

Mood and Framing Effects in Advertising

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how moods elicited by television programmes influence viewer attitudes, intentions, cognitive responses and recall when considered in conjunction with a commercial's affective tone, and message framing. Three hypotheses are tested addressing: (1) The predictions of the mood congruency and mood consistency models. (2) Whether mood effects for the two models are moderated by self-esteem. (3) The interaction of mood state and message framing.

An experiment using actual television programmes and differentially framed and affectively toned commercials found that sad commercials resulted in more favorable intentions and greater recall than happy commercials under both happy and sad mood conditions. These findings

contradict prevailing mood theory, yet are supported by protection motivation theory, cognitive priming, stereotyping and self-discrepancy perspectives. The mood, affective tone and self-esteem interaction was not evident. Framing results support research on the negative bias and the notion that incongruent information prompts more elaborative processing.

INTRODUCTION

The costs of television advertising have increased dramatically in recent years. For instance, in America, the comedy *Seinfeld* was recently reported as commanding a \$550,000 fee for a 30-second slot (*Advertising Age*, 1996). This for a comedy that in New Zealand, AGB McNair ratings suggest was being viewed by over 20 per cent of households with children aged 0 to 14 years in 1996 Television New Zealand, 1996a). It would be expected then that maximising advertising effectiveness is a key concern for advertising strategists. Even more so when the affective tone of the programme is considered. For example, while few would argue that *Seinfeld* is a light-hearted comedy, the programme ER costs \$500,000 for a similar time period (*Advertising Age*, 1996). This for a hospital drama with a presumably more serious, and at times more somber, affective tone.

From an academic perspective, many experimental studies suggest that video segments and films can act as mood inducers (e.g., Cunningham, 1988; Curren & Harich, 1994; Goldberg & Gorn, 1987) which begs the following question: How best to match the 'mood' of the programme with the 'mood' of the commercial to optimize advertising effectiveness? Understanding this is of importance to advertisers, both in terms of appropriate commercial placement within programmes and also for the creation of advertising stimuli (Gardner, 1985). While a growing stream of consumer research has recently studied the impact of mood upon judgments (e.g., Curren & Harich, 1994; Swinyard, 1993), this affective matching issue between the programme and commercial has only been sparingly researched. For example, a study by Goldberg and Gorn (1987) suggested mood effects on commercial evaluations. They manipulated programme type (happy, sad) and commercial type (informational, emotional), finding greater perceived ad effectiveness after exposure to the happy mood-inducing programme. While this study provides insight into the influence of mood and commercial effectiveness, they did not study affective tone, message framing, nor the potential moderating role of self-esteem. The purpose of the present study is to specifically address the appropriate match between consumer mood and the affective tone of the commercial. In particular, the competing predictions of the mood congruency and mood consistency models will be tested. The influence of message framing in relation to advertising copy will also be explored. As will the role of consumer self-esteem levels.

Message Framing and Self-Esteem Defined

Message framing can be conceptualized as factually equivalent information that is perceived differently by consumers by virtue of its presentation. The analogy of a glass of water being labeled as "half-empty" or "half-full" is an example of message framing (cf. Paese, 1995). Hence, in an advertising context, the emphasis is on advocacy benefits being framed in a positive or negative manner.

Message framing is defined as the presentation of message information that is framed through using either positive or negative attribute labels, or the benefits gained or lost of a product, issue or behavior (Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy, 1990). Although a substantial amount of framing research exists (e.g., McCusker & Carnevale, 1995; Meyerowitz & Chaiken, 1987; Paese, 1995) the influence of framing and mood effects has largely been ignored (cf. Wegener, Petty & Klein, 1994 for an exception). This neglect is surprising given that mood has been suggested to have a significant influence on the cognitive processing of message content (Batra & Stayman, 1990). Furthermore, advertising copy is as a key element to be considered when constructing a commercial, given its centrality to the nature of the persuasive message (Belch & Belch, 1993). Framing also appears to be increasingly employed by a number of New Zealand advertising campaigns, such as Telecom, Ansett and road safety commercials relating to speeding and alcohol.

Self-esteem is defined in this study as one's generalized or global sense of self-worth (Smoll, Smith, Barnett & Everett, 1993), and is of relevance to this study as a mood antecedent. While traditionally mood research has excluded the study of mood antecedents (e.g., Curren & Harich, 1994; Goldberg & Gorn, 1987; Sinclair, 1988; Wright & Bower, 1992), there has been some theoretical consideration of this issue.

In a marketing context, Lutz (1985) posited two mood determinants. First, reception context, which reflects mood-inducing situational determinants such as television programme type. An uplifting, humorous film versus a sad, medical documentary would be one such example. Second, individual differences, such as self-esteem, which involves consumer dispositional characteristics.

This view has been reaffirmed by Forgas (1992) who asserts that dispositional factors can provide the impetus for people to engage in motivated processing strategies that can help explain unusual mood effects. Importantly,

self-esteem maintenance has been shown to be a potent motivational force (Brown & Mankowski, 1993), with self-esteem levels influencing affective and cognitive responses to material (Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry & Harlow, 1993). This is of relevance to the mood congruency and mood consistency models that this study seeks to test. Hence, the present study explores mood effects, framing an self-esteem, and seeks to create more generalizable results by extending the matching issue to include: (1) Consumer mood state (2) Advertisement affective tone, and (3) Advertisement message framing. Next, three research hypotheses will be addressed, then an experiment examining mood, affective tone and framing in advertising is presented.

