

Display Advertising: The Role of Context and Advertising Appeals from a Resistance Perspective

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Abstract

Purpose - This research aims to investigate the role of consumer resistance, display advertising context, appeal, and type of exposure for the successful launch of a brand into a new market.

Method - To accomplish this goal, two experiments manipulated the digital context of advertising (congruent vs. incongruent), the advertising appeal (emotional vs. informative), and the type of exposure (incidental vs. forced) using an energy drink brand. In Study 1, data were collected from 80 participants using eye-tracking and an online questionnaire. In Study 2, 138 participants visited a website with the targeted display ad and responded to an online questionnaire.

Findings - Overall, the results of two studies show that the relationship between consumer resistance and display advertising effectiveness is moderated by the advertising context and advertising appeal in incidental exposure, whereas only the advertising context moderates this relationship in forced exposure when launching a brand into a new market. Moreover, the study illustrates the importance of collecting subjective and objective data in advancing the knowledge and understanding of interactive marketing communications such as display advertising.

Originality- The study is a novel attempt within the well-established realm of interactive marketing and, specifically, of digital advertising to examine the persuasive effects of display ad features such as the context, appeal, and exposure on display ad effectiveness, considering consumers' predispositions such as resistance to change.

Keywords: brand launch, consumer resistance, display advertising, advertising context, advertising appeal, eye-tracking, energy drink, forced exposure

1. Introduction

Launching a brand into new markets is crucial to successful brand management because it determines primary demand, increases market share, secures profits, and provides a company competitive advantage (Furrer et al., 2016; Riebe et al., 2014). For market diffusion, brand introduction requires good planning and significant communication investments (Gruner et al., 2019; Heidenreich and Kraemer, 2016). Advertisements encouraging new customers to try a brand increases market share, sales, and profitability (Riebe et al., 2014).

Nowadays, businesses entering new markets use interactive marketing tools to build brand awareness (Lim et al., 2022) and a positive image. Research on how interactive technologies can aid in introducing a brand into a new market is marginal (Eid, Abdelmoety, and Agag, 2019). Although digital advertising as an interactive marketing tool has grown tremendously over the past decade (Lim et al., 2022), there is limited research on its effectiveness in launching a brand into new markets.

Furthermore, the extant literature uses advertising expenditures as a proxy (Gruner et al., 2019) or consumer characteristics and consumption behavior (Simmonds et al., 2020) to understand how advertising affects business performance when launching a product, disregarding the type of message (informational vs. emotional) and the context (congruent vs. incongruent) in which a brand advertisement is embedded in the digital interactive domain. Most importantly, most studies use surveys and subjective data from firm managers (Roberts and Candi, 2014; Liu and Wu, 2018) rather than objective customer-side advertising effectiveness measures.

Despite rising spending on digital advertising, its ROI is low due to ad-blocking (Lim et al., 2022; Brinson and Britt, 2021). GlobalWebIndex (2019) reports that 47% of internet users (2 billion people) use ad-blocking software on all their devices. Advertisers implement forced exposure strategies (contrary to incidental exposure) to combat ad blocking, such as forced pop-

up ads and pre-roll video ads (Kim, 2018). Thus, examining how incidental and forced exposures work in display ads of brands entering new markets is of great interest. There is no available research on this topic to the authors' knowledge.

When launching a brand into a new market, businesses must understand how consumers respond to interactive media communications (Wang, 2021) and, more precisely, their resistance to adopting new products/brands. According to a Gartner report (2019), only 11% of companies meet their goals when launching a new product, partly due to a lack of target market knowledge and consumer needs and wants. Most advertising research has explored consumer ad resistance (Fransen et al., 2015), while the branding literature only examines consumer innovativeness and its link to new brands and brand expansions (Xie, 2008). Thus, both streams of literature disregard consumers' resistance as a predisposition that affects their reactions to ads and brands. However, resisting a new brand before buying it will hurt the later stages of the purchase process (Tsotsou and Wirtz, 2015). Consumer resistance (CR) will render every communication strategy and tactic ineffective, resulting in wasted investments. Thus, interactive marketing communications require further investigation to overcome customer aversion to new brands.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of display advertising elements and consumers' resistance to the successful launch of a brand into a new market. Specifically, the objectives of this research are: (1) to understand the role of consumers' resistance when launching a brand into a new market via display advertising, (2) to explore the effects of the digital context of display advertising (congruent context vs. non-congruent context), (3) display advertising appeal (emotional vs. informative), and (4) type of exposure (forced vs. incidental) on display advertising effectiveness. To accomplish these objectives, dual-system theory (Kahneman, 2011) offered the theoretical underpinnings for the research hypotheses, and two experiments tested them.

