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between Moods Elicited by TV
Programs and Commercials**

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The Importance of Fit between Moods Elicited by TV Programs and Commercials

by
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Abstract

We examine the effects of program-induced moods on liking for commercials that elicit positive or negative moods. Previous research suggests that TV viewers have more favorable attitudes toward commercials when they are in a happy mood than when they are in a sad mood. Drawing on role fulfillment evaluation theory, we hypothesize that TV viewers have more favorable attitudes toward commercials that support moods established by programs than toward those that break established moods. Our hypothesis leads to the novel prediction that, during a sad program, TV viewers will like sad commercials more than happy commercials. We find support for this prediction in two experiments. Furthermore, we hypothesize that role fulfillment evaluation theory makes accurate predictions when people are likely to have mood expectations during a TV viewing experience, whereas mood as information theory makes accurate predictions when people are unlikely to have mood expectations during a TV viewing experience. We find support for this hypothesis in experiment 2.

Previous consumer research suggests that TV viewers have more favorable attitudes toward commercials when they are in a happy mood than when they are in a sad mood. Research has demonstrated this effect with moods induced by commercials themselves (Batra and Stayman 1990; Derbaix 1995; Edell and Burke 1987; Holbrook and Batra 1987) and with moods induced by TV programs in which the commercials are embedded (Goldberg and Gorn 1987; Mathur and Chattopadhyay 1991). This research has revealed two main effects. All else equal, TV viewers like commercials more when (1) they induce happy moods rather than sad moods, and (2) they are embedded in programs that induce happy moods rather than sad moods. These effects are important since attitude toward the ad (A_{Ad}) reliably influences brand attitudes and purchase intentions (MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch 1986; Madden, Allen, and Twible 1988; Miniard, Bhatla, and Rose 1990; Mitchell and Olson 1981; see Brown and Stayman 1992 for a review), and is the single best predictor of an ad's ability to influence sales (Haley and Baldinger 1991). However, previous research has not examined whether commercials that induce a happy mood exhibit an advantage over those that induce a sad mood, irrespective of whether the mood induced by the program is positive or negative. This is the focus of our research.

In this article, we propose that when TV viewers watch a program that establishes a mood, they expect to continue experiencing that mood throughout the duration of the TV viewing experience. We draw on research on mood as input to role fulfillment evaluation processes (Martin et al. 1997) to hypothesize that TV viewers have more favorable attitudes toward commercials that support moods established by programs than toward those that break established moods. Our hypothesis leads to the novel prediction that, during a sad program, TV viewers will like sad commercials more than happy commercials. We find support for this prediction in two experiments.

Our prediction that people will evaluate some stimuli more favorably when they are in a negative mood than when they are in a positive mood may initially seem to be at odds with mood as information theory (Schwarz and Clore 1983, 1988), which proposes that people use their momentary affective states as information when making judgments and evaluations, for example by asking “how do I feel about it?” Mood as information theory thus predicts that people will evaluate stimuli more favorably when they are in a positive mood than when they are in a negative mood. We assert that the apparent contradiction between our predictions and those of mood as information theory can be reconciled by noting that role fulfillment evaluations are based on an expectation comparison process. Specifically, we hypothesize that role fulfillment evaluation theory makes accurate predictions when people are likely to have mood expectations, whereas mood as information theory makes accurate predictions when people are unlikely to have mood expectations. We find support for this hypothesis in experiment 2.

Our research contributes to theory and practice in three ways. First, we use role fulfillment evaluation theory to identify an effect that is at odds with the recommendations of previous research on the attitudinal effects of moods induced by TV programs and commercials. Second, we identify mood expectations during the experience as a moderating variable, allowing us to reconcile our main result with those of extant research. Third, our results provide guidance to advertising managers who seek either to select a program during which to air existing commercials, or to produce commercials that will be aired during a particular program. Importantly, our suggestion that sad commercials, such as those for products such as life and health insurance, can be more effective when aired during sad programs than during happy programs, seems to go against common advertising practice.

ATTITUDINAL EFFECTS OF MOODS INDUCED BY TV PROGRAMS AND COMMERCIALS

Moods Induced by TV Programs

Goldberg and Gorn (1987) investigated whether moods induced by TV programs influence viewers' attitudes toward commercials that are embedded in these programs. Specifically, they examined whether happy and sad TV programs induce parallel moods among viewers, whether viewers continue experiencing these moods during commercial breaks, and whether these moods influence their attitudes toward the individual commercials that appear during the breaks. Goldberg and Gorn's experimental results suggest that viewers indeed feel happier while viewing happy programs than while viewing sad programs, that they continue experiencing these program-induced moods during commercial breaks, and that on average their attitudes toward commercials are more favorable when these commercials are embedded in happy programs than when they are embedded in sad programs. Additional research has reported congruent results (Gorn, Goldberg, and Basu 1983; Mathur and Chattopadhyay 1991; Srull 1983).

