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# The Effect of Stealth Advertising in Newscasts on Viewers' Recall

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The Effect of Stealth Advertising in Newscasts on Viewers' Recall

by

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of the requirements for the degree of  
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## Abstract

Product placement, also referred to as stealth advertising, raises important questions when it comes to television because a far larger audience views television than movies. Product placement in newscasts is even more controversial. Television news is expected to be free of persuasive attempts and provide citizens with basic information that is of public importance. Yet, product placement blurs the line between journalism and commercial promotion, thus destroying the integrity of the news.

Product placement in newscasts raises ethical questions about the effect it has on viewers, provided that they do not realize that they are presented with commercials, framed as news story. Yet, this paper argues that, since viewers focus on the actual news and do not elaborate consciously on the advertised product or brand, product placement in newscasts has little effect on their brand recall. To support this hypothesis the paper compares brand recall from product placement and commercials.

Results revealed that this hypothesis is partially true. Important discovery from this study is the fact that product placement directly affects news credibility.

## Chapter One:

### Introduction

Product placement on television is one of the fastest growing, and most debated advertising tools. A Nielsen report on ad spending in U.S. revealed that product placement on TV increased 22 percent between 2006 and 2010, where 5,381 product placements appeared across 12 broadcast and major cable networks in prime time (McAdams, 2011). Product placement has been utilized for over 100 years, yet it was reinvented as a commercially valuable tool with the 1982 movie “E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial”, where the “Reese’s Pieces” candy debuted. The economy, the Internet, the audience fragmentation, and the introduction of Replay TV and TiVO, a digital video recorder that provides an opportunity to skip (zip) the commercials, are some of the reasons that encouraged advertisers to search for new avenues to attract viewers. Thus, nowadays brand appearances in scripted programs, such as soap operas, sitcoms, drama series, music videos, movies, as well as sports and reality shows are considered by many a normal part of the program.

By definition, conventional advertising is “. . . the nonpersonal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services, or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media.” (Bovee & Ahrens, 1986, p. 5, as cited in Thorson, 1996). Conversely, product placement on television, also known as stealth advertising, brand placement, covert advertising, etc., is “. . . the encroachment of commercially tinted messages” (Chernov, 2010, p. 33) that carries implicit promotional

content into the TV segments. In particular, product placements are: (a) messages that are embedded in, and therefore not distinct from, the editorial content; with (b) high level of disguise and obtrusiveness; with (c) unidentified sponsor; and (d) no specific regulations (Balasubramanian, Karrh, & Patwardhan, 2006).

Based on type of financial compensation, Choi (2007) distinguished between three types of product placement: gratis arrangements, barter arrangements, and paid placements. According to the author, while barter and paid placements are intentionally arranged to appear in certain programs, the gratis arrangements are there to create more realism, are not controlled by the marketer, and could be presented in a negative light.

With respect to the present study, the term *stealth advertising* (Chernov, 2010) will be used to address brand appearances in newscasts that present the product in a positive for the marketer light. These include the barter arrangements and the paid placements, whose implications would be discussed further in the paper.

In the quest for the common characteristics of the efficient product placement, scientists have considered variables, such as audience involvement (high vs. low), modality (visual, audio, or audio-visual), type of products (low vs. high involving, or neutral vs. ethically charged), sponsor image (positive, negative, or neutral), preexisting attitudes toward the brand, even viewers' gender and viewing frequency. They have also distinguished between message recall, attitude toward the message, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intent. For instance, previous research has shown that liking a message does not necessarily lead to the desired purchase intent (Bator & Cialdini, 2000). Even remembering the brand does not increase the likelihood of purchasing the product (Romaniuk, 2009). Yet, theories such as Fishbein's (1963) behavioral expectancy value,

McGuire's (1964) inoculation theory, Greenwald's (1968) cognitive response theory, and Wyer's (1974) information-processing theory have developed the idea that attitudes depend on recall of message arguments. With such substantial theoretical support, the present study will focus exclusively on the initial catalyst for product purchase, i.e., product recall.

Hallahan (1999b, p.300) defined recall as “. . . the ability to retrieve and reconstruct from memory specific information and represents the pass-through acquisition of message content.” To measure viewers’ recall, the study will compare the recall effect of product placement and advertising in newscast. Additionally, based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), the recall effect will be manipulated by the level of viewers’ involvement with the program.

As mentioned in the beginning, product placement in newscasts is becoming extremely popular among advertisers. Hence, it is surprising that there are not more studies that focus on this phenomenon. The ones that do, examine the corruption of news (Wood, Nelson, Jaeho, & Yaros, 2004; Avery & Ferraro, 2000; Chernov, 2010), discuss the ethical issues that product placement raises (Brainard, 2004; Goodman, 2006), and question the positive effect it has on consumers (Rotfeld, 2008). While the majority of the existing knowledge pool examines advertising or editorial recall in newscasts, no studies were found to measure the product placement recall. Thus, the present study will aim to further contribute to the existing recall studies and at the same time, to close the knowledge gap, by answering the following question:

RQ: What is the effect of stealth advertising in newscasts on consumers’ recall of the advertised product, based on program involvement?

This study extends previous research on product placement recall by studying its effect in video news releases (VNRs) and comparing it to recall from conventional advertising. From a theoretical standpoint, the current study draws from the dual processing model of social cognition, i.e., the Elaboration Likelihood Model, to connect viewers' involvement with the program to their recall of product placement.

## Chapter Two:

### Literature review

Product placement raises important questions when it comes to television. The problem is that a far larger audience views television than movies and, while consumers consciously choose to see a movie, “. . . television is more pervasive in consumers lifestyle and less easily avoided” (Avery & Ferraro, 2000, p. 219).

#### *Product placement in newscasts*

Product placement raises even more questions when it comes to television news. General agreement is that product placement is detrimental to the integrity of the news, because it blurs the line between journalism and commercial promotion, and thus can limit the role and the importance of the news as a source of information about issues of public importance (Chernov, 2010). The general perception is that television news should provide citizens with basic information necessary for democracy to function (Wood et al., 2004).

On the other hand, research on the viewers’ attitude toward product placement revealed that viewers are “. . . ’tired of traditional commercials’ and would prefer less obtrusive advertising tools such as brand placement” (Karrh, 1998, p. 38). Further, supporters of product placement argued that, unlike generic brands, real ones create a real-world simulation, which helps viewers to become fully absorbed in the story line (Avery & Ferraro, 2000; Sheehan & Guo, 2005; Sung & de Gregorio, 2008). Avery and Ferraro (2000) referred to this reality simulation with the term *verisimilitude*. Wood et al.