The paper enriches the interactive marketing, brand management, and advertising literature in several ways. *First*, it contributes theoretically by approaching CR (Heidenreich and Kraemer, 2016; Mani and Chouk, 2019) via dual-system theory (Evans and Stanovich, 2013; Grayot, 2020; Kahneman, 2011) to explain consumers' reaction to a brand when launched into a new market via display advertising. Understanding the role of CR on the effectiveness of display advertising at the introductory stage of a brand would further extend dual-system and advertising theories. Thus, the paper informs the literature on interactive marketing communications and brand management. *Second*, this research is a novel attempt within the well-established realm of digital advertising and interactive marketing to examine the persuasive effects of display ad features, such as the context, appeal, and exposure type, on display ad effectiveness, considering consumers' predispositions as resistance to change. Thus, the study advances the interactive marketing and online advertising literature.

In addition, the study provides substantial practical implications. Brand managers must invest in interactive marketing and advertising activities to bring results. Therefore, it becomes necessary for them to examine the efficacy of different display ad elements and understand their role in successfully introducing a brand to a new market. To this end, the study helps brand managers in making an informed decision regarding the type of context (congruent vs. incongruent), appeal (informational vs. emotional), and exposure (incidental vs. forced) they need to overcome CR. Thus, the paper assists brand managers in launching a brand into a new market and developing effective display ads and measures to boost brand awareness and the brand image process. Furthermore, the study methodologically enriches the brand management and interactive marketing literature by suggesting experimental designs combining objective and subjective data collection methods such as eye-tracking and online surveys. Thus, we propose that there is a complementary relationship between subjective measures and eye-tracking,

justifying their use in interactive marketing to provide a holistic understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Following, the paper presents the literature review followed by the conceptual framework. Next, it discusses the two studies separately and concludes with the theoretical and practical implications and the avenues for future research.

2. The role of digital advertising in introducing a brand into a market

Interactive digital advertising has replaced traditional broadcast and one-way media communication to strengthen consumer-brand relationships (Wang, 2021; Lim et al., 2022). Brand introductions require choosing digital advertising formats and contexts. Thus, businesses can choose from display ads (banners, landing pages, pop-ups, and flash ads), native advertising (Jung and Heo, 2021), search engine marketing and optimization, social media ads, email marketing, and video ads. Display advertising comprised 31% of digital advertising revenue in 2019 (IAP/PwC, 2019). eMarketer (2022) reported \$106 billion in US programmatic display advertising, up 41.2% from 2020. Companies need low-cost communications, parallel brand digital ad testing, and market-reflective outcomes (Dahan and Srinivasan, 2013). Thus, display advertising is ideal for brand introduction.

Due to its long-term impact on business success, current advertising research seeks to identify the factors that boost display advertising effectiveness (Lim et al., 2022; Muñoz-Leiva, 2018). Consumer motivating variables that impact brand advertising on the internet, including resistance to change, also attract attention (Niu, Feng, and Niu, 2022). The present study aims to bring the two streams of research together by assuming that the type of advertising appeal and context moderates the relationship between CR and display advertising effectiveness.

Heidenreich and Kraemer (2016) have shown that managers can overcome consumers' resistance

to new products by manipulating the content of their communication messages. However, Heidenreich and Kraemer (2016) have used only subjective measures of communication message effectiveness (self-reports of intentions to adopt a new product). This research uses both subjective and objective measures.

3. Conceptual Framework

The paper builds on the dual-system theory (Kahneman, 2011) to propose a conceptual model to describe the relationships between CR, advertising appeal, advertising context, advertising exposure, and advertising effectiveness in interactive marketing. Dual-system theories are a well-established family of theories on reasoning, judgment, and decision-making (Evans, 2003; Mugg, 2016). According to the “standard view” of the dual-system framework, there are two systems of thinking and processing. System 1 is automatic, fast, heuristic-based, emotion-driven, unconscious/preconscious, and old evolutionary. System 2 is controlled, slow, rule-based, rational, conscious, and new evolutionary (Kahneman, 2011). Dual-system theories have been extensively used in the interactive marketing literature to understand complex phenomena of consumers' attitude formation and their approach/avoidance behavior (Chang, 2018; Dhar and Gorlin, 2013).

Some recent theories illuminate how the two systems interact (Grayot, 2020). The most influential interpretation, the "default interventionist" model, predicts that System 1 operates autonomously and generates intuitive default responses. At the same time, System 2 monitors the quality of these responses and may intervene to revise, replace or inhibit them (Evans and Stanovich, 2013). System 1 is the default decision-making system (Kahneman, 2011) since most thinking occurs unconsciously and automatically (Bargh, 2002). It continuously monitors what is happening within and outside the human brain and generates assessments of different aspects of the situation unintentionally and effortlessly. These assessments are based on simplifying

heuristic rules and biases. "Heuristic is a simple procedure that helps find adequate, though often imperfect, answers to difficult questions" (Kahneman, 2011, p. 98).

