

QUALITATIVE EFFECTS OF MEDIA ON ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS

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This study presents a quantitative examination of the qualitative impact of print media, both newspaper and magazine, on advertising effectiveness. Previous research has identified 39 distinct qualitative experiences involved in reading magazines and 44 involved in reading newspapers. It is found that the large majority of these media experiences are related to advertising effectiveness. The more readers, for instance, experience a newspaper or magazine as “It makes me smarter,” the more effective an ad in the magazine or newspaper is. It is further shown that these effects are robust over a representative sample of 101 newspapers and 100 magazines for a national sample of consumers in the United States.

Advertising obviously depends on both the quality of the product being advertised and the quality of the ad itself. A third factor is equally obvious, but receives relatively less attention. It is the medium in which the ad appears. The traditional concern of media planning is with evaluations of size, reach, and frequency issues associated with a medium's audience. The medium itself is most often viewed as a vehicle that provides exposure, or "eyeballs," for an ad. Any consideration of the quality of the medium itself as something that might affect reactions to an ad, if considered at all, is typically based on subjective judgments of alternative, and otherwise comparable, media buys.

Although there are demonstrations in the research literature that media can provide a context that exerts an influence on advertising effectiveness, there is no systematic approach in the literature or in practice to exploring such effects. The purpose of this study is to develop a general approach to relating the qualitative aspects of media (as apart from traditional "quantitative" issues such as recency or frequency of exposure) to advertising effectiveness. To do this it is first necessary to determine the relevant qualitative experiences associated with a medium of interest. By experiences we mean the thoughts and feelings involved in the actual use of the content of the medium (see Calder and Malthouse, 2004). Once these experiences have been established, they can then be related to the effectiveness of a particular ad appearing in the medium.

The first step in this approach, determining the relevant qualitative experiences, has been completed for two print media, magazines and newspapers. The methodology and results are reported in Calder and Malthouse (2004) and Malthouse and Calder (2004b) and are summarized here. An initial qualitative research phase sought to ground (see Calder, 2001) the work in the actual experiences reported by consumers. For newspapers, over 300 hour-long interviews were conducted focusing on one newspaper in each of seven different newspaper markets. For magazines, one hundred hour-long interviews were conducted. Each focused on a single magazine or newspaper that the consumer regularly read. This covered a total of 68 different magazines and seven newspapers. These interviews were used to generate items that reflected specific experiences that were common across magazines and newspapers. We refer to these as *experience items*. One experience item for magazines, for instance, was "*It updates me on things I try to keep up with.*" An example of a negative item was "*Reading this newspaper makes me feel like I am drowning in the flood of news that comes out each day.*" The wording of the items reflects the way consumers typically expressed themselves in the qualitative interviews.

This work generated large pools of experience items that were then included on subsequent quantitative surveys in order to identify general experiences

reflected by related specific experience items. A total of 275 items were included on the newspaper survey and 220 items on the magazines survey. Respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with each experience item on five-point scales. From this data we used factor analysis to identify 44 general newspaper experiences and 39 general magazines experiences. See the aforementioned papers for details of the factor methodology. Note that each of the experiences is measured by multiple experience items and thus can be regarded as a multi-indicator scale. The item “*It updates me on things I try to keep up with*” thus loads on an experience we label *It makes me smarter*, along with other items such as “*Even if I disagree with things in the magazine, I feel I have learned something*” and “*The magazine stimulates my thinking about things.*” Each experience scale is unidimensional and has high reliability.

In this previous work we also examined the relationship of these experiences to overall usage of the media (using measures developed in Malthouse and Calder, 2002; Calder and Malthouse, 2003; Malthouse and Calder 2004a). These analyses not only showed that many of the experiences related to current usage of specific magazines and newspapers but also that this relationship was robust across magazines and newspapers. That is, the experiences relate to usage in general and not just for certain magazines or newspapers (see Calder and Malthouse 2004 and Malthouse and Calder 2004b).

Having established a set of qualitatively grounded, reliably scaled, and robust measures of magazine and newspaper experiences, we now turn to the second step, which is the focus of this study. Do experiences with print media affect ads in the media?

