

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

HOW DO SIMPLE VERSUS INTRICATE ADVERTISEMENTS EXPRESSED VIA
VISUALS AND MESSAGING, AFFECT CONSUMER REACTIONS?

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines consumer reactions to four different advertisements by the Chupa Chups lollipop company. The first part of the study discusses the results from two different focus groups that were conducted using three Chupa Chup advertisements. The second part of the study analyzes an online questionnaire concerning two of the previous Chupa Chups advertisements as well as one new advertisement. Each advertisement differed in message complexity from simple to medium to intricate. 'Simple' refers to an easily interpretable image with limited copy. 'Medium' refers to slightly more copy and a busy visual. 'Complex' suggests challenging and lengthy copy accompanied by an intricate visual. The results from the focus group showed that individuals preferred the simple advertisement because it was straight forward and easy to interpret. The intended message and action was understood by all. However, the remaining two advertisements were both disliked for varying reasons. The medium advertisement was disliked due to severe controversy of the intended message, and the complex advertisement was disliked for its confusion and lack of interpretable message. The questionnaire experiment showed that there was no significant difference between advertisement type and purchase intention, that there was no significance between positive mood and purchase intent, that there was a significance between negative mood and purchase intent, that there was a significance between advertisement type and both positive and negative mood, and that there was a significance between both advertisement type and attitude towards the brand and attitude towards the specific advertisement shown.

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Chapter 1

The Importance of Effective Messaging in Advertising

Creating an advertisement is an extensive and multifaceted process. From finding the consumer insight, to creating the big idea, to developing the marketing and communications strategy, numerous resources, money, and time go into creating a single advertisement.

Advertisers want to ensure their messages reach the right audiences, in the right locations, at the right times. Thus, it is no surprise that it is crucial to know exactly what makes consumers tick.

What makes them remember one advertisement versus another? What calls consumers to action?

There are so many factors that contribute to this, and there have been numerous studies in the past that try to explain these different factors, such as investigating responses based on gender, age, lifestyle choices etc.

As of 2014, The Neilson Company stated that on average, 38 ads air every minute across national TV. This represents only one of the many different forms of media that we take in on a daily basis (Neilson, 2014). Further, President of the Marketing Firm Yankelovich, Jay Walker-Smith, stated that in the 1970's we were exposed to approximately 500 advertisements a day and now we are exposed to as many as 5,000 advertisements a day (Johnson, 2006). Additionally, eMarketer released the total media ad spending in the United States for 2017, consisting of \$83 billion dollars spent on digital and \$71.65 billion dollars spent on TV along with billions also spent on newspapers, magazines, directories, radio, and out-of-home. Digital and TV are projected to increase in the upcoming years (eMarketer, 2017).

Lastly, in the past decade, new ways for us to consume messages has increased, thus breaking through this constant clutter has become essential for advertisers. Keeping consumer's attention once a message has been displayed is another important component to a successful advertising campaign. As consumers, we are constantly on the move and constantly looking for the next best thing, hence, advertisers more so than ever, have a limited time to make their messages appealing and resonate with an intended audience. So, how do advertisers break through this clutter?

By developing innovate methods to stand out in our complex, consumption-oriented environment.

In 2005, Margot van Mulken, Renske van Enschoot, and Hans Hoeken, all conducted a study that examined the relationship between appreciation and complexity in magazine advertisements. They asked 88 undergraduates (44 female, 44 male) to rate their appreciated and experienced complexity of 12 different advertisements. The results showed that the degree of implicitness had a meaningful impact on the advertisement's appreciation. They found that implicit advertisements were appreciated more than explicit advertisements. These researchers concluded that if participants judged advertisements to be more complex, then their appreciation for the advertisement decreased (Mulken, M. V., Enschoot, R. V., & Hoeken, H, 2005). Consequently, if appreciation for an advertisement decreases this can then lead to further negative repercussions such as lower ad recall, lower purchase intention, lower brand loyalty etc.