HYPOTHESES

Mood Congruency versus Mood Consistency

Of key interest to the present study are the competing predictions of the mood congruency and mood consistency models. Mood congruency predicts happy moods will result in superior persuasion than sad moods owing to memory-based factors. Much of this research can be conceptualized using Bower's (1981) network model of memory. With this model, memory consists of an associative network comprised of nodes. When an emotion node is activated, it spreads to connected nodes within the memory structure (Bower, 1981) making contact with the nodes representing specific cognitive information (Zajonc & Markus, 1982) thereby resulting in mood state influencing information processing. Mood state thus primes associated mood-congruent cognitive material, which in turn, makes that material more accessible. Subjects should therefore recall information the affective valence of which is congruent with their current mood states (Snyder & White, 1982). From an attitudinal perspective, mood congruency theory posits that consumer evaluations occur in mood congruent directions (Gardner, 1985). For example, if a consumer is confronted by ambiguous stimuli, the priming of mood congruent information should influence associations (Bower, 1981). Consequently, there is a congruence of affective elements resulting in more favorable evaluations with subjects in positive moods more likely to retrieve positive information thereby increasing the likelihood of positive evaluations.

A number of studies support mood congruency. For example, Goldberg and Gorn (1987) in a study of informational and emotional commercials for brands such as Heinz and Tang embedded within happy or sad mood-inducing television programmes found that for the happy

mood condition, commercials were perceived by subjects as being greater in effectiveness. More recently, Wright and Bower (1992) examined subjective probabilities in relation to positive and negative future events. They found that for the happy mood condition, positive future events (e.g., "The Soviet Union and China will sign a comprehensive peace agreement within the next two years") were judged more likely than negative events, whereas a sad mood resulted in negative events being perceived as more likely.

Owing to the importance of a consumer's existing mood state under this model, mood congruency theory suggests that advertisers should seek exposure when consumers are in a happy mood, thus generating more positive evaluations than when they are in a sad mood. Placing advertisements within a negative context is therefore considered undesirable under the mood congruency perspective.

In contrast, mood consistency theory predicts evaluation favorability where mood and affective tone valence match. Sad moods can therefore result in favorable evaluations. The negative-state relief model of altruistic behavior (Manucia, Baumann & Cialdini, 1984) offers a potential explanation for mood consistency effects. Based in social psychology, this model suggests that people engage in altruistic behaviors to alleviate negative moods. Kamins et al. (1991) has suggested a parallel between watching television and social situations, such that sad mood viewers empathizing with characters in an sad advertisement, may react positively. Hence, empathizing is perceived as a prosocial act which creates positive feelings in the viewer. Research suggests that indulging in self-rewarding behaviors can serve a mood-elevating function, raising an individual to a positive mood and thereby relieving their negative affective state (Bierhoff, 1988; Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder & Clark, 1991; Midlarsky, 1991). Likewise, mood repair theory holds that individuals in a negative mood will seek to repair or elevate their mood through, for example, helping behaviors (e.g., Abele & Hermer, 1993; Isen, 1987; Salovey, Mayer & Rosenhan, 1991). Thus, the key to distinguishing between these two models is essentially the role of sad mood states. Under mood congruency, sad moods are posited to result in less favorable evaluations than happy moods. In contrast, mood consistency focuses not on mood state, but rather on whether there is a match between the mood and affective tone valence (Hadjimarcou & Marks, 1994). As a result, the following hypothesis is offered for testing:

H1_a: *Mood congruency* - Consumers form more favorable attitudes (A_{ad} , A_b), purchase intentions (PI) and cognitive responses after viewing positive or negative commercials presented in the context of a positive television programme, than will subjects exposed to identical commercials in the context of a negative programme.

H1_b: *Mood consistency* - Consumers' attitudes (A_{ad} , A_b), purchase intentions (PI) and cognitive responses will be significantly more favorable where consumer mood state matches the affective tone of the commercial presented.

The Influence of Self-Esteem

Of further interest is whether self-esteem plays a moderating role regarding mood congruency and consistency effects. Social cognition research indicates that motivational and affective factors may have a pronounced influence on judgmental processes (e.g., Kunda, 1990). Furthermore, recent research in cognitive psychology suggests that whether mood congruency or mood consistency is pursued may be moderated by dispositional factors. Smith and Petty (1995) in a series of three experiments examined the positivity of recalled memories for visual stimuli (e.g., a picture of a man looking out a window) in relation to a person's self-esteem (SE) and the extent to which they engaged in negative mood regulation. The two mood conditions were negative and neutral mood. They found that individuals high in SE provided mood consistent results regarding positivity of their recalled memories, whereas subjects low in SE followed the mood congruency model.

Mood theory suggests that high SE people employ a motivated processing strategy (Forgas, 1992). That is, they are motivated to engage in mood repair, a view consistent with past research suggesting that high SE individuals are more likely to engage in self-enhancement than low self-esteem people (Brown, Collins & Schmidt, 1988; Schlenker, Weigold & Hallam, 1990). In contrast, low SE subjects lack such a motivation, perhaps owing to the low opinion they have of themselves, and thus employed substantive or heuristic processing with their mood congruent judgments. On the basis of this discussion, the following hypothesis is offered for testing:

H2: Under negative mood conditions, consumers high in self-esteem (SE) will be motivated to produce mood consistent judgments. However, consumers low in SE experiencing a negative mood will follow mood congruent predictions.

Message Framing

From a purely framing perspective, prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979, 1982, 1984) predicts that different frames can affect how consumers encode information as either potential gains or losses relative to a neutral reference point. Positive frames are likely to be encoded as a gain, thereby encouraging risk-avoidance, whereas negative frames enhance risk-seeking. Following Meyerowitz and Chaiken (1987), this approach suggests that positive frames emphasizing cell phone ownership benefits (the product category for the present study) would be more effective than negative frames, assuming cell phone ownership is a risk-averse behavior. Consistent with this assumption, a recent nationwide survey of American cell phone owners revealed that two prime reasons for purchase are personal security and business productivity (*Cellular Integration*, 1995), suggesting risk-aversion both personally and financially. In contrast, non-ownership could mean isolation in emergencies or lost business opportunities through unavailability. These benefits have also been identified as crucial determinants of cell phone selection in the New Zealand media (e.g., *Consumer*, 1995; *Management*, 1996) and were thus employed in the present study.