The general question we have posed cannot of course be answered by any one study. Our goal is rather to provide evidence that the experiences we have identified can affect a specific ad where the ad is not related to content and is relatively “generic” in terms of product and execution. Stated differently, if we hold product and execution constant, does the effectiveness of a representative ad depend on the experience individual consumers have with the magazine or newspaper that it appears in?

To answer this question we conducted two quasi-experimental studies, one with magazines and magazine readers and one with newspapers and newspaper readers. In both cases we sought nationally representative samples of readers *and* magazine/newspapers in the United States. The objective is to determine if the way a person experiences a magazine or newspaper affects how they respond to an ad in the magazine/newspaper. For example, do people who are higher on “*It makes me smarter*” (magazine experience 2) have more favorable reactions to an ad in a magazine and, if they do, is this effect general

across magazines or limited to just some magazines? For all the experiences we have identified, we want to understand which experiences influence attitude towards advertising and whether these relationships hold across magazines/newspapers.

In this study we tested one ad that we created for the purposes of this study. Again we emphasize that the issues raised here cannot be settled with one study. At the same time positive results would point to eventually extremely important conclusions. If we find, for instance, that when readers experience a magazine as making them smarter, they are more responsive to ads, then a magazine that has a high level of this experience is worth more to an advertiser than in a magazine with a low level of experience on this factor. Suppose magazine A has an average of 4.0 on making readers smarter while magazine B has an average of 3.0. Qualitative effects of this kind would need to be accounted for in media planning.

METHODOLOGY

We present results from two studies, one focused on newspapers and the other on magazines. The methodologies were similar but not identical.

Magazine and Newspaper Sampling

A key feature of this research is that we wanted to test whether any effects of experiences on advertising are common across publications within a medium or are restricted to some publications. This issue of the generalizability of effects is an empirical question to be examined by the research. We therefore used a sample of 100 magazines and 101 newspapers to provide a strong test of whether the effects of experiences on advertising are common across magazines.

For *magazines*, our approach was to use publications with the largest U.S. audiences. By definition these magazines cover the experiences of a large number of people and span all of the major magazine categories. Specifically, we screened for readers of the top 100 MRI magazines. These magazines represent 96.2% of net readers of all MRI-measured titles. (See our website for the categories of magazines.) Two titles were excluded; one no longer published and another that did not contain advertising as content. Two widely-read business magazines were added to better represent that category.

Our study of *newspapers* is part of a longitudinal study of readers of a random sample of 101 U.S. daily newspapers. The details of the first wave of the sampling plan are provided in Calder and Malthouse (2003) and summarized briefly as follows. We first drew a stratified random sample of 101 U.S. daily newspapers. Newspapers were stratified on circulation, urbanicity,

competition, and extent of geographical distribution. All “types” of newspapers are represented in our sample, ranging from small-town newspapers, to large urban newspapers.

Consumer Sampling

Data was collected via a mail survey. The advertisement shown in figure 1 was included in the survey. Details on the advertisement are below. Experiences and reaction to advertising were measured across large random samples of readers of the 100 magazines and 101 newspapers. For magazines, we sampled readers of these magazines using a two-wave procedure. The first wave was a mail survey, which was used to identify readers of each of the 100 magazines. The second wave mailed selected responders a longer survey containing the experience items generated from the qualitative research. In the first wave, we mailed 22,810 surveys to a random sample of NFO household panel members. This included an over-sampling of teenagers, Generation X, African Americans, and Hispanics. A total of 11,494 usable questionnaires were returned, giving a 50.4% response rate. The survey asked up to three members of the household to complete the survey. The three members were indicated on the survey and selected from a sampling frame provided by NFO. From the 11,494 returned surveys by households, a total of 19,004 individuals completed the questionnaire. Individuals were asked whether or not they read each of the 100 magazines at least once during a typical month. The 19,004 individual respondents yielded a total of 80,536 magazine-person combinations.

