The Effect of Humor and Expected Effect on People's Recognition/Recall of A Special Part of the Copy (Disclaimers) in a TV Commercial?

유머와 기대효과가 TV 광고 카피의 특별한 부분에 대한 소비자 인식 및 소환에 미치는 영향

Ryu, Hyun-Jay (Sogang University) · Jeong, Gap-Yeon (Hankuk University of Foreign Studies) · Jang, Yong-Woon (Shinhan University)

Abstract

This study focused on young adults’ recognition and recall of a special part in a TV commercial: advertising disclaimers (e.g., “This is a dramatization. Do not attempt”). Data were collected from 520 undergraduate students from a southeastern university in USA. This cross-sectional study used for 2*2 factor design to test our research questions. As stimulus for the experiment, humor was applied to advertisements to check if the participants recognized and memorized the disclaimers in the advertising significantly different. In addition, the participants were divided into two groups, the treatment being the addition/lack of information about the purpose of this study. This was to investigate the possible differences in the level of recognition/recall of disclaimers between a more natural setting and a less natural one for people’s exposure to TV advertising. The results clearly showed that conditions (humor in advertising and providing participants with information about the purpose of the study) significantly influenced the young adults’ recognizing or recall of TV advertising disclaimers.

Key words: Advertising Disclaimers, Humor, Recognizing and Recall

* kingkap@naver.com
Introduction

With the spread of well-being in society as a whole, the television commercials of well-being also have been growing up (Han, 2014). Although the internet has been growing up a source of providing information, TV commercials is the most important provider about well-being information (Joo & Kim, 2013). In accordance with the increased the amount of information about well-being in TV commercials, TV commercials have been influencing the well-being behavior of consumers (Park & Kim, 2013). In this TV commercials, disclaimers are the most important factor.

‘…Disclaimers and disclosures should be clearly worded, legible and prominent.
In television advertising, both audio and video disclosures are encouraged...’

(Children’s Advertising Review Unit 1983)

Disclaimers are an important means through which advertisers can provide additional information about the advertised product or service to consumers so that they do not misunderstand the content of the advertising (Stern & Harmon, 1984). Besides protecting consumers, advertising disclaimers are important attributes for companies and advertising agencies as well (Stutts & Hunnicutt, 1987). Actually, advertising disclaimers have a critical role in companies’ need for legal compliance and their own protection during potential conflicts with consumers regarding the information they communicate through their advertising (Bakir, 2005). Therefore, the importance of disclaimers, which are one special type of message in advertising, could be equal to that of other marketing messages in advertising (Foxman, Muehling, & Moore, 1988). However, despite their significance in several aspects, disclaimers have been one of the hardly discussed topics in advertising research, even though protecting consumers from the content of advertising and outlining advertisers’ responsibilities about the messages have become growingly critical issues (Bakir, 2005). Wai-ling, 2004; Herbst & Allan, 2006).

Also, the studies dealing with advertising disclaimers have been limited to a few topics, such as children or adolescents’ recognizing and understanding of disclaimers (Bakir, 2005), style (e.g., size, place) of disclaimers and their effects (Herbst & Allan, 2006), and content analysis of disclaimers in the advertising targeting children or adolescents (Muehling & Kolbe, 1998). Disclaimer studies dealing with non-children or adolescents samples or how the other factors in advertising possibly influenced the audiences’ recognizing and recall of disclaimers have been almost nonexistent.

As a study dealing with people’s recognition/recall of an important part of the copy in a TV commercial (advertising disclaimers), this research focuses on young adults (college students, older than 20) and the disclaimers in one of their favorite TV commercials, beer advertising. Besides investigating how much the college students recognize and recall the disclaimers, this study applied two potential factors (e.g. 1) the humor in advertising and 2) providing participants with information about the purpose of this research) that might influence college students’ recognition/recall of advertising disclaimers. By comparing the four different groups in the experiment, ( 1) Humor in advertising/without providing participants with information about the
purpose of this research, 2) Humor in advertising/ providing participants with information about the purpose of this research, 3) No humor in advertising/ without providing participants with information about the purpose of this research, 4) No humor in advertising/ providing participants with information about the purpose of this research), this study investigated the possible influences of the two factors on the participants’ level of recognition and recall of television advertising disclaimers.