Goldberg and Gorn explained their central result—that viewers' attitudes toward commercials are more favorable when these commercials are embedded in happy programs than in sad programs—using theories of mood state dependent memory (see Bower 1981; Bower and Cohen 1982) and mood congruent accessibility (see Isen 1984; Isen et al. 1978). According to these theories, people are more likely to recall experiences that are congruent with their current mood than those that are incongruent. Consequently, these theories predict that people in positive moods will recall a greater number of positive experiences related to a target stimulus than will people in negative moods, and thus will evaluate the stimulus more

favorably. Goldberg and Gorn's central result is also consistent with Schwarz and Clore's (1983, 1988) mood as information theory, which proposes that people use their momentary affective states as information when making judgments and evaluations, and predicts that people in positive moods will thus evaluate a stimulus more favorably than will people in negative moods. Importantly, Goldberg and Gorn's (1987) descriptions of the commercials that they utilized in their experiments suggest that they were either neutral or positively valenced (390).

Moods Induced by Commercials

Research has also investigated how moods induced by commercials themselves affect viewers' attitudes in the absence of a mood-inducing program context. This research has examined the effects of specific categories of affective responses (see Batra and Ray 1986) and changes in continuously measurable mood dimensions (see Russell 1979, 1980; Watson and Tellegen 1985) on viewers' ad attitudes (Burke and Edell 1989; Derbaix 1995; Holbrook and Batra 1987; Stayman and Aaker 1988; see Brown, Homer, and Inman 1998 for a review). This research overwhelmingly concludes that viewers have more favorable attitudes toward commercials that induce a positive mood than toward those that induce a negative mood.

ROLE FULFILLMENT EVALUATION THEORY

Mood as Input to Role Fulfillment Evaluations

Although previous consumer research has identified main effects of moods induced by both programs and commercials on TV viewers' attitudes toward commercials, this

research has not examined whether the valence (positive vs. negative) of moods induced by commercials and by programs interact. We investigate this possibility within the framework of role fulfillment evaluation theory.

Extending early work on role fulfillment evaluation theory (Higgins and Rholes 1976; Woll et al. 1980; Wyer 1970) to the context of moods, Martin et al. (1997) proposed that people sometimes have mood based role expectations (e.g., people expect to feel happy while listening to a stand-up comedian; people expect to feel angry while listening to death metal music). Furthermore, they proposed that when people have such mood expectations, they compare their current mood to their expected mood when forming evaluations. Based on this, Martin et al. predict that when a target stimulus induces feelings that are expected (e.g., a comedic story makes people feel happy), people will evaluate it favorably, whereas when a target stimulus induces unexpected feelings (e.g., a comedic story makes people feel sad), they will evaluate it unfavorably.

For example, in their first experiment, Martin et al. (1997) incidentally placed participants in either a happy or sad mood, and then asked these participants to read and evaluate either a happy or sad story. They report that participants who had been placed in a happy mood evaluated the happy story more favorably than did participants who had been placed in a sad mood. Among those participants who had been placed in a happy mood, the happy story seemed to have fulfilled its role—they expected it to make them feel happy, and they indeed felt happy. Similarly, Martin et al. report that participants who had been placed in a sad mood evaluated the sad story more favorably than did participants who had been placed in a happy mood. Among participants who had been placed in a sad mood, the sad story seemed to have fulfilled its role—they expected it to make them feel sad and they indeed felt sad.

Hypothesis Development

We propose that when TV viewers watch a program that establishes a mood, they expect to continue experiencing that mood throughout the duration of the TV viewing experience. This experience will typically include not only time spent viewing the program, but also time spent viewing embedded commercials. Thus, although viewers may not have expectations about how commercials should make them feel per se, since the commercials that interrupt a program are part of the TV viewing experience, it follows that people's mood expectations about the experience should apply not only to the program but to the commercials as well. Thus, based on role fulfillment evaluation theory we hypothesize that TV viewers have more favorable attitudes toward commercials that support moods established by programs than toward those that break established moods.