(2004) concluded that brands in news not only provide realism to the reported events, but also valuable new information to viewers, e.g., new product introduction; safety recalls; consumer scams, etc.

Conversely, Wenner (2004) argued that products in reality programs are almost always positively cast, which is false, because in the real world brands are not always presented in positive light. Rotfeld (2008) also disputed the positive effect of product placement and argued that covert marketing is not gaining credibility or breaking out from the clutter. Instead, it creates more consumer distrust with even more message clutter in new areas of the public space. Media distrust is provoked by people's frustration from fake news and relentless marketing, because they do not receive real and accurate information that empowers them to make informed decisions (Adelstein, 2005).

Stealth advertising raises ethical questions about the effect it has on viewers, since they do not realize that they are seeing commercials that are framed as news stories. According to Schejter (2006), TV viewers have the right to know which side the broadcaster represents and what the motivation behind the message is. This information will help them better comprehend the message. The evening news are appealing to stealth marketers because the audience expects greater independence, hence persuasion is easiest where the audience is most credulous and least defended against promotional messages (Goodman, 2006).

#### *Viewers' perceptions of product placement*

According to Balasubramanian et al. (2006, p.129), “. . . viewers' perceptions of placement ethics should influence their responses to specific brand appearances in media programs.” For example, ethically-charged products such as tobacco, guns, alcohol, and

fatty foods are perceived by viewers as less acceptable than neutral products like autos, cameras, or soft drinks (Gupta & Gould, 1997; McKechnie & Zhou, 2003; Sung & de Gregorio, 2008).

On the other hand, the perceptions toward the specific brand appearance are directly related to the perceptions toward product placement in general. Thus, viewers who are negatively predisposed toward product placement would not discriminate between neutral and ethically-charged products, as they are equally unacceptable as a practice (Gupta, Balasubramanian, & Klassen, 2000; Gould, Gupta, & Grabner-Kräuter, 2000).

Conversely, those that are positively predisposed toward product placement evince little concern about its government regulation or the notion that it is highly unethical to influence audiences through brand placement (Sung & de Gregorio, 2008). For the most part, viewers would not even consider the government as an ally when consumer protection is at hand and would rely more on business self-regulation (Newell, Blevins, & Bugeja, 2009).

The perceptions toward product placement are dependent upon the viewers' cultural background. Cross-cultural research has found that American viewers are more likely to perceive a product in the program as paid advertisement, when compared to Singaporeans, yet Americans are less likely to consider product placement to be an ethical issue (Karrh, Frith, & Callison, 2001). Similar results were revealed in studies comparing American viewers to Chinese (McKechnie & Zhou, 2003), to Japanese (Kazuhiro & Miracle, 2010), as well as to French and Austrian viewers (Gould et al.,

2000). Balasubramanian et al. (2006) explained this tendency with the fact that the regulations in the U.S. are not as restrictive of advertising as they are in other nations.

### *Product placement regulations*

From regulatory standpoint, stealth advertising is in dissonance with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations for clear identification of the sponsored products. The sponsorship-identification requirements, as stated in Section 317 of the Communications Act and enforced by the FCC, stipulate that when brands are mentioned or appear on television programs for a fee or special consideration, that information must be disclosed during the program (Karrh, 1998). Television stations and networks face more stringent rules, because they use public resources. A station's or operator's failure to make a sponsorship disclosure, required by section 317, subjects it to fines and perhaps license revocation (Adelstein, 2005).

Yet, many manufacturers have found their way around the FCC rules, by supplying products free of charge to program directors (Vollmers & Mizerski, 1994, as cited in Avery & Ferraro, 2000). In 2004, for example, only 29 percent of the product placement in the US was paid for (Schejter, 2006).

Avery and Ferraro (2000) reviewed different legal cases in the history of product placement and concluded that the current Court would view any case of mixed speech designed to persuade consumers to purchase a product as commercial speech (a speech that does no more than propose a commercial transaction). On the other hand, again based on previous cases, the authors stated that hybrid messages (messages composed of both commercial and noncommercial speech inextricably intertwined) must be considered noncommercial speech. This is especially relevant for news programs, where

the commercial speech is framed as editorial and is presented through viewers' rather than consumers' perspective.

According to Chernov (2010), the newscast content with hidden nature presents a topic of public interest and significance, but the news station uses a certain local company or product to exemplify the story's theme. The leads of such reports often start with stating the problem or concern and then are framed by showing how businesses and business employees solve or address these problems (Chernov, 2010).

#### *Product placement frequency of occurrence*

Fawcett (1993) compared product placement occurrences in the television programming of ABC, CBS, FOX, and NBC and discovered that they appeared most often during evening news (40%). In a similar study, news programs contained 20.6% of all brand appearances, averaging 36.0 brand appearances per 30 minutes of news (Avery & Ferraro, 2000). In 2006 La Ferle and Edwards replicated Avery and Ferraro's study and identified a similar pattern, where the greatest number of product placements was in special event presentations such as newscasts.

Wood et al. (2004) added cable networks and found that the local news programs presented more brand/company content (14.50 commercial content per 30 minutes of news), than national news programs (10.90 commercial content per 30 minutes of news). This is provoked by the fact that smaller stations are more likely to be influenced by outside pressure and they struggle to maximize advertising time and revenues (Chernov, 2010). Local stations, for example, widely use VNRs as a tool, to more effectively compete with the larger stations (Owen & Karrh, 1996). Part of the reason is the lack of resources to gather enough news for their program.

It should be noted, that Wood et al. (2004) included both companies and brands that received preferential treatment by the news media and others that received neutral and negative news coverage. As stated earlier, the present paper refers to stealth advertising as only those brands or companies that receive positive for the advertiser coverage in news.

In the comparative study between local and national news programming, and cable networks, Wood et al. (2004) discovered that the leading commercial content by story type was sports (21.6%). This result is not surprising, given the fact that the incidental encounter of billboards during a game is inevitable. In sport broadcast advertisements that appear in the background are considered secondary to the actual game and therefore the encoded information from such ads may very likely be weak (Tsuji, 2011; Schejter, 2006). What is more, in sports programs the occurrence of more than one product at a time is prevalent, which creates brand clutter and competition for viewers' attention (La Ferle & Edwards, 2006). This is not the case for news programs where there is hardly more than one brand referenced at a time (La Ferle & Edwards, 2006).

Further, there is little relationship between the segments within a given program, i.e. Headlines, Weather, and Sport, because they are self-contained and often presented by different personnel (Roehm, Roehm, & Boone, 2004). For the purposes of this paper, product placement research will be directed solely toward the actual news content (Headlines).