The goal of the second wave was to survey a random sample of *readers* of each of the 100 magazines. We define a reader as someone who reads or looks into the magazine at least once in a typical month. To avoid difficult problems with doing statistical inference during our analysis, we decided to interview at most one person from each of the households that returned a survey. Each person was asked about one of the magazines they read. We computed weights for each magazine-person experience and used a random sampling procedure with these weights to select roughly the same number of people for each of the 100 magazines. (The details for these weights are available from our website.) This guarantees a *random* sample of magazine-person experiences. In total, 4,347 of the 6,085 surveys mailed were returned giving a 71% response rate to this wave of the survey. Overall the response rate was $.50 \times .71 = 36\%$. Respondents were weighted to the U.S. Census using age, gender, and race.

The newspaper study is part of a longitudinal study of newspaper readers. In the year 2000, we mailed 115,890 surveys to consumers in the 101 newspaper markets, 37,036 responded, giving a response rate of 37% after dropping undeliverables. This survey did not include questions about the experience of

reading a newspaper and will not be discussed further here. The results presented in this paper come from a follow-up survey of 4,444 responders to the original survey. We drew a random sample of 15,664 *readers* from the 37,036 responders to the first wave.

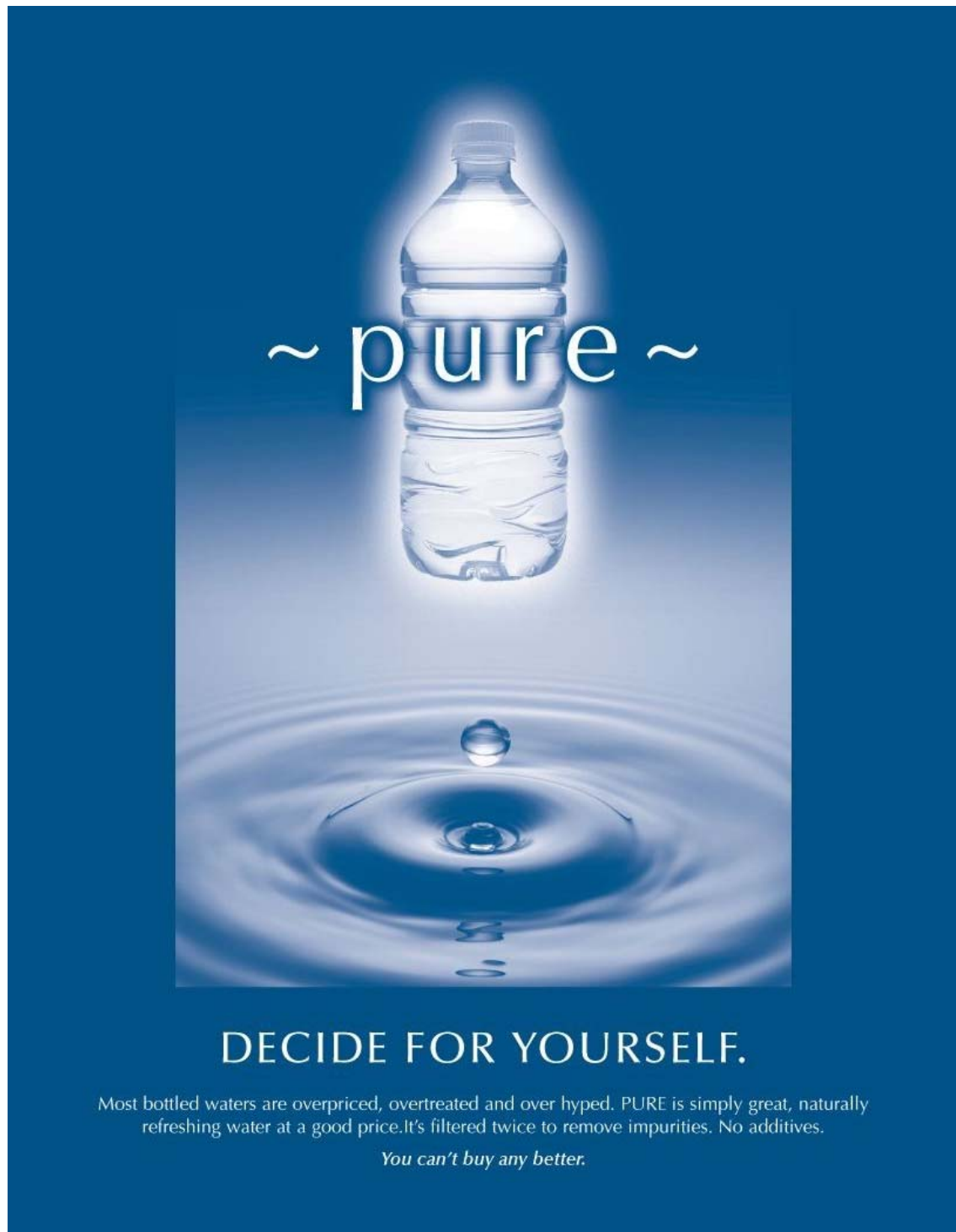
Advertising Quasi-Experiment: Test Ad, Effectiveness Measures, and Control Variables