By predicting that people will evaluate some stimuli more favorably when they are in a negative mood than when they are in a positive mood, our hypothesis initially seems to be at odds with mood as information theory, which proposes that people use their momentary affective states as information when making judgments and evaluations, and thus predicts that people will evaluate stimuli more favorably when they are in a positive mood than when they are in a negative mood. However, this apparent contradiction can be reconciled by noting that role fulfillment evaluations are based on an expectation comparison process. Thus, we hypothesize that role fulfillment evaluation theory should make accurate predictions when people are likely to have mood expectations (e.g., when they focus on their mood during an experience), whereas mood as information theory should make accurate predictions when people are unlikely to have mood expectations (e.g., when they are distracted from their mood during an experience).

We next report the results of two experiments that support our hypotheses, and discuss the implications of our findings for theory and practice.

EXPERIMENT 1

Overview

The goal of experiment 1 was to test our hypothesis that TV viewers have more favorable attitudes toward commercials that support moods established by programs than toward those that break established moods. The experiment had a 2 (program mood: happy vs. sad) \times 2 (commercial mood: happy vs. sad) \times 2 (program replicates) \times 2 (commercial replicates) between-subjects design.

Materials

Program Clips. We sought to select two happy program clips and two sad program clips, each of approximately 15 minutes in duration, for use in the experiment. We wanted the program clips to satisfy three criteria. First, we wanted the two happy (sad) program clips to induce a significantly happy (sad) mood among viewers. These differences would serve as the basis of our program mood manipulation in the experiment. Second, since viewers' liking of programs may influence their attitudes toward embedded commercials (Murry, Lastovicka, and Singh 1992), we wanted viewers' initial liking of the happy and sad program clips to be statistically equal. Third, following Goldberg and Gorn's (1987) program selection procedure, we wanted viewers' ratings of the pleasantness, usualness, and interestingness of the happy and sad program clips to be statistically equal.

We conducted a pretest to select an appropriate set of program clips. Participants rated their reactions to several program clips on nine-point scales of induced mood (endpoints: -4 [made me feel very sad], +4 [made me feel very happy]), liking (endpoints: -4 [disliked very much], +4 [liked very much]), pleasantness (endpoints: -4 [very unpleasant], +4 [very pleasant]), usualness (endpoints: -4 [very unusual], +4 [very usual]), and interestingness (endpoints: -4 [very uninteresting], +4 [very interesting]).

The pretest results indicated that one pair of happy program clips and one pair of sad program clips together satisfied all three of our criteria. Participants indicated that the two happy program clips—excerpts from a regional comedy show that was popular in the area—made them feel significantly happy compared to the midpoint of the scale ($M_{\text{two happy programs}} = 1.36$), ($t(24) = 6.32$, $p < .001$), and that the two sad program clips—excerpts from a regional dramatic show that was popular in the area—made them feel significantly sad compared to the midpoint of the scale ($M_{\text{two sad programs}} = -1.44$), ($t(24) = 5.31$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, participants liked the happy and sad program clips equally ($t(40) = 1.69$, NS), and rated them as being equally pleasant ($t(43) = 1.57$, NS), usual ($t(47) = .59$, NS), and interesting ($t(47) = 1.81$, NS).

Commercials. We sought to select two happy commercials and two sad commercials that had been recorded from TV or downloaded from the internet and were each approximately one minute in duration for use in the experiment. We wanted the commercials to satisfy two criteria. First, we wanted the two happy (sad) commercials to induce a significantly happy (sad) mood among viewers. These differences would serve as the basis of our commercial mood manipulation in the experiment. Second, we wanted viewers' initial liking of the happy and sad commercials to be statistically equal.

We conducted a pretest to select an appropriate set of commercials. Participants rated their reactions to the commercials on nine-point scales of induced mood (endpoints: -4 [made me feel very sad], +4 [made me feel very happy]) and liking (endpoints: -4 [disliked a lot], +4 [liked a lot]). The results indicated that one pair of happy commercials and one pair of sad commercials together satisfied both of our criteria. Participants indicated that the two happy commercials—one about a car and one about a bath soap—made them feel significantly happy compared to the midpoint of the scale ($M_{\text{two happy commercials}} = 1.78$), ($t(31) = 6.64$, $p < .001$), and that the two sad commercials—one about speeding and one about domestic violence—made them feel significantly sad compared to the midpoint of the scale ($M_{\text{two sad commercials}} = -3.21$), ($t(27) = 20.43$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, participants liked the happy and sad commercials equally ($t(54) = .19$, NS).