### *Video news releases*

VNRs and product placements have much in common when unidentified sponsor and persuasion are considered. The paper employs findings from existing studies on VNRs, because the effect of product placement in newscasts on viewers' recall is severely understudied. VNRs can be described as prepackaged news reports, created by a business or organization, and intended for direct use by TV news stations. Pointed as one of the most famous VNRs, is "Karen Ryan", created by the Department of Health and Human Services. The news report presented a monologue of the fake reporter Karen Ryan elaborating on the accomplishments of the government in the healthcare area.

Broadus, Harmon, and Mounts (2011) considered the main ethical problem with VNRs to be that the audience is deceived of watching news gathered by reporters, while in reality they are seeing a hidden commercial, created by business or government. This description is closely related to that of stealth advertising, provided previously by Chernov (2010). The FCC Commissioner Adelstein (2005, p. 8) concluded, "We have a right to know that people who present themselves to be independent, unbiased experts and reporters are not shills hired to promote a corporate—or governmental—agenda."

Further, in their analysis of the effect of VNRs on viewers' recall, Owen and Karrh (1996, p.372) acknowledged that "[S]ponsors' preferences for communications are highest when the medium and message are largely inseparable and when the message is effectively packaged as editorial content."

From a legislative perspective, in May 2005 the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) declared the use of VNRs by government agencies as illegal. Further, the Radio Television News Directors Association (RTNDA, 2005) adopted an ethics code for

VNR use and the Society for Professional Journalists (SPJ, 2006) also approved of a resolution about the appropriate use of VNRs. In 2004 Public Relations Society of America recommended that the VNR source to be identified in news reports that contain VNR content (Public Relations Society of America, 2004). Yet, those codes are voluntarily and unenforceable.

### *Publicity vs. Advertising*

In general, advertising is a paid communication with clearly identified sponsor that presents a product or company in favorable light, whereas publicity secures editorial space in media for promotional purposes, does not identify the sponsor, and is not paid for (Eisend, & Küster, 2011). Although not directly stated in the existing literature, publicity refers to VNRs and not to product placement. Yet, as previously implied, the dispute is relevant to the present study's attempt to distinguish between product placement in newscasts and advertising.

Scientists and practitioners agree that both publicity and advertising have their advantages and drawbacks. In advertising, unlike publicity, the sponsor has control over the message, while in publicity the sponsor could enjoy the credibility and trustworthiness that come with the editorial content. Scholars refer to the latter as *third-party endorsement effect* (for a thorough review on previous research see Hallahan, 1999a).

In short, the term *third-party endorsement* refers to the fact that the media is regarded as an independent source of information and as such, it has no reason to communicate biased or false messages (Hallahan, 1999a; Eisend, & Küster, 2011).

According to Hallahan (1999a) there are four main reasons why viewers might turn to news as an acceptable source of information: 1). Expertness; 2). Independence; 3). Unclear intention to persuade; and 4). Ambiguity of language. Likewise, Cameron (1994) identified three dimensions of trustworthiness that are found to be lower for advertising than for editorials: 1). *Personal gain* of the source; 2). *Intent to persuade*; and 3). *Bias of the source*. The unfavorable position of advertising is best summarized by Peeler and Guthrie (2007, p.350), who acknowledged that, although advertising is the primary source of financial support for any media, it is considered by many consumers and commentators a lesser form of speech and even “. . . ridiculed and lampooned in the very media it supports.”

#### *Source credibility*

One of the main cues in stealth advertising that is directly related to the ELM (further discussed) is source credibility. Recipients use it to infer level of agreement with the recommendations when they cannot easily comprehend a message (Olson & Zanna, 1993). Source credibility is one of the main reasons for the persuasive nature of stealth advertising. For example, it leads to greater brand recall in radio brand placements, when compared to radio advertisements (van Reijmersdal, 2011).

Scholars are not unanimous about the effect of source credibility. On one hand, although peripherally processed behavior change is usually short-term, when source credibility is the persuasive cue the final result of peripheral processing could be long-term behavior change. (Bator & Cialdini, 2000). On the other hand, the peripheral route is unlikely to create long-term attitude change (Dainton & Zelle, 2005; Olson & Zanna, 1995).

With respect to actual recall, Balasubramanian et al. (2006) stated that the higher the connectedness to a program, the higher the message outcomes for placements, embedded in the program. In their research on viewers' recall and VNRs, Owen and Karrh (1996) confirmed this hypothesis, stating that viewers give more credibility to VNR-based messages within news program, than to similarly structured advertisement messages. Thus, they concluded that viewers recall products better when they see them in news than in commercials.

On the other hand, research has shown (Tewksbury, Jensen, & Coe, 2011) that even when VNRs are labeled as such and there is identification of the presence of biased news, viewers did not change their perceptions toward the news; neither had they recalled the product differently (Cameron, 1994).

Further, Verčič, Verčič, and Laco (2008) also did not find enough evidence to confirm that editorial content offers larger credibility than advertising content and thus could impact subjects' attitude stronger. Though the research sample was drawn from Croatia, the results are in accordance with previous research (Hallahan, 1999a; Hallahan, 1999b; Jo, 2004) that revealed that news do not necessarily outperform advertising. The lack of consistency in previous study results leaves the effect of source credibility in different content type still under question.

#### *Product placement vs. publicity and advertising*

McCarty (2004) implied that with product placement, the marketers receive the best of both advertising and publicity. On one hand, publicity is not controllable by marketers and thus, it can reveal neutral and even negative information about the company and/or its product. A content analysis (La Ferle & Edwards, 2006), for example,

discovered that 90.8 percent of the studied 1.992 brand placements were presented in neutral manner. Conversely, with product placement the sponsor has control over the communication.

On the other hand, unlike advertising, the communication is not perceived by the audience as a persuasive attempt. The hidden nature of product placement could be accounted for the success of this marketing tool, because the mere fact that it is not officially presented as a commercial, “. . . may not activate the processes that typically put a consumer on guard in the case of advertising.” (McCarty, 2004, p.49).

In the context of positive presentation, product placement is similar to what Eisend and Küster (2011, p.910) referred to as *advertorial*, i.e., a print advertisement disguised as editorial material. In particular, the authors defined advertorials as a combination of publicity and advertising that leads to “. . .high credibility since they are perceived as editorial content; at the same time marketers control message content and can avoid the possibility of negative information effects.” The meta-analysis revealed that advertorials lead to stronger recall than publicity when compared to advertising (Eisend, & Küster, 2011).