Several factors, including experience and personality, create predispositions and influence the formulation of heuristics. Prior research has defined CR as a personality-specific inclination to resist (i.e., passive resistance, Heidenreich and Handrich, 2015) or an unfavorable attitude toward innovations (e.g., new brand) (i.e., active resistance, Kleijnen et al., 2009), an individual's general tendency toward disbelief of advertising claims (i.e., ad skepticism, Obermiller and Spangenberg, 1998), an unpleasant psychological state (i.e., advertising reactance) and a negative emotion evoked by an advertisement (i.e., irritation because of ad intrusiveness, Brinson and Britt, 2021), or as actions reducing exposure to the ad (i.e., ad avoidance and blocking, Speck and Elliott, 1997). First, the present paper emphasizes CR for a new innovative brand rather than its advertisement. Hence, it does not pay much attention to constructs such as advertising reactance, avoidance, blocking, intrusiveness, and irritation. Second, it focuses on the personality-specific inclination to resist changes before new product evaluations (hereafter - CR), which occurs mostly unconsciously and as a negative predisposition toward new brands (Heidenreich and Handrich, 2015). On the contrary, active resistance to a new innovative brand is mostly conscious evolving after new product evaluation (i.e., Kleijnen et al., 2009) and is out of the scope of this paper.

The central assumption of this research is that when consumers' resistance to innovations is high (low), System 1 predisposes them to react negatively (positively) to a display ad for a new-to-market brand. Specific advertising appeals or context can be more attractive to individuals with high CR because of System 1 thinking or can activate System 2, mitigating the role of resistance on ad processing, attention, and attitude. Study 1 tested these assumptions in incidental exposure and Study 2 in forced exposure to a display ad for a new-to-market brand.

4. Study 1 – The Role of CR, Display Context, and Appeal on Advertising Effectiveness/Incidental Exposure

Ad-context congruency is one of the most critical media factors in improving advertising effectiveness (Kwon et al., 2019). Ad-context congruency occurs when a display ad is placed in a thematically congruent context (website) and is used to improve advertising memory and attention, especially in the early stages of the product life cycle (Kwon et al., 2019). Another element influencing advertisement effectiveness is the type of advertising appeals, meaning "the general tone and nature of the commercial or message" (Clow and Baack, 2005, p. 5). Informational appeals emphasize product price, quality, promotional information, and value performance aiming at consumer cognition. In contrast, emotional appeals involve joy, enthusiasm, surprise, fear, guilt, and humor to influence consumers' moods (Teichert et al., 2018).

As an interactive marketing tool, display ads aim to attract consumers' attention while browsing the internet. Under these circumstances, every exposure to display ads happens outside active, laborious, or deliberate information-seeking behavior and is considered incidental exposure (Krishnan and Chakravarti, 2003). In incidental exposure, individuals with high CR, who are not open to new brands, may try to avoid cognitively demanding, assertive, direct advertising approaches, such as informational appeals (Grigaliunaite and Pileliene, 2016) and incongruent advertising contexts (Diede and Bugg, 2017), that oppose their predispositions. According to Talke and Heidenreich (2013), these people are less likely to pay attention to a new brand message (i.e., selective attention away from the ad) and to seek information about a new brand because they cannot cope with "the new" that acts as a stressor.

On the contrary, they may attend to subtle and indirect advertising approaches, such as emotional ads (and congruent advertising context), that pose no threat to their beliefs. Indeed, prior research on advertising avoidance behavior indicates that viewers are less likely to avoid

emotional advertisements than informational (Woltman et al., 2003). Confirmation bias[†], an unconscious cognitive bias activated involuntarily as part of System 1, directs selective attention to consistent stimuli (i.e., emotional appeal and congruent advertising context) rather than to inconsistent (i.e., informational appeal and incongruent advertising context) (Prat-Ortega and de la Rocha, 2018). Taking it all together, System 1 draws attention and information processing away from informational or incongruent messages contradicting consumers' predispositions, such as resistance (Figure 1). Thus, the following hypotheses are advanced:

***H1.** Display ad placement context (a) and advertising appeal type (b) moderate the relationship between CR and fixation duration*

***H2.** Display ad placement context (a) and advertising appeal type (b) moderate the relationship between CR and visit duration.*

***H3.** Display ad placement context (a) and advertising appeal type (b) moderate the relationship between CR and time to the first fixation.*

