

Humor and Brand Image-Shaping:
A Content Analysis of “America Runs on Dunkin” Campaign
Television Advertisements

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Yushan Jin,
Who have devoted her whole life to her child.

Abstract

This study examines the role of humor in television advertisements of Dunkin' Donuts "America Runs on Dunkin" campaign to find out how humor is used to shape the brand image. Eight Dunkin' Donuts coffee television advertisements were analyzed to find out the role of humor. The results showed that humor variables, such as ludicrous humor, satire, intent humor, audio and visual humor, are used in this campaign advertisements. The study also found out that the advertisements are intentionally message dominant advertisements; structurally, they have syntactic relatedness; and they are thematically related. With the findings, the study concludes that humor in the Dunkin' Donuts coffee television advertisements does not shape Dunkin' Donuts coffee image directly, but it does indirectly play positive roles in image shaping. Humor is used as a subordinate variable to shape the image of Dunkin' Donuts coffee. Suggestions for future research were also discussed.

Key Terms: humor, television advertisements, brand image-shaping, Dunkin' Donuts, America Runs on Dunkin

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Chapter One

Introduction

This study is a content analysis of the Dunkin' Donuts “America Runs on Dunkin’” campaign. This study will focus on the role of humor in television advertisements of this particular Dunkin' Donuts campaign to find out how humor is used to shape the image of Dunkin' Donuts coffee.

Humor is one of the most frequently used techniques in modern advertising. It is estimated in Markiewicz's research in 1974 that the humor usage in television and radio advertising is as high as 42% (407). Speck in 1991 and Weinberger and Spotts in 1989 estimated that between 11% and 24% of television advertisements in the United States use humor (para. in Alden, Mukherjee and Hoyer 1). According to Alden, Hoyer and Lee in 1993, similar or higher usage has been reported in international studies of humor (para. in Alden, Mukherjee and Hoyer 1). Beard said in 2005, that approximately one out of five television advertisements contain humorous appeals (54). Super Bowl advertising has become very popular in the U.S., and the top ten advertisements based on meter results all used humor in 2003, 2004, and 2005 (Gulas and Weinberger 17). Also, according to Weinberger in 1995, more than \$150 billion is spent on advertising in national media in a year, with between 10% and 30% of that amount going for the placement of ads that are intended to be humorous (para. in Spotts, Weinberger, and Parsons 17). According to TNS Media Intelligence report in 2008, advertisers in the United States spend about \$45 billion a year on humorous advertisements on the basis of the total advertising expenditures in 2007 (Strick Baaren, Holland, and Knippenberg 35). The use of humor in television advertisements is supported by more and more executives. Gulas and Weinberger say, The executives overwhelmingly felt that television (84 percent) and radio (88 percent)

were best suited to the use of humor, while they gave other advertising media much less support (outdoor 40 percent; magazine, 39 percent; newspaper, 29 percent; and direct mail, 22 percent) (61).

Though the use of humor is high, the persuasiveness of humor in television advertising remains uncertain. There are some studies that say humor is effective in television advertising, and some say humor is not. A survey of executives at leading advertising agencies in the U.S. by Madden and Weinberger in 1984 said that 90% of the respondents believed that humor leads to enhanced advertising effectiveness (para. in Chattopadhyay and Basu 466). Proponents of humor argue that humor is a universal language that humanizes advertising (Sternthal and Craig 12). According to the research by Duncan in 1979, and by Duncan, Nelson, and Frontczak in 1984, advocates of humor in advertising maintain that lighthearted message appeals secure audience attention, increase memorability, overcome sales resistance, and enhance message persuasiveness (para. in Scott, Klein, and Bryant 498). Herold says that these roles of humor in advertising are played by “attracting attention in a relevant way, then by imparting pleasant information and making a soft sell, all in a mixed atmosphere of relaxation and integrity” (1).

Some feel that humor wears out quickly on repetition and consequently is not persuasive in the long run (Sternthal and Craig 12). Weinberger and Gulas reveal that though the pace of humor research has increased, relatively few of the studies have had a systematic conceptual framework (35). Weinberger and Gulas, in their study in 1992 that reviewed the effect of humor in advertising, stated that “the current conclusion from the overall literature concurs with the view that humor does not offer significant advantage over non-humor when persuasion is the goal” (56-57). Alden, Mukherjee, and Hoyer say that there are even clear risks associated with using humor as a central message strategy (1).

Also, some researchers say that the efficacy in television advertising depends on the use of humor. Hepner asserts that humor can be effective if used as a means and not as an end in itself (para. in Sternthal and Craig 12-13). Sternthal and Craig also say that in television advertising, some feel that the proper development of humor requires much of the available commercial time that might better be used in developing product or service attributes (12). Scott, Klein, and Bryant say that positive effects of the use of humor in advertising might be expected if two factors are present. First, the humor should be directly related to and well integrated with the objectives and message of the advertisements. This assertion is supported by Klein, Bryant, and Zillmann's research in 1982. Second, the advertised product, service, or event should be appropriate for the use of levity according to Runyon's research in 1979 (para. in Scott, Klein, and Bryant 498).

However, some deficiencies exist in the previous studies. Weinberger and Gulas evaluated the previous studies about humor in advertising, and they concluded that in the studies about the role of comprehension of humor in advertising, advertising researchers used fictional rather than actual products in manipulations, and that researchers should also employ several measures of comprehension (38). Sternthal and Craig also, after doing their research about humor in advertising, stated that many unconsidered factors such as the influence of source credibility and audience predispositions on the persuasive impact of humor require more investigation (18). Some studies stated that the limitation in their studies was the comprehensive consideration of other relevant factors (Alden and Hoyer 36; Scott, Klein, and Bryant 501).

In general, many studies have been done to examine the role of humor in television advertisements. However, no studies have been done about the use of humor in brand image shaping, and the need to generate hypotheses for further study is key to the implementation of

additional research in this area. This issue is more specific than the general role of humor in television advertisements, and needs addressing.

Rationale for Study

This content analysis is meaningful and needed for several reasons. First, as it has been mentioned previously, the usage of humor in television advertising is increasing day by day. Therefore, the question whether using humor in television advertising has a greater impact on brand image shaping than not using humor is becoming a controversial issue and one that needs further exploration in order to generate hypotheses for further study. Second, persuasiveness is one of the most important reasons why advertisers use humor in their television advertisements, and persuasiveness is a key element in brand shaping. Furthermore, brand image shaping is becoming more and more important in today's marketing world. Therefore, examining the role of humor in brand image shaping in television advertising is a meaningful and practical study. Third, up-to-date studies about the topic are needed since media develops so rapidly today. There are not many studies done today about the role of humor in television advertising. However, many of the previous studies that were done between 2007 to 2009 got uncertain results about the role of humor in television advertising. Therefore, this study is needed to examine the role of humor in brand image shaping, in contemporary society and business.

Statement of the Problem

Advertisements play an essential role in people's lives. People get much information through advertisements, especially television advertisements. Therefore, many advertisers create a lot of techniques in television advertising to deliver the message that they want to deliver. Humor is one of the most popular and frequently used techniques in television advertising. More and more television advertisements are using humor, and many marketing researchers say that

humor arrests people's attention, increases advertisement memorability, overcomes sales resistance, and enhances message persuasiveness (Duncan 286). However, academically, communications theorists say that the role of humor in advertising is still controversial. Advertising is being developed rapidly using different techniques. Hence, it is necessary to conduct a study to examine the role of humor in television advertising, especially on a particular issue such as brand image shaping, and provide useful information to the advertisers to help them decide whether they should invest in the use of humor in television advertising or should change direction to another technique. In addition, consumer and mass communication researchers would find the addition of such a study to the body of media knowledge worthwhile for generating idea and assumptions for future studies and research. Dunkin' Donuts "America Runs On Dunkin'" campaign is an appropriate case, using humor in television advertising to add value to the company's brand image, to find out the role of humor in television advertisements.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this content analysis is to examine the attempt at persuasive effects of humorous advertisements in a single company's humorous television advertising campaign. According to Kelly and Joloman, humor in advertisements was defined as (1) a pun, (2) an understatement, (3) a joke, (4) something ludicrous, (5) a satire, (6) irony, and (7) intent (32).

The detailed explanation will be stated in the literature review chapter.

Research Questions

The central research question that this study attempts to answer is "what roles does humor play in shaping the image of Dunkin' Donuts coffee during one particular advertising campaign?" This study will also have the following research sub-questions:

1. What are the humor variables that are used by Dunkin' Donuts in their "America Runs on

Dunkin' campaign television advertisements?