Questionnaire. Since we are interested in viewers' liking of commercials, we utilized attitude toward the ad (A_{Ad}) as our central dependent variable. Based on Bergkvist and Rossiter's (2007) finding that multiple and single item measures of A_{Ad} have the same predictive validity and their recommendation that future research utilize single item measures, we measured A_{Ad} with a single nine-point scale (endpoints: -4 [disliked it very much], +4 [liked it very much]). We also measured experienced happiness and sadness using separate nine-point scales (endpoints: 1 [not at all happy (sad)], 9 [very happy (sad)]). The questionnaire also included a suspicion probe, which asked participants to spend two minutes writing about the purpose of the study.

Procedure

Four hundred and twenty four people recruited from the streets outside a behavioral laboratory near a large urban university participated in the study, in exchange for a voucher for a sandwich and beverage. None of the participants had previously participated in the pretests. The experimenter randomly assigned participants to the 16 cells in the experimental design.

At the beginning of the experiment, the experimenter told participants that they would be participating in a pretest for a future study about TV programs, and that they would be asked to watch a video and then respond to some questions about their opinions of its contents. After listening to this description of the study, all participants signed an informed consent form.

Participants in all conditions first watched a video of approximately 16 minutes in duration. The video was displayed on a computer in full screen mode. The first 15 minutes of the video consisted of one of the two happy or two sad program clips. The last minute consisted of one of the two happy or two sad commercials. After viewing the video, participants responded to the questionnaire, which was administered using paper and pencil.

Results

Data Exclusions. We excluded the responses of 14 of the 424 participants: six whose suspicion probe responses said that the experiment was about the types of commercials that people like after different types of TV programs, five who had difficulty understanding the directions or using the computer, two who left before completing the experiment, and one who encountered a computer problem. Thus, our results are based on a final sample size of 410.

Mood Manipulation Checks. Participants watched a program clip that was meant to induce either a happy or sad mood (i.e., a happy program clip or a sad program clip) followed by a commercial that was meant to induce either a happy or sad mood (i.e., a happy commercial or a sad commercial). Although the pretests indicated that the happy program clips and commercials induced happy moods and that the sad program clips and commercials induced sad moods, we included measures of experienced happiness and sadness in the study in order to verify that our manipulations had been successful.

We first examined participants' experienced happiness using a 2 (program mood: happy vs. sad) \times 2 (commercial mood: happy vs. sad) \times 2 (program replicates) \times 2 (commercial replicates) ANOVA. Consistent with our predictions, participants who watched a happy program clip felt significantly happier ($M = 4.90$) than did those who watched a sad program clip ($M = 4.30$), ($F(1, 394) = 10.15, p < .005$), and participants who watched a happy commercial felt significantly happier ($M = 5.29$) than did those who watched a sad commercial ($M = 3.87$), ($F(1, 394) = 49.36, p < .001$). None of the other effects, including the program mood \times commercial mood interaction, reached significance.

We also examined participants' experienced sadness using a 2 (program mood: happy vs. sad) \times 2 (commercial mood: happy vs. sad) \times 2 (program replicates) \times 2 (commercial replicates) ANOVA. This analysis revealed that, as expected, participants who watched a sad program clip felt significantly sadder ($M = 3.98$) than did those who watched a happy program clip ($M = 3.19$), ($F(1, 392) = 19.47, p < .001$), and that participants who watched a sad commercial felt significantly sadder ($M = 4.44$) than did those who watched a happy commercial ($M = 2.77$), ($F(1, 392) = 78.45, p < .001$). None of the other effects reached significance, except the commercial mood \times program replicate \times commercial replicate interaction, which cannot account for our hypothesized effects, and was likely significant by chance given that the 4-way ANOVA involved estimation of 15 effects.

Matching Programs and Commercials. Based on our hypothesis that TV viewers have more favorable attitudes toward commercials that support moods established by programs than toward those that break established moods, we predict that TV viewers will like happy (sad) commercials more when they are embedded in happy (sad) programs.

To test these predictions we examined participants' commercial liking ratings using a 2 (program mood: happy vs. sad) \times 2 (commercial mood: happy vs. sad) \times 2 (program replicates) \times 2 (commercial replicates) ANOVA. Consistent with our predictions, the program mood \times commercial mood interaction was significant ($F(1, 394) = 10.08, p < .005$). Participants liked the sad commercials significantly more when they followed the sad program clips ($M = 1.79$) than when they followed the happy program clips ($M = .71$), ($F(1, 394) = 14.51, p < .001$), and liked the happy commercials more when they followed the happy program clips ($M = 1.55$) than when they followed the sad program clips ($M = 1.40$), although this difference was not significant ($F(1, 394) = .22, NS$). Interestingly, participants liked sad commercials following sad programs clips ($M = 1.79$) as much as happy commercials following happy program clips ($M = 1.55$), ($F(1, 394) = .73, NS$).

