00) amount of white packaging, F (1,50) = 8.88, p = .004, η^2 = .25. The high amount of white coffee packaging was also associated with a lower price (M = 3.12) than the medium (M = 4.10) and low (M = 3.78) amount of white packaging. The medium and low amount of white packaging did not differ from each other on price and quality expectations (p = .12 and p = .07 respectively).

3.2.2 Shape

We found strong effects of width-height and waist-hip manipulation on the expected amount of fat. The width-height manipulation had a linear positive effect on expected amount of fat for the yogurt packaging ($M_{slim} = 3.77$, $M_{medium} = 4.31$, $M_{wide} = 4.98$), F (1,50) = 22.09, p < .0001, $\eta^2 = .31$, and this was also the case for the salad dressing packaging ($M_{slim} = 3.71$, $M_{medium} = 4.43$, $M_{wide} = 4.86$), F (1,50) = 11.13, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .18$. Thus, the normal packaging was associated with a higher amount of fat than the slim packaging, and the thick packaging was associated with a higher amount of fat than the normal packaging.

Furthermore, the waist-hip ratio manipulation had a linear effect on expected amount of fat for the yogurt packaging ($M_{low} = 3.78$, $M_{medium} = 4.08$, $M_{high} = 4.37$), F (1,50) = 8.30, p < .0001, $\eta^2 = .14$, and also for the dressing packaging, ($M_{low} = 3.49$, $M_{medium} = 4.16$, $M_{high} = 4.59$), F (1,50) = 23.56, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .32$

Likewise study 1, we did not find any effects of the shape manipulations on taste expectations.

4 Discussion

In two studies, we found support for the notion that packaging color and shape have the ability to communicate meaning to consumers. Our results indicate that - within two different product categories -, the use of bright colors on packaging communicates a lower product quality, as well as a lower product price. We found no linear effect of color brightness on quality and price associations: it was the bright packaging version in particular that communicated a lower price and quality. This was the case when consumers had the opportunity to use reference packaging, as well as when packaging was presented in isolation.

We found similar effects of the amount of white that was used in the packaging on quality and price perception. Packaging with a high amount of white consistently communicated a lower price and quality. Although we also found differences between the medium and low amount of white packages in half of the cases, these were not visible in all conditions. Therefore, we conclude that particularly packages with a very high amount of white communicate a lower price and a lower quality.

But not only colors can be used for symbolic communications. We also found effects of shape. Specifically, we found that increasing degrees of width-height and waist-hip ratio had a linear positive effect on associations with a high amount of fat per Milliliter product. Since participants rated the associated amount of fat per Milliliter product, and the volume descriptions of the product were identical in all three conditions, it is unlikely that the effects of width-height and waist-hip ratio are caused by differences in volume perception. These results indicate that imitating human body sizes by varying the degree of these ratios affects perception of the amount of fat, and thus the healthiness of the product. These findings suggest that marketers should take into account the shape of packaging design when they wish to communicate that a product contains a low amount of fat. However, further research is necessary to examine the effects of packaging shape on the expected amount of fat when additional packaging cues are used, such as product claims or information about ingredients. Also, future research should address whether varying the width-height and waist-hip ratio of packaging may have different and possibly stronger effects for consumers who have a high concern for their weight or are currently dieting. This group of consumers may be more preoccupied with body size, and therefore may be affected stronger by these kinds of packaging cues.

Contrary to our expectations, we did not find positive effects of width-height and waist-hip ratio on taste associations. Some authors found a negative relationship between perceived healthiness and tastiness of vegetables and fast-food (Raghunathan, Naylor, & Hoyer, 2006). However, this relationship may simply not apply to the products that we used in our study, since we tested packaging of yogurt drink and salad dressing, which are categories for which the healthy = tasty association may be considerably weaker compared to vegetables and fast-food.

Our aim was to examine whether an increasing degree of specific packaging cues affects product associations in a linear way, and we found partial support for our hypotheses. However, in Studies 1 and 2 we manipulated the packaging cues brightness, amount of white, width-height ratio and waist-hip ratio using three levels. To get a better understanding of the type of relationship between the degree of various packaging cues and their meaning, a study with a higher range of cue levels is necessary. With such a design, it may even be possible to examine the “optimal” degree of certain packaging cues for communicating product or brand meaning.

Although we did not directly test the difference between cue presentation with versus without reference packaging, we found that the effects of packaging cues were highly similar when participants were able to use reference packages that differed on the cue in question, in comparison to when the cue was presented in isolation. In both cases, we found moderate to strong effects of our cue manipulations. This may have relevant implications in practice. That is, symbolic packaging cues may affect product associations when consumers are standing in front of the shelf in a supermarket, where they use other packaging as a reference, but may also affect product associations when a product packaging is presented in isolation, for instance in an advertisement or a TV-commercial.

Although these notions need further investigation, this study shows that packaging is not merely a vehicle that communicates explicit product information, but is also a tool that helps communicate meaning by unobtrusive features in its design. Therefore, it may be a powerful advertising tool in creating and strengthening product and brand identity.

5 Acknowledgements

I thank Peeter Verlegh, Marieke Fransen and Edith Smit for their valuable input and comments on an earlier draft.

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I Love You just the Way You Are: When Large Degrees of Logo Change Hurt Information Processing and Brand Evaluation

Bo van Grinsven and Enny Das

1 Introduction

To keep up with rapidly changing market conditions, revitalizing a brand through an adjustment of brand logos is a natural and necessary element of brand management (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006; Aaker, 1991; Kapferer, 1998). On average, one in fifty companies change their logo per year (Spaeth, 2002). For example, Philips redesigned its brand logo in 2013 to communicate a new strategy of 'being a diversified technology company, focused on improving people's lives through meaningful innovation' (Philips, 2013). This logo change went unnoticed by many, most likely due to its subtle features. BP redesigned its brand logo more drastically in 2001. The company wanted to let go of the traditional image of a global petrol company by focusing more on sustainable energy.