2. Does humor shape Dunkin' Donuts coffee image in the advertisements?

The research questions are designed to answer the central research question, which is discussed in the methodology chapter. In association with the review of literature, this study will attempt to answer the research questions by analyzing the types of advertisements used in a particular advertising campaign.

Outline of the Study

This study will be divided into six chapters.

- The first chapter will provide a brief introduction about the humor in television advertising, the rationale for the study, rationale for the method, statement of the problem, and the research questions.
- Chapter two will present a comprehensive literature review about humor in television advertising including previous studies.
- Chapter three will describe the research methods including the method selection, data selection, the ways to collect and analyze the data, reliability and validity in the study, and the description of the role of the researcher.
- The fourth chapter will state the results of the study and highlight the significant results.
- Chapter five will be the conclusion. This chapter includes the results of the study, the answers to research questions, limitations of the study, and future study suggestions.

The study will follow the outline guide. The following chapter will be literature review to provide background information and understanding about the topic.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Humor is one of the most commonly employed strategies in advertising recently. While the use of humor is high, the efficacy of humor - as a communications device- remains uncertain. Many controversial issues about the effects of the humor in advertising still exist.

In this chapter, the author will start the literature review by stating the history of humorous advertising, as well as the definitions of humor in advertising. Then the author will discuss the previous studies about the humor in television advertising. The previous studies about humor in television advertising are mainly about the following five categories: humor and attention, humor and retention, humor and liking, humor and message comprehension, and humor and persuasion.

History of Humor in Advertising

According to Beard, there were five historical periods in the development of the use of humor in today's advertisements. The first period is between 1900 and 1917 when the advertisers thought humor might attract the audience but could not sell the product (14). Beard says before this period, advertisers mainly relied on either announcement advertising or the simple repetition of a product name and logo (9). This period is the beginning of what the advertisers considered “modern” advertising. People started to be aware that humor could be used in advertisements but not effectively. The second period is between 1917 and the 1940s, when many advertisers were beginning to recognize that the enjoyment of humor is a universal human trait (Beard 17). In this period, humor became popular in cartoon and comic-strip advertising (Beard 18). The third period is between the 1950s and 1960s, when a creative revolution began (Beard 22). In this period, more entertainment and amusement were added to advertisements. Also, during this

period, advertisers moved more and more of their advertising away from print and radio to television, and they began to think that advertising should be interesting and entertaining as well as sell the product (Beard 23). The next period is between 1970s and 1980s, when advertising went back to the 1950s hard-sell style, influenced by economic recession (Beard 25).

Developing from this period, advertisers in the 1990s argued that they should adapt the use of humor to changing societal factors, such as “the mood of the times and the economy in general” (Beard 28). The use of humor became more and more popular among advertisers after that, and humor has become one of the most popular strategies in television advertising.

Definition of Humor in Advertising

The definitions of humor in advertising are various. Kelly and Soloman, in their research in 1975, define humor in advertisements as (1) a pun, a humorous way of using a word that suggests two interpretations; (2) an understatement, since sometimes the humorous advertisement means something that is less than the real; (3) a joke, since the humor in advertisements is sometimes presented without any seriousness; (4) something ludicrous, which is just used for the purpose to laugh; (5) a satire, as sarcasm is used in some of the humorous advertisements to show vice or folly; (6) irony, since sometimes the words are used to express the opposite meanings; and, what the researchers say is the most important one, (7) intent, which is the perceived purpose of advertiser to be humorous (32). Humorous advertisements are perceived to have many complex elements, such as cultural, temporal, and individual differences (Kelly and Soloman 32).

Sternthall and Craig also stated a similar definition of humor in advertising. They say that humor in an advertising appeal is on the basis of the use of puns, jokes, understatements, turns of phrases, double entendres, satire, irony, slapstick, or incongruity (13). Sternthall and Craig also

defined the humor in advertising from another approach, which is to examine the responses induced by an identifiable stimulus: humor is defined by heightened arousal, smiles, and laughter exhibited by an audience in response to a particular message (13).

Spott, Weinberger and Parsons examined Speck's outline of the typology of humor that incorporates the relatedness of humor in advertisements on three levels – 1) intentional, 2) structural, and 3) thematic – which are rooted in literary theory and semiotics. Intentional relatedness is classified into two dominances: (1) humor dominant advertisements, which means the humor takes more important place than the message in the advertisements, so once the humorous elements are removed, the advertisements means nothing; and (2) message dominant advertisements, which means the humor process is lower than the whole message, and it can be removed from the advertisements without any loss of the message. Structural relatedness means the relationship between the humor and the message parts in the advertisements, so in humor-dominant advertisements, structural relatedness means integration of the subordinate message elements with the humor, and in message-dominant advertisements, structural relatedness means syntactic relatedness, which is the placement of the humor in the advertisements. Thematic relatedness is the relationship between the humor and the message content. Therefore, in thematically related advertisements, the humor is related to the product, such as the uses of the product, benefits, brand name, or typical users, while in thematically unrelated advertisements, humor has no relationship with product or any other product-related claims (Spotts, Weinberger, and Parsons 18-20).

Kelly and Soloman also classify humor according to different elements. They define humor according to visual and auditory factors: (1) if the humor could be understood without the sound, it is visual humor; (2) if the humor could be understood without visual, it is audio humor;

and (3) if the humor needs both audio and visual, it is audio and visual humor (32). Also, according to the direction of humor that is used in the advertisements, Kelly and Soloman classified humor in the advertisements into two types: (1) humor that is being directed toward the product if the product is used to create the humor or if the humor is associated with the product, and (2) humor that is not being directed toward the product if the humor can exist if even the product is not presented (33).

According to the literature on humor in television advertising, the definitions are various. Not only the definition, but the findings about the role of humor in television advertising are also numerous and controversial.

Humor and Attention

Herold says that humorous advertising is more likely to arrest people's attention, increase memorability, and enhance message persuasiveness by “attracting attention in a relevant way, then by imparting pleasant information and making a soft sell, all in a mixed atmosphere of relaxation and integrity” (1). Many of the advertisers agree that humor enhances audience attention, at least on the first few exposures to the persuasive communication (Sternthal and Craig 13). The findings about the impact of the humor on attention are very positive.

Studies have shown that 94% of advertising practitioners see humor as an effective way to gain attention, and 55 percent of advertising research executives consider humor to be superior to seriousness in arresting attention (Weinberger and Gulas 11).

Many studies have proved that humorous advertisements have a positive effect on attention. Compared with non-humorous advertisements, humorous advertising tends to have more positive results on arresting people's attention. In a laboratory test of attention effects of humor in advertising, Speck compared humorous advertisements with non-humorous with four

attention measures: initial attention, sustained attention, projected attention and overall attention, and he also found that humorous advertisements outperform non-humorous advertisements on each of the attention measures (par. in Weinberger and Gulas 36). Kelly and Joloman say that humorous advertisements contain animation significantly more often than the non-humorous counterparts, and this result was expected because animation and humor are somewhat related in the American culture (34). Also, Chattopadhyay and Basu say that convergent evidence indicates that humorous advertisements are more attention-grabbing than non-humorous advertisements according to the researches made by Lammers et al. in 1979, Madden and Weinberger in 1982, and Speck in 1987 (467). Recent studies also supported this assertion. Scharrer, Kim, Lin, and Liu's study about gender, humor, and the performance of domestic chores in television advertising in 2006, confirms the prevalence of humor as a device in television advertising, which presumably occurs due to the widespread belief in humor's effectiveness in capturing attention (235).

Some researchers insist that humor enhances people's attention by raising interests. Two studies by Markiewicz indicate that light-hearted communications are significantly more interesting than similar seriously-stated messages (413). Markiewicz indicates that humor does appear to increase interest, which implies a possible increase in attention; however, specific attempts to measure attention are lacking (413). Also, Leavitt, in a factor analytic study, reported an energy or attention dimension accounting for 55% of the total variance in viewers' ratings of television, and he suggested that humor was one component of this energy dimension (428). Though Leavitt's study was not directly related to advertising, it still supported the idea that humor can attract people by raising interests.

Cline and Kellaris say that the majority of studies conducted in industry as well as in

laboratory settings prove the evidence that humor grabs people's attention (55). The cautionary stance taken by Byrant and Zillmann is appropriate for all the humor-attention studies. The results seem to indicate a positive impact on attention, and Sternthal and Craig's finding, which is that humorous messages attract attention, also gave another evidence to support the positive view. Besides, humor in some other areas, such as in education, has also been proven to have a positive effect on attention. In a review of the education literature, Byrant and Zillmann concluded that humor has a positive effect on attention as well; however, they said, "unqualified direct evidence for the effects of using humor in non-mediated classroom instruction is still wanting" (59).