***H4.** Display ad placement context (a) and advertising appeal type (b) moderate the relationship between CR and fixation count.*

***H5.** Display ad placement context (a) and advertising appeal type (b) moderate the relationship between CR and visit count.*

In line with hypotheses H1-H5, CR is expected to positively affect Aad during incidental exposure when the ad is emotional, and the context is congruent. This is happening most likely due to two reasons. When consumers focus on browsing a website, a display ad is made accessible to their perception, a condition known as "mere exposure" (Zajong, 1968). Under this condition, repeated incidental exposures to a display ad (e.g., high visit counts) increase perceptual fluency and lead to a more positive Aad (Fang et al., 2007). On the other hand, when consumers thoroughly process a display ad (e.g., high fixation duration and visit duration), they can later recall the ad content based on the brand name used as a retrieval cue (Venkatraman et

[†]Nickerson (1998) defines confirmation bias "as the seeking or interpreting of evidence in ways that are partial to existing beliefs, expectations, or a hypothesis in hand" (p. 175).

al., 2021). If the ad message is initially favorable to consumers, a retrieval cue will result in a positive Aad later (Keller, 1991). Hence, the following hypothesis is advanced:

H6. Display ad placement context (a) and advertising appeal type (b) moderate the relationship between CR and Aad.

“ Figure 1 here.”

4.1 Method

The study took place in Greece. Two display ads for an unknown energy drink brand (3D) and two websites were designed. A gym website was the congruent advertising context, whereas an e-shop selling various electronic accessories was the incongruent context. The two display ads portrayed an image of the energy drink, its logo, and a short message (informational or emotional). The informational message was: *"Energy drink with tea, an ideal energy source, and strength. Without carbonate, sugar, and conservatives"*. The emotional message stated, *"A taste that excites wakes up all senses and makes you happy"*.

To test H1-H6, Study 1 used a 2(advertising appeal) x 2(advertising context) between-subjects eye-tracking experiment. Eye-tracking was employed to objectively measure consumers' attention and information processing on the four conditions. Eye-tracking provides objective data because it measures actual behaviors/reactions (eye movements) to a stimulus. The experiment included four phases. Initially, the participants answered demographic and consumption-related questions (*Phase 1*). Then, they passed a calibration test (*Phase 2*), and next, they were guided to a website (one of the two versions) and asked to surf for three minutes (*Phase 3*). There were two ads on the website, one with the targeted brand (energy drink) and one for another product (a laptop or a mobile phone). The participants could view the additional product information by clicking on the ads. During *Phase 3* of the experiment, the Tobii X2-30

eye-tracker recorded their eye movements. Finally, participants answered questions about their CR and Aad (*Phase 4*). The average time each subject spent in the experiment was 30 minutes.

Overall, 80 undergraduate students were assigned to one of the four treatment groups: congruent context and informational display ad (n=20), congruent context and emotional ad (n=20), incongruent context and informational ad (n=20), and incongruent context and emotional ad (n=20). Undergraduate students participated in the study because research in the UK, the USA, India, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and the Philippines shows that 37% of consumers under 25 years old are regular consumers of energy/sports drinks (Clifford, 2018). Therefore, student samples were deemed appropriate for the product brand tested in the study.

4.1.1 Measurement instrument

An online questionnaire was used, consisting of two parts. Part I gathered demographic and consumption data such as daily internet use in hours and frequency of buying food and beverages. Part II measured CR and Aad on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from completely disagree (1) to completely agree (7). CR was assessed with the 13-item Inclination to Resist Change (IRC) scale (Heidenreich and Handrich, 2015), while Aad was measured with a three-item scale (Baker and Kennedy, 1994).

Study 1 also used several direct eye-tracking measures such as time to first fixation (attention), fixation duration (interest-information processing), fixation count (attention-information processing), visit duration (interest-information processing), and visit count (attention, difficulty of understanding) (Muñoz-Leiva et al., 2018; Myers et al., 2020; Tobii.com). Fixation refers to a stable gaze focused on a specific area (Balatsoukas and Ruthven, 2012). “A visit is defined as the period of time when a participant first focuses on a region until the person looks away from that region” (Tobii.com).

4.2 Study results

Study 1 used the PROCESS macro-Model 1 (Hayes, 2018) to test hypotheses 1 to 6. Regarding the hypotheses about the moderating effect of ad context on the relationship between CR and the dependent variables, statistically significant interaction effects between CR and context on Fixation Duration ($b=2.87$, $p=.01$; Table 1) (H1a is supported), Visit Duration ($b=3.06$, $p=.02$; Table 2) (H2a is supported), Fixation Count ($b=12.93$, $p<.01$; Table 3) (H4a is supported), Visit Count ($b=2.88$, $p=.01$; Table 4) (H5a is supported), and Aad ($b=-.77$, $p=.01$; Table 5) (H6a is supported) emerged. The results show that individuals with low CR spend more time processing the ad (i.e., fixation and visit duration), pay more attention to the ad (i.e., fixation count), visit the ad more frequently (i.e., visit count), and have a more positive Aad when the context is incongruent. This pattern does not apply to individuals with high CR.

