The Effects of Context Congruence On Ad Persuasiveness in e-Magazines

It Serves My Motive, And I Distinguish the Advertisement

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Despite substantial interest in advertisement-context congruence as a determinant of advertisement effectiveness and advertisement memory in digital platforms, especially in the electronic magazine (e-magazine) context, less attention has been devoted to identifying how it influences advertisement persuasion. This issue is explored through three between-subjects experimental studies: in Study 1, the causal role of advertisement-context congruence on advertisement persuasion and the conditional role of consumer motive as a chronic characteristic; in Study 2, consumer motive as a situational aspect and the mediating role of felt involvement; and in Study 3, generalizability, using a diverse sample. The insights generated enrich the understanding of the various conditions and mechanisms that create advertisement persuasion in e-magazines to create better advertisement effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

The number of people who read information on digital platforms, whether for news or other information, has increased over the years. This change in consumer media behavior has prompted companies to change their preference from traditional media to digital media. Digital dominance now challenges the existence of traditional advertising and has motivated advertising companies to position their offerings through a focused digital media platform, such as electronic magazines (e-magazines). Published on a digital platform, the e-magazine reaches its audience through public computer networks. The use of e-magazines became popular because of the extensive use of tablets and electronic readers (e-readers). It signals a change in advertising strategy from the relatively weak and ineffective traditional channels to a growing platform (Pescher, Reichhart, and Spann, 2014).

Advertising in e-magazines has become an affordable medium for digital communication, but

Management Slant

- Goal-oriented consumers develop high advertisement persuasion when exposed to an advertisement that is congruent with the context.
- Consumer felt involvement with the advertisement mediates the interaction effect of Advertisement-Context Congruence × Consumer Motive on advertisement persuasion.
- Exposure of goal-directed consumers to a congruent advertisement creates heightened levels of felt involvement and, in turn, develops high advertisement persuasion when they are exposed to a strong message argument.
- Exposure of experiential consumers to an incongruent advertisement creates heightened levels of felt involvement and, in turn, develops high advertisement persuasion when they are exposed to a strong message argument.

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analyses of e-magazines as a medium of advertising are still limited (Colliander and Dahlen, 2011; Zanjani, Diamond, and Chan, 2011). This paucity of research is surprising, considering the significance of the subject in both advertising theory and practice. In this domain, studies have emphasized the critical role of advertisement-context-driven factors in the digital media context (Belanche, Flavián, and Pérez-Rueda, 2017; Moorman, Neijens, and Smit, 2002; Yaveroglu and Donthu, 2008; Yi, 1990). Less attention, however, has been devoted to the understanding of this phenomenon at the level of the motives of readers. A recent meta-analytic framework reported the existence of evidence regarding the media context factors on advertisement memory (Kwon, King, Nyilasy, and Reid, 2019). The same authors presented a comprehensive analysis of the existing understanding, but no evidence was reported from examining the roles of user motive and advertisement context or how these roles work with digital media context to influence user memory. Studies have, however, supported that, in an online advertising setting, motive plays a pivotal role because readers make rational decisions based on their motives, which direct them to decide which objects to notice and which to ignore (Cannon, Richardson, and Yaprack, 1998; Rodgers, 2002; Van den Broeck, Poels, and Walrave, 2018). The current authors therefore presumed that the stronger the motive, the more it would generate thoughtful and effortful processing of persuasive message processing.

Among media context factors, the extant literature offered much emphasis on advertisement-context congruence (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, and Anckaert, 2002; Moorman *et al*., 2002). One study conceptualized congruence as the relevance of the association, showing the degree to which the information contained in the stimulus favors or hinders the identification of the theme or message being communicated (Heckler and Childers, 1992). That information also covers the expectancy, or the extent to which an item or information falls into a predetermined schema or a structure evoked by the theme. Previous studies have noted that congruence better stimulates user attention; if an advertisement of a suitcase is inserted into a travel article, it will generate better attention (MacInnis and Jaworski, 1989; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) by invoking relevance of association and expectancy match. To the contrary, if the same suitcase advertisement were presented in a health care magazine, the incongruency would create expectancy mismatch and less relevancy of association.

Consumers tend to approach digital media with specific motives; they also have the flexibility to change their motive during the media interaction from information gathering to entertainment. This is because they carry full control of the content and medium, and this control enables them to manipulate "what they see on the screen in real-time" (Stern, 1994, p. 1). This control helps them to achieve whatever specific motive they have while interacting with the medium in real time. On digital platforms, the meta-motivational levels of users fluctuate from a serious mind to a playful mind (Jung, Chu, Min, and Martin, 2014). Hence, one cannot ignore the possibility of this motive when a reader interacts with congruent (versus incongruent) advertising presented on digital media platforms. Thus:

Consumers tend to approach digital media with specific motives; they also have the flexibility to change their motive during the media interaction from information gathering to entertainment.

RQ1: How do the underlying motives of viewers visiting a digital media channel, explicitly e-magazines, condition the advertisement-context congruence and, in turn, shape their processing of an advertisement presented in the magazine?

The answer would add value to the digital media literature and help advertisers select suitable e-magazine platforms by incorporating the underlying motives of users. Studies have also supported the ability of individuals to assess or process persuasive messages (Park, Lee, and Han, 2007). The content presented in an advertisement message is an essential aspect, as it can affect persuasiveness (Pornpitakpan, 2004). When a strong message argument is presented, persuasion is improved (Cacioppo and Petty, 1979). In the extant literature, however, there has been no clarity regarding the importance of argument strength. Thus:

RQ2: Does the strength of the argument presented in an e-magazine advertisement affect reader persuasion?

The authors further presumed felt involvement to be an intervening factor that works to accentuate information processing and, hence, increase advertisement effectiveness. This is because, in an advertising setting, consumers often form persuasion through their involvement with the message itself, which is called "felt involvement" (Karmarkar and Tormala, 2010), and this process increases the effectiveness of the message (Myers, Royne, and Deitz, 2014; Segev, Wang, and Fernandes, 2014).