The design world generally describes small versus big logo changes as evolutionary versus revolutionary redesigns. Evolutionary redesigns are preferred when brands hold a strong market position and want to reach new audiences (Airey, 2009; Murphy, 2013; Van Grinsven & Das, in press). Revolutionary redesigns are applied to reflect changes in brand identity and to diminish negative brand associations (Airey, 2009; Van Grinsven & Das, in press). Un-fortunately, both theoretically and empirically it has remained unclear how big a redesign should be in order to increase consumer attention or change brand evaluations. Thus far, three studies have explicitly examined different degrees of logo change, but these studies used different operationalizations. Walsh, Winterich and Mittal (2010) defined a small change as a slight adjustment of the logo shape and a substantial change was a larger shape change, changing the complete form of a logo from angular to round. Müller, Kocher, and Crettaz (2011) and Van Grinsven and Das (in press) operationalized a small logo change as a change in color of the logo and a substantial change as a change in color and shape of the logo, but staying true to the overall pattern.

The present research tested the effects of different degrees of logo change on logo processing speed and brand attitudes. Because several studies have shown that human preference for certain shapes may be universal (Bar & Neta, 2006), we followed guidelines by Müller et al. (2011) for substantial degrees of logo

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_29, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

change (i.e., a change of the original brand logo in color and shape). We extended previous research by also including large degrees of logo change, following guidelines of Brandglue (2013): features from the original brand logo should still be visible by maintaining some heritage of the original brand logo and/or the main product category of the brand

2 Theoretical Framework

Small and larger logo changes may be processed at different levels of attention (Finn, 1988). Processing of small logo changes, which may often go unnoticed by many, may be based on an automatic mechanism that does not require awareness or motivation (Alley & Cunningham, 1991; Bornstein, 1989). A large body of literature from cognitive psychology has found that prototypical stimuli are processed more fluently that non-prototypical stimuli (Reber, Schwarz, & Winkielman, 2004; Posner & Keele, 1968; Rumelhart, McCelland, & the PDP Research Group, 1986) because they do not demand much processing capacity. Interesting in this respect are findings from Shapiro and Nielsen (2013) who showed that spontaneous detection of subtly changed ad-elements increased fluent processing of the ad, despite the fact that observers failed to actively notice that they were exposed to a changed object (i.e., change blindness; Simons & Rensink, 2005). The authors conclude that implicit awareness of a change increases the allocation of processing resources to the changed information (Brockmole & Henderson, 2005; Shapiro & Nielsen, 2013), which, at the time of judgment, positively affects processing fluency. These findings point to the possibility that subtle, evolutionary logo changes may even increase fluent processing, compared with original logo processing, even though several studies suggest that fluency occurring at the automatic level is enhanced by familiarity (Shapiro, 1999; Jacoby & Hayman, 1987; Roediger & Blaxton, 1987).

For higher degrees of logo change, consumers need to more actively engage with the stimulus in order to understand its meaning and link it to existing knowledge. Just as complex logos require more cognitive capacity than simple logos (Van Grinsven & Das, 2014), evolutionary brand logo changes are easier to link to existing knowledge systems than revolutionary changes. Higher degrees of logo change may thus require more intensive, systematic processing than small logo changes. This proposition is supported by recent research, reporting that substantial logo changes slowed down logo processing speed (in milliseconds), compared with small and no logo change conditions (Van Grinsven & Das, in press). Extending these findings to large logo changes, we propose that the relationship between degree of logo change and processing speed is linear and negative (H1). We further propose that exposure should moderate this relationship. As each additional exposure to a changed logo is an opportunity for consumers to learn about the stimulus, and learning about the stimulus becomes more pertinent for higher degrees of logo change, we expect that exposure should speed up processing speed especially for higher degrees of logo change (H2).

Consumers' motivation to pay attention to marketing stimuli also plays a role in logo processing effects. Van Grinsven and Das (in press) found that substantial degrees of logo change hurt logo processing speed in particular for highly brand conscious consumers. The concept of brand consciousness helps to understand how consumers process information of brands they are interested in (Nelson & McLeod, 2005; Van Grinsven & Das, in press). It is defined as the degree to which a consumer is oriented on buying well-known branded products (Sprotles & Kendall, 1986; Shim & Gehrt, 1996; Liao & Wang, 2009). Highly brand conscious consumers often use brands as a form of self-expression (Belk, 1988). Just as optimally innovative stimuli, significant logo changes may require deeper levels of attention and higher levels of cognitive processing, and only highly brand conscious consumers may be motivated to invest this effort, and 'solve the logo riddle'. Low brand conscious consumers on the other hand, lack strong connections between themselves and the brand, and thus process brand logo redesigns more automatically. We thus expect that increases in degree of logo change negatively affect logo processing speed in particular for highly brand conscious consumers (H3).

2.1 Logo Changes and Brand Attitudes

Larger degrees of logo change have fewer familiar elements and more novel elements than small changes. The downside of such larger logo changes is the increased difficulty of connecting a logo to existing knowledge systems. However, the upsides of larger logo changes lie in the domain of attention and evaluation; novel stimuli are more attention grabbing than familiar stimuli and more intuitively interesting (Berlyne, 1970). Research on optimally innovative images (Giora et al., 2004) suggests that a pleasurable feeling may arise when people are challenged to process information that is off from what they know. This research shows that optimally innovative stimuli are preferred over familiar stimuli, despite the fact that familiar stimuli are processed more fluently at the implicit level. Optimally innovative stimuli appear to elicit deeper levels of attention and higher levels of cognitive processing (Hekkert, Snelders & Van Wieringen, 2003). Also relevant in this respect is research on stimuli that intend to 'communicate the message in an aesthetically pleasing way by deviating from the audience's expectations' (McQuarrie & Mick, 2003, p. 198) such as tropes, riddles and rhetorical figures in advertising (e.g., Corbett & Connors, 1999). Consumer's affective responses to such deviations from the expected depend on whether they are able to actively process and solve this riddle. If this is the case, then the pleasurable experience associated with solving the puzzle may transfer to attitudes toward the ad (e.g., Ang & Lim 2006, Lee & Mason, 1999; Phillips, 2000; van Mulken et al., 2005; 2010). When the riddle or trope is too easy or too difficult, consumers do not experience the pleasurable feeling (Van Enschot et al., 2008), with potentially backfiring effects on attitudes.

Like tropes and metaphors, substantial logo changes may present con-sumers with a puzzle; a stimulus that feels familiar but looks different. To provide a moderate cognitive challenge, logo changes should be recognizable but not too easy to solve, containing a fair mix of old and new elements. Hence, whether higher degrees of brand logo change affect brand attitude positively or negatively, depends on whether consumers are still able to process the degrees of change.