Aside from the predicted interaction, the main effect of program mood was significant ($F(1, 394) = 5.27, p < .05$), as were the effects of program replicates ($F(1, 394) = 4.44, p < .05$) and commercial replicates ($F(1, 394) = 34.91, p < .001$). These main effects are fully qualified by the predicted interaction, and none of the other effects were significant. Given that none of the interaction terms other than the predicted one reached significance, the data support our hypothesis.

Discussion

The results of experiment 1 support our hypothesis that TV viewers have more favorable attitudes toward commercials that support moods established by programs than toward those that break established moods. Consistent with this hypothesis, we found that participants liked two sad commercials significantly more when they followed sad program clips than when they followed happy program clips, and liked two happy commercials more when they followed happy program clips than when they followed sad program clips, albeit not significantly so.

Most established mood theories—such as mood state dependent memory (Bower 1981; Bower and Cohen 1982), mood congruent accessibility (Isen 1984; Isen et al. 1978), and mood as information (Schwarz and Clore 1983, 1988)—predict that people will evaluate stimuli more favorably when they are in a positive mood than when they are in a negative mood. Consumer research based on these theories (e.g., Goldberg and Gorn 1987) has popularized this notion among advertising managers, who typically prefer time slots during happy programs to those during sad programs (see Mathur and Chattopadhyay 1991). Thus, a key finding of experiment 1 is that, under some conditions, viewers may actually have more favorable attitudes toward commercials when they are aired during sad programs than when they are aired during happy programs.

Although this finding initially seems to be at odds with mood as information theory, this apparent contradiction can be reconciled by noting that role fulfillment evaluations are based on an expectation comparison process. In experiment 2, we identify attentiveness to mood during the experience as a moderating variable that allows us to reconcile our main result with those of extant research

EXPERIMENT 2

Overview

The goal of experiment 2 was to test our hypothesis that role fulfillment evaluation theory makes accurate predictions when people are likely to have mood expectations (e.g., when they focus on their mood during an experience), whereas mood as information theory makes accurate predictions when people are unlikely to have mood expectations (e.g., when they are distracted from their mood during an experience).

Materials

Based on our hypothesis, we predict that, following happy program clips, TV viewers will like happy commercials more than sad commercials *regardless of whether they focus on or are distracted from their mood during the TV viewing experience*. However, following sad programs, we predict a difference in viewers' responses to happy and sad commercials. Specifically, we predict that following sad program clips, TV viewers who focus on their mood will like sad commercials more than happy commercials (in congruence with role fulfillment evaluation theory), whereas viewers who are distracted from their mood will like happy commercials more than sad commercials (in congruence with mood as information theory). Thus, having participants watch commercials following sad program clips would provide a means for us to test our hypotheses, but having participants watch commercials following happy program clips would not do so. In light of this, we only asked participants to watch commercials following a sad program clip in experiment 2. We used one of the sad program clips and the same four commercials as in experiment 1, in this experiment.

Independent Variables

People are more likely to have mood expectations when they attend to their mood during an experience than when they are distracted from their mood during the experience. Thus, in this experiment we manipulate the degree to which participants attend to their moods while viewing a program clip and a commercial. Furthermore, to provide evidence that the effects of this manipulation are attributed to a difference in mood expectations rather than to level of attentiveness to the induced mood, we also manipulate the degree to which participants attend to their moods after viewing the video, just before responding to the dependent measures. If attentiveness itself affects the type of commercial (happy or sad) that participants like following a sad program clip, then attentiveness during the experience and attentiveness after the experience should both have the same effects. However, if a difference in expectations drives the effects of attentiveness during the experience, then attentiveness after the experience should have no effect, since a manipulation after an experience cannot affect expectations during the experience.

Thus, experiment 2 had a 2 (attentiveness to mood during the TV viewing experience: focused on mood during experience vs. distracted from mood during experience) \times 2 (commercial mood: happy vs. sad) \times 2 (attentiveness to mood after the TV viewing experience: focused on mood after experience vs. not focused on mood after experience) \times 2 (commercial replicates) between-subjects design. We utilized the same questionnaire as in experiment 1, adapted to be administered via computer.