11. Theoretical Background

1. Discussions about Disclaimers in Advertising Research

There have not been enough studies about advertising disclaimers despite their importance (Muehling & Kolbe, 1998). Also, among the few studies, most studies mainly focused on limited subtopics such as children’s attention and understanding of advertising disclaimers (Mallalieu, Palan, & Lacziak, 2005). Since the ultimate goal of advertising disclaimers is to provide important information for audiences, so that the advertisers can prevent misleading caused by any information from the advertising (Liebert, Sprafkin, Liebert, & Rubinstein, 1977), research using vulnerable groups of people have been very popular (Lan, Lwin, Williams, & Yu 2002).

Content analysis has been a major approach for the studies dealing with advertising disclaimers since 1970 (Muehling & Kolbe, 1998). Those mainly reported the use of audio and verbal disclaimers (disclosures) in diverse advertising targeting children or adolescents. For instance, Atkin and Herald (1977) found that only 31% of television toy advertisements targeting children from their sample were containing advertising disclaimers that included basic instructions for the children audience about the products advertised. Barcus (1977) also reported that only about 35% of the television advertisements targeting children aired on weekends and after school hours contained disclaimers. This rate did not change enough even in 1984 (Stern & Harmon, 1984). However, finally, in the mid 1990s, a higher rate of presence of disclaimers in children’s advertising was reported. Kolbe and Muehling (1995) found that about 70% of the television advertising for children had some types of advertising disclaimers.

Another popular line in the research about advertising disclaimers focused on the practical effects of advertising disclaimers in children’s advertising (Stutts & Hunnicutt, 1987). Generally, it was found that the children audience not only did not recognize or remember disclaimers in advertising, but they didn’t even understand what the advertising disclaimers really meant (Stern & Harmon, 1984). Liebert and associates (1977) were some of the first researchers who indicated that the disclaimers in children’s advertising were not as effective as policy makers intended. The researchers suggested that the standard form of disclaimers should be made simpler for children to understand better what the disclaimers mean. Stern and Resnik (1978) also indicated that the disclaimers in children’s advertising for toys instructing children to use the product safely were not effective. Some other researchers argued as well that advertising disclaimers should be created with more caution based upon the age ranges of the children who are exposed to the advertising (Van Evra, 1990). Stutts and
Hunnicutt (1987) found differences in understanding depending on children’s age. According to the researchers, verbal disclaimers were more easily understood by older children, but age was not a significant factor for non-verbal disclaimers.

2. The Effects of Humor in Accepting Advertising Messages: Controversial

Humor has been one of the most popular tools advertisers used in their campaigns across most media to attract audiences for a long time (Costley, Koslow, & La Trobe, 2002; Nilsen, 2000; Ruch, 1996; Spotts, Weinberger, & Parsons, 1997). According to researchers (Spotts, Weinberger, & Parsons, 1997), about 30% of advertising in the United States is intended to be humorous. Many advertisers believe that humor is a helpful appeal for their advertisements to deliver their messages to the target audience more effectively (Flaherty, Weinberger, & Gulas, 2004). This overall preference for humor compared to other appeals was also found in several international advertising competitions, such as Canne and Clio (Murphy, Morrison, & Zahn, 1993). According to Murphy and his colleagues, about 62% of award winning radio advertisements in the Clio competition contained humor. Also, several polls have indicated that the general consumers enjoy the advertisements that use humor in the story more than other types of advertising (Flaherty, Weinberger, & Gulas, 2004). However, despite this popularity and the overall belief about the positive impact of humor advertising, the opinions among researchers about the effect of humor as a communication tool varied (Flaherty, Weinberger, & Gulas, 2004; Toncar, 2001; Shabbir & Thwaites, 2007). Even though numerous studies agree that humor in advertising generally has a positive effect on audiences’ attention to advertising (e.g., Gelb & Pickett, 1983), there have been several studies as well indicating that the effect of humor is not significant or is vague (e.g., Sutherland & Sethu, 1987). Therefore, it is hard to generalize the results from one study to other cases that might have totally different circumstances (Gelb & Zinkhan, 1986). For example, since the communication steps the researchers have been applying are different, such as attention, recognition, comprehension or recall, the term “effect” in diverse research could have very different meanings (Duncan & Nelson, 1985).

