

Spring 4-30-2016

Countering Correspondence Bias: Critical Thought Induction in Viewers of Narrative Advertisements

Kendra Hardy

King's University College, khardy@uwo.ca

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/psychK_uht



Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hardy, Kendra, "Countering Correspondence Bias: Critical Thought Induction in Viewers of Narrative Advertisements" (2016).
Undergraduate Honors Theses. 38.
https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/psychK_uht/38

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Psychology at Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact tadam@uwo.ca, wlsadmin@uwo.ca.

Countering Correspondence Bias:
Critical Thought Induction in Viewers of Narrative Advertisements

by

Kendra Hardy

Honours Thesis

Department of Psychology

King's University College at Western University

London, Canada

April 2016

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Donald Gorassini

Abstract

Corporations often use narrative advertisements as they are an effective method of persuasion. Viewers of narrative advertisements enact the correspondence bias due to being too engaged in the storyline to create counterarguments. The present research examined the impact of critical thought induction as a mechanism to counteract the correspondence bias, as measured through participant ratings of commercial attitude and corporate image. Participants (N = 179; 58 male, 116 female, 5 other) were recruited from a university student pool and Facebook. Participants viewed a narrative advertisement by Anheuser-Busch, completed thought listing, and rated the commercial and company. Results demonstrated that the correspondence bias was present, regardless of the manipulation. However, participants who experienced critical thought induction listed more thoughts relating to the persuasion attempt than the commercial. These results demonstrate the strength of correspondence bias and provide insight into the interventions required to counter it.

Countering Correspondence Bias:

Critical Thought Induction in Viewers of Narrative Advertisements

As a part of strategic marketing, companies often use commercials that tell a story. These are known as narrative advertisements (Escales, 2007). Often, the storyline presented in the advertisement has little relevance to the product being sold. It is proposed that narrative advertisements are effective because attention is directed to the story, which prevents critical thought about the message and the product being presented. By engaging the viewer in the narrative, the persuasion attempt enacts the correspondence bias. Correspondence bias occurs when one infers a disposition of a person or other entity, such as a company, on the basis of behavioural features (Gilbert & Malone, 1995). If a company's behaviour appears positive, the company as a whole is also perceived to be positive. An important element of marketing is the enhancement of corporate image, and narrative advertisements are an effective means by which companies can achieve this.

For the viewer, narrative advertisements are problematic as the correspondence bias substitutes for an informed evaluation of the information presented. A critical evaluation of the persuasion attempt if it was to occur could reveal the true nature of the product or company being advertised, which could be positive or negative. The purpose of the present research was to determine if inducing critical thought after a view of a narrative commercial having little to do with the advertised product would counteract the correspondence bias. We expected that those who would think critically about the commercial, as per an experimental suggestion, would be able to acknowledge their positive attitude towards the commercial, while remaining justly critical of the company.

Defining Narrative Persuasion

A narrative refers to any story that has characters and a clear beginning, middle, and end. Narrative persuasion involves the use of a narrative with the intent to create attitudinal change in the viewer (Green & Brock, 2000). Formal narrative persuasive attempts can take place in many different formats, such as, public service announcements, entertainment media, and advertisements. Narrative persuasion can also be used informally through methods such as story-telling, sales attempts, or asking for favours (Dal Cin, Zanna, & Fong, 2004; Green & Brock, 2000). The most common form of narrative persuasion used in marketing is the use of an emotionally compelling story presented in a multimedia format.

An example of narrative persuasion, produced by the brewing company, Anheuser-Busch, was used in the present research. Participants watched a 60-second commercial, known as *Lost Dog*, which is the third installment of a series of advertisements, titled *#BestBuds*, promoting Budweiser beer (Scott & Hertzberg, 2015). The commercial follows the story of a golden retriever puppy who gets lost and makes a compelling journey home. Throughout the commercial, there is very little overt promotion of product or brand of Budweiser which is a constituent of Anheuser-Busch. Instead, the advertisement makes use of an emotional narrative to transport the viewers, and create the conditions for correspondence bias, therefore making it an ideal choice for present research. In Anheuser-Busch's annual report, it is stated that consumers reacted excitedly to *Puppy Love*, the second installment of *#BestBuds*, due to a pre-existing strong emotional bond with Budweiser (Anheuser-Busch InBev., 2014). In their report, Anheuser-Busch acknowledges the existence of an association between the commercial, the viewers' emotions, and the brand. However, the relationship they seem to be describing is the inverse of what the behavioural science research knows as the correspondence bias (Escales,

2007; Gilbert & Malone, 1995). That is, Anheuser-Busch claims that the viewers enjoy the commercial because of their emotional attachment to Budweiser, but research articulates that the viewers develop an emotional attachment to the company because they enjoy the commercial (Fien & Hilton, 1994).

An examination of pertinent research from social psychology, cognitive science, and consumer behaviour was conducted to more fully understand the workings of narrative persuasion in marketing and to develop a method for countering its influences. The present study builds upon the framework provided by the previous theory and research in these fields.

Narratives are Naturally Processed

Research has demonstrated that individuals are naturally able to process narrative advertisements. In 1932, Bartlett posited a theory that discusses the nature of memory in relation to stories. This theory articulates that human memory is constructive and functions through the adaptation and development of schemas, a concept closely aligned with the notion of stories (Bartlett, 1932). Narratives are an effective method of persuasion because our memory naturally assimilates information into storylines. Each individual develops schemas differently, which is why it is imperative for companies to be aware of what narratives their target audience will best relate to in order to increase the likelihood of the narrative advertisements being effective.

Rooted in cognitive science, Baddeley's model of working memory provides another explanation of the mechanisms that underlie narrative understanding. According to Baddeley (2001), people organize information in immediate consciousness using episodes, a term for models of the situation and one that is very similar to schemas. One of the storage components of working memory is referred to by Baddeley (2001) using the terms episodic buffer and model space. Episodes can be retrieved from long term memory or they can be suggested by an agent

(e.g., in a narrative advertisement) or a cue within a given situation. When performing a task, one or more schemas are necessary for organizing thought and action about the event. For example, one might have a phone-conversation-with-friend schema to guide pertinent thinking (friendly chat, making plans, learning the latest news). Additionally, one might also have a driving-to-work schema to guide pertinent thinking in a different sphere (eyes on the road, get to the destination, follow the rules). The themes are called forth as needed and, as demands of the situation change, one model displaces another. Each individual makes use of a sequence of different episodic schemas over the course of the day to make effective action possible.

Both Baddeley and Bartlett recognized that stories are a necessary component of navigation in human life. Narrative commercials should be easily processed by human beings because stories are the customary means of processing everyday information.

Narrative Advertisements Influence How Information is Processed

The Transportation Imagery Model is essential to understanding the processing of narrative persuasion attempts (Green & Brock, 2002). The Transportation Imagery Model explains how narrative persuasion encourages the target to focus all cognitive resources on the storyline presented. This transportation removes the ability for the target to engage in any behaviour to counter the persuasion attempt (Friestad & Wright, 1994; Green & Brock, 2002). The experience of transportation is involved when the viewer becomes immersed in the story due to empathy for or identification with the characters or story (Laer, de Tuyter, Visconti, & Wetzels, 2014). This transportation has been found to reduce the amount of critical thoughts that a viewer engages in (Laer, de Tuyter, Visconti, & Wetzels, 2014; Slater & Rouner, 2002). This model is an explanation for the effectiveness of narrative persuasion. The use of narrative persuasion is effective in advertising because it provides means of organizing informational

input, regulating emotion, and also distracts the viewer, therefore decreasing their motivation to evaluate the commercial outside of its storyline (Green & Brock, 2002).