#### *Product placement modality*

The way product placement operates could be confusing, because on one hand, to be effective it needs to hide its persuasive nature, while on the other it has to be evident in order to achieve success. McCarty (2004, p.50) summarized this notion by stating that:

“. . . in the same way that a good story makes us forget that the main character is an actor we may know from other roles a good product placement may be one that

fits with the story in such a way as to make us forget that it is there to persuade us.”

An important characteristic that makes the difference between successfully embedded products and uncovered persuasive attempt is congruency with the program. Placement modality plays an important role in establishing such congruency. Russell (1998) illustrated a three-dimensional framework of product placement modality that includes screen placement (visual component), script placement (audio component), and plot placement (an audio-visual connection to the plot).

From a marketer’s perspective, modality comes with a certain price tag, depending on the product’s intended use and anticipated degree of exposure. The general opinion is that the price is not as high as the one paid for advertising, which is yet another reason for the existence and prosperity of product placement. For example, the costs for Walt Disney’s movie *Mr. Destiny* reportedly ranged from \$20,000 for only visual product displays to \$40,000 for brand name mentions to \$60,000 for depicting actual usage (Bhatnagar, Aksoy, & Malkoc, 2004).

From a modality standpoint, a recent research (La Ferle & Edwards, 2006) revealed that the predominant mode of product placement appearance in non-scripted programs was the visual only (50.5%). What is more, 77 percent of those visual brands did not interact directly with the plot, which may lead to the conclusion that such placement could be easily overseen.

Further, 87.6 percent of the placements were displayed prominently and 74.6 percent were displayed at the center of attention (La Ferle & Edwards, 2006). A prominent placement is characterized with larger size, central position on the screen, and

integration into the action; hence features that make the product vivid and memorable (Gupta & Lord, 1998). Gillespie, Joireman, and Muehling, (2012) described subtle placements to be visual only, without being central to the plot. Conversely, blatant or prominent placements were presented auditory or audio-visionary and were highly related to the plot.

Balasubramanian et al. (2006) and Romaniuk (2009) argued that dual-mode (visual and verbal) placements generate better cognitive outcomes (i.e., recall) than single-mode placements. This empirical generalization could be applied to forced and natural-viewing environments, experimental designs, and pretests. It also could be generalized for both advertisements and brand placements (Romaniuk, 2009).

On the other hand, in a study that compares the recall effect of subtle and prominent placements in movies, Gupta and Lord (1998) did not find any recall advantage for audio-visual product placements, when compared to visual only. Additionally, audio-only product messages scored higher recall when compared to subtle visual-only placements. The results revealed that prominent placements rendered the highest recall, followed by advertising, and subtle placement.

On yet another hand, Bhatnagar et al. (2004) claimed that the successful product placements are subtle and blend in with the context. Based on their argument, when a placement is too obvious, consumers are more likely to sense the manipulative intent, which turns the placement into a commercial, but the effect could backfire by harming the brand and the program credibility. In this realm, Grigorovici and Constantin (2004, p.24) proposed that:

“ . . . one way of making viewers think less of the placement as the plug" is by having the brands placed in highly arousing, affective immersive program context that leaves less processing capacities to encoding placements as commercial messages, but rather wrapping" users/viewers in the program context itself while connecting the placement in an integral experiential" encounter to the brands.”

A recent research on modality manipulated the effect of subtle and blatant (prominent) product placement with ego depletion (Gillespie et al, 2012). The term *ego-depletion* refers to the theory that a person's self-control resources are depleted at the end of the day, because the person has engaged in series of activities that require self-control during the day, e.g., attention regulation, thought suppression, daily stress, etc.

Comparing placement modality and ego-depletion, Gillespie et al. (2012) concluded that subtle placements are more effective than blatant placements during prime-time television, because ego-depletion reduces recognition of subtly placed products. This causes viewers in an ego-depleted state to hold more positive attitudes toward subtly placed than toward blatantly placed products.

While not directly relevant to the present study, ego-depletion is worth mentioning, because the majority of the news and commercials are aired during prime-time, i.e., between 7 and 11 p.m. To many viewers this time-frame is the end of the day.

Modality is crucial for the recall of product placement and future research should compare the effect of subtle vs. prominent placements when moderated by program involvement. For the sake of simplicity this study will experiment with subtle visual-only placement, in order to comply with the idea of stealth advertising.

### *Program involvement and Recall*

Involvement is “. . . the degree to which an audience member perceives a connection between him or herself and mass media content, and the degree to which the individual interacts psychologically with a medium or its messages.” (Levy, 1987, p.268). Program involvement is an important factor for predicting recall. Yet, authors are not unanimous about the relationship between program involvement and ad recall, e.g., some hypothesize it to be negative, others positive, and still others predict an inverted U relationship (see Moorman, Neijens, & Smit, 2007 for a summary of theories on ad recall). Research on advertising recall during television programs (Gunter, Furnham, & Beeson, 1997), for example, revealed that recall during commercial breaks is negatively related to greater liking for a program, greater perceived credibility of its content, and greater affective involvement with the program.

The mixed results could also be attributed to differences in the settings where the experiments took place, i.e., natural vs. laboratory environment (Moorman et al., 2007). On one hand, in laboratory settings there are no other distracting factors and viewers will be focused solely on processing the program and the commercials, which means that the only distraction from processing the commercials will be their involvement with the program. On the other hand, in natural settings viewers engage in more than one activity at a time, which makes it harder to predict the actual cause for their distraction from the commercials (Moorman et al., 2007). With respect to ad recall, Moorman et al. (2007) and Moorman, Willemsen, Neijens, and Smit (2012) advised that any study that measures commercial recall should be conducted under naturalistic conditions without any forced

exposure, because the effect of program involvement on commercial recall is predominantly mediated by program exposure.

Further, the presence/absence of memory aids or cues is still another component that could lead to mixed results. According to Gunter et al. (1997) unaided recall of advertised brands and aided recall of message details became poorer as viewers' involvement with the program they were watching became stronger. For a study to be accurate, it should test both aided and unaided recall.

While there is a wide range of studies focusing on the relationship between program involvement and subsequent commercial recall, the connection between involvement and embedded commercial recall is severely understudied. In a study on involvement and product placement recall during sports games, Moorman et al. (2012) discovered that recall of embedded ads was highest among viewers who were the most involved with the program. Further, the authors acknowledged that learning effects also underlie embedded ad awareness, since “[T]he more people are exposed to broadcast games, the more memory traces from advertisements embedded in these games people are able to retrieve.” (Moorman et al., 2012, p.32).