By addressing the aforementioned research gaps in advertisement literature, the current study offers contributions to both

theory and practice. For the first time, empirical evidence supports the conclusion that consumer-specific factors, such as motives, are conditional agents, shaping their processing of advertisement messages in congruent (versus incongruent) settings to develop advertisement persuasion on digital media. This is a much-needed understanding, as it provides directions to consider reader-related factors during message design and execution for digital advertising. The authors also explored the importance of the argument presented in the message as a boundary condition between the causal agent and the consumer-driven outcome, which is message persuasion. These findings help position messages in a way that creates better advertisement persuasion in digital settings.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

In this section, the authors provide a theoretical background that forms the foundation of the study. First, the study articulates the overarching framework: the goal-directed semantic memory. This framework is developed by integrating the interactive advertising model and the spreading activation model of semantic memory. On the basis of this framework, the authors discuss how consumer motive moderates the relationship between advertisement-context congruence and advertisement persuasion.

The Interactive Advertising Model

The interactive advertising model explains that when a user confronts an advertisement on digital media, information processing begins when the user switches his or her motive, such as from research to entertainment. The motive denotes the inner drive of the user to conduct an activity in that digital medium. On the basis of the differences in user motives—such as research, shopping, surfing, getting entertainment, information sharing, and socialization—they will differently attend to and comprehend the information presented while satisfying their purpose (Rodgers and Thorson, 2000). When a user enters the digital media to search for a product or service, arguably, he or she is serious-minded; that is, his or her activities are very goal-directed. Users also enter the media for entertainment, however, in which case their activities are purely experiential. In sum, the interactive advertising model classifies the user motive as "telic" (which is highly goal-oriented, more serious, and present-oriented) or as "paratelic" (which denotes low goal orientation and being more experiential and playful). This theoretical framework strongly supports the conclusion that user motives change more frequently on digital media platforms than on a traditional media platform. Hence, in this study, the authors presumed that consumer motive plays a critical role in directing the advertisement processing of users on a digital media platform.

If e-magazine context is able to prime memories or thoughts, then presenting an advertisement that is similar to the context will also create favorable memories or thoughts related to the advertisement.

Activation Models of Semantic Memory

According to the spreading activation model of semantic memory (Collins and Loftus, 1975) when an advertisement is presented in context, it can act as a cognitive prime. That is, the activation of a concept primes memories of other concepts that carry congruence either conceptually or semantically. Thus, if the advertisement is able to generate or prime memories of that context in which the advertisement presented is similar or congruent, then it also will prime memories related to the advertisement presented in that context. This theory has been further supported by many authors (*e.g.*, Yaveroglu and Donthu, 2008); advertisement recall increased when the advertisement was presented in similar or congruent context. Thus, this study presumed that if e-magazine context is able to prime memories or thoughts, then presenting an advertisement that is similar to the context will also create favorable memories or thoughts related to the advertisement.

Goal-Directed Semantic Memory

On the basis of the aforementioned theoretical frameworks, this study proposes an interactive framework, which the authors have called "goal-directed semantic memory." This framework explains that consumer goals or motives play a pivotal role in digital media information processing. These goals change in real time, following the preferences and priorities that consumers form when they are on digital media (*e.g.*, from information to entertainment). Consumers process the information presented in the media according to their real-time motives. In this setting, the consumer will be directed to the context that matches his or her motive or goal. If the content presented in that context matches the consumer motive, it will facilitate processing the information. This is because the match facilitates and provides a conviction that content presented in that context helps a consumer to achieve the goal in real time. If it does not match, then it will hinder or prevent the processing of the same, because of its inability to direct the goal achievement. In

this study, the authors examine the feasibility of this framework and empirically validate its relevance in digital media settings.

Role of Consumer Motive

Motives define the inner desire to fulfill a need or want actively (Rodgers and Thorson, 2000). Studies have emphasized that motives play a pivotal role in influencing consumer behavior on digital media (*e.g.*, Danaher and Mullarkey, 2003; Zanjani *et al.*, 2011). An earlier study classified user motives as either goal-directed or experiential (Hoffman and Novak, 1996). The goal-directed motive directs the user to make use of the media selectively and intentionally; hence, the user shows a purposeful exposure to particular content (Rubin and Perse, 1987). Experiential motives direct the user to use the media for escape, distraction, and relaxation so that the purpose of a session is not particularly a result-oriented one (Sheehan, 2002). Thus, following the previous literature, the authors conceptualized that a goal-directed motive is directed by extrinsic motivation, instrumental orientation, utilitarian benefits, directed search, goal-oriented choice, cognition, work and planned purchase (Novak, Hoffman, and Duhachek, 2003). The experiential motive then denotes ritualized orientation; intrinsic motivation; hedonic benefits; navigational choice; nondirected search; and affective, fun, and compulsive purchase (Novak *et al.*, 2003).

Past research in advertising has indicated the relationship between advertisement-context congruence, consumer motive, and consumer processing of the information (Ha and McCann, 2008; Zanjani *et al.*, 2011). Researchers found that advertisement-context congruence increases advertisement recognition for information seekers with goal-oriented motives but had no effect on internet surfers with experiential motives (Zanjani *et al.*, 2011). To further substantiate the conditional effect of consumer motive in e-magazine settings, the authors used goal-directed semantic memory to explain how goal-oriented/experientially oriented consumers would become more or less persuaded by an advertisement when it is congruent or incongruent with the context. The goal-directed semantic memory framework explains how people process stimuli differently on the basis of their motives and how its outcome changes attitudes and consequent behavior. It posits that when users are presented with a message or information, they may have different motives in their mind, and the differences in motives, in turn, influence their processing of the advertisement presented in the media.

Those individuals with goal-oriented motives generally find advertisements distracting and intrusive, interrupting searches and causing information overload (Danaher and Mullarkey, 2003; Ha and McCann, 2008). Goal-oriented users who believe that advertisements are impeding the task try to avoid them, which affects advertisement memory and persuasiveness (Cho and Cheon, 2004). One can argue that when goal-oriented users see an incongruent advertisement, they respond less positively to it, as it is not related to their goals, and so they have reduced elaboration, leading to reduced persuasiveness. The goal-directed orientation heightens their relevancy and expectancy match perception; hence, when they see an advertisement-context setting that violates this, it reduces their elaboration to process the incongruent advertisement. When the advertisement presented is congruent with the context, however, it will create higher relevancy perception, and they consider it one that follows their expectancies. It therefore creates higher elaboration and, in turn, effective persuasion.