Understanding and Counteracting the Correspondence Bias

With origins dating back to the 1960s, the correspondence bias, also known as the fundamental attribution error, can significantly influence how viewers perceive persuasion attempts. The correspondence bias is the tendency to make assumptions about one or more dispositions of a person or organization based on the features of action (Gilbert & Malone, 1995). In cases of the correspondence bias, situational constraints on the behaviour are not sufficiently weighted. An advertising plan that uses emotionally involved narratives depends on consumers not processing situational constraints in order to be successful. If a company produces a pleasant advertisement, or engages in socially responsible corporate actions, and the consumers engage this correspondence bias, the consumer will then infer that the positive features of the advertisement characterize the company itself (Yoon, Gurhan-Canli, & Schwarz, 2006).

When a correspondence bias is produced, it does not allow the viewer to consider alternatives to the message being provided. Therefore, the viewers of narrative advertisements are following along with the presented message. The viewers' positive feelings toward the company or product are produced without critically thinking about the information (Escalaes, 2007; Gilbert & Malone, 1995). Research has demonstrated that countering the correspondence bias is possible, and that this process then allows the consumer to be more thoughtful in their consideration of the information (Fien & Hilton, 1994; Yoon, Gurhan-Canli, & Schwarz, 2006). One way to counteract the correspondence bias in consumers is to ensure that they are aware of the persuasion attempt. This is providing an alternative narrative (e.g., "the company is trying to

persuade me”) than the narrative presented in the commercial (e.g., “Will the lost dog get home safely?”). In one study, the correspondence bias did not occur when participants reported a high level of suspiciousness of ulterior motives for the agent’s use of corporate social responsibility campaigns (Yoon, Gurhan-Canli, & Schwarz, 2006). Another method to counteract the correspondence bias is to provide viewers with examples of potential reasons that the agent may have had in developing the materials. This approach will therefore activate the viewer’s advertisement skepticism and provide them with a different theme for organizing and processing the message (Fien & Hilton, 1994; Petty, Cacioppo, & Shumann, 1983).

The Persuasion Knowledge Model, developed by Friestad and Wright (1994), is rooted in consumer behaviour research. This model explains the knowledge and behaviours that must be possessed by both the viewer and company in order for a persuasion attempt to be processed thoroughly and critically (Friestad & Wright, 1994). In order to counter a persuasion attempt, the viewer must have knowledge about the topic, about the company producing it, and about persuasion at large (Friestad & Wright, 1994; Ham, Nelson, & Das, 2015). When activated, persuasion knowledge displaces an advertiser’s suggested narrative in favour of one that would be fairly critical of the advertiser’s motives and message. The present research contains in its experimental condition an invitation to think in terms of a persuasion narrative. It was anticipated that this would serve to counteract the correspondence bias.

Present Research

The present research has been greatly influenced by each of the aforementioned constructs and models. This study aims to add to the wealth of literature concerning the use of narrative persuasion. One limitation of previous research is the lack of external validity. In many studies pertaining to narrative persuasion, the stimulus materials used are developed for the primary

purpose of research. Although there are benefits to this methodology, such as control over brand influence and previous exposure, these factors are an integral part of why narratives are effective in persuasion (Laer, de Tuyter, Visconti, & Wetzels, 2014). It is because of this that the participants in the present study were shown the *Lost Dog* commercial used by Anheuser-Busch during the 2015 Super Bowl. We are interested in the impact of critical thought induction (i.e., the condition in which participants were asked to think about the advertisement's persuasive elements) on perceived corporate image after participants view an emotional, narrative advertisement, such as *Lost Dog*. In the present study, we expected that participants who have their critical thought activated would not engage in the correspondence bias. It is also expected that the participants who do not have their critical thought activated would default to the use of the commercial's narrative about the lost dog and consequently demonstrate the correspondence bias.

Participants in the present study were recruited using social media and the King's University College Department of Psychology student participant pool on SONA. All participants watched the *Lost Dog* advertisement and were then assigned to one of three conditions: no suggestion plus thought listing, suggestion plus thought listing, or no suggestion. In the no suggestion plus thought listing condition, participants were asked to list thoughts that they encountered while viewing the commercial. In the suggestion plus thought listing condition, participants were asked to list thoughts about why the commercial was selected. In the final group, no suggestion, were not asked to list any thoughts, and therefore served as a way of determining if the thought listing process could influence later attitudinal ratings of the company and commercial.

The thought listing technique was developed in the late 1960s as a response measure that could be evaluated both qualitatively through analysis of the text and quantitatively through objective scoring of the responses (Cacioppo & Petty, 1981). Participants were instructed to list all thoughts pertaining to the specific prime, as previously indicated. The prime provided was the manipulation in the present research (Cacioppo & Petty, 1981). Following this, all participants rated the commercial attitude and corporate image.

The independent variable in this study consisted of the three aforementioned conditions: no suggestion, no suggestion plus thought listing, or suggestion plus thought listing. It was expected that participants in the no suggestion plus thought listing group would list primarily *commercial related thoughts*. They would report on thoughts and emotions that occurred to them during the commercial. These experiences would have been limited by the advertisement theme and would therefore centre on theme-related elements (e.g. “I felt sad and scared for the lost puppy”, “I liked the song”, and “What a cute puppy!”). Due to correspondence bias, this condition was expected produce an inflated positive attitude for the company. It is expected that through the induction of critical thought, the suggestion plus thought listing condition would express *persuasion related thoughts* that reflect an alternative narrative, one that discusses company and their advertising motives. This theme consists of at least some critical thoughts (e.g. “It has nothing to do with beer,” and “It shows that the company has a heart”) (Kramer, 1994). The critical thoughts are expected to counter the correspondence bias, resulting in a less positive attitude compared to the no suggestion condition. In the no suggestion condition, it is expected that the viewer would also engage in the correspondence bias, which would be seen through an inflated positive attitude towards the company. This condition was expected to have the same results as the no suggestion plus thought listing condition.

The dependent variable is the perceived corporate image, which was measured by the participants' rating of the company. We expected that by inducing the viewers' critical thought, there would be a significant reduction in the corporate image ratings in the suggestion plus thought listing condition when compared with the ratings of the viewers who did not engage in critical thought. This is due to the counteracting of the correspondence bias.

We analysed the responses to thought listing in the no suggestion plus thought listing and the suggestion plus thought listing conditions. It was expected that significantly more thoughts would be listed in the no suggestion plus thought listing condition due to the knowledge that passively enjoying a narrative persuasion attempt is more entertaining and natural than analysing the motives behind it. It was also anticipated that more persuasion related thoughts would be listed in the suggestion plus thought listing group, demonstrating that the viewers are engaging in an alternative narrative. Finally, it was expected that there would be more negative thoughts provided in the suggestion plus thought listing condition.