Procedure

Three hundred and thirty people recruited from the streets outside a behavioral laboratory near a large urban university participated in the study in exchange for a voucher

for a sandwich and beverage. None of these participants had previously participated in experiment 1 or the pretests. After each participant had signed an informed consent form, the experimenter randomly assigned him/her to one of the 16 cells in the experimental design.

Participants first read instructions that implemented the manipulation of attentiveness to mood during the TV viewing experience. In the focused on mood during experience condition, the first screen of instructions stated that the day's study was about the degree to which people empathize with characters in TV programs. The instructions stated that participants would watch a video and that during the video they should focus on their emotional responses to its content. A second screen of instructions stated that, after viewing the video, participants would first be asked to answer some questions about their opinions of parts of the video and then to take an empathy survey, which would include questions about their emotional responses to the plot, characters, and overall tone of the video.

In the distracted from mood during experience condition, the first screen of instructions stated that the day's study was about people's short-term memory for the details of TV programs. The instructions stated that participants would watch a video and that during the video they should focus on some specific details of its content. A second screen of instructions stated that, after viewing the video, participants would first be asked to answer some questions about their opinions of parts of the video and then to take a memory test about the characters, which would include questions about their names, personalities, and even their outfits and hairstyles, among other traits.

All participants then watched a video of approximately 16 minutes in duration on a computer in full screen mode. The first 15 minutes of the video consisted of the sad program clip, and the final minute of the video consisted of one of the two happy or two sad commercials.

At the conclusion of the video, a set of instructions appeared on the screen which implemented the manipulation of attentiveness to mood after the TV viewing experience. In the focused on mood after experience condition, these instructions told participants that they would next be asked to respond to some questions about the video, alerted them that viewing the video may have put them into a particular mood, and asked them to spend a few seconds concentrating on their mood. In the not focused on mood after experience condition, the instructions told participants only that they would next be asked to respond to some questions about the video. All participants then responded to the questions, which appeared on the screen one at a time, by clicking their desired responses and then clicking a continue button.

After participants had completed the questionnaire, a set of instructions appeared on the screen which stated that they had been selected to participate in a control condition, and that, for statistical purposes, they would not be asked to respond to an empathy survey or memory test.

Results

Data Exclusions. We excluded the responses of 48 of our 330 participants: 39 whose suspicion probe responses indicated awareness that the experiment was about the types of commercials that people like after different types of TV programs, seven who had difficulty understanding the directions or using the computer, and two who left before completing the experiment. Several of the participants who may have been hypothesis aware mentioned in their suspicion probe responses that someone had told them about experiment 1. Our results are based on a final sample size of 282 after these exclusions.

Mood Manipulation Checks. Participants watched a program clip that was meant to induce a sad mood (i.e., a sad program clip) followed by a commercial that was meant to induce either a happy or sad mood (i.e., a happy commercial or a sad commercial). Although the experiment 1 pretests indicated that the sad commercials induced sad moods and the happy commercials induced happy moods, we included measures of experienced happiness and sadness in the study in order to verify that our manipulations had been successful.

We first examined participants' experienced happiness using a 2 (attentiveness to mood during the TV viewing experience: focused on mood during experience vs. distracted from mood during experience) \times 2 (commercial mood: happy vs. sad) \times 2 (attentiveness to mood after the TV viewing experience: focused on mood after experience vs. not focused on mood after experience) \times 2 (commercial replicates) ANOVA. Consistent with our predictions, participants who watched a happy commercial felt significantly happier than did those who watched a sad commercial ($M_{\text{two happy commercials}} = 5.42$, $M_{\text{two sad commercials}} = 4.08$), ($F(1, 266) = 28.40$, $p < .001$). The analysis also revealed a significant main effect of attentiveness to mood during the TV viewing experience ($F(1, 266) = 5.01$, $p < .05$), which indicated that participants who were distracted from their mood during the experience felt happier than those who focused on their mood during the experience, a result we expected since the program clip that participants watched had a sad tone. Furthermore, there was a significant main effect of attentiveness to mood after the TV viewing experience ($F(1, 266) = 4.91$, $p < .05$), which indicated that participants who focused on their moods after the experience felt happier than those who did not focus on their moods after the experience. None of the other effects were significant.

