

SERDAR YILDIZ
ANADOLU UNIVERSITY, TURKEY

EFFECTS OF ABSURDITY IN ADVERTISING ON CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD THE AD AND RECALL

Abstract:

Absurdity is widely used in advertising, whereas the empirical studies on effects of absurdity in advertising are limited. This study is an experimental research to examine the effects of absurdity in advertising on consumers' attitude toward the ad and recall. The presence and absence of a visual absurd stimulus was tested with print ads that were created for a fictitious outdoor clothing brand. It was hypothesized that using absurd elements in the print ad leads to more positive attitudes toward the ad than the non-absurd version of the same ad. It was also hypothesized that absurdity increases the recall of the brand name and the slogan. A student sample consisting of 160 subjects were chosen from 5 different faculties of Anadolu University. They were randomly assigned to two equivalent treatment groups according to viewing absurd or non-absurd print ads. As a result of the literature review it was noted that the product category attitude or involvement might moderate the effect of absurdity. Thus, the product category involvement was considered as a confounding variable and measured for all subjects. It was proved that both of the treatment groups were equivalent on the basis of involvement, age and gender. The results supported the hypothesis about the attitude toward the ad. The subjects who viewed the absurd ad had more positive attitudes toward the ad than the ones who viewed the non-absurd ad. On the other hand, the hypothesis on recall was partially supported. As a result of the unaided recall test it was found that absurdity increases the brand name recall. However, there was not a significant difference on slogan recall. Additionally, the results of the content analysis of the unaided recall test sheets revealed that the visual absurd element of the ad might cause misremembering of the slogan, because it was seen that a remarkable number of the subjects who viewed the absurd ad misremembered the slogan. At the end, all the findings were discussed; managerial implications were stated and further research areas were suggested to make a contribution to advertising and consumer research studies.

Keywords:

Absurdity, Advertising, Attitude toward the ad, Recall