We hypothesize that a person's qualitative experience with a magazine/newspaper affects the way the person reacts to advertising in the magazine/newspaper. We evaluate this hypothesis by including an advertisement (see figure 1) in the survey. Respondents were told: "This section asks about your reactions to an ad that will appear in the ___ magazine (newspaper). This ad is for a new bottled water product." We created the bottled-water brand "Pure" and an advertisement for Pure. To our knowledge, there is no bottled water product under this name. We selected the water category because it is at least potentially relevant to almost all consumers. The advertising execution was intended to be representative of typical print advertising. Prior sections of the survey contained the experience scales for either magazines or newspapers. The ad was the same for magazines and newspapers *except* for the quality of the paper used (the newspaper ad was on actual newsprint).

Attitude toward the ad

We developed a multi-item scales to measure attitude toward the ad. In the newspaper study, respondents were asked "How well does each of the following words describe the ad for Pure in the ___ newspaper?" The question wording was the same in the magazine study, except that the last part was "the (magazine name) ad for Pure?" The newspaper study included the items "Interesting, Believable, Warm, and Valuable" (7-point scale from "Does not describe the ad at all" to "Describes the ad very well"). In addition to these four items, the magazine study also included the items "Calm, Energetic, Irritating, Imaginative, Soothing, Clever, and Personal." We factor analyzed the responses to the items and computed coefficient alpha(e1). For the newspaper data, the factor analysis suggested that these four items form a scale, with only one eigenvalue greater than 1 and all factor loadings .82 or greater. Coefficient alpha is .88, indicating a highly reliable scale. For the magazine data(e1), all of the items loaded on one factor with the exception of the "Valuable" item, which loaded on a second factor. Omitting the "Valuable" item, the other 10 items loaded on a single factor with one eigenvalue greater than 1 and factor loadings ranging from 0.81 to 0.69. Coefficient alpha was 0.92, indicating a highly reliable scale.

Figure 1
ADVERTISEMENT USED IN QUASI-EXPERIMENT



Covariates

We included covariates to control for other factors that might affect the attitude towards the ad. A person's current bottled water consumption could have a positive relationship with the person's rating of the ad. We "control" for this by including data from the following question in our models: "In a typical month how many bottles do you drink of any brand of bottled water?" Responses to this question were measured in the six response bins none, 1-3 bottles, 4-5 bottles, 6-7 bottles, 8-9 bottles, and 10 or more bottles. Using these bins eliminates the possibility of outliers exerting a strong influence on the analysis.

Also, it is possible that people who like advertisements in general have a more favorable attitude towards the bottled water advertisement, so to control for this in the magazine study we also included the question: "How much interest do you have in the advertising that appears in (magazine name)?" The four response categories were "A lot of interest," "considerable interest," "some interest," and "not much interest." By including these variables in the model we attempt to rule out other factors that might explain differences in attitudes towards our particular ad, thereby increasing the power of the quasi-experiment. This allows us to be more confident that any differences identified by our analysis are in fact due to difference in the experience factor rather than one of these potentially confounding factors.