Chapter 2

The Current Study

Due to the fact that it is so important for advertisers to effectively deliver appealing messages, this investigation examines simple versus complex visuals and messaging in advertisements to uncover how consumers truly feel about these different forms of advertisements and their corresponding success. The brand researched in this study is the “Chupa Chups” lollipop company. The advertisements vary in the amount of information used and the intricacy of the visuals.

In 1958, Enric Bernat wanted to create a sweet that children could enjoy without the mess that many sweets leave behind. He came up with the big idea to design a product that would be like eating a treat with a fork, but without the common sticky mess. His lollipops were universally appealing because they made both children and parents happy. Bernat positioned his brand as easy going, bright, cheerful, and unique. Bernat aimed to be creative with a simple product. In 1988, Salvador Dali created the daisy shape that became the logo for Chupa Chups and has remained since (Perfetti Van Melle, 2012).

The first part of this study involves an eight person focus group consisting of five females and three males, all undergraduates. This 45-minute-long discussion took place on October 5th, 2017 at 7:00 PM in Nicholas Towers at the Pennsylvania State University. Participants were presented with one Chupa Chups advertisement and then collectively asked a series of questions regarding the advertisement. This process was repeated two more times so that all three advertisements were shown and discussed. After the three advertisements were shown separately, they were then all shown at the same time to compare and contrast. The first advertisement is below.

Figure. 1: Simple Ad



This advertisement has a simple, bold visual with a one worded message and can be categorized as simple image advertising. This advertisement will be referenced as ‘simple.’ The second advertisement is below.

Figure 2: Middle Ad



This advertisement has moderate messaging, with a slightly more complicated visual to comprehend. This advertisement will be referenced as ‘middle.’ The third advertisement is below.

Figure 3: Complex Ad

Why Make a
**GINGER
BREAD
HOUSE**
**when you*
can have a*
**GINGER
HAIRD
SPOUSE?**

Look at this one
we made earlier!

Chupa Chups

Chupa Chups

Xmas Less Serious at ChupaChuok.com

The advertisement features a young couple sitting on a white rug in a living room decorated for Christmas. The woman is holding a gingerbread man with a red party hat. The man is brushing her hair. In the background, there is a fireplace with a fire, a Christmas tree, and wrapped gifts. A gingerbread house is on the floor next to them. The Chupa Chups logo is visible in the top right and a red arrow points to a gingerbread man in the background.

This advertisement has both heavy copy and heavy content making it the most complex of the three advertisements. This advertisement can be categorized as having complicated visuals and messaging. This advertisement will be referenced as ‘complex.’

The questions asked during the focus group can be found in Appendix A. During this focus group the advertisements were presented from easiest to most complicated in terms of interpretation of the message and visuals. To gain further insights and allow for randomization, a second focus group was held on October 11th, 2017 at 7:00 PM in Nicholas Towers at The Pennsylvania State University. This was a smaller focus group consisting of two females and one male, all undergraduates. This time the advertisements were presented in no specific order. The moderator kept both focus groups on topic and at ease by being friendly, welcoming, accepting, and appreciative of all responses.

The second part of this study involves an online questionnaire that was sent out to Penn State Facebook groups, email list serves, campus organizations, friends of friends etc., to create a large snowball sample of respondents. The high number of respondents allowed for a more accurate analysis of data. The responses were gathered after three weeks upon distribution with a total of 264 responses.

Chapter 3

Focus Groups: Results

After showing the three advertisements and having an open discussion about the visuals, messaging, and brand, it became clear what was successful and unsuccessful within each Chupa Chups advertisement.