In a comparative study of the effects of news editorial vs. advertising materials, Jo (2004) discovered that the content type had a significant impact on brand recall, as more subjects recalled brand names from advertising messages than from editorial. Further, the same study revealed that argument quality also played an important part on brand recall. Under strong-argument condition the results did not reveal any differences between editorial and advertising, in the weak-argument condition advertising had more persuasive impact than news (Jo, 2004). While those results prove that more research is

needed when comparing recall from different content types, they should be applied to the present study with a grain of salt. Jo's (2004) experiment utilized a script from a magazine, while the present research is interested in television content. Previous discussion has shown that modality also plays an important role in persuasion.

*Persuasion, ELM, and stealth advertising*

Persuasion refers to any instance in which an active attempt is made to change a person's mind (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). In particular, according to the ELM, *persuasion* refers to any change in attitudes that results from exposure to communication (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b; Olson & Zanna, 1993).

Petty and Cacioppo introduced the ELM in 1986, although back in 1977, in his unpublished dissertation, Petty first proposed the idea about the two routes to persuasion. Petty and Wegener (1999, p.42) stated: "In brief, the ELM was formulated as a theory about how the classic source (e.g. expertise), message (e.g. mood), and contextual (e.g., distraction) variables have an impact on attitudes toward various objects, issues, and people." Eagly and Chaiken (1993) added that ELM offers an extended view of persuasion, specifying under what conditions persuasion is mediated by message related thinking and what are the peripheral mechanisms to persuasion when those conditions are not met. The model was designed to explain and combine the results of empirically supported studies of attitude change and persuasion that, according to Petty and Wegener (1999) were inconsistent, contradictory, and merely generalizable. Petty and Cacioppo (1986a, p.125) acknowledged that there was very little agreement among scholars about "... if, when, and how the traditional source, message, recipient, and channel variables

affected attitude change.” Thus, the ELM had to provide an integrative framework for understanding previous research findings and to generate new predictions.

The term *elaboration* refers to the extent to which people think about the issue-relevant arguments in the persuasive message (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), and suggests that people add something of their own to the specific information that is provided during the communication process (Petty & Wegener, 1999).

The ELM postulates that attitudes are formed along two different routes to persuasion—central and peripheral. Petty and Cacioppo (1986a) defined *attitude* as general evaluations people hold in regard to themselves, other people, objects, and issues. Those general evaluations are based on variety of behavioral, affective, and cognitive experiences, and can influence behavioral, affective, and cognitive processes.

The ELM hypothesis on elaboration comes from recognizing the fact that people cannot exert considerable mental thinking about all of the messages to which they are exposed. Hence, sometimes people need to act like “cognitive misers” (Taylor, 1981) in order to function properly, while other times they need to invest in a considerable amount of cognitive resources. Thus, the ELM proposes an “elaboration continuum” that determines the extent to which arguments are processed and evaluated (high elaboration) versus peripheral cues (low elaboration) that shape persuasion. The most important common characteristic of the variables that mediate the central route persuasion is that they implicate argument-based mental processing. In this context, Petty and Cacioppo identified *message-relevant thinking* as the primary mediator of central route persuasion (Cacioppo, Petty, Kao, Rodriguez, 1986).

On the other hand, based on Petty and Cacioppo's (1981, p.256) definition, *persuasion cues* (peripheral cues) are “. . . factors or motives inherent in the persuasion setting that are sufficient to produce an initial attitude change without any active thinking about the attributes of the issue or the object under consideration.” Such cues that affect persuasion without affecting argument scrutiny could be impression management motives, the attractiveness of the message's source, one's social role, etc.

Thus, at the high end of the elaboration continuum are theories such as inoculation theory, cognitive response theory, information integration theory, and the theory of reasoned action. They all assume that people are actively seeking to evaluate the information in a message. At the lower end of the continuum are theories such as classical conditioning and mere exposure that propose that changing evaluations are a result of affective and associational processes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a).

It is important to clarify that the continuum concerns the nature of thinking rather than the amount of thinking (Petty & Wegener, 1999). In particular, the main difference between the two routes is based on the extent to which the attitude change that results from the message is provoked by motivation and ability for active thinking about the information provided in the message (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). Thus, ELM's main hypothesis states that when motivation and ability for argument elaboration are high, people follow the central route. Conversely, when the ability and/or motivation are low, people follow the peripheral route. Eagly and Chaiken (1993, p.307) concluded that the two routes complement each other and “. . . together they exhaust the universe of mediating processes that persuasion theorists have discussed.”

Petty and Cacioppo (1986a) outlined seven postulates of the ELM.

1. People are motivated to hold correct attitudes:

The desire for correctness is an important determinant of the extent of information-processing activity. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986b) incorrect attitudes can have deleterious behavioral, affective, and cognitive consequences. The ELM acknowledges that at a conscious level, the default goal for people is to hold opinions that are correct. Even though absolute correctness might not exist, the opinions are correct from their holders' perspective. Yet, for the idea of correctness to be achieved, attitudes need to be judged against some standards. Thus, people can judge the correctness of their attitudes by comparing them to the opinions of others; by ignoring the opinions of others; or by considering both their opinions and the opinions of others (Petty & Wegener, 1999).

Further, attitudes are seen as correct or proper as long as they are seen as beneficial for the physical or psychological well-being of the individual (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). In one study (Cialdini, Levy, Herman, Kozlowski, & Petty, 1976) for example, the participants were presented with an issue of either high or low relevance and were informed that they will either engage or not in a discussion of that issue. The results revealed that anticipatory positions shifts were either in the direction of moderation or polarization of initial position. Thus a moderation shift occurred when participants expected discussion on a personally unimportant topic, polarization shifts occurred when discussion was anticipated for a personally involving topic, and position moderation disappeared when the discussion was cancelled. The moderation could be explained with the fact that people would not strain from the group opinion and seem

incorrect when they don't have enough information or are not highly involved with the issue. The polarization could be based on people's desire to defend their opinion on a highly involving topic or one that they know much about.

2. Although people want to hold correct attitudes, the amount and the nature of issue relevant elaboration in which they are willing or able to engage to evaluate a message vary with individual and situational factors:

Essentially, the ELM speculates that the default motive in persuasion settings is to understand the world and to develop accurate views (Petty, 1994). Such understanding could be developed along the central route, if the recipient is motivated and able to engage in effortful thinking (i.e., message-argument elaboration). The intensity with which a person chooses to process a message is affected by the persuasive message itself (e.g. is the topic of high or low personal relevance); the persuasion context (e.g. is a persuasion forewarning provided); and the message recipient (e.g. is the recipient high or low on need for cognition) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Thus, the model acknowledges that, depending on the individual and the situational factors, the levels of motivation and ability, necessary for effortful elaboration, could vary.