MODELS RELATING EXPERIENCES AND ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS

We studied the dependence of attitude toward the ad on experiences using hierarchical linear models (HLM). Attitude toward the ad is the dependent variable and the independent variables are the experience factor, the bottled water consumption control variable, and in the magazine analyses, the general interest in advertising control variable. We estimate this model for each of the 44 newspaper experience factors and 39 magazine experience factors. More precisely, we estimate the model

$$y_{ij} = (\alpha + a_i) + (\beta_1 + b_{1i})x_{1ij} + (\beta_2 + b_{2i})x_{2ij} + e_{ij},$$

where the subscript j indexes people and i indexes newspapers. The attitude towards the advertisement is y_{ij} , the value of the experience factor is x_{1ij} , and the amount of bottled water consumed by the respondent is x_{2ij} . In the case of the magazine study we also controlled for interest in advertising by adding it as an additional covariate. The industry intercept is α , β_1 is the industry slope for an experience factor, and β_2 is the industry effect for current bottled water consumption. Random variables a_i , b_{1i} , and b_{2i} are specific effects for

newspaper i having normal distributions, each with mean 0 and standard deviations σ_a , σ_{b1} , and σ_{b2} , respectively. For example, the effect of an experience on advertising attitude for someone reading newspaper i is thus the sum of the industry-wide effect (β_1) and the newspaper-specific effect (b_{1i}). By including random effects for the intercepts and slopes, each newspaper or magazine can have a different slope and/or intercept.

Magazine Results

We estimate the model for each of the 39 magazine experience factors. The model estimates are given in table 1. The third column gives the slope for the experience averaged across magazines (β_1). The fourth column gives the P-value testing the null hypothesis that the slope is zero ($H_0: \beta_1=0$) versus a two-sided alternative. All but three of the magazine experiences have significant effects on the attitude towards the bottled water ad. The largest slope is for magazine experience 3 (The stories absorb me) with $\beta_1=.60$, indicating that the more stories in some magazine absorb the reader, the more favorable the reader is to the bottled water ad. Other magazine experiences with particularly large effects on attitude as indicated by their slopes include 19 (I like some of the ads a lot), 5 (I find the magazine high-quality and sophisticated), 32 (I often reflect on it), 2 (It makes me smarter), and 4 (I trust it). It is particularly interesting that many of the experiences that have the strongest relationship with attitude toward the ad are not explicit advertising experiences.

The only three magazine experiences that do not have significant slopes, indicating that they have no effect on attitude towards the ad, are 18 (I dislike some of the ads), 26 (This magazine irritates me), and 20 (It disappoints me). The fifth and sixth columns quantify whether these slopes vary across magazines by giving σ_{1b} and a P-value testing whether $\sigma_{1b} = 0$. For *these three* experiences the variation across magazines is not significant, suggesting that these experiences do not affect the ad for any magazine.

There is significant variation across magazines for most of the other experience factors. For example, consider magazine experience 3 (The stories absorb me), where $\beta=.60$ and $\sigma_{b1}=.053$. The P-value for σ_{b1} is .0021, and so we conclude that there is significant variation across magazines in the effect of this experience on the attitude towards the ad. For some magazines the effect (slope) of this experience is stronger than for others. Invoking the normality assumption, we conclude that 68% of magazines have slopes between $.60 \pm .0533$. Note that the slope is positive for all magazines, meaning that having this experience has a positive effect on attitude toward the ad across magazines. However, the effect is stronger for some magazines than for others.

Table 1
EFFECTS OF MAGAZINE EXPERIENCES ON ATTITUDE TOWARDS
THE ADVERTISEMENT, AFTER CONTROLLING FOR CURRENT BOTTLED
WATER CONSUMPTION AND GENERAL ADVERTISING INTEREST