To date, the only study to address mood and framing issues is Wegener, Petty and Klein (1994) who found a mood X framing interaction for high need for cognition (NFC) subjects. NFC can be conceptualised as a person's predisposition towards elaborating upon information presented to them (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). They found positive frames resulted in more favorable judgments for happy subjects and negative frames more effective for sad people. These findings suggest that any mismatch of valency across mood, affective tone and framing will result in consumers perceiving less likelihood of framed consequences occurring. Matching valencies of either all positive (as in mood congruency) or all negative (as in mood consistency under sad mood) would therefore appear to offer the most promise in terms of advertising persuasiveness. This discussion leads to the following hypothesis:

H3: Consumers attitudes (A_{ad} , A_b), purchase intentions (PI) and cognitive responses will be more favorable where the affective tone and message frame of the ad is congruent with the affective valence of the consumer's mood.

METHOD

Design

The hypotheses were tested using a 2 (mood: happy, sad) X 2 (affective tone: happy, sad) X 2 (message framing: positive, negative) between-subjects factorial design with a control group. There were 16 to 37 subjects within each of the experimental design cells.

Subjects and Product

One hundred eighty-seven subjects from an undergraduate marketing class participated in the study (91 males, 96 females). Subjects were randomly assigned to treatment conditions. An additional 27 subjects comprised a control group.

Cellular phones were chosen as the product category. The rationale for this selection was based on three criteria: (1) *Message Framing Capacity*. Did the product have the potential to be framed positively or negatively? (2) *Subject Knowledge*. The product had to be one subjects were familiar enough with to be able to make a judgment on, to avoid nonsense responses. (3) *Commercially Successful*. Cell phones have been labeled recently as the tele-communications industry's "fastest-growing business" (*FORTUNE*, 1994). In New Zealand alone, the market leader in cellular phones - Telecom New Zealand - has reported a growth in cellular subscribers of 69.8% in the year to 30 June 1995 (Telecom Corporation of New Zealand Ltd., 1996a). This growth with 30 to 40 per cent of New Zealanders forecasted to be using mobile communications by the early part of the next century (Telecom Corporation of New Zealand Ltd., 1996b). Likewise, it has been estimated that 16% of Australians own a cell phone (Telecom Corporation of New Zealand Ltd., 1996b).

Pretest 1: Mood Manipulation

A pretest was conducted to select programmes that induced happy and sad mood. Eighty-three undergraduate marketing students participated with between 17 and 25 subjects viewing one of the four mood-inducing programmes. Pretest subjects were excluded from main study data collection to avoid potential response bias effects caused by prior exposure to the mood induction programme. It is noted that movie/video mood induction has proved to be a successful mood inducer in past research. Gerrards-Hesse, Spies and Hesse (1994) in a review of close to 250 psychological studies over a ten-year period conclude that the Film/Story MIP (Mood Induction procedure) represents the only method that is equally suited for the induction of happy and sad moods.

All segments were approximately 7 minutes in length often concluding where a natural advertising break occurred. The two happy programmes were *Seinfeld* (a situation comedy) and *The Simpsons* (a cartoon animation comedy). The two sad programmes were *Caroline's Story* (a documentary on a young woman suffering from anorexia nervosa) and *A Lot of Love, A Lot of Pain* (a documentary item dealing with child cancer). None of these programmes related to cell phones in any way to avoid priming effects which is consistent with past research (Hertel & Fielder, 1994). Furthermore, the two happy programmes added to the external validity of the study by virtue of their popularity. For example, AGB McNair market research data shows *The Simpsons* to be the fifth highest rating programme in New Zealand between 18 August - 31 August in 1996 with 28% of the viewership amongst 18 to 24 year olds - the age bracket of the student sample (Television New Zealand, 1996b).

Subjects rated their mood on a 7-point scale (1 = Happy, 7 = Sad) and then rated six items the extent to which they experienced certain feelings when they viewed the programme. Three were filler items the other three measuring anger. That is, Enraged, Angry and Mad (1 = not at all, 7 = to a great extent), all three derived from Izard's Differential Emotions Scale (Izard, Dougherty, Bloxom & Kotsch, 1974). Care was taken with the sad programmes to choose those that would avoid an anger response which would confound the result (such as a programme on animal cruelty). An examination of the psychological literature on anger tends to support this possibility. Anger can be defined as an emotional state which probably yet not necessarily acts as a precursor to aggression (Averill, 1982; Batson, Shaw & Oleson, 1992), and which involves the assignment of blame (Kernis, Grannemann & Barclay, 1989). It was felt that items on medical diseases were less likely to generate the attribution of blame. Furthermore, items on child cancer have also been used effectively in past research (e.g., Smith & Petty, 1995; Wegener et al., 1994).

As a principal axis factor analysis revealed that the three anger items loaded strongly on a single factor and formed reliable scales ($\alpha = .92$), an anger index was created for analyses. A significant difference was found in mood scores ($t(81) = 14.56, p = .0001$), with the happy programmes (mean = 2.37, standard deviation = .82) rated as significantly happier than sad programmes ($M = 5.38, s.d. = 1.05$). While no significant difference existed between *Seinfeld* and *The Simpsons* ($t(41) = 1.26, p > .21$), a judgment decision was made to select *The Simpsons* (mean = 2.24; s.d. = .78) as the relevant happy programme

for the main study. For sad programmes there was no significant difference in mood scores ($t(38) = 0.11; p > .91$). However, a t-test conducted on the anger index found a significant difference between the two programmes ($t(38) = 4.50, p = .0001$). Specifically, *Caroline's Story* rated far higher than *A Lot of Love, A Lot of Pain* on the anger index ($M_s = 10.65$ vs. 5.12 , $s.d.s = 4.59$ vs. 2.50 respectively). Thus, *A Lot of Love, A Lot of Pain* was selected for the main study.

Pretest 2: Affective Tone Manipulation

A second pretest was performed to ensure selected commercials had the appropriate affective tone. One hundred thirty-five subjects from an undergraduate marketing course participated (75 males, 60 females). Commercials were presented in one of three sequences to test for order effects.