On the other hand, users with experiential motives are less involved in the context compared with goal-oriented users, so they would respond less positively to the congruent advertisements, and when they see an advertisement in a context that is incongruent, then it will capture their attention and they will have increased cognitive elaboration (*e.g.*, Smith and Petty, 1996). Experientially oriented consumers do not seek relevance and also show less expectancy concerning the platform with which they interact while observing the advertisement. Primarily, they would like to interact with a platform providing fun and entertainment. Hence, they always prefer platforms and content that do not follow relevance and their expectancy match. Thus:

H1: In e-magazine advertisement settings, consumer motive influences the effect of advertisement-context congruence on advertisement persuasion, such that:

H1a: Goal-oriented consumers develop high (versus low) advertisement persuasion when exposed to an advertisement that is congruent (incongruent) with the context.

H1b: Experientially oriented consumers develop high (versus low) advertisement persuasion when exposed to an advertisement that is incongruent (congruent) with the context.

Role of Consumer Felt Involvement

Consumer felt involvement has been defined as "the level of involvement a consumer feels" (Martin and Marshall, 1999, p. 208). The felt involvement of a consumer has two antecedents: intrinsic sources of personal relevance (ISPRs) and situational sources of personal relevance (SSPRs; Celsi and Olson, 1988). According to Celsi and Olson, "a wide variety of specific stimuli, cues, and contingencies in a consumer's immediate environment may function as SSPR[s]" (1988, p. 211). These stimuli shape the consequences, values, and goals of consumers. The stimuli that may function as

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SSPRs will become sources of felt involvement if they activate self-relevant goals and are seen as related directly to essential goals.

ISPRs are "relatively stable, enduring structures of personally relevant knowledge, derived from experience and stored in long-term memory" (Celsi and Olson 1988, p. 211). Someone who likes to know about automobiles, for example, would pay more attention to those advertisements in a magazine that is personally relevant (such as one about cars and bikes). These readers experience more involvement with those personally relevant advertisements. Previous research has stated the role of consumer felt involvement in comprehension and attention (Celsi and Olson, 1988).

A consumer viewing his or her task as a goal-directed one will pay less attention to peripheral materials, especially those unrelated to the task (Danaher and Mullarkey, 2003), which leads to low elaboration. If such consumers find the advertisement in the magazine congruent, they will elaborate more to it, which will result in more persuasion (Miniard, Bhatla, Lord, Dickson, and Unnava, 1991; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann, 1983). On the other hand, experiential users are not result-oriented (Sheehan, 2002); they do not have a particular goal in mind, and they usually browse content, including peripheral advertisements that are exciting and surprising. Here, advertisements dissimilar to the context would stand out, as this increases their elaboration, and users would perceive them as more exciting and personally relevant. Congruent and incongruent elaboration, however, will lead to persuasion through felt involvement (Karmarkar and Tormala, 2010). This is because experiential consumers are oriented more toward surprising things; therefore, they prefer to look at incongruent things and provide more elaboration for those aspects. This increased elaboration leads to more persuasion through felt involvement (Chaiken *et al.*, 1989; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986).

The authors also argue that when the condition promotes motivation and the ability of the individual to use issue-relevant thinking, the processing concerning the advertisement will be favorable (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). For a goal-oriented user, when the advertisement in the magazine is similar to the context, it will encourage reader motivation and ability to engage in thinking that is issue relevant, as it acts as an ISPR; hence, elaboration with the similar advertisements will be high. This increased elaboration driven by ISPRs creates greater felt involvement, leading to higher persuasion (Karmarkar and Tormala, 2010). On the other hand, for an experiential user, when the magazine advertisement is divergent from the context, it will draw the attention of the user, who will be motivated and will engage in issue-relevant thinking (here, a dissimilar advertisement), as in this situation it acts as an SSPR; hence, persuasion with the advertisements will be high. This increased persuasion driven by the SSPR will create greater felt involvement and lead to higher persuasion (Karmarkar and Tormala, 2010). Thus:

H2: Consumer felt involvement with the advertisement mediates the interaction effect of Advertisement-Context Congruence × Consumer Motive on advertisement persuasion.

Role of Argument Strength

In addition to the aforementioned interaction, and intervening mechanism, the authors also examined the role of argument strength, proposed as an essential element in the advertising literature (*e.g.*, Karmarkar and Tormala, 2010; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Karmarkar and Tormala (2010) argued that elaboration would enhance or weaken persuasion depending on argument strength. When a strong argument exists, stronger elaboration will boost the speed of persuasion (Karmarkar and Tormala, 2010), and it can also affect the effectiveness of the advertisements (Pornpitakpan, 2004). In this study, the authors initiated a proposition substantiating an important question: How would argument strength condition the effect of felt involvement on message persuasion?

Previous literature states that more elaboration improves persuasion when the message is strong in its argument, and diminishes persuasion when the message is weak in its argument (Petty and Cacioppo, 1979). Also, when the message has weak arguments, higher involvement would reduce, reverse, or eliminate the effect (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Hence, the authors proposed that when goal-oriented users come across a congruent magazine advertisement, they are motivated for higher processing and elaboration, as it is related to their goal. The level of persuasion now depends on the argument strength in the advertisement, because, in a greater elaboration condition, a strong argument will increase persuasion, whereas a weak advertisement will decrease persuasion.

Similarly, when goal-oriented users interact with an incongruent advertisement, the consequent effect of felt involvement will

For experiential users, when the magazine advertisement is dissimilar to the context, they find it more surprising, which will increase information processing and lead to elaboration and more felt involvement, ultimately resulting in more considerable advertisement persuasion.

be relatively low. In this situation, presenting a strong argument would not direct the users for higher processing, as it is not related to their goal; hence, there is no motivation for them. Therefore, the felt involvement would be low, and elaboration would be less, leading to decreased persuasiveness despite persuasive arguments, as the discrimination between both kinds of arguments will be reduced (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Similarly, for experiential users, when the magazine advertisement is dissimilar to the context, they find it more surprising, which will increase information processing and lead to elaboration and more felt involvement, ultimately resulting in more considerable advertisement persuasion. In this situation, presenting a strong (versus weak) argument would create a difference in user persuasion. When an experiential user views an incongruent advertisement, this creates a higher level of advertisement persuasion. In this setting, presenting a strong argument in the advertisement heightens its intrinsic/situational personal relevance, creating stronger advertisement persuasion outcomes. In the study, the authors argue that, in an incongruent advertisement setting, presenting a strong argument will direct more advertisement-related information processing for the experientially oriented consumers. This processing would be better when they are exposed to a strong message argument in an e-magazine setting. Thus:

H3: Argument strength of the advertisement moderates the conditional mediating effect of felt involvement (Condition on Motive × Advertisement-Context Congruence) on advertisement persuasion such that:

H3a: Exposure of goal-directed consumers to a congruent advertisement will create a heightened level of felt involvement and, in turn, develop high (low) advertisement persuasion when they are exposed to a strong (weak) message argument.

