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The Investigation of Post-Experience Advertising Effect of Memory of Collegiate Sporting Event Experience

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Hu, Chengming and Cole, Shu, "The Investigation of Post-Experience Advertising Effect of Memory of Collegiate Sporting Event Experience" (2016). *Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally*. 15.
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Literature Review

The sporting event, a tourism product with an increasingly powerful ability to attract visitors to a destination, can generate destination perception through direct event experience and team identification and create certain meanings in the minds of sport event participants (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2010). However, most university athletic departments have abundant expenses to cover and only a few universities generate enough revenue to cover all athletics expenses (Fulks, 2013; Hardin, Ruihley, & Veraldo, 2013), requiring most universities to increase attendance in order to increase revenue. Since the memory of a previous travel experience has been confirmed to be an important way of generating intention to re-visit a travel destination (Kozak, 2001), a memory of sporting event experience should be a valuable way to enhance the intention of sporting event participation. Since, in general, experiences are composed of various factors within an interwoven network, the memory of a sporting event experience is a progressive memory of serial episodes and interactions from the event, which is, therefore, similar to autobiographical memory (Rubin, 2005). Autobiographical memory involves individuals remembering events from their life experiences, especially occasions when they put themselves in specific situations with certain memorable cues (Coghlan, 2012; Hyman Jr., Husband, & Billings, 1995; Rubin, 2005).

When sporting event participants try to recall previous sport event experience, they are in the process of information searching and processing. During this information retrieval process, their recollection of sport event experience episodes may be influenced by external information, such as advertising, due to the introduction of new clues of the event (Hoch & Deighton, 1989). In addition, since the product or service advertising has always been one of the primary sources from which consumers learn product information (Hoch & Deighton, 1989), the ways in which advertising can affect participants' event experiences should be considered critical to event marketers who want to understand consumer education through event experience. The majority of the research before 1990 dealing with how advertising influences consumers' product experiences focuses on the forward-framing effect, in which advertising presented to consumers prior to the actual product experience can provide clues to consumers that can influence their understanding and interpretation of the product's features, and can thus change the nature of their interaction with the product. For instance, Hoch and Ha (1986) found that participants who watched advertising before the actual product experience paid more attention to product attributes promoted in the advertising and thus spent more time on them while trying the product than participants who watched the advertisement after their actual product experience or without watching the advertisement.

In the 1990s, a new trend in scholarship suggested that backward-framing effect is also significant. The backward-framing effect occurs when advertising presented after the actual product experience plays an important role in influencing consumer product experience formation (Braun, 1999). The memory reconstruction framework indicates that when a past experience is recalled, memory is not merely a reproduction of past experience, but rather a complex process where correlated information from both what consumers knew before an actual experience and what they learned afterward become integrated to create an ultimate memory of product experience (Bartlett, 1932). This "reconstructive memory" has been further identified as a process which alters how consumers remember their previous experience because of their creation of false post-experience "information" (Loftus, 1982; Schacter, 1995); additionally, it has been shown that memory reconstruction is more likely to occur when there has been a time lag between the experience of the product and its ad presentation (Braun-LaTour, LaTour,

Pickrell, & Loftus, 2004; Braun, 1999). On the other hand, when consumers recall their previous experience under memory-based circumstances, the process of retrieving the memory of that experience can be influenced by expectations driven by the consumer's existing knowledge base (Loftus, 1982).

Research Purposes and Hypotheses

The current study attempts to examine the post-experience advertising effect on memory of sport event experience. The purpose of this study is to expand the boundaries of contemporary post-experience advertising effect studies by investigating the post-experience advertising effect on different types of product experience. Controlling for variance in age, educational background, and lifestyle makes it possible to reduce the variance within the sample, successfully detect the differences between experimental groups, and then construct the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Examining whether post-experience advertising effectively transforms college students' memories of collegiate sporting event experience:

H1a: Participants who are exposed to post-experience advertising will recall more ad-consistent words about the event than participants without post-experience advertising exposure.