Five commercials were selected for pretesting from a pool of 43 generously provided by Saatchi and Saatchi. *Telstra* (young people dance and chat with friends and wave to the camera), *Ericsson* (happy, smiling people, plenty of sunshine), *Motorola* (a sad, heart-broken woman is jostled and shoved on a city street), *Telecom-hunter* (a hunter is shot in the head in a remote national park. The cell phone saves his life when his friends are able to call for assistance), *Telecom-trawler* (the engine of a fishing trawler sets ablaze stranding the crew far out to sea. The captain calls for help on his cell phone).

After exposure, subjects rated the ad's affective tone on a 7-point scale (1 = Happy, 7 = Sad), as well as liking (1 = Dislike very much, 7 = Like very much), interest (1 = Interesting, 7 = Boring) and attitude (1 = Good, 7 = Bad). A significant treatment effect for ad type was evident across the dependent variables ($F(4, 130) > 3.51, p < .02, \omega^2 > .06$) with the *Telstra* and *Telecom (Trawler)* ads rated as the happiest and saddest respectively ($M_s = 2.63$ vs. 4.44 , $s.d.s = 1.04$ vs. $.97$). No main effects or interactions for order were evident across the dependent variables ($F_s < 2.28, p > .10$).

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Mood and Affective Tone

We manipulated happy versus sad mood using the pretested programmes *Seinfeld* and *A Lot of Love, A Lot of Pain*. Similarly, affective tone was manipulated using the *Telstra* and *Telecom (Trawler)* commercials.

Message Framing

Frames were inserted in the commercials through use of a

video editing suite which provided a professional looking result. Seven seconds of black screen were inserted at the end of the ad just before the final shot of the brand name. Over this black screen white writing was displayed in a medium-sized font chosen for comprehensibility.

Three benefits were selected for comprehensibility reasons which were sourced from a recent cell phone user survey which covered 10% of Americans owning a cell phone (*Cellular Integration*, 1995). For positive framing, the following was displayed (negative framing in parentheses):

A CELL PHONE OFFERS YOU:

(NO CELL PHONE MEANS:)

1. Convenience
(1. Inconvenience)
2. Greater Productivity
(2. Being Unproductive)
3. Personal Security in Emergencies
(3. Isolation in Emergencies)

PROCEDURE

Subjects were told that the purpose of the study was to find out how people evaluate television programmes and commercials. They were next instructed to turn over the page of their questionnaires and complete the three scale items listed there under the heading "Section A." They were also asked not to turn over the page until instructed to do so.

Subjects then were asked to seat themselves in a comfortable manner to view the television. The television programme was then played. Upon ending, subjects completed the scales under the heading "Section B." The "Section A" and "Section B" items measured subjects' pre-treatment exposure and post mood-induction mood scores (excluding filler items used to disguise the purpose of the study). We included the pre-mood induction measure to investigate whether differences in mood existed between mood conditions before exposure to the induction. However, no interactions or main effects eventuated. The commercial was then played, after which subjects were asked to complete the remainder of the questionnaire at their own pace. When they had finished, booklets were collected. Subjects were then thanked for their participation. For those students in the sad mood conditions, chocolate biscuits were handed out (a potent smile-inducer). The entire procedure took less than 37 minutes to complete.

EXPERIMENTAL MEASURES

Dependent Variables

Attitudes and Purchase Intentions. Attitude toward the ad (A_{ad}) was rated on four 7-point items anchored by: good-bad, interesting-uninteresting, like-dislike, and irritating-not irritating. Three 7-point items measured *attitude toward the brand* (A_b) anchored by: good-bad, pleasant-unpleasant, and like-dislike. *Purchase intentions* (PI) were rated on three 7-point items (likely-unlikely, possible-impossible, and probable-improbable). The reliabilities of these scales were sufficiently high (Cronbach's alpha = .79, .90 and .90 for A_{ad} , A_b and PI respectively), which is consistent with past research which has used these items (Yi, 1990).

Cognitive Responses. Subjects were instructed to write down all thoughts and feelings that had crossed their mind as they watched the commercial. The reference to feelings in the instructions is important as it allows the assessment of both affective and cognitive responses (Rosselli, Skelly & Mackie, 1995). Two judges independent of the author categorized the cognitive response data into the following categories: (1) *Overall affective tone* - positive thoughts (+), negative thoughts (-) or neutral thoughts (n). (2) *Constructive processing* - specific/message-related thoughts (a), simple/ evaluative thoughts (b) and other thoughts (c). The following examples illustrate this coding scheme: "I liked the music and sang it in my mind" (1+), "I didn't like the advert" (1-), "The focus market would be people around 20-40 years old" (2a), "Overall the ad's quite ok!" (2b). A valenced cognition score was also calculated in a manner following past research (Kamins et al., 1991), as the number of the respondent's positive thoughts minus the number of negative thoughts.

Recall. Subjects were then asked to write down all they could remember about the commercial. Directed instructions of this nature both improve the reliability of coding and reduce the likelihood of irrelevant memories being recorded (Parrott & Sabini, 1990). Data was then coded by the two judges as to the number of elements correctly recalled. The coding schema for this task was guided by Houston, Childers and Heckler (1987) with a total recall score comprising the extent to which the subject correctly referred to the following:

1. *Product class* - correct mention of the product class represented in the ad.
2. *Brand name* - correct mention of the brand name of the advertised product or service.
3. *Copy attribute* - correct reference to the product attributes portrayed in the copy or correct mention of

the specific copy information beyond brand, product class, and copy attribute.

Interjudge agreement for the coding of the cognitive response and recall data was sufficiently high (averaging 95% agreement) with differences resolved by the coders.

Manipulation Checks

The questionnaire included three manipulation checks. First, a mood manipulation check asked subjects to rate how they felt after having watched the programme (1 = Happy, 7 = Sad). Second, a similar check was performed for affective tone with subjects rating the extent to which the ad seemed happy or sad (1 = Happy, 7 = Sad). Third, a framing manipulation check adapted from past framing studies (Homer & Yoon, 1992; Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy, 1990) was used involving two 7-point scales. Subjects rated the extent to which the ad contained positive or negative information (1 = positive information, 7 = negative information). Subjects then rated the extent to which the ad stressed positive or negative consequences of buying a cell phone (1 = positive consequences, 7 = negative consequences).