We will explore the use of counterarguments as a mediator of the relationship between critical thought and perceived corporate image. A counterargument is defined as any thought articulated that challenges the image of the company that is promoted in the advertisement (e.g. "Budweiser is not a good company", "They are trying to confuse their viewers", or simply "I didn't like that Budweiser used this commercial"). Counterarguments will be examined through analysis of the thought listing responses and scored by dividing the number of total thoughts by the number of counterarguments. It is expected that there will be more counterarguments in the suggestion plus thought listing condition when compared with the no suggestion plus thought listing condition; however, the existence of counterarguments in the suggestion plus thought

listing condition is expected to lead to a significant decrease in the viewers' ratings of the corporate image.

Method

Participants

Participants were undergraduate students at King's University College at Western University (n=92) and community members (n=87), 116 female, 58 male, and 5 who chose not to indicate a gender. The participants in the present study were asked to indicate their age within categories that ranged from under 18 to greater than 60 (under 18, n = 8; 18-24, n = 131; 25-31, n = 12; 32-38, n=4; 39-45, n = 2; 46-52, n = 10; 53-59, n = 4; 60+, n = 3, no response, n = 5). The majority (78.9%) completed the study in Canada (n = 138), and the remainder took part from Australia (n = 4), Austria (n=1), Belgium (n=1), Cambodia (n=2), China, (n=5), Ecuador (n=1), Egypt (n=1), Greece (n=1), India, (n=1), Israel (n=1), Pakistan (n=1), Peru (n=1), Portugal (n=1), United Kingdom (n=4), and the United States of America (n=12). There were no exclusionary criteria for participants to take part in the study. However, the data from 21 participants were removed due to incomplete responses, and 180 participants opened the link to the study but completed no tasks, and so were also removed. This left the overall sample size of the study at 179.

Materials

Recruitment platforms. Participants were recruited using either SONA or Facebook. SONA is the website used for King's University College undergraduate students to sign up to participate in studies. This website provided information about the study, the link to the study, and timeslots for the participants to complete the study. After signing up, participants were informed that they could complete the study at any time, regardless of their timeslot. On

Facebook, information about the study with the link associated was posted on personal Facebook pages, in groups, and on pages promoting companies, news agencies, and celebrities.

Presentation software. The entirety of the study was completed online using the Western University survey software, Qualtrics. The Qualtrics software allowed us to embed the video directly into the study, take all study measures, assess the time that participants spent on each screen shown, and record IP addresses to look for any repeated participants.

Commercial from the 2015 Super Bowl. Participants viewed a 60-second commercial, known as *Lost Dog*, which is the third installment of a series of advertisements titled *#BestBuds* (Scott & Hertzberg, 2015) for Budweiser beer, a product of Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc. This advertisement features a golden lab puppy, Clydesdale horses, and a young, attractive farmer. There is no dialogue in the commercial, with the only sounds being an emotional rendition of “I’m Gonna Be (500 Miles)” by Sleeping at Last, from the animals, and of car horns. In this commercial, the puppy gets lost and makes his journey home, only to be cornered by wolves close to home, a farm. The famous Budweiser Clydesdale horses break out of the barn and rescue the puppy, bringing him safely home. The commercial closes with the farmer in a barn drinking a Budweiser beer with the puppy and a horse nearby. This is followed by a display of the Budweiser logo against a solid red background (Scott & Hertzberg, 2015).

As previously mentioned, in their annual report, Anheuser-Busch discusses the success of these *#BestBuds* advertisements. An earlier commercial in the series, *Puppy Love*, received the most likes on Facebook for a brand and over sixty million views on YouTube (Anheuser-Busch InBev., 2014), which is a factor as to why we selected *Lost Dog* for the present research. We received written permission from Anheuser-Busch to use the commercial for our research purposes.

The *Lost Dog* advertisement makes use of backward conditioning, in which the unconditioned stimulus (UCS), the advertisement, precedes the conditioned stimulus (CS), the Budweiser logo shown after the story) (Chang, Stout, & Miller, 2004). In this commercial, the positive emotional-arousing narrative is presented first, followed by the Budweiser logo and beer. Research by Chang, Stout, and Miller (2004) demonstrates that this method of conditioning suppresses positive attitudinal change. In traditional classical conditioning, in which the conditioned stimulus is presented prior to the unconditioned stimulus, positive experiences of the UCS would transfer to the CS.

Procedure

Participants followed a provided link, either through a Facebook post or on the SONA system, to the Qualtrics page of the present study. The informed consent was the first page, on which the participants had to type their name as their consent to participate in the research (Appendix A). Following this, all of the participants viewed the *Lost Dog* advertisement. After watching the commercial, participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: no suggestion, no suggestion plus thought listing, or suggestion plus thought listing. The suggestion is the manipulation of inducing the viewer's critical thought, which only took place in one condition.

Manipulation of the independent variable. After watching the commercial, participants were randomly assigned by Qualtrics to one of the three conditions of the study. Participants in the no suggestion condition and the no suggestion plus thought listing conditions did not experience the suggestion to undertake a narrative that deviated from that given in the commercial. In the no suggestion plus thought listing condition, participants were prompted to list their thoughts about the commercial after viewing it. In the no suggestion group, participants

did not list thoughts after viewing the commercial, but moved directly to the next stage in the study. This was a control for determining if thought listing task in the no suggestion plus thought listing condition would be reactive. The following are the instructions that the no suggestion plus thought listing group received:

Now that you have watched the Anheuser-Busch *Lost Dog* commercial, we are interested in what thoughts you had while viewing. Simply list what thoughts you encountered during the video. Do not feel the need to censor your thoughts or be concerned about grammar or spelling.

Type only one thought per page. When you have typed your first thought, click on the next button to submit another thought. After two thoughts, you will have the option to continue listing thoughts or move on to the next stage if you have no more to record.

After viewing the commercial, the participants in the suggestion plus thought listing condition were instructed to list thoughts about why the company chose to use the commercial.

The following are the instructions this group received:

Now that you have watched the Anheuser-Busch *Lost Dog* commercial, we are interested in what thoughts you have about why the company chose to use this advertisement. Simply list your thoughts about why this commercial was used. Do not feel the need to censor your thoughts or be concerned about grammar or spelling.

Type only one thought per page. When you have typed your first thought, click on the next button to submit another thought. After two thoughts, you will have the option to continue listing thoughts or move on to the next stage if you have no more to record.

Aside from the instruction about what type of thoughts to list, the thought listing instructions are the same for the two conditions. The thoughts were listed immediately after the viewing of the advertisement. The participants are told not to be concerned with spelling or grammar or to censor their thoughts. Participants were to record two thoughts, after which they had the choice of submitting up to two additional thoughts, or to continue on in the study. These guidelines were laid out by the researchers that developed the thought listing procedure, a commonly used measure in persuasion research (see guidelines in Cacioppo & Petty, 1981).

Measurement of dependent variables. Participants from all three conditions completed two sets of semantic differential scales, the first assessing the commercial attitude and the second assessing the corporate image. The commercial was rated on four different scales. The anchors for the Commercial Attitude ratings were: Dull to Moving, Uplifting to Discouraging, Pleasant to Unpleasant, and Bad to Good. Between each of the anchors, there were five buttons for participants to indicate their level of agreement. The button closest to the first anchor was scored as -2, and the button closest to the second anchor was scored as +2. The first and fourth scales (Dull to Moving and Bad to Good) were ultimately reverse scored. The score from this set of ratings will reflect the participant's attitude toward the commercial. If the items of the scale were found to have sufficient internal consistency, the plan was to generate a single Commercial Attitude score per participant by averaging of the individual scale responses (range -2 to 2, with higher scores reflecting a more positive attitude).