H3b: Exposure of experiential consumers to an incongruent advertisement will create a heightened level of felt involvement and, in turn, develop high (low) advertisement persuasion when they are exposed to a strong (weak) message argument.

STUDY 1

To test H1a and H1b, the authors applied a one-group (congruence: high versus low) between-subjects experimental design. In this design, consumer motive concerning reading was considered as a chronic or trait element. Hence, the authors measured motives during the experimentation rather than manipulation.

Stimuli Selection

Selection of the stimuli used to manipulate advertisement-context congruence was based on a focus group interview and follow-up pretests. First, on the basis of a focus group interview, the authors selected two magazine settings as study contexts: *Automobile Magazine* and *Healthcare Magazine*. Following expert advice and extant literature, an automobile advertisement (fictitious) in an automobile magazine was selected as the stimulus with high context congruence, and an automobile advertisement in a health care magazine was selected as the stimulus with incongruence (Zanjani *et al.*, 2011). The automobile advertisement in an automobile magazine was selected on the basis of the fact that the context should be relevant to the automobile advertisement or be expected by the reader while reading the automobile magazine. Contrary to this, an automobile advertisement in a health care magazine was selected because the context is irrelevant to the automobile advertisement, meaning that it does not contribute to the theme of the magazine or that the reader generally does not expect this advertisement within the health care context. The stimuli were placed in these magazines as manipulations for the study experiment. A pretest was conducted to finalize the stimuli.

Participants and Procedure

As part of the study, the authors made an open invitation to all graduate students of a university to participate in an experiment. Within two weeks, 390 students reported their willingness, and all of them reported that they read different types of e-magazines on digital platforms. From this group, the authors randomly selected 128 students aged 18 to 26 years old. These participants were invited to the university computer lab. To confirm the quality of

the collected data, the authors excluded those participants with suspicious patterns. This resulted in a final usable sample of 120 participants (67 percent men; mean age = 20.11, SD = 2.23).

Selected participants were randomly assigned to the two different advertisement-context congruence conditions. Participants were instructed to use the devices (*e.g.*, tablets) placed on their respective seats. The devices provided were connected to a local Wi-Fi network of the university. After providing detailed instructions, the respondents were given directions to click and open the respective magazine icons placed on the front page of these devices. Later, the respondents were given 15 minutes to read or browse through the magazine. At the end of this process, the participants were instructed to close their devices and answer the survey forms placed on their respective tablets.

Measures

The authors assessed consumer motive using a two-item, 7-point scale adapted from previous literature (*e.g.*, Sánchez-Franco and Roldan, 2005). The first item captures goal orientation, and the second item captures experiential orientation. During the analysis, the authors reverse coded the first item. The average score of these two items was calculated and considered as a measure of consumer motive (α = 0.78), with higher scores indicating experiential orientation and lower values indicating a goal-oriented motive. The outcome variable, advertisement persuasion, was measured by taking the composite score of product attitude and purchase intention (adapted from Karmarkar and Tormala, 2010). The manipulation of advertisement-context congruence was measured by asking respondents to rate the degree to which they feel that the selected advertisements and magazine content match each other (adapted from Moorman *et al.*, 2002).

Data Analysis

As part of the data analysis, the authors first analyzed the manipulation of advertisement-context congruence and found that the manipulation was successful. Then, to test the study hypotheses, the authors used the moderation analysis (Model 1) following the recommendation of Hayes (2018) using SPSS PROCESS, a software package used for interactive, or batched, statistical analysis. The manipulated advertisement-context congruence was significant (β = 1.42; bootstrapped [Boot] 95 percent confidence interval [CI] = 0.7706, 2.071; See Table 1). It indicated that those people exposed to low advertisement-context congruence (indicated as 0) versus high advertisement-context congruence (indicated as 1) reported a difference in advertisement persuasion, whereas those exposed to high advertisement-context congruence indicated a high advertisement persuasion score. Similarly, the consumer motive estimates also supported a significant negative effect on advertisement persuasion (β = –0.693; 95 percent CI = –0.80, –0.58), indicating that, as the motive level of the users increases (*i.e.*, as and when they become more experiential), advertisement persuasion decreases. Last, the interaction between advertisement-context congruence and consumer motive also showed a significant effect (β = –0.222; 95 percent CI = –0.36, –0.07). To better understand the effect of moderation, the authors also analyzed the effect of advertisement-context congruence at different levels of moderation using spotlight analysis (Spillier, Fitzsimons, Lynch, and McClelland, 2013). For individuals with low motive (goal orientation [mean – SD] = 2.56), the effect of advertisement-context congruence on advertisement persuasion was reported as high (β = 0.849; 95 percent CI = 0.52, 1.17; See Figure 1 and Table 1). For individuals with a high motive level (experiential orientation [mean + SD] = 5.59), however, the effect

Table 1 Data Analysis Results of Study 1

	Coeff	SE	*t*	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Dependent variable: Advertisement persuasion						
Constant	6.7193	0.2870	23.4162	0.00	6.1510	7.2877
Motive	–0.6936	0.0541	–12.8240	0.00	–0.8007	–0.5865
Congruity	1.421	0.3284	4.3272	0.00	0.7706	2.0714
Motive × Congruity	–0.2224	0.0744	–2.9886	0.0034	–0.3699	–0.0750
Conditional effect of advertisement-context congruity on advertisement persuasion at various consumer motive levels						
Moderator: Motive	Effect	SE	*t*	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Mean – SD (low level) = 2.5682	0.8497	0.1624	5.2320	0.00	0.528	1.1714
Mean (medium) = 4.0833	0.5127	0.1122	4.5686	0.00	0.2904	0.7350
Mean + SD (high level) = 5.5984	0.1757	0.1557	1.1283	0.2615	–0.1327	0.4841

Notes: Sample size = 120. Coeff = coefficient; LLCI and ULCI represent the 95% confidence interval lower and upper levels, respectively.