The most memorable aspects of figure 1 included the scary shark, the oversized lollipop, and the boat. In both focus groups, all participants understood that the shark within the advertisement was attracted to the lollipop because of its “irresistible” taste. Everyone agreed that the intended message came across and was fairly easy to interpret. They liked that the advertisement was straight forward and youthful. However, everyone agreed that after seeing this advertisement they were not more likely to purchase the Chupa Chups lollipop as they felt, “college students and older individuals aren’t walking around with lollipops in their mouths.”

Figure 2 was chosen in this study because it had a fairly straightforward message with a slightly challenging visual, thus it was the middle ground between a simple and complex advertisement. The results for this advertisement were unexpected and surprising. Everyone felt this advertisement was created with “such poor taste,” as it was discussing the potential suicide of a child. One individual said it was, “so messed up,” and was confused how the advertisement even made it to consumers. Another respondent said it was a “horrifying” advertisement. Participants felt this advertisement was too immoral because a young girl was on top of a doll house ready to jump to her death if she did not receive a Chupa Chups lollipop. When asked what the advertisement was trying to tell them, one individual stated, “if you don’t give your children a lollipop they’re now going to kill themselves.” They agreed that the message was clear, but that it was a very poor strategy irrespective of whom the target audience might be. One

individual even chimed in to say, “can we get the shark ad back please?” Lastly, individuals were concerned that there was no clear reference to a lollipop other than the logo which many individuals may not even be familiar with in the first place.

The third and final advertisement was figure 3. Both focus groups had a very hard time trying to interpret the message in this advertisement and they did not see the connection to a lollipop. They argued that one would not even be able to tell it was even an advertisement for lollipops. No one could pick out anything memorable in the advertisement because there was “too much going on,” and participants felt “too overwhelmed with everything.” The only potential message anyone was able to decipher was that maybe Chupa Chups goal was to get consumers to choose lollipops over gingerbread houses during the Christmas season. Individuals argued that the Chupa Chups brand needs to “figure it out” in terms of their communication strategy and creative executions. Lastly, they stated that they were now less inclined to buy a lollipop from Chupa Chups because the advertisement was not clear and was filled with clutter.

When placing all three advertisements next to one another, every single participant in both focus groups agreed that their favorite advertisement was the simple ad. They appreciated how clear the advertisement was and how it was directly related to a lollipop. They knew the brand immediately, engaged with the strong visuals and contrast of colors, and liked the catchy one-worded phrase. In terms of the least favorite advertisement, there was a split between the middle ad and the complex ad. Individuals who voted for the middle ad said this advertisement was too offensive that even if they were unable to comprehend the complex ad, they could not stop themselves from disliking the middle ad. On the other hand, individuals who voted for the complex ad said it was their least favorite because at the end of the day it still made no sense.

While they did not appreciate the taste of the middle ad, they still believed the message came across effectively with understandable copy and visual.

Furthermore, when asked who the target audience was for these advertisements there was a mix of responses ranging from children to adolescents to parents. Participants did not feel confident in who Chupa Chups aimed to target. Chupa Chups say in their brand values that they aim to bring joy to children of all ages; hence it was agreed that these advertisements need to do a stronger job at attracting children. Individuals argued that children would have great difficulty understanding the middle ad and the complex ad due to the intricacy of the messages and visuals, and that some young children may not even be able to read the one-worded copy in the easy ad.

Overall the advice for the Chupa Chups brand was to create simpler, less serious, and more humor-oriented advertisements that are clearly targeted towards children. Chupa Chups brand personality is easy going, bright, cheerful, and unique. Further their brand essence is “life less serious.” It is clear they have missed the mark with some of these advertisements, especially the middle ad, as it elicited suicidal references. As a result of these findings it was decided to remove the middle ad from the second part of the study and replace it with a new, interim advertisement. The new advertisement is below and will be referenced as ‘medium.’