<i>Nr.</i>	<i>Experience label</i>	β_1	P-Value	σ_{b1}	P-Value
3	<i>The stories absorb me</i>	0.60	<.0001	0.053	0.002
19	<i>I like some of the ads a lot</i>	0.55	<.0001	0.063	0.001
5	<i>I find the magazine high-quality and sophisticated</i>	0.53	<.0001	0.057	0.004
32	<i>I often reflect on it</i>	0.53	<.0001	0.072	0.000
2	<i>It makes me smarter</i>	0.52	<.0001	0.066	0.001
4	<i>I trust it</i>	0.51	<.0001	0.050	0.126
25	<i>I learn things first here</i>	0.50	<.0001	0.066	0.000
8	<i>It improves me and try new things</i>	0.49	<.0001	0.084	0.000
28	<i>I feel good when I read it</i>	0.48	<.0001	0.050	0.096
15	<i>It's my personal timeout</i>	0.48	<.0001	0.063	0.002
13	<i>It grabs me visually</i>	0.47	<.0001	0.066	0.001
27	<i>It's brief and easy to read</i>	0.47	<.0001	0.035	0.276
30	<i>I find unique and surprising things</i>	0.47	<.0001	0.059	0.046
35	<i>I get a sense of place</i>	0.46	<.0001	0.069	0.000
7	<i>I'm inspired</i>	0.46	<.0001	0.062	0.034
22	<i>It's relevant and useful to me</i>	0.44	<.0001	0.064	0.003
24	<i>It's for people like me</i>	0.43	<.0001	0.070	0.000
29	<i>I like seeing people of color in this magazine</i>	0.42	<.0001	0.053	0.001
1	<i>I get value for my time and money</i>	0.41	<.0001	0.061	0.001
16	<i>It helps me look good; it's sensual, even sexy</i>	0.41	<.0001	0.073	0.055
6	<i>I'm touched</i>	0.40	<.0001	0.053	0.067
10	<i>I build relationships by talking about and sharing</i>	0.38	<.0001	0.056	0.074
33	<i>I like its seasonality</i>	0.38	<.0001	0.050	0.020
14	<i>It helps me keep track of celebrities</i>	0.34	<.0001	0.055	0.009

TABLE 1, CONTINUED

Nr.	Experience label	β_1	P-Value	σ_{b1}	P-Value
17	<i>I read the ads</i>	0.34	<.0001	0.072	0.002
31	<i>It's part of my routine</i>	0.33	<.0001	0.064	0.001
38	<i>I relate to the ads</i>	0.32	<.0001	0.070	0.014
34	<i>I feel I know the writers</i>	0.28	<.0001	0.073	0.000
37	<i>I think others in the household would enjoy this magazine</i>	0.25	<.0001	0.068	0.001
9	<i>It reinforces my faith</i>	0.23	<.0001	0.077	0.005
23	<i>I keep or share articles</i>	0.22	<.0001	0.077	0.009
21	<i>It leaves me feeling bad</i>	0.16	<.0001	0.040	0.231
11	<i>I save and refer to it</i>	0.15	<.0001	0.076	0.000
12	<i>This magazine's website is important to me</i>	0.15	<.0001	0.087	0.004
36	<i>I want more ad information</i>	0.14	<.0001	0.054	0.048
39	<i>It requires me to focus</i>	0.11	<.0001	0.063	0.024
18	<i>I dislike some of the ads</i>	0.03	0.3904	0.000	
26	<i>This magazine irritates me</i>	0.03	0.4278	0.061	0.100
20	<i>It disappoints me</i>	0.02	0.5515	0.000	

We do not report the slopes for each of the 39 models for the control variables. The estimates are provided on our website. For each of the experience factors, the effect of current bottled water consumption is positive and around $\beta_2=0.10$. This indicates that the more people drink bottled water, the more they like this ad. Likewise, the slopes for the other control variable measuring how much the respondent likes ads in general have a slope of about $\beta_3=0.25$, indicating that the more the respondent likes ads in general, the more he/she likes this ad. The results we report thus control for any potential confounding due to these variables.

The fact that most experiences have a significant effect on attitude toward the ad across magazines after controlling for general ad interest and current consumption provides strong evidence in support for the hypothesis that these qualitative experience affect advertising effectiveness in a robust way.