Further, the ELM recognizes that the level of desire to be correct varies among people and situations, and is not the only factor that determines the extent of thinking (Chaiken & Trope, 1999). For example, based on the hedonic factor, people who are in positive mood tend to think more about pleasant messages, not because they are in high need for cognition, but because these messages are hedonically rewarding (Petty & Wegener, 1999). Further, increased thought confidence also increases persuasion when

one exerts favorable thoughts and conversely reduces persuasion when one engages in unfavorable thoughts (Petty, Briñol, & Tormala, 2002).

Thus, some of the central approaches focus on how the arguments in a persuasive message are comprehended and learned. For a message to be persuasive it has to be comprehensible, which includes factors such as number of arguments in the message, rewards within the message, and conclusion of the message. Others focus on the information that people generate themselves. Attitude change depends on the attributions people make about the behavior of others and about their own behavior. Petty and Cacioppo (1981, p.163) defined attribution as “. . . an inference made about why something happened, why someone did or said something, or why you acted or responded in a particular way.”

If, for example, the communicator advocates a position that favors his own interests, he confirms the recipients' premessage expectations. On the other hand, if the communicator advocates a position that is contrary to his interests, he disconfirms the premessage expectations, which makes the recipients more susceptible to the persuasive message. Yet, this applies only to situations where the recipients have expectations about the communicator or the message.

Postulate 2 recognizes that for a central route processing to occur, both motivation and ability to elaborate on an issue should be present. Other options, discussed later in the paper, also exist. For example, high motivation to elaborate, but low ability (e.g. disrupted by distraction); or high ability, but low motivation (e.g. low relevant message); or even low motivation and low ability. Thus, under low elaboration conditions, people look for simple cues and could base their judgment on the first arguments processed; the

actual number of arguments presented; or on analysis of the source (Chaiken & Trope, 1999).

Because, it would be wrong to conclude that the central route is simply rational, while the peripheral is not, the ELM proposes the idea of the elaboration continuum and degree of effortful thinking. Along this continuum Chaiken and Trope (1999) concluded that when the ultimate goal is to determine the true merits of the proposal, people would use whatever information is needed to reach this goal.

3. Variables can affect the amount and direction of attitude change by (a) serving as persuasive arguments, (b) serving as peripheral cues, and/or (c) affecting the extent or direction of issues and argument elaboration.

In the context of the ELM, *arguments* are bits of information, included in the communication and “. . . relevant to the person’s subjective determination of the true merits of an advocated position” (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b, p. 16). Argument quality is central to the ELM and it refers to the recipient’s perception of a message argument being strong and cogent, or weak and spacious (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Petty and Cacioppo used argument quality to identify the extent to which a treatment variable has influenced message processing; whether message processing is objective or biased; and whether persuasion has occurred along the central or peripheral route (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Thus, a thorough scrutiny on argument quality is needed to understand the underlying processes in the ELM:

- In objective processing: The manipulation of argument quality and treatment is symmetric. In high elaboration condition subjects discriminate more between strong and weak arguments. The persuasiveness of strong messages

is increased and the persuasiveness of weak messages is decreased.

Conversely, in low elaboration condition (high distraction) subjects discriminate less between strong and weak arguments.

- In biased processing: The manipulation of argument quality and treatment is asymmetric. The treatment variable (prior knowledge) biases the argument quality in positive or negative direction. In high elaboration treatment condition (high prior knowledge) subjects discriminate more between strong and weak arguments, than in low elaboration control condition (low prior knowledge). When processing is positively biased, recipients are highly motivated to generate favorable thoughts about the argument, and exposure to weak arguments constrains but does not eliminate bias. Likewise, when processing is negatively biased recipients are motivated to generate unfavorable thoughts about the argument, and exposure to strong arguments merely lessens bias.

Petty and Cacioppo (1986a) defined *strong message* as one that contains arguments that in the process of effortful thinking generates predominantly favorable thoughts. For positive change to occur, the thoughts have to be more favorable, when compared to those prior to message exposure. On the other hand, the authors defined a *weak message* as one that under the same condition of effortful thinking generates predominantly unfavorable thoughts. Thus, if the message arguments are subjectively weak or counter attitudinal, the person rehearses preexisting unfavorable thoughts that lead to a boomerang effect. During the boomerang effect the person moves away from the arguments in the message. Research has shown that under low involvement, the

tendency toward boomerang was produced primarily by a rejection of the message source, whereas under high involvement, the tendency toward boomerang was produced primarily by a rejection of the message arguments (Petty et al., 1981).

So far it is clear that along the central route, persuasion is based on thoughtful consideration of the object or issue at hand. Still, “. . . the process is not completely objective and/or logical, because what is a good argument to one person may be a bad one to another.” (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981, p.256).

According to the ELM, variables can influence attitudes in three different ways: by serving as an argument, by serving as a cue, or influence elaboration in an objective or biased manner (Petty & Wegener, 1999). Postulate 2 already discussed that the reduction of either motivation and/or ability to engage in effortful thinking increases the impact of the peripheral processes. Thus, along with varying the quality of the arguments, attitudes can be influenced with simple cues when argument processing is absent.

A rule of thumb is that the variables that increase or decrease persuasion, play a two-fold role and should not be labeled as motivation thinking variables only and/or cues only. On one hand, as per Petty (1994), all variables can have favorable impact on attitudes when the elaboration likelihood is low. On the other hand, if those same variables provide information that is relevant to the central merits of the receiver or if they bias the processing of the presented issue-relevant information, they can influence attitudes under high elaboration conditions. Petty and Cacioppo (1986b) also acknowledged that many of the variables, that would be presented next, could serve as peripheral cues when elaboration is low. Yet, those same variables could serve as enhancers of objective message processing when the elaboration is high. An example is

the positive mood manipulation that can increase persuasion by different processes under high and low elaboration conditions (Petty et al., 1993). Under high elaboration the positive mood influenced both thoughts and attitudes, while under low elaboration positive mood influenced attitudes with the same magnitude as under high elaboration, but not thoughts. Thus, the results revealed that one variable, such as positive mood, can have the same effect on attitude, but to play different roles.

Finally, Petty and Cacioppo (1986b) proposed that the variables that influence the elaboration likelihood, may lead to either objective or biased message processing.

4. Variables affecting motivation and/or ability to process a message in a relatively objective manner can do so by either enhancing or reducing argument scrutiny.

When the recipient is seeking the truth wherever it might lead, the effortful processing transpires in an objective manner. Variables that affect motivation and/or ability to process a message in an objective manner do so by either enhancing or reducing argument scrutiny (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). Thus, when a variable enhances argument scrutiny the strengths of cogent and/or the flaws of specious arguments should become more apparent. Conversely, when a variable reduces argument scrutiny, the strengths of cogent arguments and/or the flaws of specious ones should become less apparent (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). In short, Postulate 4 explains how the same variable can both increase and decrease persuasion by increasing or decreasing information processing.