The perceived corporate image was rated on six items. The anchors for the corporate image ratings were: Pleasant to Unpleasant, Untrustworthy to Trustworthy, Antisocial to Prosocial, Honest to Dishonest, Caring to Uncaring, and Noncharitable to Charitable. Between each pair of anchors, there were five buttons which indicate the level of agreement. The button closest to the first anchor was scored as -2, and the button closest to the second anchor was scored as +2. The second, third, and sixth scales (Untrustworthy to Trustworthy, Antisocial to Prosocial, and Noncharitable to Charitable) were ultimately reverse scored. If internal consistency of items was sufficiently high, the items here would also be combined by averaging. Each participant would thus be given a corporate image score ranging from -2 to 2, with higher scores reflecting more positive attitudes toward Anheuser-Busch as a company.

After rating the corporate image, participants were asked to rate the commercial on one final attribute, Fair to Manipulative. This scale was presented last due to concern that the word manipulative could act as a demand characteristic and therefore influence the remaining ratings.

Two measures were derived from the thoughts reported in the thought listing exercise. Each participant was asked to record at minimum of two thoughts. Two raters, who were blind to the experimental conditions, rated each thought as either relating to the commercial narrative (e.g., “what a cute dog” or “what courage”), relating to the persuasion narrative (e.g., “I wonder why they barely mentioned their product” or “I guess they wanted us to feel good”), or neutral (e.g., thoughts that did not make grammatical sense, were repeated by the same participant, or did not clearly fit as commercial or persuasion related). A guide for these ratings was given to each rater (Appendix B). From the ratings provided, three new variables were computed. The variable, total thoughts, was the sum of all thoughts. The variable, commercial related thoughts, was the sum of all commercial narrative thoughts. The variable, persuasion related thoughts, was the sum of all persuasion narrative thoughts. A single variable was derived by subtracting corporate image thoughts from persuasion narrative thoughts. A higher score would reflect thinking in terms of the commercial narrative whereas a lower score would reflect thinking more along the lines of the persuasion narrative.

Each thought was also classified, by the same two raters, as either positive (e.g., “I like the music” or “This is a cute story”), negative (e.g., “they are taking advantage of my love for animals” or “This makes me anxious”), or neutral (e.g., “I wonder what song this is”, or thoughts that do not make grammatical sense, are repeated by the same participant, or are not clearly positive or negative). A guide for these ratings was also provided to the raters (Appendix C). From these ratings, a new variable was computed by subtracting all negative thoughts from

positive thoughts. A higher score would reflect more positive thoughts, and a lower score reflects more negative thoughts.

Debriefing. After completing the ratings, the participants were given the debriefing form and thanked for their participation (Appendix D).

Design

The focal study was a one-way between-subjects design with three levels of the independent variable. The participant's critical thought about the commercial was manipulated as the independent variable. The influence of this was then measured on thought parameters, attitude toward the commercial, and attitude toward the company. All of the variables in the study were continuous. The primary hypothesis in this study was that attitude toward the company would be less positive in the suggestion plus thought listing condition than in the two no suggestion conditions, which would not differ.

Results

The data collected was analysed to test the hypotheses of the present research. The participant ratings on the Commercial Attitude and Corporate Image scales were assessed to consider the correspondence bias. Additionally, the thoughts listed by the participants and the measure of fair to manipulative were assessed to determine the strength of the manipulation provided. The timing measures were also a point of interest to measure participant involvement.

Commercial Attitude Scale

Each participant rated the commercial on five dimensions, four of which were used for the Commercial Attitude Scale: Moving to Dull, Uplifting to Discouraging, Pleasant to Unpleasant, and Good to Bad. These items reflected the overall view that the participant held towards the *Lost Dog* commercial. Internal consistency of the 4-item measure of commercial

attitude was conducted. The Cronbach's alpha value, $\alpha = .85$, reflected an internally consistent scale of commercial attitude

A single commercial attitude value was created by averaging the four items of the scale (range -2 to 2). The scale midpoint was meaningful because scores below the midpoint of zero reflected a negative attitude and scores above the midpoint reflected a positive attitude. A 3 x 2 x 3, condition (suggestion plus thought listing versus no suggestion plus thought listing versus no suggestion) x recruitment method (SONA versus Facebook) x gender of participant (male versus female versus other) between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run on the commercial attitude composite. None of the effects were significant. The mean and standard deviation of commercial attitude in the suggestion plus thought listing condition were, $M = 1.23$ and $SD = .79$, in the no suggestion plus thought listing group were, $M = 1.30$ and $SD = .61$, and in the no suggestion group were, $M = 1.29$, $SD = .82$. The aforementioned mean values failed to differ, $F(2, 164) = .04$, *ns*. The statistical power of the ANOVA on commercial attitude by condition was .05.

One-sample t-tests were conducted on each of the items on the Commercial Attitude scale, including the average of the four items (Table 1). The data for these t-tests was collapsed across conditions, as there were no significant differences. All values, individually and averaged into the commercial attitude composite, significantly exceeded the scale midpoint, zero, in the direction of more positive attitude.

Table 1.

One-Sample T-Tests for Ratings on Commercial Attitude Items

Index	Mean	SD	t-value	p
Moving – Dull	1.28	.90	19.22	< .001
Uplifting – Discouraging	1.22	.90	18.21	< .001
Pleasant – Unpleasant	1.37	.89	20.74	< .001
Good – Bad	1.22	.90	18.21	< .001
Commercial Attitude	1.27	.74	22.88	< .001

Corporate Image Scale

Each participant also provided attitudinal ratings of the company, Anheuser-Busch, on six dimensions: Pleasant to Unpleasant, Trustworthy to Untrustworthy, Prosocial to Antisocial, Honest to Dishonest, Caring to Uncaring, and Charitable to Noncharitable. The score on each scale was used to demonstrate the perceived corporate image of Anheuser-Busch. Internal consistency analysis of the 6-item measure of corporate image yielded a Cronbach's alpha of, $\alpha = .85$. In view of the scale's reliability, a single variable was created by averaging over the six items after appropriate reverse scoring (range -2 to 2). Again, the midpoint of the scale was a meaningful boundary between positive and negative evaluations of the company that produced the commercial.

A 3 x 2 x 3 (condition x recruitment method x gender) between subjects ANOVA on the corporate image composite yielded no significant main effects or interactions. The mean and standard deviation of the corporate image ratings in the suggestion plus thought listing condition were $M = .57$ and $SD = .76$, in the no suggestion plus thought listing group were, $M = .62$ and $SD = .71$, and in the no suggestion group were $M = .55$ and $SD = .73$. An ANOVA on the ratings by condition was conducted. These means did not differ, $F(2, 164) = .68, ns$. The statistical power of the ANOVA on the corporate image scale by condition was .16.

One-sample t-tests were conducted on each of the items in the corporate image scale, including the average of all the items (Table 2). The values of each variable were collapsed over condition and compared against the scale midpoint value of zero. These data clearly show that participants across conditions rated the company positively.