Newspaper Results

The effects of the newspaper experience factors on the attitude toward the ad, sorted in descending order of effect size, are given in table 2, which has the same format and interpretation as table 1. All but six of the newspaper experiences have significant effects. The strongest effect (0.7094) is for newspaper experience 11, “High quality, unique content.” This indicates that the more people experience the content as unique, the more they like the Pure ad. The value of σ_{b1} for this experience factor is 0 indicating that this is true for all newspapers. Experience 13 (“Makes me smarter”) and experience 12 (“All sides of the story”) have the second and third strongest strong effects. Both experiences also have small variance across newspapers (σ_{b1}), indicating that this effect holds across newspapers. Newspaper experience 2 (“My personal timeout”) also has a strong positive effect, but it also has substantial variation across newspapers ($\sigma_{b1} = 0.0568$). This indicates that the effect holds across all newspapers ($.5466 \pm 3 \times 0.0568 > 0$), but that the effect is stronger for some newspapers than for others.

Unlike magazines, some of the experiences also have significant negative effects on attitude toward the ad. Newspaper experience 14 (“Wasting my time”), for example, has a negative effect indicating that the more people feel a newspaper wastes their time, the less they like the advertisement. Other newspaper experiences having a negative effect include 17 (“Annoyed and unimpressed by ads”), 40 (“Lacks distinction”), 9 (“Too much”), and 22 (“Skim and scan”). These findings are true across all newspapers, as indicated by the insignificant P-values for $H_0: \sigma_{b1}=0$.

Table 2
EFFECTS OF NEWSPAPER EXPERIENCES ON ATTITUDE
TOWARDS THE ADVERTISEMENT AFTER CONTROLLING
FOR CURRENT BOTTLED WATER CONSUMPTION

<i>Number</i>	<i>Label</i>	β_I	<i>P-Value</i>	σ_{bI}	<i>P-Value</i>
11	<i>High quality, unique content</i>	0.7094	<.0001	0.0000	.
13	<i>Makes me smarter</i>	0.7068	<.0001	0.0371	0.3209
12	<i>All sides of the story</i>	0.5656	<.0001	0.0000	.
2	<i>My personal timeout</i>	0.5466	<.0001	0.0568	0.0030
4	<i>Touches and inspires me</i>	0.5228	<.0001	0.0000	.
16	<i>Ad usefulness</i>	0.5171	<.0001	0.0501	0.0069
25	<i>Turned on by surprise and humor</i>	0.4735	<.0001	0.0071	0.4930
8	<i>Grabs my visually</i>	0.4633	<.0001	0.0553	0.0026
1	<i>Looks out for my interests</i>	0.4447	<.0001	0.0394	0.2635
5	<i>Something to talk about</i>	0.4133	<.0001	0.0529	0.0017
43	<i>Ad credibility</i>	0.3841	<.0001	0.0263	0.4162
18	<i>Makes me more interesting</i>	0.3714	<.0001	0.0366	0.3365
7	<i>Clip and save</i>	0.3528	<.0001	0.0325	0.3382
24	<i>Commands my attention</i>	0.3267	<.0001	0.0686	0.0011
20	<i>People I know</i>	0.2420	<.0001	0.0506	0.0030
10	<i>I connect with writers</i>	0.2206	<.0001	0.0516	0.1473
15	<i>Shows me diversity</i>	0.2073	<.0001	0.0496	0.1567
44	<i>Pick up or take with me</i>	0.1803	<.0001	0.0310	0.3499
41	<i>Guide me</i>	0.1745	<.0001	0.0714	0.0007
39	<i>Pass it around</i>	0.1715	<.0001	0.0162	0.4508
38	<i>Makes me want to read</i>	0.1605	0.0002	0.0536	0.2108
36	<i>Taking a stand</i>	0.1593	<.0001	0.0514	0.1950
30	<i>Value for my money</i>	0.1538	<.0001	0.0669	0.0494
3	<i>Reading on the web</i>	0.1065	0.0006	0.0925	0.0003
35	<i>Unwilling to share</i>	0.0647	0.0322	0.0689	0.1029