In fact, controlling for the relatedness factor makes the findings of the experimental studies in advertising unanimous in their support for a positive effect of humor on attention (Weinberger and Gulas 36). Since attention has been only indirectly measured, people may assume that humor, raising the level of interests, will also extend to affect whether the messages is noticed (Duncan 288). Therefore, more studies about the direct measures are needed. The results indicate that humor has a big possibility to have the effect of grabbing attention, but still, more research needs to be done.

Humor and Retention

Some advocates of humorous advertising have maintained that humorous advertisements are recalled long after less creative communications have disappeared from memory (Duncan 290). However, Markiewicz, concluding from eleven studies, found that one out of eleven studies supported the effect of retention (412). He also indicated according to his study that there appears to be no significant difference due to humor at the acceptance and retention stages (413).

However, Krishnan and Chakravarti used memory tests to examine the brand claims

memory, and they found that humor facilitates memory for brand claims depending on humor strength, and more effectively than non-humor, even if low in claims relevance and may facilitate encoding by attracting more processing resources to the advertisement (241). Memory for brand claims may benefit from the resources, but high-strength humor may draw resources away from brand claims, lowering recall (Krishnan and Chakravarti 241- 242). A recent study by Scharrer, Kim, Lin, and Liu in 2006, found that humor is effective in television advertising in influencing memory (235). Also, Chung and Zhao, in 2003, found strong positive relationships between a humorous advertisement and memory of advertised brand, and the results showed that humorous advertisements were more effective in low-involvement products in terms of memory (136).

Other studies have indicated that no significant difference exists between humorous advertisements and non-humorous advertisements on retention. Sternthal and Craig say that studies that compared the retention of persuasive humorous and serious material failed to find significant differences attributable to the level of humor present (14). Concluding from the experiments by Gruner, Kennedy, Kilpela, and Talor, which have revealed no significant differences in the length of retention between messages containing light-hearted and serious copy, Duncan says that communication effects of humorous messages should be regarded as useful, but tentative (290).

Not many studies have been done to examine the effects of humor on retention in advertising. However, some of the results were controversial, with some of the research ending up concluding that there is no significant relationship between humor and retention. More and further researches are needed.

Humor and Liking

Many studies, such as Biel and Bridgwater's study in 1990, and Haley and Baldinger's study in 1991, indicate that liking may be an important element in the effectiveness of television advertisements (Weinberger and Gulas 47). Recent studies, such as Tomkovick, Yelkur, and Christians' study in 2001, found that humor was the most important variable in influencing liking (para. in Gulas and Weinberger 17).

Rossiter and Percy say that humor in advertisements can assist in attracting attention and making advertisements more memorable and more likeable (par. in Scharrer, Bergstrom, Paradise, and Ren 620). Central to the practice of using humor in advertising is the belief that humor helps to create favorable responses toward an advertised product or service (Weinberger and Gulas 44). On the basis of this, humor has been widely acknowledged and employed as an executional element in advertisements, primarily to engender affective response, such as liking (Zhang 15).

Many studies have suggested that humor enhances the liking of the message and the brand of the television advertising. Sternthal and Craig say that humor enhances the liking of the message (17). Strong support has been found in their studies for this conclusion in both advertising and non-advertising research. Weinberger and Gulas evaluated that humor has been shown to enhance liking for advertisements and liking of the brand by analyzing the studies of Gelb and Pickett in 1983, Belch and Belch in 1984, Duncan and Nelson in 1985, Gelb and Zinkhan in 1986, and Speck in 1987. Lee and Mason also say that the influence of humor through an affective mechanism such as transfer of liking for the advertisement to the brand has been demonstrated by Aaker, Stayman, and Hagerty in 1986 (158). Assuming the use of humor tends to put people into a positive mood, research on mood provides additional evidence for the

positive effects of humor on advertisements and brand evaluation (Lee and Mason 158).

Scharrer, Kim, Lin, and Liu, in their recent study in 2006, also supported the assertion that humor develops favorable feelings toward a product or an advertisement (235).

Researchers indicate that the impact of humor on liking can even possibly drive people to persuasiveness. Scharrer, Bergstrom, Paradise, and Ren say that driving the use of humor in advertising is the desire to create positive effect, because individuals in a good mood are typically more receptive to a persuasive message (619). Biel and Bridgwater in 1990 concluded that individuals “who liked a commercial ' a lot' were twice as likely to be persuaded by it as people who felt neutral toward the advertising” (38). Although, in Biel and Bridgwater's work, liking was not confined to entertainment value and included such factors as personal relevance, Haley and Baldinger found that liking is directly tied to humor (114). Haley and Baldinger's study indicates that a positive response to the statement, “This advertising is funny or clever,” predicts the success of an advertisement 53% of the time, whereas agreement with the statement, “This advertising is boring,” predicts failure 73% of the time (114).

However, some recent studies say that humor does not affect the level of liking for brand names. Berg and Lippman, in the study about the role of humor in radio advertising in 2001, found that there were no differences in level of liking for brand names presented with humorous material versus brand names presented with nonhumorous material (203). However, the study was about the radio advertising, so visual effect are lacking when presenting humorous materials. Also, Flaherty, Weinberger and Gulas say that if an intended as humorous is not perceived as humorous, its effectiveness at influencing attitudes and purchases can be seriously harmed (34).

Some studies considered some indirect effects. For example, Zhang and Zinkhan, in their study in 2006, found that humor can elicit favorable explicit judgments of ads, products, and

brands, but it is affected by some indirect effects, such as attitude towards the advertisements, or who receives the message, moderated the impact of humor (120). Also, in Galloway's study in 2009, a liking advantage for lower but not for higher sensation seekers was observed for humorous advertisements compared to non-humorous advertisements (785).

However, most studies have positively shown that the impact of humor on liking the message or the brand in the television advertisements is very positive. As well as the feature that humor grabs people's attention, humor has another big possibility of liking.

Humor and Message Comprehension

Even though many people tend to like the messages in the television advertising if the advertisements use humor, messages should be comprehensible. However, the findings about the impact of humor in message comprehension are very controversial.

Early studies of the humor in the 1980s, such as the studies of Cantor and Venus in 1980, Gelb and Zinkhan in 1986, and Sutherland and Middleton in 1983, suggest that there is a negative relationship between humor and comprehension (Weinberger and Gulas 37-38). However, more recent studies show positive relationship between humor and comprehension. In a study of 1000 broadcast commercials, Stewart and Furse (1986) found humorous content to increase the comprehension of an advertisement, and other studies by Duncan, Selson, and Frontczak in 1984; Weinberger and Campbell in 1991; and Zhang and Zinkhan in 1991 have also found similar positive results (Weinberger and Gulas 36). Sternthal and Craig concluded that the studies and the data appear to indicate that humor does not affect message comprehension differently from serious communications (14). They say that a number of investigations that measured the comprehension of humorous communications reported that they were understood by the audience, but when subjects are not informed as to the nature of the communication, such

as satire, message comprehension comes out poorly (14).

It seems that the impact of humor on comprehension tends to be negative. However, Weinberger and Gulas's data call into question the existence of a global negative effect hypothesized by Sternthal and Craig in 1973 (17). Weinberger and Gulas say that the negative view of the impact of humor on comprehension is shared by 64% of research executives at U.S. advertising agencies, and summing up the experiments that tried to measure the effects of humor on comprehension in advertising, six indicate humor may enhance comprehension, five produce neutral or mixed findings, and six indicate that humor may harm comprehension (38).

Weinberger and Gulas stated many equivocal findings of the advertising research. They turned to non-advertising research to clarify the controversial issue. They say the effect of humor on comprehension is typically measured through a written test in education research, and they believe that these studies could provide insight into the impact that humor may have on advertising comprehension (38). Weinberger and Gulas say that an analysis of the relevant non-advertising studies shows eight studies that report a positive effect of humor on comprehension and eleven studies that indicate a null or mixed effect, and none of the non-advertising studies reported a negative effect of humor on comprehension (38). A recent study by Mak and Carpenter, in 2007, indicates that people's age is negatively related to humor comprehension whereas education is positively related to humor comprehension (Mak and Carpenter 611).

Overall, the inconclusive nature of the results suggests that the effect of humor on comprehension is an area where additional research can be especially helpful.