For example, Starbucks redesigned its brand logo in 2011, by deleting both the brand name and the color black from the brand logo. Although consumers had many different feelings and opinions about this brand logo redesign, consumers were still able to link the redesigned logo to the Starbucks-brand. Tropicana on the other hand, redesigned visual elements of the brand (logo and packaging) in 2009. After two months sales dropped with 20%, and Tropicana switched back to their original brand logo and packaging (Zmuda, 2009).

Extending previous findings (Van Grinsven & Das, in press), we propose a non-linear relationship between degree of logo change and brand attitudes: up to substantial degrees of change, increases in processing difficulty should go hand in hand with increased brand evaluations; for larger degrees of change, processing difficulty should be negatively related to brand attitude. We thus propose a curvilinear relationship between degree of logo change and brand attitude (H4). Because highly brand conscious consumers are more likely to process logo information at deeper levels, and because exposure increases consumers' opportunity to learn about new stimuli and gradually integrate them into their associative network as familiar stimuli, we expect these effects to be more pronounced for highly brand conscious consumers and after repeated exposures (H5).

3 Method

3.1 Participants and Design

The hypotheses were tested in a 3 (degree of change: no change, small change, large change) x 2 (exposure: 1 time vs. 3 times) between subjects design with brand consciousness as continuous predictor (standardized). Two hundred and sixty-six Dutch respondents (56.9% female, 43.1% male, Mage = 25.03, SDage = 7.82) participated in this study.

3.2 Materials

The target logos (both FMCG brands: Ola and Red Bull) consisted of a combination of a word mark and a brand logo, and were familiar among all partici-pants. The target logos were redesigned by a graphic designer, who was paid a small fee for his services, and concerned either a substantial change or a large change with respect to the original brand logo. For the manipulations of degree of logo change guidelines by Müller, et al. (2011) were followed for the sub-stantial redesigns (i.e., change of the original brand logo in colour and shape; see also Van Grinsven & Das, in press), and guidelines of Brandglue (2013) were followed for the large redesigns (i.e., revolutionary redesigns): features from the original brand logo can still be visible by maintaining some heritage of the original brand logo and/or the main product category of the brand. Because previous studies (e.g., Van Grinsven & Das, in press) have shown that small degrees of logo change (i.e., a change of color within the same shades of color, for example: changing from a red hue to orange: Müller et al., 2011) hardly sorted any effects on logo processing speed, we extended the degrees of change to large degrees of logo change, and we excluded the small degrees of logo change. The logo redesigns are presented in Figure 1.

The brands were selected based on several criteria: 1) brands should be familiar among Dutch participants, 2) the brand logos should consist of a combination of a word mark and a brand logo, 3) the large brand logo redesigns should be transformed into figurative brand logos in order to remain some of the heritage of the product category of the brand, and finally, 4) the brand logos shouldn't be changed in the last decade.

Figure 1: Degrees of Logo Change for the Target Brands

To verify the operationalization of degree of change we conducted a pretest among 50 participants (50% female) in a between subjects design; each participant was first exposed to the original brand logo, followed by a set of brand logos that had undergone either a substantial or a large change. Participants were asked to what extent they perceived the brand logo as different from the original brand logo by responding to three items (no difference - large differ-ence, no adjustments - large adjustments, no change - large change) on a 7-point scale (Cronbach's α : .94; cf. Alshebil, 2007; Walsh, et al., 2010). Results showed that both substantial adjustments ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 1.08$) and large ad-justments ($M = 5.96$, $SD = .74$) were evaluated as such and differed significantly from each other: $t(49) = -10.45$, $p < .001$.

3.3 *Procedure*

The online tool 'Inquisit' was used to collect the data on laptops with pre-installed plugins. Participants were actively approached to contribute to this study and were, when agreeing to participate, assigned to one of the laptops. The program randomly assigned participants to one of the experimental conditions. At the start of the questionnaire, participants were informed that they were about to contribute to a study about brands and brand logos. After asking several questions about demographics, participants were instructed that they needed to watch a slide show of different logos that would be presented to them, about which questions would be asked later (i.e., logo processing speed).

This slide show consisted of different brand logos, among which the two target brands. Each logo was presented for 1200 milliseconds, immediately followed by the next brand logo (conform Lepore & Brown, 2002). Participants in the 1-exposure condition were exposed to a slide show of 24 unique brand logos, among which were the two target logos. The other 22 unique brand logos served as filler items and were all original brand logos. Participants in the 3-exposure condition were exposed to a slide show of 48 brand logos: 3*2 = 6 target logos, four other brand logos that were also shown three times to not solely focus on our target logos (4*3 = 12 filler logos), the same 18 filler logos that were shown in the 1-exposure condition, and twelve other unique filler brand logos. All logos were of (inter)nationally familiar brands and all filler logos were original brand logos. Depending on the condition the participants were in, they were either presented with the original brand logos, the substantially redesigned brand logos, or the large redesigned brand logos and the filler items. Logos were presented in the center of the screen and the order in which the logos appeared differed randomly within and across conditions.

After the slide show, brand consciousness was measured, which also served as a distraction from the logo processing speed task. Next, logo processing speed (see below for a more detailed description) was measured, followed by questions to measure brand attitude per brand and a one-item control question for brand familiarity: ‘Are you familiar with this brand?’ All participants answered affirmative. At the end, participants were thanked for their co-operation.

3.4 Measures

Brand Consciousness. A six-item, 7-point Likert scale of Nelson and McLeod (2005) was used to measure brand consciousness (e.g., ‘Brand name products that cost a lot of money are good quality’, and ‘Sometimes I am willing to pay more money for products because of its brand name’, totally agree - totally disagree), Cronbach’s $\alpha = .89$ ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.45$).

Logo Processing Speed. We measured logo processing speed with an adjusted version of a Lexical Decision Task (LDT, Meyer & Schvaneveldt, 1971). The method to measure logo processing speed was adopted from Van Grinsven and Das (in press). By pressing either the ‘I’ (seen before) or the ‘E’ (not seen before) on their keyboard (Lepore & Brown, 2002), participants were asked to decide as quickly and accurately as possible whether the brand logo presented in the middle of their computer screen had been presented to them in the initial slide show or not.