Table 2.

One-Sample T-Tests for Ratings on Corporate Image Items.

Index	Mean	SD	t-value	P
Pleasant – Unpleasant	.64	1.05	8.13	< .001
Trustworthy – Untrustworthy	.49	.97	6.72	< .001
Prosocial – Antisocial	.91	.92	13.25	< .001
Honest – Dishonest	.47	.99	6.28	< .001
Caring – Uncaring	.80	.95	11.35	< .001
Charitable – Non-Charitable	.20	.96	2.81	.005
Corporate Image	.58	.73	10.70	< .001

Comparing Commercial Attitude and Corporate Image Ratings

Although ratings of the commercial and ratings of the company were both significantly above zero in the positive direction, it was to be determined if the two ratings differed from each other in how positive they were. A paired sample t-test conducted on the means of the Commercial Attitude and Corporate Image Scales was significant, $t(356) = 8.88, p < .001$. The mean and standard deviation scores for the Commercial Attitude scale were $M = 1.27$ and $SD = .74$. The mean and standard deviation scores for the Corporate Image scale were $M = .58$ and $SD = .73$. This finding demonstrates that although there were no condition differences, as per the aforementioned ANOVA on both the Commercial Attitude and Corporate Image scales, and although all means were significantly in the positive direction, participants rated the commercial as significantly more positive than the company.

There was one scale item that was used on both the Commercial Attitude and the Corporate Image scales. The item was Pleasant to Unpleasant (range -2 to 2). This enabled more direct comparability of evaluations over the two types of ratings than would the comparison, as above, of the overall commercial attitude score and the overall corporate image score. On the Commercial Attitude scale, the mean and standard deviation for the pleasant item were $M = 1.37$ and $SD = .89$. On the corporate image scale, the mean and standard deviation on the same item were $M = .64$ and $SD = 1.05$. A $3 \times 2 \times 3 \times 2$ (condition x recruitment x gender x rating of commercial versus company rating on Pleasant to Unpleasant item) mixed factorial ANOVA, with repeated measures on commercial and company ratings of Pleasant to Unpleasant, was conducted on these data. Ratings for the commercial significantly exceeded those for the company, $F(1, 170) = 8.36, p = .004$, a finding that recapitulates the comparison of the overall scale scores of commercial and company.

Thought Listing Ratings

Participants in the suggestion plus thought listing condition and the no suggestion plus thought listing condition were asked to record a minimum of two thoughts following the viewing of the *Lost Dog* advertisement. The suggestion plus thought listing group was asked to list thoughts about why the company chose to use the commercial whereas the no suggestion plus thought listing group was asked to list thoughts that they had during the commercial.

Total thoughts. The total number of thoughts that each participant reported was recorded and used to compute a variable of total thoughts. An ANOVA comparing total thoughts per condition was conducted on this variable. The results from this ANOVA were significant, $F(1, 107) = 5.73, p = .018$. Fewer thoughts were expressed in the suggestion plus thought listing condition ($M = 2.09, SD = 1.62$) when compared to the no suggestion plus thought listing condition ($M = 2.44, SD = 1.58$). This may reflect the saliency of the commercial narrative, compared to the persuasion narrative.

Narrative classification. The thoughts listed were divided into categories of persuasion related, commercial related, or neutral by two raters who were blind to the experimental condition. To examine inter-rater reliability, Pearson correlations were computed on the two sets of ratings, separately within each rating category. The correlation for the commercial ratings was significant $r(115) = .90, p < .001$, as was the correlation for the persuasion ratings, $r(115) = .87, p < .001$. The correlation within the neutral rating category, although significant, indicated low reliability, $r(115) = .34, p < .001$, which is likely attributable to the fact that very few thoughts were placed into this category.

The primary concern was to examine the frequency with which participants used a narrative defined by the commercial versus a narrative defined by the participant's relationship

with the company and understanding of persuasion. An index was computed to reflect this tendency. Between-rater disagreements within the commercial rating category and the persuasion related category were resolved through conversation. A new variable was computed by subtracting the number of persuasion related thoughts from the number of commercial related thoughts. An ANOVA comparing the difference scores over conditions was conducted, $F(1, 107) = 36.50, p < .001$. The mean and standard deviation for the number of commercial related minus persuasion related thoughts in the suggestion plus thought listing condition were $M = -.44$ and $SD = 3.22$, and the mean and standard deviation for the same variable in the no suggestion plus thought listing condition were $M = 1.32$ and $SD = 3.19$. Therefore, participants in the suggestion plus thought listing condition recorded significantly more persuasion related thoughts than the participants in the no suggestion plus thought listing condition.

As was evident at this point in the data analysis, the manipulation of narrative was successful in directing thoughts to the particular narrative being suggested, whether commercial related or persuasion related. It had been anticipated that a persuasion related narrative would result in participants thinking less positively of the source, Anheuser-Busch, because of the critical thought induction manipulation. From ratings of the company reported above, it was evident that ratings of the company were not adversely affected in the suggestion plus thought list condition, which suggests that participants did not think more negatively of the source despite thinking in terms of a persuasion related narrative. To test for this possibility, additional thought list ratings were taken.

Tone classification. The thoughts were also rated as positive, negative, or neutral in tone by the same two raters that rated the earlier classifications. Pearson correlations were conducted on these ratings as well. The correlation for the positive ratings was significant $r(115) = .89, p <$

.001. The correlation for the negative ratings was also significant $r(115) = .76, p < .001$. The correlation for the neutral ratings was significant as well $r(115) = .80, p < .001$. A new variable was computed by subtracting the number of negative thoughts from the number of positive thoughts (see Cacioppo & Petty, 1981). An ANOVA was conducted on the new variable by condition. The results from this ANOVA by condition failed to reach significance, $F(1, 116) = .82, ns$. Thus, the thought data indicated that thoughts were not any more negative in the suggestion plus thought list condition than in the no suggestion plus thought list condition. This suggests that our manipulation was effective only in part. It directed the narrative that was considered but it did not alter the attitudinal tone associated with the content.

Fair to Manipulative Item

The fifth item that participants rated the commercial on was measuring the extent to which the commercial was perceived as Fair to Manipulative. A 3 x 2 x 3 (condition x recruitment x gender) ANOVA was conducted on the ratings of this item. The results from this ANOVA failed to reach significance, $F(2, 164) = .97, ns$. This demonstrates that each group rated the company equally on the Fair to Manipulative scale, $M = -.18$ and $SD = 1.32$. It is important to note that the mean score was negative, and therefore demonstrating that the participants tended to rate the commercial as more manipulative than fair, regardless of condition. This demonstrates where the manipulation failed to have its intended impact as the participants in the suggestion plus thought listing group were no more likely to see the commercial as a manipulative tactic than those in the other groups. It is clear that the participants liked both the commercial and the company; however, they did not rate the commercial as inherently fair. This may be due to participants not realizing the contradiction,

not actively considering it, or perhaps the participants reconciled that the commercial and company can be likeable without being fair.