Figure 4: Medium Ad



This ad was chosen to prevent potential offenses to consumers, and to prevent potential controversial comments in the upcoming online questionnaire. Additionally, as this advertisement expresses a product-oriented approach, it works well as the middle advertisement between the shark and gingerbread advertisement. Further the copy, “tasty flavor with 95% less sugar for all to enjoy” was added to make the messaging and visual busier so that the advertisement would be a solid representation of a middle-ground advertisement between figure 1 and figure 3. This advertisement can be categorized as product attributes and information based advertising.

Chapter 4

Questionnaire: Reliability Measures

Each question within the online experiment had a variety of scales that the respondents were asked to fill out. Thus, the reliability of these grouped scales was tested using Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Testing, to ensure the questions had a high enough value before further analysing the results.

When grouping the four positive moods: calm, cheerful, happy, and relaxed, from question one, the Cronbach's Alpha was 0.868. The closer this score is to one the more reliable, thus grouping these categories created a reliable variable known as positive mood, which can be used to perform further tests. When grouping the four negative moods: anxious, disturbed, sad, and worried, from question one, the Cronbach's Alphas was 0.855. Again, because of this high value these categories can be used to create the variable negative mood, which can be used to perform further tests for analysis.

Question three and four were then tested to see the reliability. Question three received a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.932, and question four received a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.937. Due to these high values question three was computed to the variable, attitude towards brand, and question four was computed to the variable, attitude towards specific ad. Both of which could be used for further tests.

The last reliability measure was calculated to create the variable, purchase intention. Initially this question had four components to it, which resulted in a low Cronbach's Alpha. By removing the part of this question that asked, "the decision to buy Chupa Chups is foolish," the

Cronbach's Alpha significantly increased to 0.865, making the variable purchase intention both reliable and able to be used in further analysis testing.

Chapter 5

Statistical Analysis

Advertisements are calls to action by a specific audience, so it is very valuable to know if an advertisement can cause purchase intention. The first test ran in the SPSS software was a one-way ANOVA test to determine the relationship between advertisement type, (simple ad, medium ad, complex ad), and purchase intention. There was no statistical significance found, hence no significance between any of the advertisements and purchase intention.

Further, when testing to determine the correlation between mood type and purchase intent, there was no correlation between positive mood and purchase intention. However, there was a positive correlation between negative mood and purchase intention: $r = 0.18$, $p = 0.03$.

Therefore, it is valid to infer that while having a positive mood towards an advertisement did not affect a consumer's purchase intention, having a negative mood towards an advertisement impacted a consumer's willingness to purchase: When participants were in a stronger negative mood, the more likely they were to purchase. While it is a weak correlation, it is still in a positive direction.

The results of the remaining ANOVA tests can be found in Table 1 on page 18. The first of these tests examines the relationship between positive mood and advertisement type. This test was statistically significant, $F(2,180) = 4.30$, $p = 0.015$. Further, the results indicate that the medium ad generated the highest positive mood, with an average of 4.15 out of a 1-7 scale, 1 being not at all happy and 7 being extremely happy. Interestingly, the simple ad created the lowest positive mood with an average of 3.46 out of a scale of 1-7. These results suggest that a product attributes and information based advertising strategy will generate the highest positive mood.

The next test assesses the relationship between negative mood and advertisement type. Like before, this test was significant, $F(2, 180) = 5.25, p = 0.006$. The results from this test indicate that the complex ad caused the highest negative mood with an average of 2.51 on a 1-7 scale, with 1 being not at all unhappy and 7 being extremely unhappy. The medium ad caused the lowest negative mood with an average of 1.83. While the complex ad caused the highest negative mood out of all three, this was still a relatively low number. In fact, all results for negative mood did remain relatively low never reaching higher than a 3.0 on the scale. These results suggest that advertisements with heavy copy and busy visuals creates the highest negative mood.