"Tables 1 - 5 here."

Concerning the hypotheses about the moderating effect of ad appeal on the relationship between CR and the dependent variables, statistically significant interaction effects between CR and ad appeal on Fixation Duration ($b=2.66$, $p=.01$; Table 1) (H1b is supported), Visit Duration ($b=3.83$, $p=.01$; Table 2) (H2b is supported), Fixation Count ($b=14.24$, $p<.01$; Table 3) (H4b is supported) (Table 3), Visit Count ($b=2.79$, $p=.02$; Table 4) (H5b is supported), and Aad ($b=-.85$, $p=.00$; Table 5) (H6b is supported) emerged (see also Figure 2). The results show that individuals with low CR spend more time processing the ad, pay more attention to the ad, visit the ad more frequently, and have a more positive Aad when the appeal is informational. In contrast, individuals with high CR spend more time processing the ad and pay attention more frequently when the ad appeal is emotional.

"Figure 2 here."

The results showed that advertising context and appeal do not moderate the relationship between CR and Time to First Fixation (H3a and H3b are rejected) since there were no significant interaction effects.

4.3 Discussion of Results

Study 1 indicated that ad context and appeal modify the relationship between CR and advertising effectiveness (attention, information processing, and Aad). Low-resistance consumers pay greater attention to, process, and like informational display ads or incongruent advertising contexts. However, highly resistant consumers spend more time analyzing and fixating on emotional display ads. These findings confirm previous research that consumers avoid informational ads more than emotional ones (Woltman, Wedel, and Pieters, 2003), especially when they are unknown (Rhee and Jung, 2019). However, this only applies to consumers with high resistance.

5 Study 2 – A Moderation Serial Mediation Model of Display Advertising/Forced Exposure

Given that Study 1 investigated the incidental exposure to a display ad, whether the results hold in forced exposure to a display ad remained unanswered. Therefore, a second study was conducted that measures the impact of CR on consumer Aad during forced exposure. Moreover, forced exposure appropriated the examination of additional subjective measures of advertising effectiveness related to the advertised brand, such as Attitude toward the Brand (ABr) and Word of Mouth (WOM).

Next, a conceptual model based on dual-system theory is proposed to address the study's objectives using forced exposure. As seen in Figure 3, the model proposes that displaying advertisement context and appeal type moderates the CR-Aad relationship. Moreover, it was hypothesized that the Aad and the ABr mediate the relationship between CR and WOM. Path I represents Aad's mediation effect between CR and WOM, whereas Path II represents the serial mediation effect of Aad and ABr in the relationship between CR and WOM.

“Figure 3 here.”

People are frequently forced to watch advertisements when surfing a website. Interruptive tactics such as pop-ups, splash screens, interstitials, and YouTube pre-roll ads are all examples of forced exposure in interactive marketing. Prior research on dual-system theory (Zhang et al., 2018) indicates that when individuals are instructed to elaborate a message (i.e., a type of forced exposure), a fluent message activates System 1 processing while a more complex message activates System 2. In particular, emotional advertisements inducing pleasure and arousal require little cognitive effort to understand the message. In contrast, an informational display advertisement requires more cognitive effort (Grigaliunaite and Pileliene, 2016).

Similarly, pupil size, a measure of cognitive effort, is larger during exposure to incongruent rather than congruent stimuli (Diede and Bugg, 2017). In other words, System 1 is activated upon exposure to either an emotional appeal or a congruent advertising context. In contrast, System 2 is upon exposure to either an informational appeal or an incongruent advertising context.

CR is unconscious, usually driven by previous experience, and manifests before evaluating a new product (Greene and van Riel, 2021). It is expected that CR will lead to less favorable Aad when the ad is automatically consumed primarily by System 1 thinking (i.e., during the exposure to an emotional appeal and a congruent ad context). System 1 is an automatic and unconscious thinking process with little or no effort based on prior experiences and predispositions (Kahneman and Frederick, 2002), such as CR. On the contrary, CR will result in more positive Aad when the ad is analytically consumed primarily by System 2 thinking (i.e., during the exposure to an informational appeal and an incongruent ad-context). System 2 is a careful, conscious thinking process that monitors the quality of System 1 response and sometimes intervenes to "correct", replace, or hinder them (Evans and Stanovich, 2013). Thus, the deliberate cognitive evaluation (System 2) of brand-specific factors will inhibit the impact of CR (Heidenreich and Kraemer, 2016) and will lead to improved Aad. System 2 may

intervene and mitigate the negative effects of CR when exposed forcedly to an informational or incongruent message, resulting in a favorable Aad. The following hypotheses are advanced:

H7. The advertising context moderates the relationship between CR and Aad.