Timing Measures

The timing in seconds it took for participants to complete the ratings of commercial attitude and corporate image was recorded. Two variables were computed based on the timing recorded, one for the Commercial Attitude time and another for the Corporate Image time. A 3 x 2 x 3 (condition x recruitment x gender) ANOVA was conducted on the variable of Commercial Attitude time, and the ANOVA of Commercial Attitude time by the recruitment dyad was significant, $F(1, 164) = 6.03, p = .015$. Those recruited through SONA spent more time on their ratings ($M = 20.42, SD = 25.77$) than those recruited by Facebook ($M = 15.62, SD = 25.16$). The ANOVA for corporate image time by recruitment method was marginally significant, $F(1, 164) = 2.90, p = .091$. Those recruited by SONA also spent more time on their ratings ($M = 36.71, SD = 30.09$) than those recruited by Facebook ($M = 28.43, SD = 18.80$). This suggests that participants recruited by SONA spent more time on rating of both corporate image and commercial attitude when compared to the participants recruited using Facebook, thus speaking to the level of engagement that occurred between the two recruitment methods.

Mediation Analysis

It was expected that the manipulation directing participants' thinking to the commercial narrative versus the company narrative would alter ratings of company image and that this relationship would be mediated by type of thought, persuasion related versus commercial related. The mediation analysis was not performed because the independent variable failed to affect the dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Discussion

In the present research, correspondence bias was demonstrated in all three conditions. This result leads one to believe that the manipulation of the suggestion, used to induce critical thought, in the experimental condition was not effective at all. This conclusion is only partially true. Based on the analysis of the thought listing reports, the participants in the suggestion plus thought listing condition listed more thoughts relating to the corporate image narrative, when compared to the no suggestion plus thought listing condition who listed more thoughts consistent with the commercial narrative. These results indicate that the critical thought induction manipulation was sufficient in altering the narrative that the participant focused on, however, it was not sufficient to induce attitudinal change. Timing measures indicated that participants recruited by SONA spent more time on the commercial attitude and corporate image ratings than those who were recruited using Facebook.

Effectiveness of *Lost Dog*

The present study demonstrates the high level of success of this narrative advertisement. Regardless of condition, all participants rated both the commercial and the corporate image of Anheuser-Busch as positive. This is highly impressive as there was no direct attempt to increase viewers' perceptions of the company made in the *Lost Dog* advertisement. People were drawn into the narrative portrayed and generalized the positivity of the story portrayed in the commercial to the company itself. This means that the advertisement was successful in increasing corporate image, without explicitly stating positive attributes of Budweiser or Anheuser-Busch. The results of this research would be of great interest to Anheuser-Busch as they demonstrate the effectiveness of their advertisement, *Lost Dog*.

Findings Suggest the Occurrence of Correspondence Bias

The results of the present research are consistent with the notion of correspondence bias that has been examined in previous research (Escales, 2007). The commercial, *Lost Dog*, was rated extremely positively. If the correspondence bias was present, the corporate image ratings would also be positive. Across all three conditions, the corporate image was rated positively, although these ratings were significantly lower than those for the commercial. The data do not conclusively demonstrate the correspondence bias. This is because it is possible that the participants would have rated the corporate image positively regardless of the viewing of the *Lost Dog* advertisement. Therefore, future research would be advised to introduce another control group to address this (e.g., no commercial viewing or a neutral or negative commercial viewing).

The manipulation of critical thought in the present research was expected to decrease the favourability in the corporate image ratings. Based on the thought listing responses, it seems that the manipulation was partially successful in doing so. The suggestion was successful in changing the narrative participants were focused on, but it failed to result in more negative ratings of corporate image.

Successful Change of Narrative Thought

It was expected that participants in the suggestion plus thought listing condition would list significantly more persuasion related thoughts than commercial related thoughts. This would deviate from the baseline represented by the no suggestion plus thought listing condition, in which more commercial thoughts compared to persuasion thoughts would be listed. This set of findings would demonstrate a shift in the narrative used by participants in the suggestion plus thought listing condition. Based on the results from the thought listing analyses, we can state

that the narrative that the participants in the suggestion plus thought listing group was successfully altered. This is seen in the finding that those in the suggestion plus thought listing condition listed significantly more persuasion related thoughts (e.g., “What does this have to do with beer?”) than commercial related ones (e.g., “The puppy is so cute!”), meaning that those in the experimental condition were thinking primarily about the persuasion process, whereas those in the no suggestion plus thought listing group listed thoughts primarily related to the commercial narrative. The altering of the narrative that participants were following was a necessary, but not sufficient, element of countering correspondence bias.

The Transportation Imagery Model explains that narratives are effective because they direct the targets’ information processing to the presented storyline, which in turn removes the ability of the target to develop cohesive counterarguments to the persuasion attempt (Green & Brock, 2002). When considering the narrative results of the thoughts listed in the present study through a lens of the Transportation Imagery Model, it would appear that altering the narrative that participants are focusing on would be important to countering the correspondence bias. It was expected that the persuasion narrative would result in thoughts about the process of manipulation involved when companies persuade an audience. If this was present, viewers might then view the company less favourably because of the manipulative aspect (Kramer, 1994). As noted, the persuasion related thought was present at a higher degree in the suggestion plus thought listing condition. Unexpectedly, this was not accompanied by decreased ratings of the corporate image, which serves as an explanation for the correspondence bias not being countered.

It is important to note that the participants in the no suggestion plus thought listing condition were absorbed by the commercial narrative and engaged in very little persuasion-

related thoughts, as seen in the thought listing analyses. This demonstrates the high level of control narrative commercials possess over viewers.

Failure to Reduce Positivity of Persuasion Related Thoughts

Following the findings that the narrative used by viewers in the suggestion plus thought listing condition was successfully altered, the thoughts were rated once again as positive, negative, or neutral. This analysis was expected to provide further insight into why the correspondence bias was not countered when the narrative was altered. This set of findings demonstrated that the thoughts that were listed by the suggestion plus thought listing condition participants were not significantly more negative than those listed in the no suggestion plus thought listing condition. Therefore, thinking about the company in a positive way was not sufficient to counter the correspondence bias alone. We expect that in order to counter the correspondence bias, the participants would need to shift to a negative narrative about the company. It was expected that when prompted to think about the company, the viewers would do so negatively, however the manipulation did not have this effect. It is because of this that the second necessary condition, altering the tone of the narrative being engaged in, for the countering of correspondence bias was not successful.

Inability to Counter the Correspondence Bias

We anticipated that the correspondence bias would be present in the two no suggestion groups and also that the induction of the persuasion narrative would be sufficient to counter the correspondence bias in the suggestion plus thought listing condition. Induction of persuasion related thought was expected on theoretical grounds to arouse persuasion knowledge, which is critical of persuasion attempts (see Friestad & Wright, 1994). Closely related elements of persuasion knowledge, such as the priming of potential corporate motives, have been successful

in countering the correspondence bias in studies using stimuli created for research purposes (Fien & Hilton, 1994; Yoon, Gurhan-Canli, & Schwarz, 2006).

As previously stated, our manipulation of critical thought was not sufficient to counter the correspondence bias experienced by participants in the present study. One potential explanation for is that the present research utilized an expensive and exhaustively developed commercial promoting a well-known company, Budweiser. This commercial as a stimulus material is a great variant from previous research studies that make use of advertisements, both print and video, that were made specifically for research purposes using fabricated companies and products. For example, Eisend (2015) used an advertisement for a fictional company, Berry's Licorice, in a study that looked at the impact of informing participants about marketers' tactics on the level of influence achieved by the persuasion attempt. It is possible that because of a pre-existing relationship between the participant and the company, the correspondence bias was more difficult to counteract than with fabricated companies.