Humor and Persuasiveness

Humor has been increasingly employed by mass marketing communicators as the motivational basis for their persuasive appeals during the past decade (Sternthal and Craig 12). It

seems that humor is considered as an effective persuasive vehicle, but the evidence supporting the effectiveness of humor is equivocal.

Sternthal and Craig, in their research in 1973, concluded that the distraction effect of humor may lead to persuasion. They say humor may distract the audience, yielding a reduction in counter-argumentation and an increase in persuasion (17). Also, an examination of commercials published by McCollum/Spielman, in 1982, found that 31% of humorous commercials showed above average scores on persuasiveness (5). Scott, Klein, and Bryant's research was a strong case for a persuasive effect of humor. They used behavioral observation to measure persuasion, which was quite different from other analytic approaches. They found that attendance at social events was greater among subjects who received a humorous advertisement than among those who received one of two other types of promotions (17).

However, there are also many studies that indicate that there is no relationship between persuasiveness and humor in advertising. For example, Markiewicz, in 1974, did research using a learning theory and found out that a humor-persuasion effect is not likely to be robust (420). Also, Madden and Weinberger, in 1982, found that only 26% of the research practitioners agreed that humor is more persuasive than non-humor (11). Stewart and Furse, in their 1986 research, found that humor has no persuasiveness unless the product and its benefits are the primary focus of the commercial (par. in Weinberger and Gulas 39). Also, Gulas and Weinberger, in 2006, evaluated Topline and Stewart and Furse studies, and they say that both studies suggest that humor in TV ads have a good chance at aiding recall and comprehension but not persuasion (69).

Some research concluded that the impact of humor in persuasiveness tends to have no significance. Duncan has evaluated previous studies about the persuasiveness of humor in advertising and says that the evidence does not indicate that humorous advertisements are as

effective in persuading in non-humorous advertisements (289). According to Markiewicz's research, concluding from thirteen experiments (Gruner in 1971 and 1972; Kennedy in 1972; Kilpela in 1961; Lull in 1940; Markiewicz in 1972 and 1973; McGown in 1967; Pokorny in 1965; Pokorny and Gruner in 1969; and Youngman in 1966) that compared the relative persuasive impact of humorous versus serious messages, he found that ten studies failed to find evidence for any difference in persuasion due to message humor; two found tentative support for the greater effectiveness of humorous messages; and one found a serious message to be more persuasive (410-411).

More studies, before 1990s, have stated that the persuasiveness of humor in television advertising has no significant effect. Chattopadhyay and Basu, in 1990, say that their result suggests that humorous advertisements are best suited for reinforcing pre-existing favorable attitudes of audience (Chattopadhyay and Basu 475).

However, the negative view towards the relationship between humor and persuasion is challenged by some of the recent studies. For example, Gibson, in his recent study in 2008, showed that evaluative conditioning changed attitudes and brand choice of Coke and Pepsi (para. Strick, Baaren, Holland, and Knippenberg 36). Strick, Baaren, Holland, and Knippenberg, in 2009, assumed that evaluative conditioning of a product with humor would lead to enhanced association of the product with positive affect, but not actually to reduced association with negative affect (36). They, then, found a positive change in implicit attitudes after repeated exposure to product-humor pairings, and they found that the implicit attitude towards the product mediates product choice (Strick, Baaren, Holland, and Knippenberg 42).

The literature, from 1960s to 1990s, in marketing and communication has addressed this issue directly, and the evidence for a persuasive effect of humor was mixed at best. However,

recent studies reflect positive effects. Speck found that three out of five uses of humor increased two measures of persuasion: intent to use the product and change in perceived product quality (par. in Weinberger and Gulas 39). Similarly, Brooker found a humorous appeal to be more persuasive than a fear appeal (36).

Some research about advertising also indicates that other factors may intervene to affect the persuasiveness of humor in advertising. Zhang and Zinkhan say, “if humor is used in a persuasive communication, its function may also vary depending on how humor is processed by the message recipient” (114). Also, Chattopadhyay and Basu found that subjects with a prior positive brand attitude were more persuaded by humorous treatments while subjects with pre-existing negative brand attitudes were not (475). They say when prior brand evaluation is positive, humorous advertisements are more persuasive than non-humorous advertisements; however, when prior brand evaluation is negative, humorous advertisements tend to be less effective than non-humorous advertisements (Chattopadhyay and Basu 475).

In general, the pursuit of the elusive increase in persuasion due to humor generally has been controversial. Just as Sternthal and Craig concluded, humor may be persuasive but probably no more so than non-humor (17). However, looking at Weinberger and Gulas's evaluation about the previous studies about the impact of humor on persuasion in television advertising, almost all of the studies that are done previously approached to examine the role of persuasiveness from the audiences' perspectives (43). Most of the studies were done to examine audiences, samples such as a certain number of adults, undergraduates, or target audiences (Weinberger and Gulas 43). Therefore, studies from other perspectives than audiences', such as from the advertisements' perspectives, provide a new hope. Also, among the studies about the impact of humor on persuasion that were done on television advertising, as Weinberger and Gulas evaluated, there

were three positive results and four neutral or mixed results, which means there still are hopes to use humor as a persuasive purpose in television advertising. Also, interestingly, most of the studies on humor's effect on persuasion were done from the 1970s to the 1990s, so a more recent study is needed.

Therefore, later in the methodology part, the researcher will attempt to examine the persuasiveness in humorous television advertising from the advertisements' perspectives and evaluate the results relating with the brand image shaping.

According to Cline and Kellaris in 2007, the incremental contribution of their own research is twofold. First, whereas prior research has shown a positive relationship between humor and attention, and between related humor and recall, previous studies have not explicitly investigated the joint interplay of humor strength and humor-message relatedness; and they specifically address this important interaction and find that with respect to claims recall, neither humor strength nor humor-message relatedness is its own virtue; so relatively stronger humor must be related to the brand or message to engender higher claims recall. Second, previous research has not investigated the generative mechanisms that follow from the interplay of humor strength and humor-message relatedness, and they found that attention and mood operate in partnership, jointly mediating the interactive effects of humor strength and humor-message relatedness on claims recall (Cline and Kellaris 64).

After reviewing the previous studies about the humor in advertising, again, the conclusions are equivocal and controversial. Also, there are not much research has been done recently to examine the effectiveness of humor in advertising. However, the study of humor in advertising has continued to gain credibility and attract scholarly attention. Between 1993 and 2005 alone, over fifty studies had been devoted to studying humor in advertising (Beard 4).

Since society today is economized, brand image shaping in advertising is the most essential purpose for advertisers. Therefore, the researcher wants to do a further research on brand image shaping on the humorous advertisements. The detailed introduction about the methods will be stated in the following chapter.

Chapter Three

Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher will introduce the detailed method that will be used to carry out the study and answer the research questions. The researcher will introduce the method selection, including the reasons why the researcher chose the method. Then the selection of commercials, the data collection and analysis, reliability and validity checks used in the study will be discussed, as well as the role of the researcher.

As it is stated in the literature review, the role of humor in television advertising is still somewhat controversial and the findings in a variety of fields as to the efficacy of mass-mediated commercial communications are wide-ranging and often contradictory. To help clarify the role of humor in particularly brand image shaping, the following study will be done using the methodological techniques of qualitative content analysis on a single case, a series of mass mediated commercial outputs.

Method Selection

Strauss and Corbin say that the reasons why researchers use qualitative research are personal preferences, and the nature of the research problem (11). Some researchers insist on using qualitative research because it seems more comprehensive than quantitative research. Strauss and Corbin say that qualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena (11). Humor in TV advertising, as stated in the literature review, is a controversial issue that needs more comprehensive and detailed study and analysis. Therefore, qualitative research will be done to explore the controversial topic more comprehensively and in detail.

This study will use a content analysis. Content analysis is potentially one of the most important research techniques in the social sciences. To examine the role of humor in television

advertisements, content analysis is a proper method for the research to view the advertisements as representations not of physical events, but of texts, images, sounds, and the way that the events are created to be seen, interpreted, acted, and delivered. Krippendorff says,

[C]ontent analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts or other meaningful matter to the contexts of their use. ... As a research technique, content analysis provides new insights, increases a researcher's understanding of particular phenomena, or informs practical actions. Content analysis is a scientific tool. (18)

Krippendorff says that the word “text” in the definition does not attempted to limit content analysis only to written material, and the phrase “or other meaningful matter” in the definition is included in parentheses to indicate that “in content analysis works of art, images, maps, sounds, signs, symbols, and even numerical records may be included as data” (19). In this study, content analysis will be used as an effective method to seek the comprehensive findings about humor in TV advertisements. Indeed, many of the studies cited in the literature review used content analysis—both quantitative and qualitative—in the examination of video and audio advertising techniques and effects.