Regarding attention, which is one of the basic steps of communication, the perspectives toward the effect of humor in advertising have been largely identical (Duncan & Nelson, 1985; Shabbir & Thwaites, 2007). Many researchers, including Weinberger and Gulas (1992), agreed that if there are some attributes causing humor in an advertisement, the possibility to get the audiences’ attention will be higher (Beard, 2005). Also, several studies reached the same conclusion that advertising likeability will be increased by humor in advertising (Duncan & Nelson, 1985; Elpers, Mukherjee, & Hoyer, 2004). In addition, it also reported that humor significantly influenced people’s positive brand association (Duncan & Nelson, 1985). Gelb and Zinkhan (1986) found through their experiment that the participants who were exposed to the advertisement with humor made more positive associations about the brand advertised. Some other studies reported a positive relationship between humor and favorable association about the brand advertised (Belch & Belch, 1983; Gelb & Pickett, 1983).

On the other hand, several studies demonstrated minimal or even negative effects of humor in advertising on people’s communication processes (e.g., Sutherland & Middleton, 1983). Berg and Lippman (2001) found that humor used in
advertising did not positively affect the strength of recognition of the brand shown in the advertisement. Recognition was not the only communication step with no significant relationship with humor in advertising. There have been some researchers as well indicating that humor does not impact people’s recall of the content in advertising, such as a brand name or headline (Cline & Kellaris, 1999; Sutherland & Middleton, 1983). In addition, comprehension, which is a comparatively high level of communication, has been known to have just a minimal relationship with humor in advertising (Spotts, Weinberger, & Parsons, 1997). Further more, Madden (1982) argued that humor in advertising is negative for the audience to recall or comprehend the content (e.g., headline, slogan, or information about the product advertised) in advertising. According to Madden’s study (1982), serious advertising, which was used as the opposite style of humorous advertising in the study, had better effects on people’s recall of the brand and their understanding of what they were told through the advertisement. As many researchers pointed out (Berg & Lippman, 2001; Eisen, 2007), humorous advertisements do not always produce systematic advantages over non-humorous advertisements in increasing persuasion (Cline & Kellaris, 1999).

3. Natural Settings of Experiments in Advertising Research

In addition to humor in advertising, this study applied the condition of providing or not information about the purpose of this study as another control variable in the experiment. Environmental conditions, such as the amount of information about the experiments (research) given to the participants or the number of exposures to the advertisement in experiments, have been considered as important variables that might influence the results of advertising research (Kent & Machleit, 1992; Allen & Madden, 1989; Johnson & Horne, 1988). One of the major reasons for the researchers to decide to use those diverse conditions as control variables in the experiments is that they wanted to see the differences in results between situations where the participants encounter advertisements in daily life versus in experiment settings (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989).

Kent and Machleit (1992) indicated that the answers from participants in advertising experiments could be significantly different depending on how much the participants know about the goal of the research. By using the term “test expectation effects” (p. 18), the researchers argued that the participants in the experiment better recognize or recall the content of the advertisement they are exposed to if they have knowledge about the purpose of the research.

Also, the expectation effect could take place if the advertisement is shown multiple times rather than just a single time in the experiment (Lee & Briley, 2005). Therefore, Kent and Machleit (1992) suggested that researchers need to design experiments with more caution based upon their specific goals. This expectation effect in advertising experiments has been indicated by some other studies as well (Strohmetz, 2008; Tversky, 1973; Eysenck, 1982). Williams (2007) and several researchers also reported that the participants registered better recognition, recall, or understanding of the content of advertisements when they were provided more information about the experiment, such as the goal of the study or a specific desire of the researchers (Suls & Rosnow, 1988; Horton & Mills, 1984).

Generally, most people rarely concentrated on the content of television advertising when they
watch the commercials in real life because they do something else in parallel, from consuming food to enjoying some other media (Thorson & Zhao, 1997; Lynch & Stipp, 1999; Patino, 2007; McCarty, 1983; Gantz & Schwartz, 2007). Therefore, the situations artificially prepared for the experiment could have a significant distance from those in real television watching environments (Kent & Machleit, 1992). That is the major reason some researchers recommend to compare the results from the more natural settings to those from more planned experiment settings (Strohmetz, 2008; Rosnow, 2002).

4. Research Questions

This study generated a couple of research questions rather than formulating hypotheses for the following reasons. First, as indicated above, there has not been a consensus toward the effects of humor in advertising on people’s acceptance of advertising messages (Flaherty, Weinberger, & Gulas, 2004; Toncar, 2001; Shabbir & Thwaites, 2007). Also, since advertising disclaimers are a special form of messages delivered through advertising, it is hard to apply the theoretical frames or some empirical findings from previous studies dealing with the relationships between humor and general advertising messages into the present study. Therefore, due to the fact that humor in advertising and advertising disclaimers are the core factors in this study, using research questions to investigate the possible relationships between the two factors could be better than using hypotheses.