Additionally, the present research made use of a brief manipulation that took place in the instructions for thought listing, which raises a concern for the level of attention paid to the manipulation. It is important to note, however, that the manipulation was successful in altering the narrative used by participants. This demonstrates that there was at least a marginal amount of attention paid to the manipulation. Future research would benefit from a more extensive manipulation.

Although the present research did not have exclusionary criteria for participation in the study, over 70% of our participants were aged 18-24 years old. Fortunately, this age group consists of the primary target audience of Anheuser-Busch. This could be another reason why the correspondence bias was not countered. It is possible that the pre-existing favourable

evaluation of Anheuser-Busch could have influenced the inability to counter the bias. In future research, it would be beneficial to have a baseline measurement of corporate image in order to better assess this bias. Regardless of the reasoning, this set of findings is important to Anheuser-Busch as it demonstrates the effectiveness of the advertisement within their target audience.

Social Media Recruitment

After an analysis of the timing data, it was found that participants who were recruited using social media, specifically Facebook, spent significantly less time on the ratings of both the commercial and corporate image when compared with the participants recruited using the King's University College undergraduate participant pool, SONA. It is important to note that this is the only difference that was significant throughout the study based on recruitment method, which supports the argument that social media is an effective method to recruit participants in Psychological research. In the present study, participants recruited using Facebook were not provided with any incentive to complete the study, whereas studies on the effectiveness of social media recruitment recommend having an incentive either in the form of a fixed prize or a lottery draw (King, O'Rourke, & DeLongis, 2014). One element of concern with the social media recruitment aspect is seen through the participants with incomplete data. Of the 180 participants who opened the link and did not continue any further, 148 were recruited using social media. It is likely that this is due to the lack of an incentive at the end of the study, however, it is still important to note that the final sample had approximately half of the participants recruited from each recruitment method. These results are important in understanding the benefits and drawbacks of using social media to recruit participants.

Practical Implications

The practical implications of the present research are extremely relevant as this is an applied research study. Through demonstrating that inducing critical thought using the brief manipulation was not sufficient to counter the correspondence bias, the present research has showcased the undeniable strength that narrative persuasion attempts possess. This is important because narrative persuasion attempts are used widely in modern advertising, meaning that viewers are engaging in this bias without realizing it.

The present research also demonstrates that viewers of narrative advertisements are at risk of decreased critical thought. This can lead to uninformed consumer decisions stemming from the positive emotions of an unrelated narrative produced by the company. In order to improve consumer protection, individuals must first recognize narratives advertisements as persuasion attempts and engage critical thought. As demonstrated in present research, it is not sufficient to think about the company. Viewers must also think critically about corporate motives and the message being presented.

Limitations

Although there are a number of relevant implications of the present research, there are certain limitations that apply. The primary limitation is that the manipulation that was used to induce critical thought was not strong enough to counter correspondence bias. This could be rectified by using a more overt or engaging manipulation, instead of a minor manipulation within task instructions.

Additionally, participant engagement was not measured in this study. All participants completed the measures online, meaning that we did not have experimental control over their environment and attention paid to the stimulus materials and tasks. We did use a measure of

timing, however, it would be beneficial in the future to use lab studies and webcam monitoring. Another possibility would be to measure pupil dilation as a more absolute measure of engagement.

It is also important to note that we did not have a group who rated the company before viewing the advertisement, thus making it more difficult to conclusively state that the inflated ratings of both company and the commercial were due to the narrative. This would have resulted in a more concrete assessment of correspondence bias.

Future Research

Future studies measuring the impacts of persuasion knowledge on correspondence bias after viewing narrative advertisements would benefit from using more real companies and their advertisements. Although the present study was not able to counter the correspondence bias, this is possibly due to the strength of professionally developed advertisement and pre-existing relationships with corporations. This high level of external validity is an integral element of understanding the implications of narrative advertisements.

Increased time allowed for processing and incentives to do so would be a beneficial addition to future research in this area. It is also important to measure participant engagement.

Future research would also benefit from including a control group in which participants' rate corporate image before viewing the advertisement, as this would make the interpretation of correspondence bias more robust.

Additionally, it would be effective if future research did a more longitudinal model, with a follow-up session at a later time to reassess the measurements of commercial attitude and corporate image. This design would demonstrate the long-term influences of narrative persuasion attempts, perhaps even without recalling the stimulus directly.

References

- Anheuser-Busch InBev. (2014). *Our Dream: Best Beer Company Bringing People Together for a Better World*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ab-inbev.com/media/annual-report.html>
- Baddeley, A. (2001). Is working memory still working?. *American Psychologist*, *56.11*, 864-878. doi: 10.1037/0003-066.
- Bartlett, F. (1932). *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Baron, R., & Kenny, D. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *51.6*, 1173-1182.
- Cacioppo, J. & Petty, R. (1981). Social psychological procedures for cognitive response assessment: The thought listing technique. In Merluzzi, T., Glass, C., & Genest, M. (Eds.) *Cognitive Assessment* (pp 309-342). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Chang, R., Stout, S., Miller, R. (2004) Comparing excitatory backward and forward conditioning. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, *57.1*, 1-23. doi: 10.1080/0272990344000015.
- Dal Cin, S., Zanna, M. P., & Fong, G. T. (2004). Narrative persuasion and overcoming resistance. *Resistance and persuasion*, 175-191.
- Eisend, M. (2015). Persuasion knowledge and third-person perceptions in advertising: The moderating effect of regulatory competence. *International Journal of Advertising*, *34*, 54-69. doi: 10.1080/02650487.
- Escles, J. (2007). Self-referencing and persuasion: Narrative transportation versus analytical elaboration. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *33*, 421-429. doi: 10.1086/510216.

- Fein, S. & Hilton, J. (1994). Judging others in the shadow of suspicion. *Motivation and Emotion*, *18*, 167-198.
- Friestad, M. & Wright, P. (1994). The persuasion knowledge model: How people cope with persuasion attempts. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *21*, 1-31.
- Friestad, M., & Wright, P. (1999). Everyday persuasion knowledge. *Psychology and Marketing*, *16*, 185 - 194.
- Gilbert, D. & Malone, P. (1995). The correspondence bias. *Psychology Bulletin*, *117*, 21-38.
- Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). The role of transportation in the pervasiveness of public narratives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *79*, 701–721.
- Green, M. & Brock, T. (2002). In the mind's eye: Transportation-imagery model of narrative persuasion. In M. Green, J. Strange, & T. Brock (Eds.), *Narrative impact: Social and cognitive foundations* (315–341). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Ham, C., Nelson, M., & Das, S. (2015). How to measure persuasion knowledge. *International Journal of Advertising*, *34.1*, 17-53. doi: 10.1080/02650487
- King, D., O'Rourke, N., & DeLongis, A. (2014). Social media recruitment and online data collection: A beginner's guide and best practices for accessing low-prevalence and hard-to-reach populations, *Canadian Psychology*, *55*, 240-249. doi: 10.1037/a0038087.
- Kramer, R. (1994). The sinister attribution error: Paranoid cognition and collective distrust in organizations. *Motivation and Emotion*, *18.2*, 199-230.
- Laer, T., de Tuyter, K., Visconti, L., & Wetzels, M. (2014). The extended transportation-imagery model: A meta-analysis of consumers' narrative transportation. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *40.5*, 797-817. doi: 10.1086/673383.