H8. The advertising appeal type moderates the relationship between CR and Aad.

CR is a predisposition of consumers to resist new products prior to having an experience with and evaluating them (Talke and Heidenreich, 2013). These consumers favor the status quo because they believe the perceived disadvantages of evaluating, purchasing, and disseminating information about a new product/brand outweigh the perceived advantages (Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler, 1991). In other words, CR is a behavioral belief (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) that overestimates a behavior's likely negative consequences.

According to the theory of planned behavior, behavioral beliefs produce favorable or unfavorable attitudes and, in turn, intentions toward the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Thus, it is expected that during forced exposure to an informational message or an incongruent context, CR to a new product will have a more positive effect on Aad and, as a result, specific behavioral intentions, such as positive WOM about the advertised brand. This assumption is consistent with the findings of Huang et al. (2013), who reported that attitude toward a viral internet video is the most critical factor affecting video-sharing intentions. Forced exposure to the new brand's arguments may positively surprise the person who tends to resist new products and may push him/her to spread the word.

Moreover, Huang et al. (2013) showed positive ABr leads to video-sharing intentions. Aad and ABr act as serial mediators between video advertising cognitions and video-sharing intentions. Ong and Ito (2019) and Leung and Stahura (2015) also proposed models with consumers' attitudes as mediators and WOM as a dependent variable. These findings are

consistent with the affect transfer perspective, which suggests that Aad directly influences ABr and behavioral intentions via brand attitude, especially when the advertised brand is of low involvement (MacKenzie et al., 1986). However, previous research did not examine the role of CR in the above relationships. Hence, it is expected that CR will have a negative effect on the Aad and, in turn, on WOM. Furthermore, the Aad and the ABr will serially mediate the CR-WOM relationship during forced exposure, subject to the advertising appeal and context.

Therefore, the following hypotheses are advanced:

H9. Display ad placement context and advertising appeal type moderate the relationship between CR and WOM through the Aad.

H10. Display ad placement context and advertising appeal type moderate the relationship between CR and WOM through the Aad and the ABr.

5.1. Method

As in Study 1, study 2 used the same brand, websites, and display ads. To test H7-H10, a 2(advertising appeal) x 2(advertising context) between-subjects experimental design was performed. The online questionnaire was sent out to 150 undergraduate students, and 138 responded (92% response rate) after being randomly assigned to one of the four treatment groups. Sixty-nine students saw the congruent to the ad website, 34 with the emotional appeal, and 35 with the informational appeal. Moreover, sixty-nine students saw the incongruent website, 37 with the emotional appeal, and 32 with the informational appeal.

The experiment included three phases. Initially, the participants answered demographic and consumption-related questions (Phase 1); then, they were guided to a website and asked to surf for 2 minutes and deliberately pay attention to the targeted ad for 1 minute (*Phase 2*). On the website, there were two ads, one for the targeted brand (energy drink) and one for another product (a laptop or a mobile phone). Finally, participants answered questions about their CR,

Aad, ABr, and WOM (*Phase 3*). The average time each subject spent in the experiment was 15 minutes.

5.1.1. Measurement instrument

The online questionnaire used consisted of three parts. Part I and Part II were the same as in Study 1, while part III measured brand-related outcomes such as ABr (Geuens and De Pelsmacker, 1998) and WOM (Baker and Kennedy, 1994). CR was measured through thirteen items (Alpha=.7), Aad (Alpha=.87), and ABr (Alpha=.8) was assessed with three items each, while WOM with a single item, ranging from completely disagree (1) to completely agree (7).

5.2. Study results

The PROCESS macro with model 83 (Hayes, 2018) tested H7-H10. The study examined the moderating role of context and advertising appeal in the relationship between CR and Aad. Moreover, it tested for the mediating role of Aad and ABr between CR and WOM (Figure 4). The results showed that only the context (incongruent vs. congruent) moderated the relationship between CR and Aad. Specifically, the overall model was significant at the .05 level ($F=3.29$, $p=.02$), with significant effects from context ($b= 2.04$, $p<.00$) and CR ($b=.33$, $p=.01$; Table 6). Moreover, the analysis showed a significant interaction effect between context and CR ($F=-.55$, $p=.01$)(H7 is supported). When the effects of the two contexts were examined, the results showed that incongruent context positively moderated the relationship between CR and Aad ($b=.33$, $t=2.60$, $p=.01$). To better illustrate the moderating role of context and identify significant relationships on specific levels of CR, the R package *interactions* were used (Long, 2019). Figure 5 shows the interaction plot with 95% confidence intervals (Panel A) and the Johnson-Neyman plot (Panel B; Spiller et al., 2013).