Regarding another controlled condition used in this study, disclosing information about the purpose of the experiment to only some of the participants, the researcher also decided to use research questions instead of hypotheses for the same reason above. Again, since previous studies hardly discussed the possible expectation effects (Kent & Machleit, 1992) in people’s recognition and recall of advertising disclaimers especially by adult audiences, applying research questions instead of hypotheses seems more sensible.

RQ1. Is humor a significant factor in people’s recognition of advertising disclaimers in a television commercial?

RQ2. Is humor a significant factor in people’s recall of advertising disclaimers in a television commercial?

RQ3. Is providing information about the purpose of the study a significant factor in people’s recognition of advertising disclaimers in a television commercial?

RQ4. Is providing the information about the purpose of the study a significant factor in people’s recall of advertising disclaimers in a television commercial?

III. Method

A total of 520 undergraduate students (389 females and 131 males, with the average age of 21.5) from a southeastern university in the United States participated in a 2(Humor: humor in advertising and no humor in advertising) * 2(Information: providing information about the purpose of this study and not providing information about the purpose of this study) factorial design. The 520 students were randomly
assigned to one of the four groups and asked to participate in the study. The researchers deliberately made the number of participants in each cell equal (130 participants per cell).

1. The Structure of the Experiment

Via a pilot test using interviews with 20 students from the same school to establish which advertisement (which product and which brand) was the most popular and comfortable to the college students, the researcher determined that a Budweiser television commercial was the most appropriate for the experiment. As another rationale, Budweiser television commercials have been chosen not only as one of the most liked commercials by young adults several times (Marketing VOX, 2008), but also considered a popular commercial in terms of humor (Market Watch, 2008). Since there have been a lot of Budweiser television commercials using humor, the researcher had to select a specific television commercial for the experiment. In the pilot test, more than 90% of the participants in the test agreed that there clearly was humor in the television advertising the researcher suggested (Budweiser “Dude” commercial). On the other hand, the researcher picked another Budweiser television commercial that does not contain humor at all (Budweiser “Welcome Soldiers!”). The participants in the pilot study also agreed (more than 90%) that the second commercial had no humor.

The participants in the experiments were randomly assigned to one of the four groups, and they watched a specially recorded television program in which the television commercials were embedded. The first group watched the Budweiser television commercial, “Dude,” in which humor was applied. Also, they were told that they were in an experiment about advertising (“This study investigates how you recognize/recall the verbal and non-verbal messages in television advertising”). In the second group, the participants watched the television commercial with humor, but they were not provided the information about the purpose of the research. At the same time, they watched a 5-minute football game before and after watching the Budweiser television commercial with humor. The participants in group 3 were exposed to the Budweiser television commercial without humor (“Welcome Soldiers!”), and they were told that the research dealt with how people recognize and recall the messages in television advertising. Lastly, the participants in the fourth group watched the commercial and were not told the purpose of the experiment.

Table 1. Group Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
<th>Group 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposed to a television commercial containing humor.</td>
<td>Exposed to a television commercial containing humor.</td>
<td>Exposed to a television commercial not containing humor.</td>
<td>Exposed to a television commercial not containing humor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being provided information about the purpose of this study (“This study investigates how do you recognize/recall the verbal and non-verbal messages in TV advertising”).</td>
<td>Not being provided information about the purpose of this study. (“This study investigates how do you recognize/recall the verbal and non-verbal messages in TV advertising”).</td>
<td>Being provided information about the purpose of this study</td>
<td>Not being provided information about the purpose of this study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
television commercial without humor along with the 5-minute football game snippet. They were not provided information about the goal of this study. In each television commercial, the disclaimers were specially created by the researcher("Keep Your Pace. Please Drink Responsibly") and were displayed visually at the bottom of the screen for 3 seconds, which is the amount of time the other television Budweiser commercials use for showing disclaimers.

The researcher made the number of participants in each group equal(130 per each group, 520 total). After watching the television commercial(or football game and the television commercial), recognition and recall of the disclaimers placed at the bottom of the screen were assessed with following simple questions: "Did you recognize the statements at the bottom of the screen in the television commercial you just watched?" and "Do you recall the statement(s) at the bottom of the screen in the television commercial you just watched?" In addition to answering YES or NO, the participants were also asked to write what they recalled as best they could: "If YES, please write any word(s) you recall from the bottom of the screen in the television commercial you just watched."