Covariates

A number of covariates were included, thereby reducing experimental error through statistical control. The covariate measures assessed subjects' familiarity with cell phones (0 = not at all, . . . , 10 = very familiar), familiarity with the ad (1 = never seen before, . . . , 7 = seen many times before), citizenship and gender.

Measuring consumer involvement was also deemed necessary, as a theoretical distinction can be made regarding mood effects for low and high involvement processing strategies. For instance, Forgas (1992) suggests that mood effects are potentially greater under conditions of high involvement owing to greater levels of constructive processing. In contrast, under low involvement where a judgment on the product already exists, then mood effects are posited to be less likely. Thus, the present study employed Mittal's (1995) 5-item Personal Involvement Inventory measure (adapted from Zaichkowsky, 1985) which contained the statement: "For me, the advertisement was:" along with the following anchors: important-unimportant, of no concern-of concern to me, means a lot to me-means nothing to me, matters to me-does not matter, and, significant-insignificant.

Self-Esteem (SE) was measured using Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem scale which has been used extensively in past research (e.g., Brown & Dutton, 1995; Leary, Tambor, Terdal & Downs, 1995; Woolfolk, Novalany, Gara, Allen

& Polino, 1995). The measure consists of 10 items rated on 4-point scales (1 = "Strongly agree" to 4 = "Strongly disagree"). Examples of scale items include: "I am able to do things as well as most other people," and "I certainly feel useless at times." Potential scores range from 10 to 40 with five negatively-worded items reverse-scored.

RESULTS

Manipulation Checks

The manipulation checks confirm that people in the happy mood condition reported happier moods than those in the sad mood condition ($M = 2.46$, $s.d. = 1.06$ versus $M = 4.59$, $s.d. = 1.08$, $F(1,185) = 170.65$, $p = .0001$, $\omega^2 = .48$). Likewise a strong effect was found for affective tone with happy ads rated happier than sad ads ($M = 2.16$, $s.d. = 1.03$ versus $M = 4.22$, $s.d. = 1.0$, $F(1,185) = 192.12$, $p = .0001$, $\omega^2 = .51$). A significant effect was also evident for message framing ($F(1,185) = 5.06$, $p < .03$, $\omega^2 = .02$) with positive frames perceived as more positive than negative frames ($M = 4.76$, $s.d. = 2.14$ versus $M = 5.56$, $s.d. = 2.67$). Therefore, these manipulation check measures indicate that the intended factors were manipulated successfully.

Check on possible confound

A potential limitation of the study concerning whether mood manipulations affected subjects' reported self-esteem scores was also tested. No significant differences in self-esteem scores existed between mood conditions ($F(1,185) = 0.20$; $p > .65$) indicating that subjects' reported self-esteem was not influenced by the mood state manipulation.

Mood Congruency and Mood Consistency. $H1_a$ and $H1_b$ address the competing predictions of mood congruency and mood consistency. Both models focus on mood and affective tone. Under mood congruency, happy moods

result in more favorable evaluations than sad moods. In contrast, the mood consistency model posits that favorable judgments will occur where the valence of the mood and the ad's affective tone match. Hence, the key to both the mood congruency and consistency models is their predictions made regarding sad mood.

A three-way MANCOVA with interaction was used to test $H1$. Treatment variables were mood, affective tone and framing. Covariates were involvement, familiarity (product), familiarity (ad), self-esteem, student type, citizenship and gender. Central to this test was whether a two-way Mood X Affective tone interaction existed.

As displayed in Table 1 and consistent with $H1_b$, a Mood X Affective tone interaction for purchase intentions conforms with the mood consistency model ($F(1,172) = 4.49$; $p < .04$; $\omega^2 = .02$). That is, the MANCOVA analysis reveals that attitudes are the most favorable for the sad mood-sad ad condition (Mean = 9.03; $s.d. = 2.26$), certainly more than the happy mood-sad ad condition (Mean = 9.67; $s.d. = 3.69$) which one would expect to be more favorable under mood congruency model. Thus, the mood consistency model for sad mood is supported. This finding was verified by means of a Tukey's Studentized Range (Honestly Significant Difference) Test. However, an unexpected result is that both models (i.e., mood congruency and mood consistency) predict the happy mood-happy ad being most persuasive for happy moods. Yet the results indicate that the aforementioned happy mood-sad ad condition resulted in more favorable intentions than the happy mood-happy ad treatment (Mean = 10.49, $s.d. = 3.50$). While the Mood X Affective tone interaction was not significant for A_{ad} , brand attitudes and valenced cognitions ($F_s < 0.42$; $p > .51$) a main effect for mood that eventuated for A_{ad} ($F(1,171) = 6.28$; $p < .02$, $\omega^2 = .03$) with sad moods generating more favorable responses than happy moods (Means = 11.03

SOURCE	df	SUM OF SQUARES	F- value	p
Mood	1	0.236	0.02	0.883
Affective tone	1	59.621	5.46	0.021
Message framing	1	35.787	3.28	0.072
Mood X Affective tone	1	49.026	4.49	0.036
Mood X Message framing	1	3.856	0.35	0.553
Affective tone X Message framing	1	1.184	0.11	0.742
Mood X Affective tone X Message framing	1	10.319	0.94	0.333

Table 1. Mood, affective tone and message framing effects on purchase intentions.