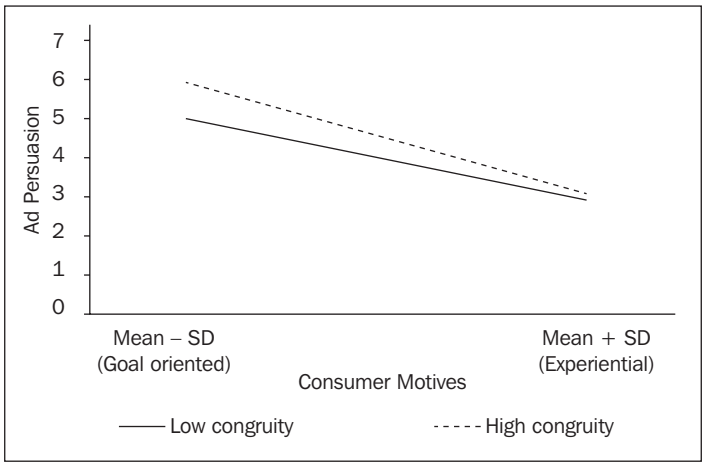


Figure 1 Interaction Plot Showing the Effect of Context Congruity × Motive on Ad Persuasion

of advertisement-context congruence on advertisement persuasion was reported as low and insignificant (β = 0.175; 95 percent CI = –0.132, 0.484). To confirm the spotlight results and analyze the range of values of the moderator at which the difference in advertisement-context congruence exposure creates an effect on advertisement persuasion, the authors conducted a floodlight analysis using the Johnson–Neyman technique. The results supported the hypothesis that, for those who reported 5 or above on the motive scale, differences in context congruence exposure create no difference in advertisement persuasion (motive score at 5.17: effect = 0.26, $p = 0.050$). For those who reported values in the motive scale below 5, however, context congruence exposure creates a difference in advertisement persuasion (motive score at 5.00: effect = 0.30, $p = 0.001$). Hence, the study found support for H1a but did not find support for H1b.

Discussion

In line with the postulations made in H1, the authors found that the reading motives of consumers as a chronic element moderate the effect of advertisement-context congruence on advertisement persuasion. More specifically, the results supported that goaloriented consumers develop a high level of advertisement persuasion when the advertisement is presented in a high context-congruent setting, therefore supporting H1a. Contradicting their postulation in H1b, the authors found that, for experiential consumers, presenting the advertisement in a congruent context (versus incongruent context) does not create any difference in their advertisement persuasion.

STUDY 2

The objectives of Study 2 were twofold. First, the authors wanted to replicate the Study 1 findings considering consumer motive as a situational orientation instead of a chronic orientation and to analyze it in a different magazine advertisement setting. Second, the authors also aimed to analyze the intervening role of felt involvement to shape the interactive effect of advertisement-context congruence on advertisement persuasion.

In this study, the authors applied a 2 (context congruence: high versus low) × 2 (motive: goal-oriented versus experiential) between-subjects design. Unlike in the previous study, the authors manipulated both advertisement-context congruence and consumer motive as between-subjects factors, whereas consumer motive was manipulated by using scenarios.

Participants, Procedure, and Measures

Similar to Study 1, the authors conducted Study 2 at a different time, and the responses also were collected from the same university. This study was performed as part of a large marketing researcher job drive conducted for graduate students at the university. The authors confirmed that none of the Study 2 participants participated in the first study. Study 2 participants were recruited from a registered list of the recruiting agency, expressed their willingness to participate in an experiment, and also confirmed their eligibility. Thus, the authors were able to identify 136 interested eligible participants for an experiment (mean age = 22.47, SD = 2.28; 65 percent men).

The experimentation procedure was similar to that of Study 1, except for motive manipulation. Participant motive manipulation was achieved using scenarios following Büttner, Florack, and Göritz (2013). Selected participants were randomly assigned to either the goal-oriented ($n = 67$) or the experiential ($n = 69$) condition manipulation. In the goal-oriented manipulation condition, the participants were exposed to a situation in which they read a scenario that stimulated a particular goal or objective (*e.g.*, mobile phone purchase). In the experiential condition, the reader read a scenario that stimulated the reader just to browse or surf the magazine articles (*e.g.*, casual reading). As in Study 1, in the high context-congruent condition, the study participants received a mobile advertisement in a mobile magazine setting; in the incongruent condition, participants received the same advertisement in a travel magazine setting.

After receiving detailed instructions, the participants first read the study scenario and then were exposed to the magazine. All of them were then instructed to report their motives. The items were similar to the chronic motive scale used in Study 1. After 15 minutes, participants were instructed to close their respective devices and directed to give their responses. To measure advertisement-context congruence and the outcome variable, advertisement persuasion, the authors used the same scales as in Study 1.

Table 2 Data Analysis Results of Study 2

	Coeff	SE	*t*	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Dependent variable: Felt involvement						
Constant	3.3528	0.1454	23.0623	0	3.0652	3.6403
Congruity	0.3553	0.2056	1.7282	0.0863	–0.0514	0.7620
Motive	–0.1222	0.2041	–0.5984	0.5506	–0.5259	0.2816
Motive × Congruity	0.6751	0.2908	2.3215	0.0218	0.0999	1.2504
Dependent variable: Advertisement persuasion						
Constant	–0.4104	0.3186	–1.2882	0.2000	–1.0406	0.2198
Felt involvement	0.9199	0.0850	10.8167	0	0.7517	1.0882
Congruity	0.2848	0.2031	1.4020	0.1633	–0.1171	0.6867
Motive	0.0074	0.1997	0.0370	0.9705	–0.3877	0.4025
Motive × Congruity	0.4781	0.2899	1.6490	0.1015	–0.0954	1.0516
Conditional (Congruity × Motive) indirect effect (via felt involvement) on advertisement persuasion						
Mediator: Felt involvement	Moderator: Motive		Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Involvement	0 = experiential		0.3269	0.1385	0.0672	0.6162
Involvement	1 = goal oriented		0.9479	0.2273	0.5094	1.4162
Index of moderated mediation						
Felt involvement			Index	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
			0.6211	0.2677	0.0933	1.1531

Notes: Sample size = 136. Coeff = coefficient; LLCI and ULCI represent the 95% confidence interval (CI) lower and upper levels, respectively; BootLLCI and BootULCI represent the bias-corrected bootstrapped (Boot) 95% CI lower and upper levels, respectively. Number of bootstrap samples for bias-corrected bootstrapped CI = 10,000. Indicator coding schemes were used to represent the moderators, such as advertisement-context congruity (1= high, 0 = low), and consumer motive (1 = goal oriented, 0 = experiential).