“please insert Table 6 and Figures 4 and 5 here.”

The results also showed that the Aad and the ABr mediate the relationship between CR and WOM, confirming hypotheses H9 and H10. Specifically, the indirect ad-context-mediated effect of CR on WOM through Aad was -.14, and it was significant (95% bootstrap CI = -.30, -.02). When examining the moderating effects separately, the effect for the incongruent context was .08 and was significant (95% bootstrap CI = .00, .18), but the effect for the congruent context was -.06 and was insignificant (95% bootstrap CI = -.16, .02) (H9 is supported). Moreover, the indirect ad-context serial mediated effect of CR on WOM through Aad and ABr was -.17, and it was significant (95% bootstrap CI = -.34, -.03). When examining the moderating effects separately, the effect for the incongruent context was .10 and was significant (95% bootstrap CI = .00, .19), whereas the effect for the congruent context was -.07 and was insignificant (95% bootstrap CI = -.20, .03) (H10 is confirmed). Furthermore, all direct effects in the model were significant except the effect of CR on WOM (Table 7).

“please insert Table 7 here.”

5.3 Discussion of Results

Study 2 confirmed only the moderated effect of context (not appeal) on CR and Aad, indicating that consumers' resistance improves Aad when the context is incongruent. The findings also showed that CR influences WOM through Aad and ABr when the context is incongruent.

6. General Discussion

Given that display advertising is one of the most effective and inexpensive tools used by interactive marketers, two studies examined the role of CR, advertising appeal (informational

vs. emotional), advertising-website context (congruent vs. incongruent), and advertising exposure type (incidental vs. forced) on its effectiveness using both subjective and objective measures of advertising effectiveness. The findings confirm that CR and advertising elements significantly influence interactive marketing communications when launching a brand. Significant theoretical and managerial implications stem from the study's results.

6.1 *Theoretical implications*

This paper integrates established principles from advertising theories with CR tenets to predict the advertising effectiveness of a brand launched into a new market and advance the interactive marketing literature. Prior studies on consumer strategies for resisting advertising focused on skepticism and psychological reactions to advertising messages (Fransen et al., 2015; Youn and Kim, 2019), neglecting CR to the advertised brand. This study extends prior research by revealing the significant effects of consumers' resistance to a new brand on advertising effectiveness. As a result, consumers' resistance is given prominence in interactive marketing research because it can influence display advertising effectiveness.

This study builds on Dual-System Theory (Kahneman, 2011) to explain how CR influences advertising effectiveness. The present study indicates that, during incidental exposure, when individuals process the advertising heuristically (system 1), congruent context and emotional appeals can reduce the negative influence of CR on advertising effectiveness. During forced exposure, an incongruent context appears to activate System 2 and lead to an analytical process that can mitigate the negative impact of CR on consumers' attitudes. This study expands the literature on advertisement-context congruency and advertising effectiveness. Ad-website congruency increases consumer attention to ads because consumers prefer congruent stimuli as they fit their category schemas better (Tsiotsou, 2013; Chun et al., 2014). The dual-system theory (Kahneman, 2011) predicts that cognitive ease improves stimulus event

emotions. The findings reveal that, in incidental exposure, ad-context congruency primes ad processing as it increases cognitive ease and minimizes customer resistance improving advertising efficacy. On the contrary, incongruent context stimulates System 2 and reduces CR through analytical thinking during forced exposure. This finding reveals that ad-website congruency only benefits incidental advertising exposure confirming the pivotal role of exposure type. This also explains the discrepancies in advertising literature about ad-context congruency (Chun et al., 2014).

This research also addresses previous conflicting findings on emotional and informational appeals in display advertising (Lee, 2014; Lwin and Phau, 2013; Teichert et al., 2018). Our study attributes literature inconsistencies to CR and advertising exposure type. Consumers exhibiting high resistance experience low motivation to elaborate and cognitively process a display ad of a new brand (Talke and Heidenreich, 2014). Hence, during incidental exposure, they process a display ad's emotional rather than informational content heuristically, making a fast, frugal, and affect-based judgment (i.e., System 1 thinking). However, there are no differences between emotional and informational appeals during forced exposure.