TABLE 2, CONTINUED

<i>Number</i>	<i>Label</i>	β_I	<i>P-Value</i>	σ_{bI}	<i>P-Value</i>
	<i>Reader behavior score</i>	0.0492	0.0087	0.0276	0.1772
42	<i>Political bias</i>	0.0390	0.216	0.0378	0.2814
6	<i>Regular part of my day</i>	0.0020	0.9477	0.0562	0.0007
28	<i>Media multi-tasking</i>	-0.0425	0.0626	0.0000	
19	<i>Makes me anxious</i>	-0.0488	0.1883	0.0338	0.3435
32	<i>My dining companion</i>	-0.0581	0.0545	0.0352	0.2895
31	<i>Drowning in news</i>	-0.0835	0.0787	0.0000	
27	<i>Gender bias</i>	-0.1890	<.0001	0.0506	0.2338
29	<i>Awkward to handle</i>	-0.1949	<.0001	0.0000	
23	<i>Poor service</i>	-0.2113	<.0001	0.0260	0.4073
33	<i>News junkie</i>	-0.2204	<.0001	0.0372	0.3242
37	<i>Uninformative ads</i>	-0.2218	<.0001	0.0627	0.0008
21	<i>Lack of local focus</i>	-0.2223	<.0001	0.0574	0.1944
34	<i>Unappealing stories</i>	-0.2235	<.0001	0.0579	0.1620
26	<i>Like to critique</i>	-0.2348	<.0001	0.0655	0.0005
22	<i>Skim and scan</i>	-0.2385	<.0001	0.0341	0.3600
9	<i>Too much</i>	-0.2530	<.0001	0.0000	.
40	<i>Lacks distinction</i>	-0.3930	<.0001	0.0220	0.4477
17	<i>Annoyed and unimpressed by ads</i>	-0.5053	<.0001	0.0380	0.3149
14	<i>Wasting my time</i>	-0.5235	<.0001	0.0459	0.2949

CONCLUSIONS

This research demonstrates that the way a person experiences a magazine or newspaper can affect the way the person reacts to advertising in the publication. For example, people who find the stories in a magazine more absorbing also have more positive reactions to the advertising in the magazine. Therefore, other things being equal, an advertisement in a magazine that absorbs its readers is worth more to the advertiser than the same an in a magazine that does not absorb its readers as much.

The most striking thing about the results reported here is just how many of the different experiences identified for magazines and newspapers are related to advertising effectiveness. Thirty-six of the 39 magazine experiences identified are associated with differences in ad effectiveness. And the three unrelated experiences are all negative. The ad was unaffected by whether the magazine experience involved a general dislike of the ads in the magazine or whether the person was often disappointed or irritated by stories in the magazine. It appears that magazines that bring any strong experience to an ad tend to increase the effectiveness of that ad, but negative experiences do not harm the ad.

Thirty-eight of the 44 different newspaper experiences are related to effectiveness. As with magazines, most of the experiences people have with newspapers are associated with differences in advertising effectiveness. Unlike magazines, however, the negative experiences that people have with newspapers also seem to affect effectiveness. To the extent that a newspaper is experienced as a waste of time, too much, and something to skim or scan, advertising suffers. Or if the paper itself seems to lack distinction or the reader is annoyed in general by the ads in the newspaper, the advertising is less effective. The greater impact of newspaper negative experiences is probably related to the fact that newspapers are less discretionary than magazines. The consumer has fewer choices and may feel more obligation to read, therefore negative experiences may be less avoidable. But, in any case, the overriding pattern in these results for both newspapers and magazines is that positive media experiences seem to translate into more advertising impact.

This conclusion is of course subject at this point to the limitations of the methodology of this study. Two points should be kept in mind. Only one ad was used in the research. No matter how “representative” the ad might be further research is obviously called for to examine different product categories and types of advertising execution. For example, the slope for magazine experience 25 (“I learn things first here”) may be even stronger for a new high-tech product than for our bottled water ad.

It would also clearly be desirable if possible to conduct future research with actual insertion of ads in magazine or newspaper pages. Besides whatever value this might have in being a more “realistic” methodology this later point raises interesting theoretical issues. The present results are best thought of in terms of the “chronic” experience of the medium, how it is typically experienced over time. One can distinguish between this and the “acute” experience of content adjacent to the ad. Actual ad insertions could be used to explore the possible differences between chronic and acute effects in future research.

Taking into consideration the limitations of this study, we conclude, based on a systematic exploration of the distinct qualitative experiences associated with print media, that the effects of these experiences on advertising effectiveness is potentially pervasive and in great need of further investigation.

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