Data Selection

This study will analyze Dunkin' Donuts “America Runs on Dunkin” campaign from 2007 to 2009. It will examine the persuasive function of humor in television advertising. Dunkin' Donuts invested millions of dollars in the campaign, which included eight 30-second and eight 15-second television spots, nine radio spots, a multi-tiered print effort, in-store advertising, outdoor program and an online component to focus on indicating “how the chain keeps busy Americans fueled and on the go” (“Dunkin' Donuts Launches New Ad Campaign”, par. 3). Most

of the television commercials that were run during the campaign used humor. In a Dunkin' Donuts-sponsored website, people could also find that Dunkin' Donuts coffee won over Starbucks coffee in an online survey about customers' taste preferences. It is possible that the "America Runs on Dunkin'" advertisement campaign affected the results; certainly, the survey and the campaign were run concurrently and a part of an integrated marketing effort. Then, another question is raised whether the television advertisements using humor helped to shape the image of Dunkin' Donuts coffee. This content analysis of Dunkin' Donuts humorous advertisements may have significant meaning and value in finding, investigating, and generating assumptions (hypotheses) as to the role of humor in television advertisements. This campaign is a most appropriate case base research upon because it is a recent happening and was run in all markets that the company had stand-alone stores at the time, in addition to being able to examine the campaign vis-à-vis the online survey run concurrently by the company. The integration of the campaign and the online survey may provide the opportunity for insight into the use of humor as the company internally used the survey as, in part, a gauge of the effectiveness of its newly themed humorous marketing approach. The use of the survey provides the company with specific results in real time that is independent of many laboratory-based consumer research models, all the while against the continuing backdrop of its use humor in television advertising as its main method.

Data Analysis

In order to be comprehensive, the researcher will first study the whole campaign and create a brief conceptual description of the whole case. The researcher will search for news and other resources to find the advertisements, to understand the context of the individual advertising in view of the entire advertising and marketing campaign, and the accomplishment that the

company claimed as a result of its mass-mediated marketing efforts from 2007 to 2009. The study will mainly analyze one-item Dunkin' Donuts coffee humorous advertisements, the vehicle upon which the company based its marketing strategy. The researcher will select only the humorous advertisements about coffee and do this qualitative content analysis about the humor variables. The endpoint was selected as the day when Dunkin' Donuts changed “America Runs on Dunkin” into “You Kin' do it” in 2009, a distinct and different marketing and, consequently, advertising strategy. The study will be divided into three parts – content analysis of the humorous advertisements, analysis of the role of humor in the advertisements, and discussion.

Content Analysis of Advertising. A content analysis of the coffee advertisements of Dunkin' Donuts in the “America Runs on Dunkin” campaign will be done in this part. To better understand the content of the advertisements, and the role of the humor in the advertisements, the researcher will first do a content analysis of the advertisements in general. The researcher will analyze the advertisements, all the while focusing on analyzing the whole structure of each individual advertisement. The researcher will offer a basic description of the advertisements first of all. Then, the research will go deeper into the general ambience, components, and the themes that the advertisements attempt to create. With the analysis of these elements, the researcher can have better understandings about the placement of the humor and the role of the humor in these particular advertisements.

This research will use a qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis differs from quantitative analysis in a number of ways. Qualitative content analysis has been defined as:

- [A] research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns. (Hsieh and Shannon 1278)

- [A]n approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step by step models, without rash quantification. (Mayring 2)
- [A]ny qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings. (Patton 453)

In other words, a qualitative content analysis is used to understand the nuances and depth of interpretations of a specific body of content. It “is widely used in mass communication” research (Zhang and Wildemuth 1). Zhang and Wildemuth say that qualitative content analysis goes beyond only counting words or extracting objective content from the subjects to “examine meanings, themes and patterns that may manifest or latent” in a particular subject (1). They also say that qualitative content analysis usually “produces descriptions or typologies, along with expressions from subjects reflecting how they view the social world”, so the perspectives of the producers of the subjects can be better understood by investigators and the readers of the study’s results (2). Qualitative content analysis focuses more on unique themes that illustrate the range of the meanings of the phenomenon than the statistical significance of the occurrence of the subjects (Zhang and Wildemuth 2). The goal is “to identify important themes or categories within a body of content, and to provide a rich description of the social reality created by those themes/categories as they are lived out in a particular setting” (Zhang and Wildemuth 11).

Analysis of the Role of Humor in the Advertisements. A content analysis of the role of humor in Dunkin’ Donuts’s coffee advertisements will be done in this part. The researcher will analyze the humor elements that are presented in the advertisements. Then the researcher will define the humorous variables and use those definitions to systematically and qualitatively analyze each element of the campaign. This will allow us to better understand the role of humor

in these particular advertisements, and derive suppositions regarding the role of humor in shaping the coffee image of the company. These suppositions and analyses will be discussed, and congruent propositions derived.

Discussion. The discussion part is very important, since it presents an evaluation of the findings. The researcher will evaluate the findings in the content analysis of the advertisements. Also, the researcher will find whether humor had an impact on brand image shaping, and finally, what kinds of roles humor plays in brand image shaping. This part will give direct answers to the research questions through the analysis. The researcher will add two parts: the limitations that the study has and suggestions for future studies.

Reliability and Validity in the Study

Validity and reliability play an important role in qualitative studies, since they are done from the individual research. Kirk and Miller say,

Reliability and validity are by no means symmetrical. It is easy to obtain perfect reliability with no validity at all (if, say, the thermometer is broken, or it is plunged into the wrong flask). Perfect validity, on the other hand, would assure perfect reliability, for every observation would yield the complete and exact truth. (20)

Therefore, the researcher will take validity as a very important element when doing the research. To discuss the validity of the research, criteria are necessary. According to Whittemore, Chase and Mandle, validity is decided with a contemporaneous synthesis of validity criteria in qualitative research and techniques: 1) primary criteria including credibility, authenticity, integrity, and criticality, 2) secondary criteria including creativity, thoroughness, vividness, congruence, and explicitness, and 3) techniques in design consideration, data generating, analysis, and presentation (530). The researcher will try to carry out the research on the standard

of the stated criteria and techniques.

Besides, the validity of this study will be achieved using triangulation, rich and thick descriptions about the content analysis part, stating negative information in literature review, doing peer debriefing, and finding an external auditor to review the research outcome (Creswell and Miller 126). Lincoln and Guba also recommended a set of activities that would help improve the validity of qualitative research results: prolonged engagement in the field, triangulation, rich data descriptions, negative case analysis, peer debriefing, and member checking (par. in Zhang and Wildemuth 6). Creswell and Miller say that triangulation is “a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” and “a systematic process of sorting through the data to find common themes or categories by eliminating overlapping areas” (126-127). The researcher achieves this goal by using social learning theory with content analysis. Creswell and Miller say that a peer reviewer “provides support, plays devil's advocate, challenges the researchers' assumptions, pushes the researchers to the next step methodologically, and ask hard questions about methods and interpretations” (129). The peer debriefing will be done with the researcher's thesis chair during the whole research process. The external auditors will be the readers of the thesis committee of the researcher. The researcher will try to use all the criteria to assure the reliability and validity of the study.

Limitations

Limitations still exist in this study. During the campaign, other selling strategies besides humor might have affected the selling as well. It should also be noted that, because of its qualitative nature, no causal relationships can be established—only described and discussed. All such descriptions and discussions, therefore, are properly held for modification by succeeding

research and researchers. In addition, more elements of the campaign could have been considered as there were, coming out of the corporate marketing department, other elements. However, since the study focuses only on the humorous television advertisements, other elements, such as in-store advertising or online components, have not been considered.

The Role of the Researcher

In doing the research, I, as the researcher of this research, will be very scrupulous and accurate. When doing the analysis part, instead of inferring from my own feelings and ideas, I will do a reasonable and accurate analysis according to the reality and the data. Especially when working on the discussion part, I will pay special attention to the accuracy. Some of my ideas might be involved during the research, but I will try to make the standard of my thinking equal to the general public's thinking and reacting rather than my personal opinion. I will stand outside of this research. Attempting to be objective when doing qualitative research is very important because researchers rely on these techniques to generate the assumptions and discussion foundations for future and ever more specific hypotheses, research questions, and study. Instead of doing the research according to personal opinion, feeling, or judgment, I will do the research with the purpose of finding the real answer to my research questions impersonally and objectively. From this, I will derive personal opinions and observations, allowing the study and the content analysis findings dictate the path. That is the best way and effort that the researcher can do to ensure the correctness of the research when doing qualitative research.