Additionally, the authors measured consumer felt involvement using two questions (Karmarkar and Tormala, 2010).

Data Analysis and Results

As in Study 1, the authors checked the manipulation of both advertisement-context congruence and consumer motive. The results supported that both manipulations were successful.

Before testing H2, the authors first checked the generalizability of the Study 1 results using Study 2 data. As part of this, the authors performed a simple moderation model (Model 1, without controlling the mediator) and examined the interaction of advertisement-context congruence (coded as 1 = high congruence, 0 = low congruence) and consumer motive (coded as 1 = goal orientation, 0 as experiential) on advertisement persuasion. The results were in support with Study 1 findings and supported a statistically significant positive interaction of Context Congruence × Motive on advertisement persuasion (Congruence × Motive: $\beta = 1.099$, $\eta^2 = 0.057$; 95 percent CI = 0.3287, 1.86). Additionally, the conditional effect of congruence at different levels of motive indicated that, in the case of high context congruence, an exposure of goal orientation creates advertisement persuasion (effect = 1.071, $p < 0.01$); however, experiential orientation has no effect on advertisement persuasion (effect = 0.61, $p = 02$).

As part of analyzing the Study 2 objectives, the authors also conducted data analysis following Hayes (2018) and examined the conditional indirect effect (Model 8). The study results supported a significant interaction of Advertisement-Context Congruence × Motive on the mediator, felt involvement ($\beta = 0.675$, $\eta^2 = .039$; 95% CI = 0.099, 1.25; See Table 2). Felt involvement also was found to have a significant effect on advertisement persuasion ($\beta = 0.919$, $\eta^2 = 0.472$; 95% CI = 0.75, 1.78). Later, the authors tested the effect of the Advertisement-Context Congruence × Motive interaction effect on advertisement persuasion. This effect supported that, while controlling the effect of the mediator, the interaction effect was reported as insignificant (direct effect [β] = 0.478, $\eta^2 = 0.020$; 95 percent CI = –0.095, 1.05). The analysis of the pairwise contrast between the conditional indirect effect of context congruence (versus incongruence) indicated that goal orientation creates higher (conditional indirect effect$_{[\text{goal orientation}]}$ = 0.9479, Boot SE = 0.231; 95 percent CI = 0.490, 1.40) advertisement persuasion through felt involvement than that of experiential orientation (conditional indirect effect$_{[\text{goal orientation}]}$ = 0.326, Boot SE = 0.136; 95 percent

CI = 0.059, 0.597). The analysis of the difference in conditional indirect effect, reflected in the moderated mediation index, supported a positive and significant effect (β = 0.621; 95 percent [Boot] CI = 0.093, 1.1531). It indicated that as the advertisement becomes highly congruent (versus incongruent), the use of goal-oriented (versus experiential) exposure creates a significant difference and develops the difference in felt involvement of the study participants, which, in turn, directs their advertisement persuasion. Therefore, the study showed that, in the Advertisement-Context Congruence × Consumer Motive interaction, there exists a mediation effect of felt involvement on advertisement persuasion. Hence, the study supported H2.

Discussion

In Study 2, the authors found that when consumers were exposed to high context congruence (versus incongruence), the situational exposure of goal orientation strongly influenced consumer felt involvement with the advertisement presented, which, in turn, increased their advertisement persuasion. Similarly, when the consumers were exposed to high context congruence (versus incongruence), the situational exposure of goal orientation influenced the felt involvement toward the advertisement (although not as strongly as the situational exposure of goal orientation), which in turn, influenced their advertisement persuasion. Thus, Study 2 extends Study 1 by providing some additional insights showing the intervening effect of felt involvement as a strong mechanism. That is, in Study 1, the authors found that the presence of a high level of advertisement-context congruence has an effect on advertisement persuasion for goal-oriented consumers, but it does not create any effect for experiential customers. By contrast, in Study 2, the authors found that, in the presence of high advertisement-context congruence, both goal-oriented and experiential consumers developed advertisement persuasion through felt involvement. This process is strong for goal-oriented consumers, however, in comparison with experiential consumers.

STUDY 3

In Study 3, the authors extended Studies 1 and 2 and examined whether the strength of the argument presented in the advertisement moderates the aforementioned conditional mediation effect. The authors applied a 2 (advertisement-context congruence: high versus low) × 2 (motive: goal-oriented versus experiential) × 2 (argument strength: strong versus weak) between-subjects design.

Methods, Participants, and Procedure

In Study 3, 248 study participants from a large consumer panel were selected after their eligibility to participate in the experiment was confirmed. In Study 3, the authors used a higher sample size, and the responses were collected from a different target group (nonstudents). This was because of the desire to capture a small effect size with sufficient power (80 percent power, $\alpha = 0.05$) and to achieve external validity for the previous studies. The study participants were invited to a meeting place after expressing their willingness to participate in an experiment. The authors randomly allocated participants to the nine different experimental conditions (mean age = 32.45 years, SD = 5.44; 56 percent women).

The procedures used in Study 3 for manipulating advertisement-context congruence and the motive conditions were similar to those in Study 2. To develop the stimuli carrying weak versus strong argument strength, however, the authors followed the instructions of Petty *et al.* (1983).

The data collection procedure was similar to that used in Study 2. The authors measured questions related to the manipulation check, the mediator, items covering the outcome variable, covariates, and demographic and other background information. The additional information sought in this study in comparison with Study 2 was related to the manipulation of argument strength. In measuring the manipulation of argument strength, the authors used a two-item scale adapted from Sanbonmatsu and Kardes (1988).