2. Results

Since the participants were asked to answer the questions by YES or NO answers(a categorical variable), the potential differences among the four groups were investigated with Cross-Sectional analysis. In addition to the Chi-square test that is typically employed to determine statistical significance for the associations between categorical variables, the researcher used Fisher’s Exact test(Fleiss, 1981) for determining statistical significance as well.

According to the results for the first research question, humor did not significantly influence the people’s level of recognizing disclaimers in the television advertising. Actually, the participants who were exposed to the serious television commercial(Budweiser, “Welcome Soldiers!”) recognized the advertising disclaimers better("Keep Your Pace. Please Drink Responsibly"), even though the difference was not statistically significant. Regarding the research question 2("Is humor a significant factor in people’s recall of advertising disclaimers in the television commercial?") the results were a little bit different from those of the first research question. It was found that humor in advertising significantly influenced people’s level of recall of the advertising disclaimers. A total of 67.3% of the participants who watched the television commercials with humor recalled the advertising disclaimers. On the other hand, about half of the participants who watched the commercials without humor remembered the disclaimers correctly.

Table 2. The Effects of Humor on People’s Acceptability to the Advertising Disclaimers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People who watched the commercial with humor</th>
<th>Recognition</th>
<th>Recall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who watched the commercial without humor</td>
<td>181 (69.6%)</td>
<td>136 (52.3%)</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$</td>
<td>1.258</td>
<td>12.168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>0.137</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher’s exact test</td>
<td>.152</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next, the potential influence of providing information about the purpose of the research they were participating in was investigated (Research question 3). Different from the results of using humor as the control variable, providing the participants with information about the goal of the study (“This study investigates how you recognize/recall the verbal and non-verbal messages in television advertising”) significantly influenced people’s level of recognition of the advertising disclaimers. A sweeping 91% of the participants who were provided information about the goal of this study recognized the disclaimers at the bottom of the screen while watching the television commercial. However, less than half of the participants who were not provided the information about the goal of this research answered YES to the question asking if they recognized the disclaimers.

Table 3. The Effects of Providing the Information about the purpose of the research on People’s Acceptability to the Advertising Disclaimers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People who were provided the information about the purpose of the research</th>
<th>Recognition</th>
<th>Recall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who were not provided the information about the purpose of the research</td>
<td>114 (43.8%)</td>
<td>106 (40.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$</td>
<td>130.079</td>
<td>78.409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher’s exact test</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
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Providing information about the goal of the present study also significantly influenced how much the participants recalled the advertising disclaimers (p<.01). About 80% of the participants who received information about the purpose of the research remembered the advertising disclaimers correctly. However, only 40% of the participants who were not provided information of the goal of this study recalled the disclaimers.

**IV. Discussion**

1. **Humor was Helpful for Enhancing the Recall of Disclaimers, but not for Recognition**

As indicated in the literature review, humor in advertising has been found not to significantly influence people’s recognition of messages in advertising by several researchers (Sutherland and Middleton 1983; Berg and Lippman 2001). Among the communication levels, it has been thought that recognition, recall and comprehension (understanding) are generally not influenced by humor in advertising (Cline & Kellaris, 1999; Sutherland & Middleton, 1983).

First of all, the results from this study provided meaningful evidence that people’s level of recognizing advertising disclaimers, like the other messages in advertising, is barely influenced by humor in advertising. Even though disclaimers are a special type of messages in advertising, it was similarly consumed to other advertising messages by people in terms of recognition. However, regarding how much people recall the advertising disclaimers, the results showed that humor clearly impacts people’s recall level. The results were actually opposite from those in several previous studies that used regular advertising messages (Spotts, Weinberger, & Parsons, 1997; Madden, 1982). Humor has been indicated by
several researchers to not significantly impact people’s recall of messages in advertising, such as headlines (Spotts, Weinberger, & Parsons, 1997). Therefore, in terms of recall, advertising disclaimers were consumed differently.

The results from the previous studies and the present study indicated that the role of humor in advertising regarding the people’s acceptance of advertising messages was limited; good for recall or impression, but vaguely effective for recognition. Therefore, along with the findings from several previous studies, those from the present research could provide a useful insight in developing advertising campaigns by applying humor. Humor might not be an appropriate tactic if the advertisers want consumers to spot their new brand names or slogans. Even though humor might get basic attention from the consumers, it will not be powerful enough for consumers to look at the advertisers’ new brands/key copies and recognize those. On the other hand, if advertisers plan to conduct a follow-up advertising campaign for an established brand that has been on the market for a while, and if the major purpose of the advertising campaign is building up the good image or impression of the brand, humor will be a good, effective tool that advertisers might consider.