Three situational variables – personal relevance of an issue, personal responsibility for message evaluation, and the number of message sources, as well as one individual difference variable – need for cognition, are pointed as the major variables that

affect motivation to elaborate in a relatively objective manner (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986b; Cook, Moore, & Steel, 2004).

Personal relevance is one of the most important variables to affect issue-relevant argument processing. As per Petty and Cacioppo (1986a), personal relevance is “. . . the extent to which an advocacy has `intrinsic importance` or `personal meaning`.” The social judgment theory proposed that the greater the personal involvement with an issue, the harder the persuasion is. Further, message-relevant cognitive responses are better predictors of attitude change under high than under low involvement conditions, because people are motivated to form veridical opinion in order to avoid being incorrect (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979a). What is more, high involvement increases persuasion for the strong proattitudinal message but decreased persuasion for the weak one.

Still, the effect of personal relevance on argument processing has some limitations. Sometimes personal interests might be so intense, such as intimate values that processing either will not occur at all, or will become biased. Second, the amount of prior considerations about the issue-relevant arguments can reduce susceptibility to counter attitudinal appeals, because the person may try to defend his/her established position or to feel that all possible arguments have been already evaluated (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Conversely to Postulate 4, Eagly and Chaiken (1993) scrutinized personal relevance of message issue and argued that its impact on message processing might not be as uniformly objective, as the ELM proposed. The authors stated that personal relevance sometimes could be biased by prior attitude or knowledge.

Personal responsibility, just like personal relevance, enhances motivation to process issue-relevant arguments. Petty and Cacioppo hypothesized that the greater the

personal responsibility for evaluating an issue, the more people should be willing to exert effortful thinking about the issue-relevant arguments. This hypothesis was tested in an experiment (Petty, Harkins, & Williams, 1980), based on the ELM's fundamental assumption that with greater ability and/or motivation to think about the arguments in a persuasive message, more favorable thoughts are generated to high quality arguments yielding more positive evaluations, but more unfavorable thoughts are generated to low quality arguments yielding more negative evaluations. The subjects were asked to evaluate an editorial written by a fellow student that argued in favor of mandatory comprehensive exam prior to graduation. The results were consistent with Petty and Cacioppo's hypothesis showing that subjects who believed to be the only evaluator of the proposal reported higher cognitive involvement in the task than subjects who believed to be part of a group (i.e., social loafing).

Further, Petty et al. (1980) discovered that group evaluators generated fewer thoughts consistent with the quality of the stimulus than individual evaluators. Thus, individual evaluators generated more favorable thoughts to likable stimulus than group evaluators and respectively more negative thoughts to unfavorable stimulus than group evaluators. Under neutral stimulus condition (neither strong, nor very weak) group size did not produce significant effects on thoughts or evaluations (Petty et al., 1980).

While increasing the number of message recipients reduces the motivation to process an advocacy, the increased number of message sources presenting the advocacy can enhance motivation to process a message. The general explanation of this phenomenon is that people think more about information that comes from multiple sources than the same information presented by a single source (Petty & Cacioppo,

1986b). Thus, in separate experiments Harkins and Petty (1981a) discovered that increasing the number of sources in a message, increases thinking about that message. Yet, certain conditions need to be met, e.g. when multiple sources presented multiple arguments more favorable thoughts leading to greater persuasion were generated, than when multiple sources presented one argument or one source presented multiple arguments. Harkins and Petty (1981a) explained this phenomenon with the fact that changing speakers and arguments enhances cognitive elaboration of the message content. Conversely, multiple low quality arguments from multiple sources created less persuasion than multiple low quality arguments from one source. Still, these statements hold true only when distraction is not present (Harkins & Petty, 1981b).

Need for cognition relates to the assumption that some people are more willing to engage in effortful thinking than other and is directly related to the central route of elaboration. Thus, people high in need for cognition scrutinize messages more carefully than people low in need for cognition (Cacioppo, Petty, & Morris, 1983). Cacioppo and Petty (1982) developed the 34 items Need for Cognition (NC) scale specifically to tap individual differences in intrinsic motivation to engage in effortful cognitive endeavors. The original scale measured statements such as: I would prefer complex to simple problems and Thinking is not my idea of fun. Few years later the scale was revisited and shortened to 18 items (Cacioppo et al., 1984). Results from previous studies (Cacioppo et al., 1986) proved that just like high need for cognition is directly related to effortful thinking (i.e., central route), the low need for cognition is directly related to the use of peripheral cues (i.e., peripheral route).

Further, Cacioppo et al. (1986) discovered that the difference in levels of need for cognition is due to the relative likelihood that individuals low in need for cognition will try to avoid effortful thinking, i.e. individuals low in need for cognition will act as cognitive misers rather than as verbal dolts.

Three other variables, i.e. ability variables, that affect the ability to process information in a relatively objective manner, without the necessary interventions of conscious intent, are distraction, message repetition, and recipient posture (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b).

Petty, Wells, and Brock (1976) acknowledged that the more distracted a person is the less thinking about the message can occur. This is especially relevant for messages that elicit predominantly favorable thoughts, because the effect of distraction interferes with the favorable thought production and thus decreases message acceptance. Likewise, if the message is unfavorable, the distraction will inhibit the cognitive response to a persuasive appeal and thus will increase persuasion.

In an experiment about increasing tuition with 20% for university students, Petty and Cacioppo (1986a) found that increasing distraction is associated with more favorable attitudes under weak message condition, but increasing distraction produces less favorable attitudes when the message is strong. Increased distraction produces favorable attitudes from weak messages, because it reduces counterargument production. Petty and Brock (1981) advised that the distraction should be strong enough to interfere with processing and evaluating message arguments, but not so strong to interfere with their reception, because it will inhibit persuasion.

When different levels of need for cognition are correlated with distraction, distraction disrupts message elaboration when people are highly motivated and able to process the message. On the other hand, if motivation and/or ability to process the message are weak, distraction has little effect (Petty & Brock, 1981). Surprisingly Petty et al.'s (1976) distraction manipulation did not produce any significant effect on message recall.

Just like distraction disrupts message processing, message repetition can enhance it. In advertising, repetition is a widely used marketing strategy, which determines the advertising schedule and has generated a considerable amount of research. The effective frequency is the number of times a person must be exposed to an advertising message before a response is made, and before exposure is considered wasteful. Repetition is important variable in terms of its impact on consumer memory and attitude. The leading theory is that there is a “. . . non-monotonic relationship between repetition and audience's reception of the message” (Campbell & Keller, 2003, p.1). In other words, message effectiveness increases in lower levels of repetition and decreases when the message reaches higher levels of repetition.