We also examined participants' experienced sadness using a 2 (attentiveness to mood during the TV viewing experience: focused on mood during experience vs. distracted from mood during experience) \times 2 (commercial mood: happy vs. sad) \times 2 (attentiveness to mood

after the TV viewing experience: focused on mood after experience vs. not focused on mood after experience) \times 2 (commercial replicates) ANOVA. Consistent with our predictions, participants who watched a sad commercial felt significantly sadder than did those who watched a happy commercial ($M_{\text{two happy commercials}} = 4.71$, $M_{\text{two sad commercials}} = 3.39$), ($F(1, 266) = 28.77$, $p < .001$). The analysis also revealed a significant main effect of commercial replicates ($F(1, 266) = 8.76$, $p < .005$), which indicated that one of the replicates elicited greater sadness than the other, and a significant attentiveness to mood during the TV viewing experience \times commercial mood \times commercial replicates interaction ($F(1, 266) = 4.63$, $p < .05$). This three-way interaction indicated that commercials in the second replicate elicited greater feelings of sadness in all conditions than did those in the first replicate, except among participants who were distracted from their mood during the experience and watched happy commercials. Among these participants, the commercials in both replicates elicited equal levels of sadness. The nature of this interaction does not compromise our manipulation.

Attentiveness to Mood during the TV Viewing Experience. The goal of experiment 2 was to test our hypothesis that role fulfillment evaluation theory makes accurate predictions when people are likely to have mood expectations, whereas mood as information theory makes accurate predictions when people are unlikely to have mood expectations. Since people are more likely to have mood expectations when they focus on their mood during an experience than when they are distracted from their mood during the experience, we manipulated the degree to which participants attended to their moods while viewing a program clip and commercial. We predict that, following a sad program clip, viewers who focus on their mood during the experience will like sad commercials more than happy commercials, whereas viewers who are distracted from their mood during the experience will like happy commercials more than sad commercials.

We examined participants' commercial liking ratings using a 2 (attentiveness to mood during the TV viewing experience: focused on mood during experience vs. distracted from mood during experience) \times 2 (commercial mood: happy vs. sad) \times 2 (attentiveness to mood after the TV viewing experience: focused on mood after experience vs. not focused on mood after experience) \times 2 (commercial replicates) ANOVA.

The attentiveness to mood during the TV viewing experience \times commercial mood interaction was marginally significant ($F(1, 266) = 3.53, p = .06$). In support of our hypothesis, participants who focused on their moods during the experience liked the sad commercials ($M = 1.86$) significantly more than the happy commercials ($M = 1.13$), ($F(1, 266) = 4.68, p < .05$), in congruence with role fulfillment evaluation theory. Furthermore, participants who were distracted from their moods during the experience liked the happy commercials ($M = 1.56$) more than the sad commercials ($M = 1.33$), in congruence with mood as information theory, although this difference was not statistically significant ($F(1, 266) = .49, NS$).

Attentiveness to Mood after the TV Viewing Experience. To provide evidence that the effects of our manipulation of attentiveness during the experience are attributed to a difference in mood expectations rather than to level of attentiveness to the mood experienced, we also manipulated the degree to which participants attended to their moods after viewing the video, just before responding to the dependent measures. We predicted that, if a difference in expectations drives the effects of attentiveness during the experience, then attentiveness after the experience should have no effect, since a manipulation after an experience cannot affect expectations during the experience. Based on this reasoning, we predicted that the interaction of commercial mood and attentiveness to mood after the TV viewing experience would be non-significant, indicating that attentiveness to mood after the

experience does not affect participants' relative liking of happy and sad commercials. Consistent with this prediction, the commercial mood \times attentiveness to mood after the TV viewing experience interaction was not significant ($F(1, 266) = 1.71, NS$).

The analysis also revealed a significant main effect of commercial replicates ($F(1, 266) = 8.90, p < .005$), and a significant commercial mood \times commercial replicates interaction ($F(1, 266) = 5.02, p < .05$). None of the other effects were significant. Since these effects do not qualify the predicted interaction, the results of experiment 2 support our second hypothesis.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

In this article, we proposed that when TV viewers watch a program that establishes a mood, they expect to continue experiencing that mood throughout the duration of the TV viewing experience. Drawing on role fulfillment evaluation theory, we hypothesized that TV viewers have more favorable attitudes toward commercials that support moods established by programs than toward those that break established moods. In support of this hypothesis, we showed in experiment 1 that participants liked two sad commercials significantly more when they followed sad program clips than when they followed happy program clips, and liked two happy commercials more when they followed happy program clips than when they followed sad program clips, albeit not significantly so.