The next test investigated individuals attitude towards the Chupa Chups brand after seeing one of the three advertisements. This test was significant, $F(2, 167) = 5.90, p = 0.003$. The results suggest that individuals had the most positive attitude towards the Chupa Chups brand after viewing the medium ad. This resulted in a 4.35 out of 7, with 1 being negative attitude towards the brand and 7 being positive attitude towards the brand. Further, individuals had the most negative attitude towards the Chupa Chups brand when viewing the complex ad. This resulted in a 3.51 on the seven point scale. The simple ad was close with the medium ad in positive attitude with a 4.15 on the seven point scale.

The fourth test displays individuals attitude towards the advertisement after seeing one of the three ads. Again, this test was statistically significant, $F(2, 154) = 6.07, p = 0.003$. Also like before, the medium ad had the highest positive mood towards the three advertisements with a 4.45 on the seven point scale. The complex ad also had the most negative mood towards the three advertisements with a 3.59 on the seven point scale. These results along with the results from the one-way ANOVA test on attitude towards the Chupa Chups brand suggest that a

“product attributes and information based advertising strategy” generates the highest positive mood towards the Chupa Chups advertisements and Chupa Chups brand.

Chapter 6

Conclusion: Practical Implications

While the focus group and online experiment gave somewhat differing results, what became immediately evident is that the Chupa Chups lollipop company must have a clear marketing and communications strategy when executing their advertisements. They need to have a well-defined target audience and refrain from using heavy copy accompanied with busy visuals. This can further be applied to all companies when executing advertising messages.

While the results varied on whether the simple ad strategy or medium ad strategy is most successful for a company, both have positive benefits that can lead to purchase intention, ad recall, brand loyalty etc. Thus, a mixture of product attributes and information based advertising as well as simplistic image based advertising, are both important components of a successful advertising campaign. It is important to note that the complex ad never received the highest and most positive score for any of the SPSS tests, making it clear that this is the least effective strategy for the Chupa Chups lollipop company.

Since there is so much clutter on a daily basis, it has become fundamental for companies to use multiple platforms and methods to spread brand awareness. Two current and meaningful tools to further an advertising campaign are social media and Google Analytics. It's 2018. For millennials, it seems almost impossible to think of a time when social media did not run our daily lives, since it did not consume our every thought, and since it did not impact our everyday decisions. Now so more than ever companies are finding ways to gain a high social media following and presence to advertise their products and services throughout these

platforms. Social media advertising is incredibly worthwhile as it allows for a vast global audience, it has a rich visual platform, and it has incredible return on investment.

Secondly, Google Analytics is another effective marketing tool used on the Google Network. Google Analytics is used by numerous businesses to increase their click through traffic to their websites and thus increase engagement, conversions etc. Google Network Advertising allows for a tremendous reach in audience, it focuses on the quality and relevance of ads, not quantity, and it offers a wide range of ad formats to choose from.

These overall findings are not only important for the Chupa Chups lollipop company, but also for all companies looking to reach a greater audience, sell their products and services, and create memorable advertising messages that resonate with consumers. By following this strategy, companies have a better chance at ensuring their advertisements break through the constant clutter consumers are bombarded with every day.

Table 1
Behavior Means and Attitude Means for Three Advertisements

Dependent Variables	Easy Ad	Medium Ad	Complex Ad
Positive mood *	3.46 n = 57	4.15 n = 62	4.02 n = 64
Negative Mood **	2.37 n = 57	1.83 n = 62	2.51 n = 64
Attitude Towards Brand **	4.15 n = 49	4.35 n = 60	3.51 n = 61
Attitude Towards Ad **	4.07 n = 47	4.45 n = 54	3.59 n = 56
Purchase Intention	3.32 n = 47	3.55 n = 53	3.48 n = 54

Note: Higher means indicate strong behaviour and attitude intentions

Note: * = $p \leq 0.05$, ** = $p \leq 0.01$, *** = $p \leq 0.001$

Appendix A

Focus Group Questions

- 1) What was memorable in this advertisement?
- 2) What do you think the advertisement was trying to say to you?
- 3) Do you think the intended message came across?
- 4) Did you like this advertisement? How so?
- 5) How do you feel about the brand after seeing this advertisement?
- 6) Did you think this advertisement was easy to interpret?
- 7) Are you more likely to purchase a product by this brand after seeing this?
advertisement?