The present study also contributes to the literature on the role of the type of exposure (i.e., incidental or forced exposure) on advertising effects (Krishnan and Chakravarti, 2003). The findings are consistent with the PINE model (Political Incidental News Exposure Model) proposition that if individuals, during incidental exposure, appraise the content as relevant/congruent, they switch to more intensive processing (Matthes et al., 2020). The results show that this is true only in high-resistance. Consumers are more receptive to a congruent advertisement because it does not allow the adverse effects of the resistance to manifest. Furthermore, the study builds on Krishnan and Chakravarti's (2003) finding that when humor is intense and relevant, consumers' memory improves during incidental exposure. Similarly, an

emotional advertisement on a congruent website enhances attention to and processing of the ad during incidental exposure.

Finally, the close association between subjective reports and eye tracking lends credence to our initial premise that methodologies assessing the effectiveness of interactive marketing communications must rely on subjective and objective data to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomena and enrich the interactive marketing literature.

6.2. *Practical implications*

This study provides several managerial implications for brand managers and interactive marketers to improve their advertising campaigns' effectiveness when launching a new brand. Because launching a brand is expensive, tactical decisions related to interactive marketing communications are crucial. A successful brand launch will increase sales and market performance while reducing advertising costs. Thus, the paper provides valuable guidelines to managers involved in the preparation and execution of a brand launch into a new market.

First, brand and interactive managers must realize that more than making large investments in online advertising is needed to launch a brand into a new market. Consumer predispositions such as resistance to new products and advertising elements such as context, appeal, and exposure type play a significant role in successfully launching a brand into a new market via display advertising. Based on the study findings, managers should use informational ads in incongruent contexts when their consumers' resistance is low and emotional ads in congruent contexts when consumers' resistance is high, and exposure is incidental. However, in forced exposure, managers should consider only the context of the ad (incongruent) to achieve their advertising goals when introducing a brand into a new market.

Second, informational and emotional advertisements can benefit firms aiming to attract consumers' attention when launching a brand. Informational ads appear appropriate when the

advertising aims to lead consumers to elaborate thoroughly on the advertising content. Hence, an informational advertisement can offer enhanced value, especially in the early stage of the purchase funnel, when consumers need to be more knowledgeable about the brand and its ingredients, benefits, and attributes. When the advertising objective is to decrease the time it takes consumers to notice the display ad of a new brand, emotional advertisements are more appropriate. Emotional advertisements creatively break through the clutter since they attract consumers' attention quickly to the advertised brand. In the later stages of the purchase funnel, when consumers are well informed of the new brand (e.g., the ingredients and benefits of an energy drink), an emotional advertisement can inject a new breath of creativity, renewing consumers' interest in the purchase funnel advertising content.

Similarly, managers should choose the context to embed their display ads based on their goals. Display ad-context incongruency appears appropriate when the advertising objective is to induce consumers' thorough processing of the advertising content. For example, informational display ads of an energy drink brand embedded in an incongruent context (e.g., an e-shop website) are more likely to gain consumers' deeper information processing (i.e., visit duration). On the contrary, advertisers should use emotional display ads on congruent websites (e.g., a gym website) if their goal is to attract consumers' attention. Hence, an energy drink brand will benefit from being advertised on a gym's website since internet users will consider it part of a total product and attend it with a greater interest.

7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This research is bound to several limitations that provide opportunities for future research. First, the tested sports energy drink brand is a convenient good of low risk requiring low consumer involvement. Broadening the spectrum of the products to medium and high-involvement products may better understand the effectiveness of display advertising in new brands at varying levels of product involvement. Second, the paper focuses only on the display

ad and not on other elements of the website that are usually present in "real websites".

Therefore, future research should extend these findings and explore the effects of display ad appeal (informational vs. emotional) and other digital media elements (e.g., ad position on a website, size of the ad, presence of several other ads). Third, the study used websites to place advertisements for a brand. However, companies often use social media to introduce and advertise their brands (Wang, 2021). Thus, future research should examine similarities/differences between social media and website advertising of brands launched into new markets and identify the most effective context.

Moreover, the paper focuses on specific direct and indirect measures of advertising effectiveness. However, there are other measures of effectiveness and interest to managers, such as ad recall, ad recognition, and purchase intentions, future studies should consider. Fifth, despite prior research (Karpinska-Krakowiak, 2021) indicating that women are more inclined than men to purchase unknown brands, this study did not examine gender effects. Future research could investigate if and how gender differences in customer resistance affect advertising effectiveness. Finally, one concern with the empirical approach is students' use in the experiments. Although this follows previous practices in experimental studies and the age group is relevant to the advertised brand market (energy drink) and the context of the ads (websites), there is a need to use a more generalizable sample to better approximate consumer reactions.

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