Data Analysis and Results

A check of the three manipulated variables showed that they were successfully executed. To test H3a and H3b, the authors followed the PROCESS approach recommended by Hayes (2018). Following this approach, the authors used Model 22, which examines the conditional moderated mediation analysis with 10,000 bootstrap samples generated from the original dataset ($N = 240$). To examine the stated hypothesis, the authors first examined the interaction effect of Advertisement-Context Congruence × Consumer Motive on the mediator, felt involvement. The results supported a significant interaction effect on the mediator (β = 3.12, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.382$; 95 percent CI = 2.6, 3.63; See Figure 2 and Table 3). It indicated that the exposure to a high level of advertisement-context congruence (coded as 1) corresponded to a high level of felt involvement toward the advertisement among consumers with goal-oriented motives (coded as 1), in comparison with exposure to a low level of advertisement-context congruence (coded as 0) among experientially oriented consumers (coded as 0). The authors also tested whether the effect of the felt involvement on advertisement persuasion is conditioned by the strength of the argument presented in the advertisement. The interaction effect of Felt Involvement × Argument Strength showed a positive and significant effect on advertisement persuasion (β = 0.2114, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.052$; 95 percent CI = 0.093, 0.329; See Figure 3). This helps infer that the effect

Table 3 Data Analysis Results of Study 3

	Coeff	SE	*t*	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Dependent variable: Felt involvement						
Constant	3.9155	0.1293	30.288	0.00	3.6608	4.1702
Congruity	–0.5468	0.1828	–2.9909	0.0031	–0.907	–0.1866
Motive	–1.4886	0.1828	–8.1423	0.00	–1.8488	–1.1284
Congruity × Motive	3.125	0.2586	12.0865	0.00	2.6156	3.6344
Dependent variable: Advertisement persuasion						
Constant	1.7856	0.1994	8.953	0.00	1.3927	2.1786
Felt involvement	0.5246	0.0520	10.0846	0.00	0.4221	0.6271
Congruity	0.2447	0.1134	2.1576	0.032	0.0213	0.4681
Argument strength	–0.3368	0.2356	–1.4292	0.1543	–0.801	0.1275
Felt Involvement × Argument Strength	0.2114	0.0599	3.5302	0.0005	0.0934	0.3294
Motive	0.0264	0.1273	0.2072	0.836	–0.2245	0.2772
Congruity × Motive	0.1588	0.2051	0.7744	0.4395	–0.2453	0.563

Index of moderated moderated mediation

Mediator	Index	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Felt involvement	0.6607	0.2472	0.2072	1.175

Conditional indirect effect (via felt involvement) of advertisement-context congruity at various levels of the moderators

Motive	Argument Strength	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
0	0	–0.2869	0.0978	–0.50	–0.1176
0	1	–0.4025	0.1290	–0.6653	–0.1568
1	0	1.3526	0.2147	0.956	1.8046
1	1	1.8977	0.1754	1.5635	2.2536

Index of conditional moderated mediation

Moderator: Motive	Argument strength	Index	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Felt involvement	0	1.6394	0.2649	1.1446	2.1828
Felt involvement	1	2.3002	0.2337	1.8617	2.7757

Notes: Sample size = 240. Coeff = coefficient; LLCI and ULCI represent the 95% confidence interval (CI) lower and upper levels, respectively; BootLLCI and BootULCI represent bias-corrected bootstrapped (Boot) 95% CI lower and upper levels, respectively. Number of bootstrap samples for bias-corrected bootstrapped CI = 10,000. Indicator coding schemes were used to represent the moderators, such as advertisement-context congruity (1 = high, 0 = low), motive (1 = goal oriented, 0 = experiential), and argument strength (1 = strong, 0 = weak).

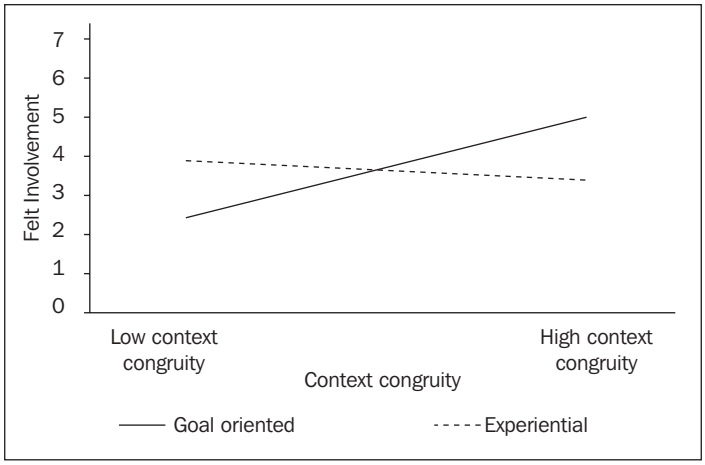


Figure 2 Interaction of Context Congruity × Motive on Felt Involvement

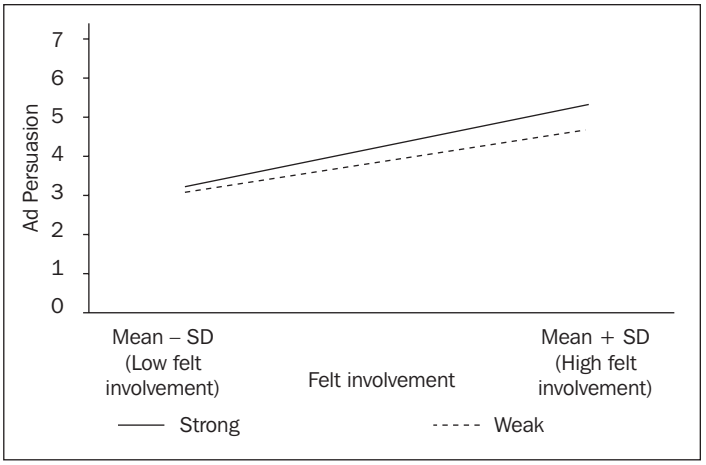


Figure 3 Interaction of Felt Involvement × Argument on Ad Persuasion

In the case of goal-oriented motives, context congruence (versus incongruence) creates higher felt involvement.

of felt involvement on advertisement persuasion is conditioned by argument strength; that is, when the felt involvement of the consumers increases, exposure to a strong argument in the advertisement (coded as 1) creates a high level of advertisement persuasion in comparison with exposure to a weak argument in the advertisement (coded as 0).

Detailed probing of the conditional mediation effects using the preplanned contrast test results showed that, in the case of goal-oriented motives, context congruence (versus incongruence) creates higher felt involvement, which in turn, creates higher advertisement persuasion in the case of a strong argument strength condition (effect = 1.897; 95 percent CI = 1.57, 2.25) versus that of a weak argument strength condition (effect = 1.35; 95 percent CI = 0.94, 1.78). The differential effect of these two also was found to be statistically significant (effect = 0.545; 95 percent CI = 0.162, 0.94). Thus, H3a was supported.