Although these findings may have initially seemed to be at odds with mood as information theory, which predicts that people evaluate stimuli more favorably when in positive moods than when in negative moods, we argued that this apparent contradiction can be reconciled by noting that role fulfillment evaluations are based on an expectation comparison process. Specifically, we hypothesized that role fulfillment evaluation theory

makes accurate predictions when people are likely to have mood expectations, whereas mood as information theory makes accurate predictions when people are unlikely to have mood expectations. We found support for this hypothesis in experiment 2. Furthermore, we showed that a mood attentiveness manipulation administered after, rather than during, a TV viewing experience has no effect on the relative liking of happy and sad commercials, as would be expected, ruling out the possibility that the observed, hypothesized effect resulted from attending to the mood experienced, per se.

Theoretical Implications

Our research has important theoretical implications. First, we show that role fulfillment evaluation theory accurately predicts consumers' attitudes in an advertising context. Furthermore, we provide a first account of how role fulfillment evaluation theory and mood as information theory coexist. Our results suggest that role fulfillment evaluation theory makes accurate predictions when people are likely to have mood expectations, whereas mood as information theory makes accurate predictions when people are unlikely to have mood expectations.

Future research should seek to more fully integrate role fulfillment evaluation theory and mood as information theory, which often make starkly different predictions as demonstrated in this article. Specifically, future research should seek to identify additional factors that influence the likelihood that people will have mood expectations in marketing relevant contexts, and thereby influence the relative predictive ability of the two theories. An integrated mood model that fully delineates the boundaries between role fulfillment evaluation theory and mood as information theory would broaden our general understanding

of how and why moods influence people's attitudes and our specific understanding of these phenomena within the consumer domain.

Recent research suggests that commercials that interrupt engaging TV programs tend to be disliked because they break the narrative flow of the story (Wang and Calder 2006). The current article suggests that this effect is moderated by the degree of fit between the emotional tone of the program and the emotional tone of the commercial. Commercials that support the emotional flow of a program and thereby satisfy viewers' mood expectations are likely to be liked, whereas those that break the emotional flow of a program and thereby fail to satisfy viewers' mood expectations are likely to be disliked.

Managerial Implications

Our research also has important managerial implications. Our results suggest at least two strategies that advertising managers can use to improve viewers' liking of their commercials, even when they interrupt engaging programs. Both strategies involve matching the emotional tone of the commercial with the emotional tone of the program in order to maintain the emotional flow of the story and thereby satisfy viewers' mood expectations

First, many products and services are most effectively advertised using commercials that induce a happy mood (e.g., toys, vacations, most categories of food), whereas many others are most effectively advertised using commercials that induce a sad mood (e.g., funeral services, insurance, legal services). Furthermore, many public service announcements induce a sad mood by necessity. Our results suggest that TV viewers will like sad commercials more when they are aired during sad programs than when they are aired during happy programs, and that they will like happy commercials more when they are aired during happy programs than when they are aired during sad programs, as long as viewers are relatively focused on

their moods during the TV viewing experience (such as when viewing entertaining dramatic or comedic programming) as demonstrated in experiment 2. These results imply that advertising managers who have produced sad commercials should, in general, seek to schedule them during sad TV programs, and that those who have produced happy commercials should, in general, seek to schedule them during happy TV programs, especially if viewers are likely to focus on their moods while viewing the programs.

Second, many products and services can be effectively advertised using commercials that induce either a happy or sad mood (e.g., weight loss products, self-help products, many types of medicine). Gardner (1985) asserts that, in some cases, target-market consumers may have extremely selective media habits, leaving marketers little latitude in which to select TV program contexts with specific mood-inducing properties. Our results suggest that, all else equal, during sad programs viewers will prefer sad commercials to happy commercials, whereas during happy programs viewers will prefer happy commercials to sad commercials, as long as they are relatively focused on their moods during the TV viewing experience as demonstrated in experiment 2. These results imply that advertising managers who intend to produce a commercial that will be aired during a sad program should give the commercial a sad tone, whereas those who intend to produce a commercial that will be aired during a happy program should give the commercial a happy tone.

Our suggestion that sad commercials can be more effective when aired during sad programs than during happy programs seems to go against common advertising practice. According to Mathur and Chattopadhyay (1991), several major organizations have policies that prohibit advertising during sad programs. Consistent with this, news articles report that many groups have pulled their commercials from sad programs (Atkinson 2004; Goetzl and Friedman 2000; Mandese 1995; Steinberg 2007; Umstead and Forkan 1999). Based on our

findings, we believe that advertising managers should reassess the usefulness of scheduling some commercials during sad programs.

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