vs. 12.54). Main effects were also consistently found for affective tone regarding A_{ad} ($F(1,171) = 6.88; p < .01; \omega^2 = .03$), valenced cognitions ($F(1, 172) = 10.90; p < .002; \omega^2 = .05$), positive thoughts ($F(1,172) = 24.57; p = .0001; \omega^2 = .10$), specific thoughts ($F(1, 172) = 8.83; p < .01; \omega^2 = .04$), purchase intentions ($F(1,172) = 5.46; p < .05; \omega^2 = .02$). Specifically, happy ads resulted in more favorable A_{ad} (Means = 11.50 vs. 12.56), more positive valenced cognitions (Means = 1.05 vs. 0.23) and more positive thoughts (Means = 1.46 vs. 0.64). More specific, message-related thoughts were also evident with the happy ad (Means = 1.79 vs. 1.28). Conversely, sad affective tone prompted more favorable purchase intentions (Means = 9.43 vs. 10.67). Additional analyses were also conducted that examined the amount of cognitive activity present in each condition. The three-way MANCOVA with interaction conducted on the recall data yielded a significant affective tone main effect ($F(1,172) = 38.27; p = .0001; \omega^2 = .14$) indicating that subjects' recall was superior for sad ads than happy ones (Means = 2.15 and 0.97). Furthermore, there was a significant Mood X Affective tone interaction ($F(1,172) = 6.73; p < .02; \omega^2 = .02$) which mimicked the result for purchase intentions. That is, sad ads resulted in greater recall than happy ads under happy mood (Mean = 2.18 and 1.08), as well as under sad mood (Means = 2.09 and 0.78).

The Influence of Self-Esteem. H2 posits that self-esteem influences whether consumers are motivated to engage in mood repair when in a sad mood. Consumers with high self-esteem in a sad mood should be motivated to produce mood consistent judgments. Conversely, low SE individuals will produce mood congruent responses. Thus, sad ads will produce favorable responses in high SE but not low SE individuals.

A three-way MANOVA with interaction was used to test H2. However, none of the Mood X Affective tone X Self-esteem interactions were significant across any of the

dependent variables ($F_s < 1.90; p > .17$). Nor were any other effects significant ($F_s < 3.59; p > .05$).

One unexpected finding was a main effect for self-esteem on subjects' intentions ($F(1,161) = 10.37; p < .01; \omega^2 = .05$), which was verified by a Tukeys test. Specifically, high self-esteem individuals were more likely to subscribe with the advertised company (Mean = 9.36, s.d. = 2.88) than people with low self-esteem (Mean = 10.97, s.d. = 3.87). A main effect for self-esteem for also A_{ad} approached significance ($F(1,160) = 2.91; p > .08$).

Message Framing. H3 predicted that subjects' responses would be most favorable significance ($F_s < 2.67; p > .10; \omega^2 < .01$). However, an exception was the Mood X Affective tone X Message framing interaction evident for the cognitive response category, specific thoughts ($F(1, 172) = 7.46; p < .01; \omega^2 = .03$). Descriptive statistics show that more specific, message-related thoughts were generated where some incongruency existed between the conditions (see Table 2). Thus, the differential nature of the conditions appears to have prompted elaborative processing. Such results appear contrary to H3's predicted consistency of valence (e.g., happy mood, happy affective tone and positive framing). Furthermore, a significant Affective tone X Message framing interaction was evident for A_{ad} ($F(1, 171) = 4.13; p < .05; \omega^2 = .02$) which appears to support this view. Means derived from this analysis indicate that more favorable attitudes were generated when subjects were exposed to a happy ad and negative frame, than to say, a sad-negative combination (Means = 10.98 and 13.18 respectively).

DISCUSSION

Summary of Main Findings

H1_a and H1_b addressed the competing predictions of the mood congruency and mood consistency models. Results indicated that subjects' purchase intentions followed the

MOOD	AFFECTIVE TONE	FRAMING	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Sad	Happy	Negative	2.47	1.84
Happy	Happy	Negative	2.03	1.64
Happy	Sad	Positive	1.57	1.14
Happy	Happy	Positive	1.47	1.24
Sad	Happy	Positive	1.37	1.30
Happy	Sad	Negative	1.29	1.16
Sad	Sad	Positive	1.25	1.13
Sad	Sad	Negative	0.63	1.02

Table 2. Mood X Affective tone X Framing interaction descriptive statistics: Specific thoughts.

predictions of the mood consistency model for sad mood (i.e., H1_b). Interestingly, a sad ad resulted in more favorable intentions and greater recall for happy mood, than a happy ad, contrary to both mood congruency and mood consistency models. Brand attitudes yielded a lack of significant results. However, a series of main effects were evident for affective tone. Happy ads resulted in more valenced cognitions, more positive and specific thoughts. They also resulted in more favorable A_{ad}, whereas sad ads generated more favorable purchase intentions. There was also a main effect for mood with A_{ad} more favorable under sad mood. Likewise, a significant main effect for affective tone was found for recall indicating that recall was superior for sad ads than happy ones.

No significant interactions were evident for H2. Yet there was a significant main effect for self-esteem on consumer purchase intentions. High self-esteem individuals rated themselves as more likely to subscribe with the advertised service provider, than low self-esteem individuals.

With regards to the influence of message framing (H3), two key results emerged. First, attitudes (specifically A_{ad}) were most favorable for subjects viewing the happy ad containing the negative message frame. Second, a three-way interaction emerged for the cognitive response category, specific thoughts. The most specific thoughts were generated by those subjects in the sad mood, happy ad, negative message frame condition. In both instances, subjects reacted least favorably and generated fewer specific thoughts where the valence was negative across conditions.

Theoretical Implications

One of the most striking findings of the present study was the lack of support for mood congruency. Indeed, the finding that a sad commercial would produce more favourable intentions and greater recall while under a happy mood was unexpected. This is particularly so when one considers that there is little support in past research for happy mood – sad commercials being evaluated more favourably than their affectively congruent counterparts. In fact, Erber and Erber (1994, p. 80) assert that “recalling an event incongruent with one’s happy mood should prime feelings of sadness.” Thus, one might expect less favourable evaluations for happy moods than when happy ads were presented to consumers. How then could the observed result have occurred? In answer to this question, there appear to be several reasons for this finding.

Fear Appeals and Protection Motivation Theory. One potential explanation for the results could be derived from the sad affective tone manipulation. It could be argued that the Trawler commercial employed was not entirely negative in affective tone. While the commercial emphasises the danger the crew are in from a fire, it ends with the crew being saved by the cell phone. Had this not been the case (e.g., had the crew died) then this interpretation would have less weight. As it stands, however, the commercial’s ending, and indeed the framed cell phone information, could be viewed as a ‘coping response’ to the threatening situation. Therefore in theoretical terms, such a commercial could be viewed as a fear appeal that complied with Protection Motivation (PM) Theory.