The computer recorded reaction times (RTs) to stimuli in milliseconds, and the average time it took participants to respond to the two target logos was used as the mean index for logo processing speed ($M = 500.81$, $SD = 243.29$). Incorrect responses were excluded for analysis (Van Koningsbruggen, Das, & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2009). The amount of incorrect answers was evenly distributed among target logos and conditions ($M_{error} = 37.7$). After excluding incorrect answers, an outlier analysis was conducted (Miller, 1991) which led to the total exclusion of 11.3% of all answers.

Brand attitude. We used a four-item, 7-point semantic differential scale of Ahluwalia, Burnkant, and Unnava (2000) to measure brand attitude, with the following items: 'I believe this brand is: bad - good, terrible - nice, unfavorable - favorable, undesirable - desirable' Cronbach's $\alpha = .77$ ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.41$).

4 Results

4.1 Logo Processing Speed

A General Linear Model with degree of change (original logo vs substantial redesign vs large redesign) and exposure (1 vs 3 times) as between subjects factor and brand consciousness as continuous factor (following Aiken & West, 1991) showed a significant main effect of exposure on logo processing speed: $F(1, 236) = 4.587$, $p = .033$, $\eta^2_p = .019$. Brand logos that were shown three times were processed faster ($M = 482.89$, $SD = 197.36$) than brand logos that were shown once ($M = 550.26$, $SD = 261.64$). Furthermore, we found a significant main effect for degree of change: $F(2, 236) = 3.478$, $p = .032$, $\eta^2_p = .029$. Additional post-hoc analyses with Bonferroni correction showed that substantial redesigns ($M = 484.13$, $SD = 181.91$) were processed significantly faster than large redesigns ($M = 574.65$, $SD = 225.37$, $p = .040$). Logo processing speed of the original brand logos ($M = 500.92$, $SD = 243.28$) did not differ from either the substantial or the large redesigns ($p > .05$).

Finally, we found a marginally significant interaction effect between degree of change and brand consciousness, $F(2, 236) = 2.335$, $p = 0.099$, $\eta^2_p = .019$. To investigate the nature of this interaction effect, we examined highly brand conscious consumers (1 SD above the mean standardized brand consciousness score; see Aiken & West, 1991), and low brand conscious consumers (1 SD below the mean standardized brand consciousness score) separately. As illustrated by Figure 2, logo processing speed decreased for highly brand conscious consumers who were exposed to a large brand logo redesign ($M = 614,58$, $Se = 50.01$) as compared to the original brand logo ($M = 419.45$, $Se = 54.22$, $p = .011$), and compared to the substantial brand logo redesign ($M =$

504.81, Se = 51.83, $p = .099$). The difference between the substantial and the large logo redesign was non-significant. No effects were found for consumers who scored low on brand consciousness, ($F < 1$).

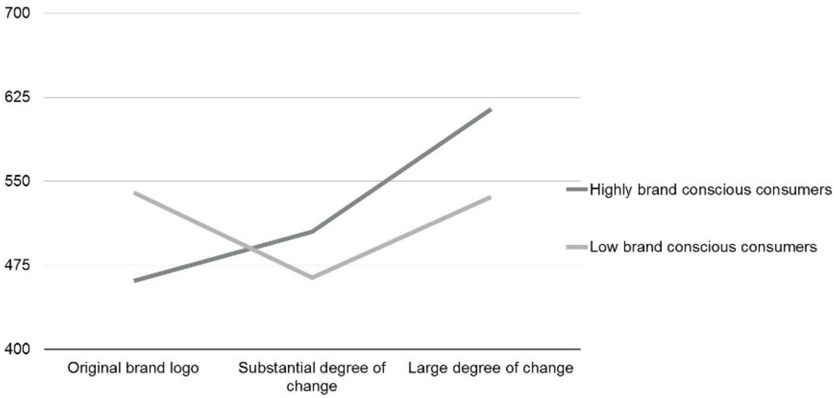

Figure 2: Logo Processing Speed for different Degrees of Logo Change and Brand Consciousness

4.2 Brand Attitude

A General Linear Model with degree of change (original logo vs substantial redesign vs large redesign) and exposure (1 vs 3 times) as between subjects factor and brand consciousness as continuous factor showed a significant effect for brand consciousness: $F(1,254) = 29.153$, $p < .001$, $\eta 2p = .10$. Low brand conscious consumers had a more negative brand attitude (M = 3.49, Se = .26) than highly brand conscious consumers (M = 4.32, Se = .26). Furthermore, we found a marginally significant effect of degree of change and brand consciousness on brand attitude: $F(2,254) = 2.444$, $p = .089$, $\eta 2p = .019$ and a significant three-way interaction effect of degree of change, exposure and brand consciousness, $F(2,254) = 3.740$, $p = 025$, $\eta 2p = .029$. To investigate the nature of this interaction effect, we used the same analysis-technique as for the effects on logo processing speed (see Aiken & West, 1991).