The contrast test results also supported that, in the case of experiential motive, context incongruence (versus congruence) creates higher felt involvement, which, in turn, creates a higher advertisement persuasion in the case of a strong argument strength condition (effect = –0.402; 95 percent CI = –0.67, –0.15) than that of the weak argument strength condition (effect = –0.286; 95 percent CI = –0.49, –0.10). The difference between these two also was found to be statistically significant (effect = –0.1156; 95 percent CI = –0.24, –0.02). Thus, H3b was supported.

Discussion

Using a different sample (*e.g.*, nonstudent participants), this study confirmed the findings of the previous study that consumer motive moderates the effect of advertisement-context congruence on the felt involvement of consumers toward the advertisement and that this, in turn, works as a precursor to the advertisement persuasion process. When the advertisement is presented in high advertisement-context-congruent settings, the goal-oriented consumers develop better felt involvement toward the advertisement, which, in turn, directs a better advertisement persuasion process for them. When the advertisement is presented in a low advertisement-context-congruent setting, then the experiential consumers develop better felt involvement, which, in turn, better directs their advertisement processing.

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study provide some valid theoretical directions to academicians and researchers.

First, based on the goal-directed semantic memory framework, the authors found that advertisement-context congruence creates a difference in advertisement persuasion and that this advertisement persuasion would be better for consumers with a goal-oriented motive. This may be because of the priming effect (Moorman *et al.*, 2002; Yi, 1990), which may arise when chronic goal-oriented consumers are exposed to a highly congruent advertisement. On the contrary, the authors did not find any support for this priming effect when experiential consumers were exposed to advertisements with high (versus low) levels of context congruence. This is because experiential orientation as a chronic individual characteristic directs the consumers to go for a casual search or to explore things casually. Hence, the context congruence (versus incongruence) does not prime their cognitive processing of the advertisement embedded in the magazine. This finding adds a new theoretical framework in digital advertising, goal-directed semantic memory. Researchers working in this domain look at the usefulness of this framework to examine the effect of consumer-driven and context-driven aspects on various advertisement-related outcomes.

When the authors considered the effect of consumer felt involvement as an intervening variable, however, the results provided some different findings; that is, they supported the conclusion that both (goal-oriented versus experiential) motives work as a boundary condition to shape the effect of advertisement-context congruence on advertisement persuasion through the mediating effect of felt involvement. In conditions with high levels of advertisement-context congruence, the goal orientation of consumers increases the felt involvement, which, in turn, directs them to form better advertisement persuasion. Contrary to this, in conditions with low levels of advertisement-context congruence, the experiential orientation of consumers directs them to develop better felt involvement, which, in turn, directs them to form advertisement-relevant persuasion. Theoretically, this finding shows the importance of considering the consumer felt involvement as a critical situational and personal relevant mechanism to develop consumer advertisement-related outcomes.

The study results also support the conclusion that the effect of felt involvement to develop advertisement persuasion is conditional on the strength of the argument presented in the advertisement. It indicates that the ISPR/SSPR elicited by the high level of advertisement-context congruence for goal-oriented consumers develops the consumer felt involvement toward the advertisement in a better fashion. This, in turn, creates a stronger form of

advertisement persuasion when they are exposed to the stronger product or service-related claim of the presented advertisement. Theoretically, this study is the first in its stream of literature to show that argument strength plays an important conditional role in shaping the effect of consumer felt involvement in creating advertisement persuasion, where the effect of felt involvement can be strengthened by exposing strong arguments or claims related to the product or services in the advertisement.

Managerial Implications

Targeting the right audience and delivering the intended message through a suitable platform are increasingly fundamental elements of a digital advertising strategy. In light of the growing importance of digital advertising, this study identifies meaningful managerial opportunities and challenges that offer insight on how to implement digital advertising through e-magazines.

The study shows advertisers that, while designing digital advertising, there is a need to assess the requirement concerning the target audience and their underlying motives. Considering the motive or purpose in mind, the company should choose a platform that carries congruency (versus incongruency). If the company targets experientially oriented people, for example, providing information or advertisements that are incongruent with the context will be more effective. If, however, the company expects to reach people who search with a goal in their mind, then it is better to select a platform that is highly harmonious or congruent. The findings suggest that managers need to carefully assess the aforementioned aspect, because this may enhance consumer situational/personal relevance toward the advertisement, leading to better advertisement persuasion.

This insight can guide media planners and help them to choose an advertisement campaign by analyzing the target audience of the client. Specifically, the findings of this study can guide managers and media planners on how to implement advertising through digital media, particularly in e-magazines, by selecting advertisements based on target audiences with different motives.

On the practical front, this study also directs advertisement designers and advertisement developers to focus more on the strength of the product/service argument/claim in the presented advertisement. As mentioned earlier, the use of online advertising is increasing, but the attention to advertisements seen in terms of click-through rates is decreasing. Because consumers are looking for information, even from advertisements, it is essential to present the claim of the product or service features in the advertisement. The strength of the arguments related to the advertised product or services in the advertisements needs to be addressed through the kinds of claims that are made about the product features.

Finally, the findings indicate that managers can devise a risk-minimization approach by selecting suitable e-magazine platforms and avoid the adverse effects of presenting their advertisements in nonsuitable settings. By placing their content in the right magazines after looking at the target audience, they can mitigate the potential adverse effect of perceived nonsuitability.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The study findings have ample theoretical and managerial contributions; however, the study suffers from some limitations. First, only two types of motives (*e.g.*, goal-oriented versus experiential) were manipulated. Future research could include persons with different pre-existing motives and could examine how the effects of these motives take place and impact the advertisement persuasion of consumers in a real-world context. The authors also recommend that the current research propositions be tested with a different set of target audiences, such as corporate executives, who read e-newspapers more frequently. Finally, the authors also recognize that, between strong congruence and incongruence, there is also the possibility of moderate congruence/incongruence. While reading the e-magazine, for example, the reader may perceive that the advertisement presented is moderately relevant and with an expectancy matching the context or that the advertisement presented is relevant to the context but not expected in this context. In this study, the authors did not consider the differentiating effect of moderate congruity/incongruity. They recommend that future researchers look at the possibility of this moderate congruity/incongruity in addition to the consideration of a strong congruity versus incongruity. JAR

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