It is my hope that as I do the research, I can constantly think about how my research is relevant to the advertising marketing nowadays and how I can develop the research and utilize it in my future career. Therefore, this research has a marvelous meaning in my life since I am making the first step to make an accomplishment in the field that I have chosen. I want to enjoy

my research when I am doing it because humor in advertising is what I am really interested in.

Summary

In general, this chapter talked about how to carry out the research and stated the detailed procedures and necessary elements. The researcher stated the reasons to use content analysis as the method, how to carry out the studies, how to insure the validity of the research, and the role of the researcher during the research. The researcher provided a detailed and specific scheme of the method of the research. On the basis of the valid proposal, the research will be meaningful and reliable.

Chapter Four

Result

In this chapter, the content of the Dunkin' Donuts advertisements is discussed and analyzed. First of all, the basic description of the advertisements will be stated. Then, the general ambience of the advertisements will be analyzed. Next, the basic components of the advertisements will be analyzed. The study, then, will analyze the themes that the advertisements intend to create. Finally, the role of humor in brand image shaping will be analyzed and discussed.

Description of the Advertisements

This content analysis is based on Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements during their "America Runs on Dunkin'" campaign. Eight Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements were shown during the campaign, and they were mainly shown in three different periods. Three coffee advertisements were shown in the first round starting in April 2006. In the second round, three other coffee advertisements were shown starting in October 2006. In the final round, two more Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements were shown starting in April 2008. All the eight advertisements use some humor effects, and all of them are 30 seconds long.

The three advertisements in the first round are all about iced coffee. They are "A Ton of Stuff", "Pleather", and "Tree". "A Ton of Stuff" is talking about a family packing a ton of stuff for a three-day weekend visit at the uncle's beach house. They are packing a ton of stuff in a car thinking there is plenty of room. Then, a voice-over says enjoy the Dunkin' Donuts iced coffee and pack a ton of stuff for the beach house. "Pleather" talks about some young people who are just getting into the car from the beach on a hot summer day. They feel very uncomfortable because they are sweating a lot and they stick to the "pleather" in the car. Then, the

advertisement shows some other young people grabbing Dunkin' Donuts Iced coffee, getting in the car, and driving away. With that, the narrator tells the viewers to grab Dunkin' Donuts Iced coffee and unstuck themselves from the pleather. "Tree" talks about a mom who gets her eight-year old son out of a tree after drinking Dunkin' Donuts Iced Latte Lite. The advertisement says, "Stay light on the feet with the taste of the Dunkin' Donuts Iced Latte Lite and get your kids out of the tree."

In the second round, "Auto Pilot", "Fritalian", and "Lefty Loosey" were shown, and this time, the advertisements were not specifically about iced coffee. "Auto Pilot" talks about autopilot and it shows a man is in a car, but he does not need to drive because the car is driving itself. Then, he goes to the Dunkin' Donuts, and after drinking the coffee, he starts to drive himself. With that, the advertisement tells the viewers to go on autopilot to the Dunkin' Donuts, and pick the coffee up each and every day. "Fritalian" talks about a bunch of people looking at the coffee menu, which is full of complicated coffee names, and they do not know what to order. Then, a man, with Dunkin' Donuts Latte, goes across the coffee shop window, and the advertisement says people should order coffee in English, not in Fritalian. "Lefty Loosey" talks about different people fixing loose things, drinking Dunkin' Donuts coffee. In the end, the advertisement says that people can get stuff done with freshly ground, freshly brewed Dunkin' Donuts coffee.

In the third round, there are two advertisements about iced coffee. They are "All Nights Blowout" and "Moving". "All Night Blowout" talks about a mom and her two daughters, drinking Dunkin' Donuts iced coffee, who start to clean up their messy house after last night's blowout. The advertisement tells the viewers to get up and take Dunkin' Donuts Iced coffee and clean up after an all-night blowout. "Moving" talks about a man helping his friend to move. He

drinks Dunkin' Donuts Iced coffee and starts to move many heavy things. Then, the advertisement says that to get going, people can drink Dunkin' Donuts iced coffee and reluctantly help friends to move.

Ambience of the Advertisements

One of the most important things about the advertisements is the ambience, in another word, atmosphere or mood that the advertisements intend to create. The Dunkin' Donuts "America Runs on Dunkin'" campaign advertisements create some happy, funny, and memorable moods.

First of all, all of the Dunkin' Donuts advertisements create happy atmospheres. All the advertisements have music that match with the situations. Moreover, all of the songs use fast tempo and exciting melody, so the whole mood of each advertisement is happy and exciting with all the songs in the advertisements. Also, all the advertisements were shot during the daytime inside the houses (some situations in "Lefty Loosey" advertisement, "All nights Blowout" advertisement, and "Moving" advertisement) or outside (all the rest of the advertisements) with lots of lights. Therefore, all of them come out very brightly, and so, the ambiences of all the advertisements create a bright and happy mood.

Second, the advertisements intend to create humor. Again, each song that matches with each situation is funny. For example, in "Fritalian" advertisements, the lyrics are "Mocha haf caf latte chino mocha dui avec moi, my mouth can't form these words, my mouth can't form these words, is it French? Or is it Italian? Perhaps Fritalian." The song matches with the situation very well, explaining everything. All the actors in the advertisements are singing the song and making some funny and confused faces. The whole situation, with the song's lyrics, plus the actors' lack of facial expressions, makes the "Fritalian" advertisements very funny and pleasing. Also, as

mentioned previously, all the elements are combined in happy moods, so this even lightens up the funny ambience more in Dunkin' Donuts advertisements.

Third, the advertisements are made with simple and memorable contents, so they create some memorable effects. All the advertisements are only 30 seconds long, and every advertisement has only one story. For example, in the "Pleather" advertisement, the situation is simply that when getting into the car in hot summer weather, people usually sweat a lot, so they stick to the pleather of the car. The advertisement focuses only on that one simple situation – people stick to the car pleather in summer. Starting from this simple situation, the advertisement draw out their product – Dunkin' Donuts iced coffee that can unstick people from the pleather. Also, every Dunkin Donuts' "America Runs on Dunkin" campaign advertisement is made with the same structure. The advertisements start with actors singing the song, and they end with simple narrations that summarize the whole situation. The last narration part makes the whole advertisement easier to understand. For example, the "Pleather" advertisement starts with some actors singing the song, and it ends with a narration that says, "Grab refreshing Ice coffee in Dunkin Donuts, and unstick yourself from the pleather. America Runs on Dunkin." The simple contents, with the easy structures, make the Dunkin' Donuts advertisements memorable.

In general, Dunkin' Donuts "America Runs on Dunkin" campaign advertisements intended to create some happy, funny, and memorable moods. Happy, funny, and memorable are the first feelings that Dunkin' Donuts advertisements create. With the first impressions of the advertisements, a deeper look into the components and the elements of the advertisements is needed. This leads to the next part of the result – components.

Components of the Advertisements

The components are mainly divided into two parts – visual and audio elements. Visual elements include the background set of the advertisements, and the actors. Audio elements include the songs with lyrics and the narrations at the end of the advertisements.

Visual Components

Background. As mentioned earlier, the background of all the Dunkin' Donuts advertisements for “America Runs on Dunkin” campaign uses a lot of lights with bright feelings. Most of the advertisements were shot outside during the daytime except three advertisements that include some scenes that happen inside the houses during the daytime. Therefore, the whole impressions that the advertisements give, with the bright backgrounds, are bright and lively, giving people positive feelings.

Actors. The actors are average looking people from different generations. Also, actors are not particularly one specific sex, hair color, ethnicity, education, or occupation. The advertisements did not choose actors with specific appearance or age groups. Also, the actors did not dress in a specific way. Their clothing is normal and casual. However, there are some peculiarities about the actors – their facial expressions and the reaction to the advertisements' songs. They do not have any facial expressions. They do not laugh, smile, make funny faces, or do other facial expressions. With no facial expressions, they are lip-singing the advertisements' songs. This, lip-singing without any facial expressions, makes them look kind of silly, so that the whole advertisement gives impression of being funny.