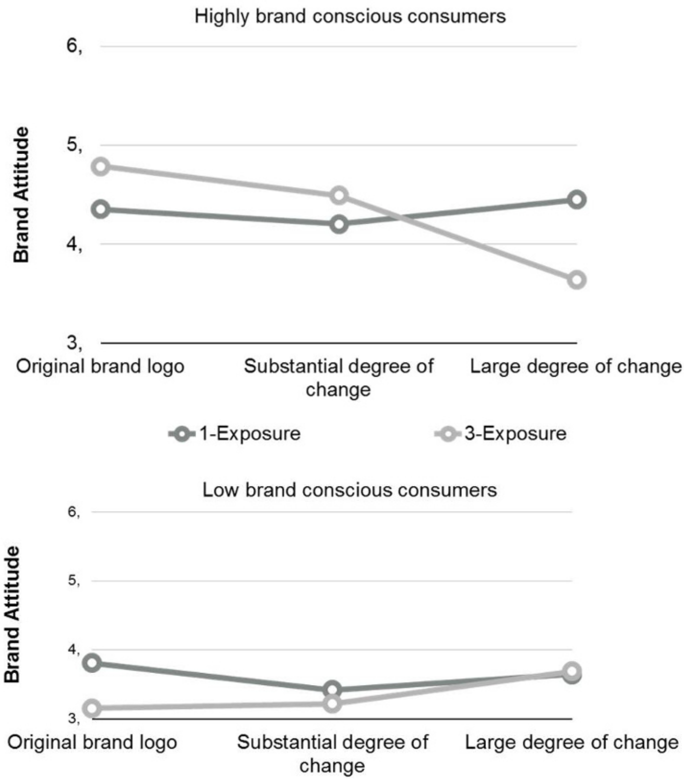

Figure 3: Brand Attitude for Highly and Low Brand Conscious Consumers

As illustrated by Figure 3, brand attitude became more negative for highly brand conscious consumers who were exposed to large brand logo redesigns (M = 3.64, Se = .26) as compared to original brand logos (M = 4.79, Se = .28, p = .003), and substantially changed brand logos (M = 4.49, Se = .23, p = .013), but only in the 3-exposure condition (F (2,254) = 5.254, p = .006). The difference between the original brand logo and the substantial degree of change (p = .41) was not significant. No effects were found for highly brand conscious consumers who were exposed to the brand logo only once (F (2,254) = .221, p = .80). No effects were found for consumers who scored low on brand consciousness, (F < 1) (see Figure 3).

5 Discussion

5.1 Findings and Theoretical Implications

In this study, we examined the effects of different degrees of brand logo change, exposure and brand consciousness. The results showed that higher degrees of logo change reduce logo processing speed. These findings replicate and extend findings of Van Grinsven and Das (in press) by adding another degree of logo change: large logo redesigns. Our findings underscore that revolutionary or large brand logo changes indeed are more difficult to link to existing knowledge systems than evolutionary brand logo changes. Higher degrees of logo change may require more intensive, systematic processing than small logo changes. Furthermore, we found that brand consciousness affects how consumers process logo changes and how this translates into brand attitude. Findings showed that brand logo changes decreased logo processing speed particularly among high brand conscious consumers, suggesting that highly brand conscious consumers process brand information on deeper levels, because they are motivated to invest this effort (Nelson & McLeod, 2005; Finn, 1988).

Brand attitudes became more negative only for highly brand conscious consumers after an increase in exposure and only for large degrees of logo change. These findings replicate and extend previous studies, suggesting that substantial logo changes may be implemented without harming brand attitudes. Large degrees of logo changes may be too difficult to ‘solve' (cf. Van Enschot et al., 2008), because they contain too many new elements, which makes these stimuli difficult and unpleasant to process. These findings are in line with studies on optimally innovative stimuli: processing such stimuli elicits deeper levels of attention and higher levels of cognitive processing (Hekkert et al., 2003), which is too difficult for stimuli that contain too many new elements.

5.2 Managerial Implications

Companies cannot endlessly redesign their brand logo without losing their market positions: changes that are too big may negatively affect logo processing speed and brand attitudes. Although previous studies have shown that the negative effect of substantial degrees of logo change can be restored with increased exposures (Van Grinsven & Das, in press), additional exposures may not work for large logo changes. Large degrees of logo change harm a brand’s visibility, which can have many different side-effects, as shown in the Tropicana example.

Negative effects of large logo changes on brand attitude are particularly likely for highly brand conscious consumers, which is problematic because especially highly brand conscious consumers function as brand-ambassadors through different channels. For example, by liking a brand's Facebook page, or its Twitter-channel, highly brand conscious consumers can promote a brand in their own network. Ola for example, has over 7 million likes of their Facebook page, which means they have over 7 million free brand-ambassadors. When changing brand information harms logo processing speed and brand attitudes, companies could have over 7 million dissatisfied brand-ambassadors.

5.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Participants were exposed to a brand logo (redesign) either once or three times. In a more naturalistic setting, three exposures to a brand logo is very limited and does not match the amount of exposure consumers are exposed to in real life. For example, on an average day, consumers are exposed to approximately 3600 advertisements (Landau, 2004; Van Grinsven & Das, in press). Future studies should consider examining logo change effects for increased levels of exposure.

Logo processing (in milliseconds) was slowed down especially for highly brand conscious consumers. An alternative explanation could be that highly brand conscious consumers have a 'tunnel vision' for brands that fit their image, which may hinder processing of brand information that is different from what they know (Van Grinsven & Das, in press). Future studies should consider this option by examining whether highly brand conscious consumers only focus on brands they use as a vehicle of self-expression and thus have a tunnel vision, or if highly brand conscious consumer actually process these brand logo changes on deeper levels of attention and therefore need more time to process the redesigned brand logo.

Finally, we only assessed the effects for low involvement brands. High involvement brands are also interesting to examine: consumers are dedicated to these types of brands, because it takes more time to make decisions concerning these type of products, which leads to deeper processing and more established brand knowledge in the consumer brain. This could indicate that high involvement brands are more sustainable in consumers' knowledge systems (Cacioppo & Petty, 1986) and therefore less affected by different degrees of brand logo changes. Future studies should therefore examine the effects of different degrees of logo change for high-involvement brands.

5.4 Concluding Comment

This study suggests that although periodically redesigning a brand logo is a pre-requisite to guarding one's position in consumers' consideration set, when changes are too big, especially highly brand conscious consumers need more time to process the changes (at deeper levels of attention), and their attitude toward the brand becomes more negative.

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The Effect of Evoked Feelings and Cognitions, Parent Brand Fit, Experiences and Brand Personality on the Adoption Intention of Branded Electric Cars for Early and Late Adopter Segments

Ingrid Moons and Patrick De Pelsmacker

1 Introduction and Purpose of the Study

Electric cars may be an environmentally-friendly answer to the ecological consequences of personal mobility. Large car brands are preparing to launch an electric car in the near future or they just did (Renault, Opel, Nissan, BMW). A brand is a portfolio of meanings and associations (Guzman et al., 2006). Cars are branded products that evoke all kinds of associations, functional as well as symbolic. Symbolic associations, such as brand personality and brand experience, are major components of brand identity and brand image (Biel, 1993; Kapferer, 2008; De Pelsmacker et al., 2007; Brakus et al., 2009). The present study focuses on the role of brand personality and brand experiences in the usage intention formation of branded electric cars. Earlier research (Moons and De Pelsmacker, 2012) also revealed that emotions evoked by the electric car and positive cognitions are important drivers of the usage intention of electric cars. Another factor that have emerged as important in determining extension evaluation is the perceived fit or congruency between an extension and the parent brand (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Patro and Jaiswal, 2003; Grime et al., 2002). Finally, people can be placed in categories according to their likelihood and speed of adopting an innovation. The innovators and the early adopters are of major importance to get an innovation launched on the market.