Fear appeals can be defined as messages which seek to motivate attitudinal and behavioural change by warning of impending harm (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1996). In contrast, PM is a theory of persuasive communication that emphasises the cognitive processes that can mediate behavioural change (Boer & Seydel, 1996). According to Rogers (1983), the coping response of PM is elicited due to four factors: (1) *severity* - i.e., a severe threat to health, (2) *susceptibility* - i.e., feeling vulnerable, (3) *response-efficacy* - where the adaptive response is seen as an effective means of averting the threat, and (4) *self-efficacy* - where the person believes in their ability to successfully complete the adaptive response. The first two of these variables represent an individual’s threat appraisal, whilst the latter two variables comprise their coping appraisal. Protection motivation is thus posited to be the result of an individual’s threat appraisal and coping appraisal.

Recently, studies have successfully applied PM to a marketing context (e.g., Tanner, Day & Krask, 1989; Tanner & Eppright, 1991). In terms of the present study, PM predicts that threat appeals are effective if people believe that they can cope with the threat. It could be then that the present study represents a framing, affective tone and protection motivation study, rather than a mood, framing and affective tone study. Thus, this appears an avenue worthy of future research.

Direct Access Processing and Brand Inferences. As noted, deliberate steps were taken to enhance external validity by using real commercials. An approach which has been used in past consumer research (e.g., Stout and Rust, 1993). Nevertheless, it is possible that the subjects viewing the commercials had preformed attitudes which biased the findings.

In terms of mood theory, Forgas (1992) suggests that such routine, direct access strategies are impervious to mood effects. This is because judgments are preformed, so there is no scope for an affective biasing to occur. This concept ties directly with the notion of brand inferences. That is, those inferences often derived from prior exposure to a commercial or product class (Mitchell & Olson, 1981). This is particularly important when one considers the absence of differences for the attitudinal measures found in the present study. These results appear to contradict past affect research which has found significant results for A_{ad} and/or A_b (e.g., Batra & Stayman, 1990; Kamins et al., 1991). While it is difficult to defend a position based on null results, it is worth mentioning that the measures used were found to be reliable, had a record of being reliable in past research, and that the manipulation checks proved to be significant.

It is of course possible that some cognitive component of A_{ad} influenced the findings. For example, Burton and Lichtenstein (1988) support this cognitive component view, suggesting that A_{ad} can be influenced by specific copy claims, such as price discounts. More plausible though is the work of Lutz (1985) who identifies prior brand inferences as a potential moderator variable regarding the impact of an advertising stimulus on A_{ad} . Likewise, Machleit and Wilson (1988) suggest that A_{ad} has a direct effect on A_b , except where a prior brand attitude exists. Thus, the null results for brand attitudes may have been the result of preexisting knowledge structures in subjects' memories. Even though familiarity with the ad was measured as a covariate, subjects' knowledge of the brand itself may have interfered with constructive processing. Therefore, the use of direct access strategies may represent a limitation of the study.

Cognitive Priming. The happy mood – sad ad superior result may also be owing to the influence of cognitive priming (cf. Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Cognitive priming relates to an unconscious bias in information processing which often results from the memory effects of a prior episode (Jacoby & Kelley, 1990).

A key assumption underlying this explanation, is that biased information is successfully retrieved and available at the encoding of the commercial that subjects are exposed to. Therefore, in terms of the current study's results, some concept may have been primed which precluded the hypothesised happy mood-happy ad effect. In fact, although the mood induction programs were screened for priming regarding the product class (i.e., cell phones and cellular networks), it may have been better to

avoid the topics of the chosen episode. One could even go so far as to argue that the derogatory nature of the chosen happy mood-induction program (*The Simpsons*), lends itself to such priming effects and should thus be avoided for this reason.

That is, in the happy mood induction many jokes were made of Homer Simpson's attempt to escape having to work by developing a condition called "hyper-obesity." Subjects viewing the induction may have unconsciously primed associations pertaining to weight gain and diet primed in memory. If one accepts that the students used in the present study were novice consumers of cell phones, then support for this stance is offered by the framing literature (e.g., Bettman & Sujan, 1987). Termed "problem framing" (Wright & Rip, 1980), literature in this area deals with how the priming of different attributes can affect decision processes by altering attribute importance. Bettman and Sujan (1987) found that novice consumers were more affected by a priming manipulation than experienced consumers when judging 35mm cameras. Hence, from this perspective, priming may have occurred which biased the results.

Stereotyping Research and Self-Discrepancy Theory. Another potential, although perhaps less plausible explanation is provided by stereotyping research. In a similar vein to the cognitive priming perspective, it may be that subjects' responses were influenced by stereotypes. Stereotypes can be thought of as cognitive heuristics which may be employed when people have a low motivation to be accurate in their judgments of others (Bargh, 1990). Stereotype use is believed to bias information processing by means of selective attention and recall that is consistent with the stereotype (Johnson & Sherman, 1990). Related to this topic is that of category membership, in-groups and out-groups.

In-groups can be conceptualised as groups that a person identifies with, whereas out-groups are of generally lower-status and lack this aspect of self-identification (Esses and Zanna, 1995). Hence, subjects may have indulged in the derogation of out-groups to increase psychological distance between themselves and the out-group. In other words, subjects may not have identified with the people on screen. The happy ad contained many slim attractive models dancing in front of the camera. Having viewed *The Simpsons* and its focus on weight subjects who were themselves weight-conscious, may have viewed the models in the commercial as belonging to an out-group, thus resulting in less favourable responses.