- Petty, R., Cacioppo, J., and Shumann, D. (1983). Central and peripheral routes to advertising effectiveness: The moderating role of involvement. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *10*, 135-146.
- Scott, J. (Director) & Hertzberg, L. (Executive Producer). (2015). *Lost Dog* [Advertisement]. Available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAsjRRMMg_Q
- Slater, M. & Rouner, D. (2002). Entertainment-education and elaboration likelihood: Understanding the processing of narrative persuasion. *Communication Theory*, *12*, 173-191.
- Yoon, Y., Gurhan-Canli, Z., & Schwarz, N. (2006). The effect of corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities on companies with bad reputations. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *16*, 377-390. doi: 10.1207/s15327663.

Appendix A

Informed Consent for Perceptions of Advertising Study

This research seeks to expand the knowledge that the scientific community has about how people view advertising. By participating in this research, you will be informed about advertising and, using that information, have the chance to become a more informed consumer. The information that you provide will add to the available research on attitudes towards advertising.

The entirety of this study will be completed online and will take approximately ten minutes. You will watch an advertisement and provide feedback immediately following the viewing. There are no known risks associated with participating in this study.

You are free to terminate your participation at any time. You don't have to respond to items that you are uncomfortable answering. Your name will not be attached to your answers from the study or demographic characteristics in any way. Your participation is confidential.

If you have any questions about the study or would like to request the final paper, please contact the principal investigator, Kendra Hardy (khardy@uwo.ca), or the faculty advisor, Dr. Donald Gorassini (dgorassi@uwo.ca).

I fully understand the above information and willingly agree to participate in the study.

Your typed name will serve as your signature.

Appendix B

Scoring Guidelines for Thought Listing

In order to properly rate the thoughts, please watch the *Lost Dog* advertisement for Budweiser that aired during the 2015 Super Bowl. Participants in the study viewed this commercial and were then asked to list their thoughts after watching the commercial. Each participant was required to list two thoughts and were given the option to provide additional thoughts. Your job is to rate each thought in the attached document as either commercial related, company related, or neutral. Each type of thought is described in more detail below. After all thoughts have been rated for a given participant, record the number of thoughts in each category that the participant had in the respective column and also the total number of thoughts in the last column. Each participant will therefore have four numbers recorded for them: the number of commercial thoughts, number of company thoughts, number of neutral thoughts, and the total number of thoughts listed.

Commercial Related Thoughts

Thoughts rated as commercial related are those that align naturally with the narrative that is being portrayed in the *Lost Dog* advertisement. That is, any thought that relates to the puppy, horses, music, or other theatrical attributes of the advertisement. Some examples of thoughts in this category include:

- What a cute dog!
- Brave horses
- I like the music
- Unlikely friendship
- Good looking actor

- Very dramatic commercial
- Sad/Happy/Worried

Company Related Thoughts

Thoughts that are rated as relating to the company will reflect the insights about why this commercial was used, the company that produced it, or the motive behind the marketing. Some examples of thoughts that would be considered company related are:

- What does this have to do with beer?
- Budweiser is trying to appeal to emotions
- This is a marketing trick to play on emotions
- Best buddies = best beer.
- It's a cute video, which means people will share it with their friends
- Shows the Budweiser cares about their customers
- They are taking advantage of my love for animals

Neutral Thoughts

Thoughts rated as neutral are any thought that does not clearly relate to either the commercial or the company. Any thoughts that are spelled incorrectly, don't make sense, or are repeated by the same participant also can be rated as neutral. For example, "I don't get this" could also be classified as neutral.

Appendix C

Scoring Guidelines for Thought Listing

In order to properly rate the thoughts, please watch the *Lost Dog* advertisement for Budweiser that aired during the 2015 Super Bowl. Participants in the study viewed this commercial and were then asked to list their thoughts after watching the commercial. Each participant was required to list two thoughts and were given the option to provide additional thoughts. Your job is to rate each thought in the attached document as either positive, negative, or neutral. Each type of thought is described in more detail below. After all thoughts have been rated for a given participant, record the number of thoughts in each category that the participant had in the respective column and also the total number of thoughts in the last column. Each participant will therefore have four numbers recorded for them: the number of positive thoughts, number of negative thoughts, number of neutral thoughts, and the total number of thoughts listed.

Positive Thoughts

Thoughts rated as positive are those that reflect positive emotions or demonstrates the viewer's support of the commercial *Lost Dog*. Some examples of thoughts in this category include:

- What a cute dog!
- Brave horses
- I like the music
- Unlikely friendship
- Good looking actor
- Appealing/Thoughtful

- There is a bond between the animals

Negative Thoughts

Negative thoughts are those that reflect negative emotions, an unfavorable view, or skeptical attitudes toward the company or commercial. Some examples of thoughts that would be considered company related are:

- What does this have to do with beer?
- This is a marketing trick to play on emotions
- They are taking advantage of my love for animals
- The dog is sad
- Sad/Worried/Anxious
- How will the dog get home?

Neutral Thoughts

Thoughts rated as neutral are any thought that are not clearly positive or negative. Any thoughts that are spelled incorrectly, don't make sense, or are repeated by the same participant also can be rated as neutral. For example, "I don't get this" could also be classified as neutral.

Appendix D

Debriefing Form for Countering Correspondence Bias: Critical Thought Induction in Viewers of Narrative Advertisements

Using literature from consumer behaviour and social psychology, this study seeks to draw forth information about how an individual's view of a commercial can impact their overall view of the company. We are especially interested in cases such as the #BestBuds advertisement, where the content does not outwardly promote their own products, but instead focuses on the emotional narrative told.

After watching the commercial, one group of participants received the instruction to list thoughts they had while watching the advertisement, while another group was told to list thoughts about why the company selected this particular advertisement. A group was encouraged to think about why company selected the commercial, which should then activate their critical evaluation, which is a facet of persuasion knowledge. A final group received no prompt to list thoughts at all.

We expect that those in the second group will be able to acknowledge their enjoyment of the commercial in the final questions, but rate their skepticism about the company and the values it holds. In short, we are looking at the impact of the activation of critical evaluation on the perceived credibility of the company after the viewing of an emotional, narrative advertisement.

By participating in this research, you have helped us gather data to support this hypothesis. Although there is research done on the topic, there is a significant need for studies to be done to support the existing theories.

Research Conducted By:

Kendra Hardy, King's University College. Email: khardy@uwo.ca.

Supervisor: Dr. Donald Gorassini, King's University College. Email: dgorassi@uwo.ca. Phone: 519-433-3591 x 4427.

More Research:

Friestad, M. & Wright, P. (1999). Everyday persuasion knowledge. *Psychology & Marketing*, 18. 185-194.

Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2002). In the mind's eye: Transportation-imagery model of narrative persuasion

If you have any concerns about the ethics involved in this research, contact Dr. Renee Soulodre-La France (Associate Academic Dean, King's University College, email: rsoulodr@uwo.ca, phone: 519-433-3491 x4424)