The purpose of this study is to explore how early and late majority segments, described by means of different attitudinal and behavioural characteristics, react differently to the idea of a branded electric car extension in terms of usage intention formation. We investigate how early and late adopter consumer groups form intentions towards using a branded electric car, and more particularly what the relative importance in this intention formation is of emotional and cognitive responses, perceived extension – parent brand fit, anticipated experiences with and perceived personality of the car.

The contribution of this paper is that it systematically and jointly analyses the impact on electric car extension evaluation of emotional, cognitive and fit responses to the extension, perceived brand experiences and brand personality.

P. Verlegh et al. (eds.), *Advances in Advertising Research (Vol. VI),* European Advertising Academy,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-10558-7_30, © Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016

This is relevant for advertising practitioners. Appealing to early adopter segments is crucial for the success of a new product introduction. Our results provide guidelines on how to position and present the branded electric car in order to be attractive to early adopter segments.

2 Literature Background and Research Questions

According to the associative network theory, brand image is a mental scheme formed by a network of concepts (nodes) interconnected by linkages or associations (Anderson, 1983, Morrin, 1999). Brands can have rational and symbolic associations. Brand personality and brand experience are major components of symbolic brand associations. Consumers use or value brands for self-expression (Swaminathan et al., 2007). Therefore, symbolic associations such as anticipated experiences with the car or perceived brand personality may be important drivers of brand evaluations and buying intentions (Biel, 1993; De Pelsmacker et al., 2007; Brakus et al., 2009). Similarly, symbolic brand extension associations can have a major impact on brand extension evaluations.

Besides rational, cognitive appreciations, there is an overwhelming evidence that affective responses play a major role in shaping consumers' evaluative reactions to (new) products (Perlusz, 2011; Bagozzi et al., 1999; Richins, 1997; Kim et al., 2007; Penn, 2007). Earlier research revealed that this is also the case for eco-friendly innovations in high involvement product categories, such as cars (Moons and De Pelsmacker, 2012). Evoked emotions and cognitions may therefore be important drivers of evaluative responses to branded electric cars.

Another important factor that determines brand extension evaluation is the perceived fit between the extension and the parent brand (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Patro and Jaiswal, 2003, Grime et al., 2002). Therefore, extension-parent brand fit may be an important determinant of positive extension evaluation.

Five market segmentation characteristics that could be indicative of early adoptership of this eco-friendly innovation are further explored here: environmental concern, environmental behaviour, opinion leadership, innovativeness and product involvement. Environmental concern is a powerful predictor of the willingness to engage in actions that protect the environment (Gärling and Thøgersen, 2001; Oliver and Rosen, 2010). Heffner et al. (2007) found that consumers who show high levels of environmental concern, chose a HEV (Hybrid or electric vehicle) to communicate interests and values related to environmentalism. Consequently, for electric cars, environmental concern may be important to distinguish early and late adopters. When people act in an environmentally friendly way in one area, this behaviour tends to spill over into other areas (Thøgersen, 1999). Environmental behaviour is therefore an important potential determinant of electric car adoption. Opinion leadership reflects an individual's ability to influence other individuals' attitudes or overt behaviour in a particular domain (e.g. cars). Opinion leaders are often the first ones to adopt an innovation (Rogers, 1995; Gatignon and Robertson, 1991; Chaudhuri et al., 2010; Gärling and Thogerson, 2001; Jansson, 2011). In the context of the adoption of hybrids, Oliver and Rosen (2010) identified opinion leadership as a relevant variable to distinguish segments. Consumer innovativeness is defined as the predisposition to buy new and different products and brands (Steenkamp et al., 1999). Innovativeness is the bottom-line type of behaviour in the diffusion process (Rogers, 1995) and is central to the theory of diffusion of innovations (Midgley and Dowling, 1978). Therefore innovativeness is a relevant indicator to distinguish early and late adopters of electric cars. Self-identification and feeling good about oneself are partly met through consumers' identification with certain brands. These brands must belong to product categories that are involving for the consumer. The effect of involvement with a product category is the intensive search for the product, extensive brand evaluations and the evocation of word-of-mouth spread of information. So, highly involved individuals gain a lot of insights about the product and may also become aware of new products earlier than others do. They are also likely to more quickly adopt these new products (Bloch et al., 1986). Consequently, involvement may be an important segmentation variable to identify early adopters.

The present study thus tries to answer the following research question:

To what extent do consumer groups that differ in terms of environmental concern, environmental behaviour, opinion leadership, innovativeness and product involvement differ in the formation of their intentions to use a branded electric car in function of their emotional and cognitive responses to an electric extension of an existing car brand, perceived extension-parent brand fit, anticipated experiences and perceived extension personality?

3 Research Method

The study was conducted in a sample of 512 consumers, representative of the Belgian population in terms of age and gender. Each respondent was exposed to an electric car concept that was presented by means of visual and verbal characteristics. This extension was explicitly linked to one of four brands, i.e., Alfa, BMW, Toyota and Volvo, in order to investigate extension attitudes based on a sufficiently broad diversity of car brands. In a pre-test, these cars came out as substantially different in terms of brand experience and brand personality. Respondents were randomly assigned to the four groups. Half of the respondents in each brand condition owned a car of the given brand Each of the participants was exposed to a set of 8 pictures: one general picture of a car with six distinct characteristics, six pictures highlighting the details of each of the six characteristics, and the general picture again. Respondents were told that the brand to which they were assigned was going to launch an electric extension like the one they just saw. They were then asked to indicate their emotions and cognitive reactions to the extension, perceived extension-parent brand fit, anticipated experiences, perceived brand personality, and intention to use the electric extension. They were then asked to answer questions about their environmental friendliness and behaviour, their innovativeness, opinion leadership and involvement with cars. Finally they had to provide a number of socio-demographic characteristics.