Also, maybe more importantly, the results from this study offered a critical motivation for public policy sectors to think about the practical effectiveness of advertising disclaimers. Since more than 40% of the advertisements seen in the United States are using humor in any sense (Spotts, Weinberger, & Parsons, 1997), based upon the results from the present research, it could be said that the disclaimers in most advertising are rarely recognized by people.

If we just considered that disclaimers are a special form of advertising messages that advertisers do not make a special effort to make visible, the rate of disclaimers being delivered to real audiences could register very low recognition. Without recognition, which is one of the basic steps in communication, regulating to insert disclaimers in advertising might be meaningless because disclaimers contain very important messages that are to be understood fully by people. Therefore, it is time for the policy makers to consider some new ways for better communicating advertising disclaimers if they think it a critical message to be placed in advertisements.

When we look at to the result of well-being aspects, to elicit recall of consumers’ well-being, we think that it need to use humor in TV commercials of well-being.

2. Serious Impact of the “Expectation Effect” on People’s Acceptance of Advertising Disclaimers

As indicated in the results section, the participants who were disclosed information about the purpose of the research registered different results than the groups left out of the loop. As several advertising researchers pointed out, the present study also experienced the expectation effect take place in the experiment (Allen, 2004; Kimmel, 2006). Generally, the expectation effects were found in terms of how people’s perceptions are influenced by being provided information about the research they are in (Rosenthal, 1994; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2008).

The participants in experiments changed their perceptions about a particular topic because of the expectation effect (Strohmetz, 2008). Therefore, they may have answered questions totally different from what they actually believed (Allen &
Madden, 1985). However, the results of this study indicated that the expectation effect could take place even when people are asked to answer by YES or NO, instead of asking their perceptions by agreement levels.

This brings up an important issue in advertising research. How do we deal with this expectation effect that commonly takes place? Some advertising researchers considered this effect as an uncontrollable variable that could seriously threaten the validity of results (Gardner & Raj, 1983). On the other hand, some others suggested that the expectation effect itself could be an important variable as well (Kent & Machleit, 1992; Olsen, 1982). Therefore, since a consensus has not been reached, it would be a wise idea if the researchers developed the experiment design with a thought about the expectation effect as well to begin with. Like the present study did, we recommend making the uncontrolled variables into the controlled variables to compare the results among different situations. It would not be a good argument to say that one of the two perspectives (expectation effect is good or bad) is inferior or unstable structure compared to the other one.

In terms of the perspective of well-being, to elicit recognition and recall of consumers’ well-being, we think that prior to TV commercials of well-being, it need to conduct a variety of campaign to provide consumers with information about well-being.

3. Limitations and Recommendations

This study used the television commercial for Budweiser with the slight modification of inserting the disclaimer, “Pace Yourself. Please Drink Responsibly,” at the bottom of the screen with exactly same size as that of the original disclaimers. Even though the television commercial was selected by the pilot test with 20 participants to decide the appropriate commercial demonstrating humor, the use of other commercials with humor could have showed some different results since humor is one of the most subjective concepts used in advertising (Cline & Kellaris, 1999). Therefore, one of the potential future studies could use multiple television commercials with humor so that the comparison of the results is possible.

Also, this study showed the television commercial only once to the participants in the four different cells. However, several studies suggested that investigating the effects of repeated exposure to television commercials could be meaningful in advertising research partly because television advertising is consumed by audience repeatedly in their real lives (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2008). Therefore, in addition to checking if the participants experience the expectation effect or not, the number of exposures to the commercial could be a meaningful variable in a future study.

Lastly, it was tricky for the researcher to judge correctly if some of the participants recalled the disclaimers, since memorizing was tested by YES or NO questions. Also, since the participants were asked to rewrite the disclaimers as well as they could based upon their recall, the criteria for judging if a specific answer is right or wrong could be still controversial. As indicated in the methods section, this study considered a correct answer (recall the advertising disclaimers) when an answer provided 80% or more of the words in the disclaimers. The researcher had to quantify the answers from the participants, but that might not be a perfect way to investigate the actual level
of recall of the disclaimers. Therefore, a study using qualitative analysis would be recommended for a future study, in order to look over the real answers without judging by sheer percentages of matching words.

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