Audio Components

Songs. All the songs that Dunkin' Donuts “America Runs on Dunkin” campaign uses are sung by They Might Be Giants. Therefore, all the songs that are used in all the advertisements

sound the same, which gives people a consistent feeling. Also, all the songs use fast tempos, and this makes the advertisements to give people happy and active feelings. Besides, the lyric of each song is written to describe the situations that happen in each advertisement. For example, in “All nights blowout” advertisement, the lyric is “Last night was very fun. This morning – less so. Whose left shoe is this? Does anybody know? Cleaning up after an all night blowout.” Just looking at the lyrics, people would know what is happening in the advertisement. In the morning, in a messy house, a family is cleaning up their house. Also, there is a left shoe in the fishbowl. The lyrics are completely consistent with the content of the advertisements.

Narrations. Besides the songs, there are also narrations in each advertisement. The narrations are all very short and are put in the end of each advertisement. The narrations explain how the Dunkin’ Donuts coffee works in each situation that each advertisement describes. For example, in “Moving” advertisement, the narration is “Get going with the one and only taste of a Dunkin Iced coffee, and reluctantly help your friend move.” This explains why the advertisement chose the content that a guy helps his friend to move while drinking Dunkin’ Donuts iced coffee. The narration also explains that after drinking Dunkin’ Donuts iced coffee, the guy would reluctantly help his friend to move. In other words, the narration plays a role that explains and summarizes the advertisements.

The Relationships between the Visual and Audio Components

The visual components and the audio components match with each other very well. First of all, the actors are lip-syncing the songs. This not only makes a funny effect, but it also gives people a feeling that the songs are directly related to the content, and also the songs are especially made for the advertisements. Second, the lyrics of the songs explain the advertisements’ contents. People not only can watch the advertisements to understand what is

going on, but with the help of the lyrics, the advertisements are more easily explained and described. Third, the narrations play a summarizing and explaining role to the advertisements. After watching the advertisements, there might be a question how the advertisements' contents are related with Dunkin' Donuts coffee. The narrations explain this point very well and emphasize the reason why people should choose Dunkin' Donuts coffee.

Theme of the Advertisements

The main theme that Dunkin' Donuts "America Runs on Dunkin'" campaign coffee advertisements want to show is that America runs on Dunkin' Donuts coffee. The advertisements try to say that Americans need Dunkin' Donuts coffee anywhere at anytime. There are three points that shows this theme.

First of all, the contents of the advertisements are variable, but they are all typical everyday situations. There are no similar situations among those advertisements. There is a situation when people stick to the pleather on a hot summer day; there is a situation of trying to get the child out of the tree; there is a situation of tightening things; and there is a situation of cleaning up the house after an all-night blowout. Also, all the situations happen often in people's normal lives. For example, when the difficult coffee names confuse people, when people drive to work in the early morning, and so on. These various and normal contents give people a feeling that they need Dunkin' Donuts coffee at anytime and anywhere.

Second, the advertisements, as mentioned earlier, do not focus on a specific group of people. In other words, the target of the campaign is all the Americans. This matches the marketing target demographics, and explicitly references the psychographics and lifestyle components of the marketing approach. There is no specific age, sex, ethnicity, or occupation. Some advertisements show a whole family, a group of young people, parents, working people,

and so on. This again shows that the coffee advertisements in “America Runs on Dunkin” campaign does not focus on one specific group of people, but target all Americans. This means the theme is all Americans need Dunkin’ Donuts coffee.

Third, the messages that the advertisements intend to deliver are various. There are some advertisements that deliver a message that is Dunkin’ Donuts coffee can keep you cool, such as the “Pleather” advertisement. Also, there are some advertisements that say drinking Dunkin’ Donuts coffee can help people get stuff done, such as the “Lefty Loosey” advertisement and the “All Night Blowout” advertisement. Furthermore, there are also some advertisements that deliver a message that is Dunkin’ Donuts coffee can keep people awake, such as “Auto Pilot” advertisement. Besides, there are also some other messages such as Dunkin’ Donuts coffee is easy to order in the “Fritalian” advertisement. All the various messages that Dunkin’ Donuts coffee advertisements intend to deliver show that Dunkin’ Donuts coffee can help people in various ways and is good for anything.

With all the reasons that are listed above, the coffee advertisements of Dunkin’ Donuts “America Runs on Dunkin” campaign show a theme that is Americans need Dunkin’ Donuts coffee anywhere at anytime, and this matches with their logo very much – America Runs on Dunkin.

The Role of Humor in Brand Image Shaping

Humor Elements

Actors. As mentioned earlier, humor is used by the actors. Humor is used in actors’ facial expressions. Actors do not have any facial expressions in the advertisements. They lip-sync the advertisement songs without any facial expressions. This makes them look funny, and overall, it creates humorous appeals.

Songs. Also, humor is used in the advertisement songs. Each song is created according to the content of each advertisement. Therefore, the lyrics of the songs, matching with the scenes, lip-synced by the actors who do not have any facial expressions, make humorous appeals.

Overall, only when the actors and the songs are merged together, do the advertisements make humorous appeals. Besides, humor is also used in the content of the advertisement itself. For example, in “Pleather” advertisement, the whole idea of drinking Dunkin’ Donuts coffee and unsticking people from the pleather is intended to make humorous appeal. Also, some of the narrations of the advertisements make humorous effect. For example, in “Moving” advertisement, when summarizing the whole idea of the advertisement, the narration part says, “get going with the one and only taste of a Dunkin Iced coffee, and reluctantly help your friend move.” Summarizing the whole idea of the advertisement, the narration part of this advertisement uses words such as “reluctantly” to bring out the humorous appeal that the advertisement intends to create.

Humor Variables

As mentioned in the literature review, Kelly and Soloman define humor in advertisements as a pun, an understatement, a joke, something ludicrous, a satire, irony, and intent (32). According to this definition, Dunkin’ Donuts “America Runs on Dunkin” campaign advertisements use ludicrous situations, some satire, and some intent humor in the advertisements. First of all, the main approach that the campaign intends to use is the ludicrous humor. For example, the idea to get actors to lip-sync the songs without any facial expressions is ludicrous. Also, some of the funny narrations, such as “get going with the one and only taste of a Dunkin iced coffee, and reluctantly help your friend move”, is using some words like “reluctantly” to create a ludicrous appeal. Second, the advertisements also use some satires. For

example, in “Fritalian” advertisement, the content is being satirical of those complicated coffee names. The actors act very upset looking at the complicated coffee names on the menu in a random coffee shop, while a person is getting Dunkin’ Donuts coffee easily. Third, in general, the “America Runs on Dunkin” campaign advertisements use intent humor. All the humorous variables mentioned above are to make the advertisements funny. Therefore, their humorous appeals are intended.

Humor variables can also be analyzed according to Spott, Weinberger, and Parsons’s definition, which is to analyze the humor in the advertisements on three levels – intentional, structural, and thematic. First of all, looking at the intentional level, the Dunkin’ Donuts advertisements are message dominant advertisements. Even if the humor is removed from the advertisements, they still make sense, and they can still deliver the message. The humor in the advertisements is used as a method to deliver the message that Dunkin’ Donuts wants to deliver. In other words, the humor is lower priority than the whole message, and it can be removed from the advertisements without any loss of the message. Second, on the structural level, Dunkin’ Donuts advertisements have syntactic relatedness. In other words, since the Dunkin’ Donuts advertisements are message dominant advertisements, they integrate the subordinate humor elements with the main messages that the advertisements intend to deliver. Third, in thematic level, the advertisements are thematically related advertisements, which means the humor is related to the product, such as the benefits of the product. For example, when the actors lip-sync the advertisement songs, they deliver the message of the advertisements about Dunkin’ Donuts coffee.

Besides, the humor variables can also be analyzed according to Kelly and Soloman’s classification of humor, which is according to visual and auditory factors. Dunkin’ Donuts coffee

advertisements are using both audio and visual humor. They do not use only visual humor or audio humor because the humor in the advertisements cannot be understood without the sound or without visual. The humor can only be understood by watching the Dunkin' Donuts advertisements, understanding the whole idea, watching the actors' facial expression, together with listening to the songs that they are lip-syncing. Therefore, the humor in Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements has both visual and audio factors.

The Role of Humor in Dunkin' Donuts Coffee Advertisements

As mentioned in the literature review, the roles of the humor in television advertisements are mainly attention, retention, liking, message comprehension, and persuasion. Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements in "America Runs on Dunkin'" campaign used humor to achieve attention, retention, and liking.