Measures: An overview of the measures is shown in appendix: extension usage intention (*PIExtension*), the valence of the emotions towards the extension (*EmoExtension),* the valence of the cognitions towards the extension (*CogExtension*), parent brand - extension fit (*Parentfit*), anticipated experiences towards the extension: Sensorial *(EXSensory),* Behavioural *(EXBehav)* and Intellectual *(EXIntell)*, and brand personality of the extension: Responsible (*PRespons*), Active(*PActiv*), Bold (*PBold*), Simple (*PSimple*) and Emotional (*PEmotional*). The new environmental paradigm scale (Dunlap, 2008) was used to measure the *environmental concern* of individuals. The *environmental behaviour* measure is a list of 15 possible environmental friendly behaviours one can act upon. Environmentally friendly behaviour was calculated as the number of behaviours that an individual claims to do for environmental reasons. Further, the degree of *opinion leadership* with respect to cars, *innovativeness* and *product category involvement* were measured. All constructs were measured on 5-point scales. All scale items loaded on one factor or subfactor (for experience and personality) and all scales had good alpha scores (see appendix). Scores per scale were were averaged across items for further analysis. The five consumer segmentation variables were median split (median scorers were removed) in order to compare individuals scoring high and low on each characteristic.

4 Results

In Table 1, an overview is given of the differences in usage intention of an electric car between the consumer groups defined above. Usage intention substantially differs between each of these consumer groups in the expected direction. Therefore they can all be considered as relevant characteristics to distinguish early from late adopters.

The analyses are split up in two parts. In each part, the usage intention towards the extension is predicted by the emotions and cognitions evoked by the extension and perceived extension-parent brand fit. In the first analysis (Table 2) additional independent variables are the anticipated experiences towards the extension. In the second analysis (table 3), additional independents are the perceived personality characteristics of the extension. These analyses are all carried out on groups scoring low and high on each of the segmentation variables.

Table 1. Differences in usage intention of an electric car between consumer segments

Consumer segments	Low	High	Significance
Environmental behaviour	2.401 (.990)	2.856 (1.075)	<.001
Environmental concern	2.534 (1.026)	2.783 (1.042)	.010
Opinion leadership	2.375 (.960)	2.992 (1.104)	<.001
Innovativeness	2.307 (.996)	2.889 (1.014)	<.001
Involvement	2.562 (.993)	2.765 (1.094)	.041

Cells are mean scores on 5-point scales (standard deviation)

Evoked cognitions by the electric car extension are the most important determinant of the intention to use the electric extension in all segments and in all analyses. The effect of evoked emotions and perceived parent brand fit is also a significant driver of intention formation. For certain segments, emotions are a relatively more important driver of intention formation than for others. Highly environmentally concerned individuals, innovators, as well as lowly involved people are significantly more driven by emotions towards the extension than other segments. Highly involved individuals and people that are not innovative mainly take parent brand fit into account. In all segments, the usage intention towards the extension is influenced by the anticipated intellectual experience of the electric extension. The anticipated sensorial experiences on usage intention is less important for highly ecological concerned people and for those who score low on opinion leadership.

Table 2. Intention to use the extension as a function of the anticipated experience of the extension, the emotional and cognitive response towards the extension, and perceived extension-parent brand fit, per subcategory of respondents.

	Ex-sensory	Ex-Behav	ExIntell	Emo Extension	Cog Extension	Parent fit	R^2
Low concern	.212 (.008)	.103 (.160)	.226 (<.001)	.083 (.168)	.235 (<.001)	.055 (.354)	.557
High concern	.104 (.192)	.071 (.328)	.158 (.014)	.228 (<.001)	.295 (<.001)	.084 (.116)	.545
Low opinion leadership	.094 (.228)	.067 (.365)	.172 (.014)	.181 (.007)	.315 (<.001)	.027 (.656)	.472
High opinion leadership	.201 (.038)	-.043 (.611)	.255 (<.001)	.178 (.019)	.313 (<.001)	.062 (.363)	.607
Low Innovative-ness	.179 (.034)	.028 (.707)	.271 (<.001)	.070 (.279)	.256 (<.001)	.102 (.075)	.522
High Innovative-ness	.156 (.042)	.117 (.104)	.143 (.011)	.183 (.003)	.247 (<.001)	.031 (.276)	.519
Low involvement	.239 (.003)	.024 (.748)	.205 (.001)	.188 (.002)	.277 (<.001)	.026 (.440)	.563
High involvement	.158 (.050)	.131 (.076)	.166 (.020)	.074 (.255)	.271 (<.001)	.114 (.053)	.533
Low environm. Behaviour	.231 (.005)	.087 (.275)	.212 (.001)	.159 (.022)	.186 (.003)	.018 (.764)	.513
High environm. Behaviour	.157 (.039)	.010 (.881)	.193 (.003)	.151 (.010)	.304 (<.001)	.142 (.009)	.585

Cells are Betas (p-value – level of significance)

For the models that include perceived personality characteristics (Table 3), an emotional as well as a responsible personality is attractive for the low ecologically concerned individuals. A simple car personality is strongly appreciated by the low opinion leaders. Strong opinion leaders have a stronger preference for responsible cars. People who are less innovative are more driven by the simplicity and the emotionality of the car extension, while more innovative people value a responsible car personality more. The usage intention of individuals that do not act in an environmentally-friendly way is more influenced by the simplicity of the car, while the highly environmentally behaving group takes a responsible image more into account.

Table 3. Intention to use the extension as a function of the perceived personality of the extension, he emotional and cognitive response towards the extension, and perceived extension-parent brand fit, per subcategory of respondents.