In support of this perspective, past research in psychology suggests that people in happy moods tend to make greater use of stereotypes than people in a neutral or sad mood. For instance, Bodenhausen, Kramer and Susser (1994) asked subjects in different mood states to determine a target's guilt after reading descriptions of a student's alleged misconduct. It was found that happy subjects rated the offender as more guilty when the alleged offender was a member of a group stereotypically associated with the offence. This result was not evident for subjects in other mood states. Such a finding links with past mood research which suggests that people in happy mood states generally engage in less effortful information processing (cf. Forgas, 1992; Morris & Reilly, 1987). Thus, stereotype use by happy subjects may have resulted in decreased effectiveness for the happy commercial condition, thus enhancing the performance of the sad commercial.

A complementary explanation is provided by self-discrepancy theory, which suggests that people possess distinct self-beliefs and emotional vulnerabilities that arise from discrepancies between a person's ideal, ought and actual self (Tykocinski, Higgins & Chaiken, 1994). For example, a perceived discrepancy between a person's actual and ideal self-concept is expected to make a person more vulnerable to negative feelings of disappointment. Research suggests that such discrepancies, if triggered, reduce the motivation to yield to the message and increase counterarguing (Tykocinski et al., 1994). Self-discrepant messages are also thought to make people's self-conceptions more accessible (Swann, 1990). Therefore subjects in the current study may have reacted more negatively owing to ad content and thus been more persuaded by the sad ad rather than the happy commercial.

Ad elements which may have evoked this response are twofold. First, the visual presentation of the models may have been perceived as self-discrepant by weight-conscious individuals. Second, given that the Telstra commercial was an Australian ad, negative responses may have been evoked owing to parochial, national identity factors. Few would argue in New Zealand regarding the intense rivalry between Australian and New Zealand sports teams. Thus, this patriotic, derisive feeling may have influenced subjects' responses to the degree that sad ads resulted in more favourable intentions than their happy counterparts. This would also concur with the in-group/out-group perspective of stereotyping research, where the intergroup distinction was defined by group member citizenship (i.e., Australian or New Zealander).

Furthermore, as these are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories, the third option is that both the visual model elements and national identity combined to have a negative effect. Consequently, this remains an intriguing avenue for future research.

H2 Theoretical Implications

For H2 the predicted mood, affective tone and self-esteem interaction did not appear. These null results are defensible owing to: (1) The significant manipulation checks, (2) the reliability of the measures in both the present study and past research, and (3) the controlled environment used to help control for the influence of extraneous factors. This does however, contradict Smith and Petty (1995) who found a mood X self-esteem interaction, although their domain was memory positivity.

A main effect for self-esteem did eventuate for intentions. This result supports esteem research. High self-esteem people are regarded as having more problem-focused strategies to life's problems than low esteem individuals (Leary et al., 1995; Scheier, Carver & Bridges, 1994). Such consumers may have more easily seen how a cell phone could be integrated into their lives and the benefits it offered them. Equally, high esteem people are thought to have a more long term focus and be more interested in goal achievement (Leary et al., 1995). Hence, high esteem subjects may have appreciated the cell phone benefits for goal achievement. Both these approaches would link with the self-enhancement motive of high esteem individuals.

H3 Theoretical Implications

For H3 results indicated that matching valency did not result in the most favorable A_{ad} responses. Research into negative information effects offers insight into this issue. Of particular interest is the negativity bias where negative information receives greater weight from consumers than an equal amount of positive information (see Kanouse, 1984 for a review). A variety of theories have been offered for a why a negativity bias may occur. For example, the figure-ground hypothesis stresses that negative information is regarded as more salient than positive information in an inherently positive world (Lau, 1985). Thus, negative information is more salient owing to a form of perceptual contrast and may have contrasted with the positive ad.

Recent framing research provides empirical support for this perspective. Smith and Petty (1996) using advocacies on waste recycling found that framing influences the degree to which people engage in elaborative processing.

Negatively-framed appeals resulted in greater scrutiny than positive appeals. They explained this result in terms of the expectancy violation hypothesis which posits that people usually expect positively framed information. When these expectancies are disconfirmed the message is examined to a greater extent.

There was also a three-way Mood X Affective tone X Framing interaction for specific thoughts. This result appears to reinforce the notion that incongruent information prompts more elaborative processing (e.g., Houston et al., 1987; Meyers-Levy & Tybout, 1989). Similarly, message ambiguity can result in a greater motivation for accuracy (e.g., Clore & Parrott, 1991). This motivation for accuracy resulting in greater elaboration and hence, more specific thoughts. This ambiguity may have been generated by the contrasting nature of the stimulus and consumer mood state.

Limitations

As with most experimental research a number of limitations need to be acknowledged. First, the use of a student sample restricts the results from being generalized to other populations. Although such samples are prevalent in consumer behavior research (e.g., Batra & Stephens, 1994) they can lessen external validity. However, given the range of variables and covariates that was studied, a laboratory experiment was deemed appropriate. Furthermore, college-aged consumers have recently been identified as a promising segment for mobile phone promotions (Steward, 1995). Second, self-esteem measures may be mood-dependent since they often require global evaluations. Tennen, Hall and Affeck (1995) have recommended using semi-structured interviews for self-esteem evaluation. However, such interviews have been criticized as being unsuitable for mood research as they may act as potential mood-inducers or primes (cf. Weary, Edwards & Jacobson, 1995).

Future Research

A number of future research directions are suggested by the results. For example, longitudinal research could be conducted to examine the relationship between mood, framing, affective tone and changes in intentions over time. Winfield, Winfield, Tiggemann and Goldney (1991) explored the psychological effects of unemployment using a longitudinal approach. A similar study could be conducted from a purchasing perspective, seasonal effects could be examined in relation to mood (e.g., sunny weather vs. winter). In terms of dispositional characteristics, it would be worthwhile to examine mood

and framing effects in relation to compulsive buying. Compulsive buying can be conceptualized as a ritualistic behavior designed to alleviate anxiety aroused by obtrusive thoughts (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989). Importantly, compulsive buying may be linked with a self-esteem enhancing motivation (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989).

The temporal dimension is also worthy of investigation. How do time and mood affect consumer judgments? What impact does this have upon possible mood congruency and mood consistency effects and consumer perceptions of advertising effectiveness? Research examining this issue in the context of mood effects remains limited (see Hornik, 1993 for an exception).

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