First of all, the use of humor in Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements plays a role that grabs people's attention. The idea of using funny songs that describe the advertisements' contents is a fresh idea. Also, the funny facial expression of the actors is a fresh appeal, and thus grabs people's attention. The advertisements are generally short and funny, so the advertisements are very attractive and easy to understand.

Second, Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements in this campaign have an effect on retention. Not only the funny look of the actors' face, but also the interesting songs of the advertisements facilitate memory of the advertisements and the humor itself. Also, again, all the Dunkin' Donuts advertisements are short and easy to understand, so they are easy for people to remember. Also, some of the contents that the advertisements used are very funny, such as "Fritalian", so the humor facilitates memory for the advertisements and the contents.

Third, Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements enhance the liking of the advertisements. Not only do the humor that the advertisements use have positive effects, but also other elements such as bright background and fast and interesting songs enhance the liking towards the advertisements. People like to watch short, funny, silly looking advertisements because those advertisements make people feel good and enjoyable.

The humor that Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements use does not directly play any roles in message comprehension and persuasion. First of all, the humor variables in the advertisements are message dominant humors. In other words, even if the humor is removed from the advertisements, the messages are still understood. Therefore, the humor that the advertisements use does not directly affect the message comprehension in the coffee advertisements. Accordingly, humor does not play any roles in persuasion. Since in the Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements, humor does not directly affect the messages that the advertisements intend to deliver, so humor is not considered to have effect on persuasion directly.

Humor and Brand Image-shaping

With all the humor variables that are used in the Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements in "America Runs on Dunkin'" campaign, the question is whether the use of the humor shaped the image of Dunkin' Donuts coffee.

First of all, humor is not the direct factor that determines Dunkin' Donuts coffee image. As analyzed above, the humor that is used in the advertisements is message dominant humor. Besides, the structure of the advertisements is the integration of the subordinate humor elements with the main messages that the advertisements intend to deliver. In other words, the main purpose is the delivery of the message. Therefore, the role of humor in brand image shaping in

Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements is not as big as the message. Humor in the advertisements in the Dunkin' Donuts campaign is used as a tool to deliver the message, but it does not dominate the advertisements. In other words, humor is used as a tool to supplement the brand image.

However, humor indirectly helps to shape the Dunkin' Donuts advertisements. As analyzed earlier, humor that is used in Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements in "America Runs on Dunkin'" campaign has an effect on attention, retention, and liking. Therefore, humor, though it does not directly shape the image of Dunkin' Donuts coffee, does play a positive role in shaping the image. Humor in the advertisements grabs people's attention to actually look at the advertisements; it helps people to remember the advertisements and the brand itself; and the humor also creates positive appeals so that people have positive feelings towards the advertisements and the Dunkin' Donuts coffee itself. With all the reasons that are mentioned earlier, humor in the Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements is used to supplement the image of Dunkin' Donuts coffee.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

The current study analyzes the humor variables in Dunkin' Donuts coffee television advertisements in "America Runs on Dunkin'" campaign, and the contents of the advertisements are analyzed to find the role of the humor in the advertisements. In this chapter, the results of the current study are discussed to answer the research questions directly, some practical implications are discussed, limitations of the current study are evaluated, and suggestions of future studies are presented.

RQ1: What are the humor variables that are used by Dunkin' Donuts in their "America Runs on Dunkin'" campaign television advertisements?

Through analyzing the contents of the eight television advertisements, the researcher found that all the advertisements used humor in the actors, especially in their facial expressions and their lip-syncing actions, and the songs.

The humor variables that are used in the advertisements, according to the definition and the classifications of humor, are 1) ludicrous humor, some satire, and some intent humor, and 2) audio and visual humor. To classify the Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements, they are intentionally, message dominant advertisements; structurally, they have syntactic relatedness; and they are thematically related. Syntactic relatedness means the integration of the subordinate humor elements with the message (Spotts, Weinberger, and Parsons 19). Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements are message dominant advertisements, so they have syntactic relatedness. Thematic relatedness means the relationship between the humor and the message content, and Dunkin' Donuts coffee advertisements are thematically related because the humor is related to the product, such as the uses of the product or benefits (Spotts, Weinberger, and Parsons 20).

RQ2: Does humor shape Dunkin' Donuts coffee image in the advertisements?

The theme or the image that Dunkin' Donuts "America Runs on Dunkin'" campaign coffee advertisements intend to create is that America Runs on Dunkin' Donuts coffee. In other words, Americans need Dunkin' Donuts coffee anywhere for any reasons.

However, humor in the Dunkin' Donuts coffee television advertisements does not shape Dunkin' Donuts coffee image directly, but it does indirectly play positive roles in image shaping. The humor helped to create some happy, funny, and thus positive moods in the advertisements. Also, humor plays some roles such as grabbing people's attention, making the advertisements memorable, and letting people like the advertisements. Therefore, humor is used as a tool or a subordinate variable to shape the image of Dunkin' Donuts coffee.

In general, the current study found out that to study the relationship between humor and brand image shaping, the first thing that the researchers should analyze is the dominance of humor in the advertisements, that is whether the weight of humor is heavy enough to determine the image of the brand. Also, the role of humor in brand image shaping is related to many other factors, such as which products the study chooses, whether the humor has direct impact on the image shaping, and so on. In the current study, humor in the advertisements has an impact on roles such as attention, retention, and liking. However, humor does not have direct impact on brand image shaping in the television advertisements of this particular product.

The roles of humor in television advertisements are various. However, this current study focuses on the role of humor in particularly brand image shaping. Combining the previous studies about the roles of humor, the current study opens a new field about the study of humor in television advertising.

Limitations

There are several limitations in the current study that may restrict the objectivity of analyzing the contents of the advertisements.

First, the objectivity and validity may be affected by the researcher's own background. The researcher is not an American, but the researcher is analyzing American television advertisements. Since the researcher is a Chinese student who is not aware much about American culture, there might have been some bias or misinterpreting during the analysis. Dunkin' Donuts is an American brand, and the researcher was not aware of this brand or the brand image before doing the research. Therefore, the researcher, when doing the research, might have missed some basic understandings or awareness about the brand. Also, when analyzing the humor in the advertisements, some bias might have existed when approaching the Americanized humor in the advertisements.

Second, the current study adopts a qualitative research method, content analysis, as its strategy of inquiry. The research is only done by the researcher's personal approach to the contents. This research method restrains the representativeness of the research results.

Third, the sample size was limited. There were only eight advertisements shown during "America Runs on Dunkin" campaign, so it is hard to look into the deeper level to do the research. The limited sample size restrained the comprehensiveness of the research results.

Fourth, there are some other factors that affect brand image shaping besides television advertising. The researcher only studies the television advertisements to see whether the humor in the advertisements affects brand image shaping. However, there are many other activities or events going on to shape the brand image besides television advertisements. In other words, humor is not the only factor that should be considered when looking at the brand image shaping.

Fifth, after doing the study, the researcher found that the television advertisements were message dominant advertisements. Therefore, the role of humor in the advertisements is limited. It is hard to look for the role of the humor that is directly related to brand image shaping.

Sixth, this study is not conducted through any theories. Therefore, the angle of analyzing research data is not specific enough, and the direction of the study is not narrow enough.

Future Research

Since the current study has many limitations, several suggestions are raised for future researchers.

First, more research should be done about this issue using different methods. Researchers can study this issue using other qualitative methods, such as focus group or interviews. However, qualitative methods have their own limitations, so to better understand the issue, the researcher suggests quantitative methods. Using quantitative methods such as surveys can gain a massive description of the consumers' attitudes, or opinions about the relationship between brand image shaping and the humor. Quantitative studies can analyze the role of humor in different directions, which is from the consumers' points of view. Also studies by different researchers other than Chinese researcher could have different results.

Second, researches can be done with the same topic but different samples. As mentioned in the limitations, the sample that the current study takes is more message dominant advertising. Therefore, some limitations exist when analyzing the role of humor in brand image shaping. Researchers can choose other samples that are humor dominant advertisements to see the role of humor in brand image shaping in advertisements. Also, researchers can study different brands.

Third, studies about other media besides television advertising are suggested. The current study focuses on humor in television advertising. Therefore, more research can be done with different media, such as print advertising, to see the role of humor in image shaping.

Fourth, studies can be done with different brand categories. The current study focused on a coffee brand. However, different products might have different results. For example, humor in car television advertisements might play different roles from humor in coffee advertisements.

Last, future studies need to be guided by theories, and the theories also need to be examined by other future studies. Different theories can draw different results or can guide the studies into different directions. For this particular issue, humor and brand image shaping, many theories from different fields can be used in the future studies.

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