	Prespons	Pactiv	Pbold	Psimple	Pemo	Emo Extension	Cog Extension	Parentfit	R^2
Low concern	.019 (.796)	.054 (.489)	.009 (.860)	.133 (.022)	.110 (.044)	.268 (<.001)	.351 (<.001)	.096 (.163)	.469
High concern	.192 (.004)	.070 (.350)	.021 (.676)	.023 (.665)	.045 (.385)	.295 (<.001)	.349 (<.001)	.112 (.044)	.526
Low opinion leadership	-.042 (.580)	.109 (.156)	-.040 (.449)	.239 (<.001)	.081 (.137)	.362 (<.001)	.399 (<.001)	-.003 (.957)	.483
High opinion leadership	.221 (.003)	-.166 (.068)	.026 (.668)	.010 (.871)	.059 (.310)	.319 (<.001)	.413 (<.001)	.117 (.111)	.574
Low innovativeness	.073 (.401)	-.018 (.832)	.011 (.852)	.104 (.083)	.148 (.010)	.242 (.001)	.365 (<.001)	.125 (.047)	.463
High innovativeness	.114 (.063)	-.023 (.754)	.007 (.891)	.072 (.212)	.038 (.476)	.304 (<.001)	.341 (<.001)	.094 (.127)	.470
Low involvement	.163 (.023)	.026 (.731)	-.028 (.610)	.065 (.294)	.115 (.039)	.295 (<.001)	.293 (<.001)	.067 (.314)	.488
High involvement	.168 (.038)	-.053 (.552)	.036 (.504)	.072 (.231)	.073 (.221)	.169 (.018)	.401 (<.001)	.133 (.037)	.490
Low environm. Behaviour	.122 (.106)	.096 (.269)	-.008 (.888)	.157 (.010)	.158 (.004)	.304 (<.001)	.310 (<.001)	-.008 (.898)	.473
High environm. Behaviour	.120 (.071)	-.033 (.633)	.000 (.998)	.074 (.176)	.032 (.550)	.262 (<.001)	.364 (<.001)	.183 (.002)	.548

Cells are Betas (p-value – level of significance)

5 Discussion and Conclusions

For the formation of the intention to use the electric car extension, cognitions are at least as important as emotions and also overrule the effect of parent fit. Nevertheless, emotions are also important determinants of intention formation towards the brand extension in all segments. This is in line with the evidence of the role of affective reactions in consumer decision making (Perlusz 2011; Bagozzi et al., 1999; Richins 1997; Kim et al., 2007; Penn, 2007) and illustrates that this is the case even in the context of high involvement eco-friendly innovative products, particularly during the early stages of really new product introductions (Wood and Morreau, 2006). The effect of parent fit, although less important, is also significant for all the segments. Also the relevance of anticipated experiences and brand personality is demonstrated. In all segments, the usage intention towards the electric extension is influenced by its anticipated intellectual experience. The effect of anticipated sensorial experiences is also important for different segments. A responsible brand personality image is an important determinant of a favorable intention towards the extension for all segments. It seems that the extension 'electric' evokes appreciation for this personality trait. Also a more emotional and bold personality is appealing for people belonging to different segments.

There are specific drivers of usage intention that are typical for early adopter segments. They can inform designers and advertisers on how to persuade early adopter segments to adopt the electric car. Emotions towards the electric car are a strong driver to persuade early adopter segments. This is especially true for highly environmentally concerned people and innovators. Also cognitions play an important role, especially for people who already behave in an environmentally friendly way. Evoking a sensorial and an intellectual experience and showing sophistication, and an active, emotional and bold personality is also important for all early adopter segments. A strong anticipated intellectual experience is especially appealing for groups highly involved in cars. Presenting the extension as responsible, and more responsible than the individual, is particularly important for innovators, opinion leaders and highly involved people. Presenting the extension as bold and emotional is particularly important for highly involved and highly environmentally concerned groups. Positioning the extension as more emotional than the individual is an important motivator for innovators and highly environmentally concerned people. Highly involved individuals are also triggered by anticipated behavioural experiences and by the idea that the car has a more active personality than themselves.

Overall, to appeal to early adopter segments, the electric car should be positioned as a sophisticated, responsible car with an emotional and active personality. It should evoke anticipated intellectual experiences, but also sensorial ones. And, most importantly, it should evoke strong positive emotional reactions and be aspirational in terms of responsibility and emotionality.

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7 Appendix

Item description and source of the extension response scales

Scale and items	Source
1. Usage Intention towards the branded electric extension (PIExtension) • I have the intention to use this electric BRAND • I will recommend using this electric BRAND others • I expect using this electric BRAND in the near future	Cauberghe and De Pelsmacker (2011)
2. Emotions towards the branded electric extension (EmoExtension) • The electric BRAND shown evokes positive feelings in me • I would find it very pleasant it to drive the electric BRAND shown • Driving the electric BRAND shown could frustrate me (r) • Driving the electric BRAND shown could easily bore me (r) • The electric BRAND shown gives me a negative feeling (r)	Cauberghe and De Pelsmacker (2011)

3. Cognitions towards the branded electric extension (CogExtension) • This electric BRAND provides me with a lot of advantages • I find this electric BRAND innovative • The media will promote this electric BRAND • The government will take measures to stimulate the use of this electric BRAND	Moons and De Pelsmacker (2012)
4. Anticipated experience of the branded extension ***Sensory (EXSensory)*** • Will make a strong impression on my senses • Will stimulate my senses • Will be an emotional car ***Behavioural (EXBehav)*** • Will incite me to active driving • Will make me feel things fysically ***Intellectual (EXIntell)*** • Will stimulate me to drive consciously • Will stimulate my curiosity and problem-solving capacity	Brakus et al. (2009)
5. Fit between the electric extension and the parent brand (Parentfit) • This is very fitting for BRAND • This is very logical for BRAND • This is very appropriate for BRAND	Dens and De Pelsmacker (2010)
6. Environmental concern • We are approaching the limit of the number of people the Earth can support • Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs • When humans interfere with nature it often produces disastrous consequences • Human ingenuity will insure that we do not make the Earth unliveable • Humans are seriously abusing the environment • The Earth has plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to develop them • Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist • The balance of nature is strong enough to cope with the impacts of modern industrial nations • Despite our special abilities, humans are still subject to the laws of nature • The so-called “ecological crisis” facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated • The Earth is like a spaceship with very limited room and resources • Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature • The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset • Humans will eventually learn enough about how nature works to be able to control it • If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe	Dunlap (2008)

7. Innovativeness • I like to have new experiences and changes in my daily routine • I am constantly looking for new ideas and experiences • I like variation and new things in my daily life • When getting bored, I look out for new challenges and experiences • I am more interested in buying new than known products • I like to buy new and different products • New products excite me • I am usually among the first to try new products • I know more than others on latest products • I try new products before my friends and neighbours	Roehrich (2004) Venkatraman and Price (1990)
8. Involvement • Buying a car is an unimportant decision • Buying a car demands not much thinking • Making a wrong decision in buying a car can mean a big loss for me	Dens and De Pelsmacker (2010)