Appendix B

Online Questionnaire

1. Review this ad carefully. All upcoming questions will refer to this Chupa Chups advertisement. [Advertisements were displayed at random].

2. Please indicate how you felt while viewing the Chupa Chups ad by circling the suitable number on each line.

	<i>Not at all</i>					<i>Extremely</i>	
a. Calm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Cheerful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Happy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. Relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e. Anxious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f. Disturbed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g. Sad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h. Worried	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Please indicate your attitude toward the Chupa Chups brand by circling the appropriate number on each line:

a. Dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Like
b. Low quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	High quality
c. Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
d. Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Pleasant
e. Unappealing product	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Appealing product
f. Boring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Exciting

4. Please indicate your attitude toward the Chupa Chups brand by circling the appropriate number on each line:

	<i>Not at all</i>					<i>Extremely</i>	
a. The decision to buy Chupa Chups is foolish	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

b. Buying Chupa Chups is a good decision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. I think Chupa Chups is a satisfactory brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. I think Chupa Chups has a lot of beneficial characteristics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Please rate the Chupa Chups ad you just saw by circling the suitable number on each line. Rate the ad itself, not the brand and/or product:

a. Weak	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strong
b. Unpersuasive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Persuasive
c. Unimaginative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Imaginative
d. Dull	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dynamic
e. Forgettable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Memorable
f. Not convincing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Convincing
g. Bad argument	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good argument
h. Boring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Interesting
i. Like	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dislike
j. Unappealing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Appealing
k. Not enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Enjoyable

5. How old are you?

6. Please circle your gender.

a. Female b. Male c. Other

7. Where are you from?

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ACADEMIC VITA

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The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

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Work Experience

Federal Tap House, State College, Pennsylvania

Server & Hostess, January 2018-May 2018

- Completed and met daily employer needs
- Carried out duties with welcoming and pleasant demeanor

IntoConcrete, Remote

Social Media Freelancer, January 2018-May 2018

- Design photo layouts for multiple platform posts
- Synthesize content so presentation is more cohesive and clear

Reingold Inc, Alexandria, Virginia

Communications Intern, June 2017-August 2017

- Designed and published monthly social media graphics and content
- Created and edited videos, press releases, and content for organizations in partnership campaigns
- Researched and conducted competitive analysis between Reingold and major competitors.

National Science Foundation, State College, Pennsylvania

R&D Assistant, August 2016-December 2016

- Created prototypes for online privacy concealment and disclosure scenarios
- Edited and formatted several privacy disclosure and concealment contexts
- Project coordinated through the Penn State College of Communications

Mr. B & Friends Creative Agency, Bath, United Kingdom

Creative Intern, June 2016-August 2016

- Researched, designed and executed a full creative brief using ADOBE creative suits
- Participated in strategic planning meetings and executions
- Managed timing and costing plans, developed surveys and formatted spreadsheet data

Fashion Week Internships, State College, Pennsylvania

Brand Ambassador, January 2016-September 2016

- Developed creative campaigns to increase student interest and recruitment for FWI
- Concepted special events such as “Blackout events” to highlight fashion videos
- Delivered marketing plans on campus to create awareness of FWI

JWS Interiors, Washington D.C.

Assistant, Summer 2016

- Assisted in developing consumer profiles for specific interior design trends
- Managed import and export of samples and products on daily basis

Association Memberships/Activities

Penn State Asset Management Group, State College, PA

Marketing Lead, January 2018-May 2018

- Raised brand awareness through email campaigns, flyers, and social media campaigns
- Assembled weekly emails for Penn State community to update members on current events

Kappa Alpha Theta Fraternity, State College, PA

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