H1b: Participants who are exposed to the post-experience advertising will recall more ad-consistent and fewer experience-consistent thoughts about the event than participants without post-experience advertising exposure.

H1c: Participants who are exposed to post-experience advertising will present higher possibility to falsely pick the collegiate sport that they had watched earlier.

H1d: Participants who are exposed to post-experience advertising will more likely to evaluate the event experience based on ad-consistent attributes than participants without post-experience ad exposure.

Proposed Methods

Experiment Design

The intended experiment follows a classic, post-test only, control group design (Babbie, 2013). Two experimental groups and a control group are created by randomly selecting and assigning subjects from a sampling of the population. Since the three groups are created by random selection and assignment of subjects, it will suffice to compare a post-test only. The experiment for acquiring empirical data for this study will be conducted and the experimental design setup is presented by following figure 1. The sequential remember, know, and guess (R/K/G) measures adapted by Tulving (1985) will be applied to capture how participants feel about the product of their memory retrieval. Under this design, participants will first watch a video describing collegiate football experience. After watching the collegiate football experience video, participants will be randomly assigned to one of three advertising conditions (no advertising, false advertising, and the same product advertising displaying different attributes). All participants then will be tested on the memories of their observation of the collegiate football experience video, their ability recognizing the collegiate sport they observed, their confidence ratings and a notional bet to measure the certainty of the recognition decision, and their overall evaluation of collegiate sport event experience.

The current experiment uses Braun's (1999) experiment design and follows her procedure with three exceptions. First, the current study uses single product-experience stimuli. Second, the collegiate football event experience is applied as investigated product experience, which not a particular experience-based product experience such as juice taste. Third, both truthful advertising and false advertising are included as post-experience exposure.

Sampling Design

A convenience sample of approximately 200 college students from a large Midwestern university will serve as the study's participants. The sample size was calculated based upon previous research analyzing post-experience advertising effect on memory of product experience (Braun, 1999) and the rule of statistical power (Bausell & Li, 2002). Students will primarily be recruited from undergraduate courses in the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies, with course extra credit provided as an incentive for participation. Additionally, students who are not enrolled in such courses but would like to participate in the study will be able to respond to recruiting flyers posted on School of Public Health bulletin boards in order to register.

Data Analysis

Experience manipulation check

The qualitative aspect of recall will be observed and coded by two independent judges familiar with qualitative methodology, with experience in script coding, and unaware of the different designs of the two collegiate football experience videos. Specifically, they will code the number of words and thoughts in the recall statements that are mentioned in the advertisement to further investigate whether the advertisements have become part of participants' own memories

Quantitative analysis

A one-way MANOVA will be applied to test different patterns of recalled statements of collegiate football experience, recognition accuracy, certainty of memory judgement, R/K/G identification, betting on memory judgement, and overall evaluation of the collegiate football program between different advertising conditions. A significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ was adopted for all statistical analyses reported.

Expected outcomes

Sporting events are not only a major source of entertainment for Americans, but are also important for the development of both universities and communities. Attractive collegiate sporting events can always bring in visitors and fans, generating large revenue streams for local tourism-related businesses and creating unique destination perception (Chalip & McGuirly, 2004; Hinch & Higham, 2004). However, many university athletic departments are currently suffering from financial difficulties due to various expenses and limited control of revenue resources (Fulks, 2013); increasing event attendance has become an important way for athletic departments to increase revenue in order to maintain the operations of various collegiate sport programs. The current study will provide a guide for collegiate sporting event managers who are interested in studying how their marketing campaigns influence consumers' perceptions and memories of the collegiate sporting event experience. More specifically, the paradigm and measures of the current study can be used to see how consumers' memories of collegiate sporting event experiences are reshaped to be consistent with the content of advertising campaigns. Additionally, in terms of the managerial implications of this study's results, collegiate sporting event managers should be provided with a clearer direction regarding how much attention should be devoted to communication management given the way that the abundant amount of external information and word-of-mouth are able to modify participants' perceptions of collegiate sporting event experience.

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