Petty and Cacioppo proposed the two-stage argument elaboration model of message repetition that was also tested and confirmed in later studies (Cacioppo & Petty, 1989). The first stage represents the ability people have to think about a message repeatedly, where moderate repetition leads to greater message elaboration. The second stage represents the tedium that results from high levels of message repetition, thus biasing the subsequent information processing activity (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Several factors need to be considered, in order to find a balance between the two stages.

The more complex, lengthy, or rapidly the message is presented, the more repetitions will be needed for individuals to fully comprehend the argument, whereas familiar arguments or information will require less repetition until tedium is reached (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Cacioppo and Petty (1979a) concluded that favorable thoughts increased, then decreased; counterarguments decreased, then increased; and irrelevant thoughts continually increased with repetition.

In a separate experiment (Cacioppo & Petty, 1980), the authors found that message arguments, whether favorable or unfavorable, were remembered better than neutral information after one exposure, but after three repetitions and there after repetitions all items were equally and highly memorable.

Further, Cacioppo and Petty's (1979a) discovered that learning and elaboration increased with repetition and message recall was stronger when the advocated position was counterattitudinal, than when the advocated position was proattitudinal. Thus, the increase in recall was the greatest between three and five repetitions for favorable advocacy and between one and three repetitions for unfavorable. Further, the counterattitudinal advocacies elicited a greater number of *topic-relevant thoughts* than did the proattitudinal advocacies, which also suggests that superior recall of the message arguments supporting the unfavorable rather than the favorable advocacy should be expected. Cacioppo and Petty (1980) concluded that people show greater attitudinal differentiation of strong from weak arguments when repetition increases. What is more, repetition is said to enhance the persuasive effect of strong arguments along the central route (Dainton & Z Kelley, 2005).

Bhatnagar et al. (2004) hypothesized that the relationship between placement strength and placement efficacy is an inverted U, where placement strength is the function of the increasing number of times that the product is mentioned. Thus, placement strength initially could attract attention and even be remembered, but at certain point placement efficacy starts to decrease and the placement strength transforms into skepticism and even feeling of betrayal.

Important characteristic of stealth advertising in newscasts is the lack of repetition. Newscasts and product placements are presented no more than twice on a single day (excluding news channels), i.e., evening news and late news. Since stealth advertisements are framed as news, they rarely are aired on the following day, because they belong to the “yesterday’s news” folder. What is more, the rerun of that news is almost impossible, unless requested from the station or found online.

#### *Posture*

The effect of the recipient posture is the third ability variable that affects effortful thinking. Unlike repetition and distraction, posture has not been studied so thoroughly in the realm of the ELM. For the purposes of message elaboration it is worth sharing the results from a study (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983) that revealed that a reclining posture facilitates effortful processing of message, while standing posture disrupts it. Further, in standing position subjects did not attitudinally distinguish between strong and weak arguments, while in reclining posture the argument persuasion differed significantly.

Other variables that affect ability to process objectively are message complexity/comprehensibility, message modality, heart rate, and recipient

intelligence/education. Chaiken and Eagly (1976), found that written messages provide people with greater opportunity for elaboration, than audio and video messages. This is especially relevant for messages conveying difficult content, because people have the opportunity to process the written messages at their own pace, while on radio and television the pace of the messages is controlled. When easy messages were concerned though, the modalities did not differ significantly. Further, Ferguson, Chung, and Weigold (1985) found that people with high levels of need for cognition reported relying more on newspapers and magazines for news and reported watching television less than did people with low levels of need for cognition. Based on previous findings, ELM hypothesizes that print messages should enhance agreement to strong, but reduce agreement to weak messages when compared to the same message presented on tape (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b).

Finally, for message complexity ELM stipulates that “. . . the strengths of cogent arguments and the flaws in specious ones should become more apparent as complexity is reduced and comprehensibility is increased.” (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b, p. 76). In particular, variables such as repetition, distraction, and posture should be able to enhance agreement when message arguments are strong and reduce agreement when those arguments are weak.

5. Variables affecting message processing in a relatively biased manner can produce either a positive (favorable) or negative (unfavorable) motivational and/or ability bias to the issues-relevant thoughts attempted.

Central processing can occur in a biased manner when, in lieu of seeking the truth, the variable encourages or inhibits the generation of either favorable or unfavorable

thought. Thus, when biased message processing takes place, the individual is more likely to choose one side over another based on knowledge base or situational factors (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). For example, biased message processing can occur when some threat is associated with adopting one position over another. Yet pure cases of objective or biased processing are rare, because many situations involve competing motives and people often have more information on one side of an issue over the other (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b).

An important variable that enables biased elaboration is the extent to which a person has a preexisting structure of knowledge on an issue (schema). According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986b), the more issue relevant knowledge people have, the more they tend to counterargue messages that oppose their initial positions. This notion was tested in a study of schemata effects on processing proattitudinal messages (Cacioppo, Petty, & Sidera, 1982). The participants were categorized as possessing “religious” or “legalistic” schema. The groups were presented with a message, either legalistic or religious on capital punishment or abortion. The results revealed that the legalistic message was perceived as more persuasive by the legalistic than the religious subjects. The opposite applied to the religious message. Further, participants generated more message-relevant thoughts when the message was congruent than when it was incongruent with their self-schema. Thus, Cacioppo et al. (1982) concluded that recipients would engage in more positive thinking when the speaker employs a perspective that reflects their self-schematization.

Conversely, when counter attitudinal arguments were presented (Wood, 1982), individuals with high prior knowledge on the issue changed their attitudes less, generated

more counterarguments, and few positive thoughts, than those who had low prior knowledge. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) argued that prior knowledge does not bias message processing all the time, rather it illustrates that high knowledge subjects have a greater ability to critically evaluate even strongly argued messages.

Second variable that motivates more biased information processing is forewarning – the process whilst subjects are informed of an upcoming communication (Cialdini & Petty, 1981). Based on previous research (see Papageorgis, 1968 for more information), forewarning could be separated in two main groups – “forewarning of persuasive intent” and “forewarning of message content”. The former informs the subjects that they will be presented with message designed to influence their position on a topic, while the latter informs the subjects that they will receive communication on a described topic (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b; Cialdini & Petty, 1981). Based on previous research (Petty & Cacioppo, 1977; Cacioppo & Petty, 1979b;), Petty and Cacioppo (1986b) concluded that when subjects are provided with sufficient time between forewarning for message content and exposure, they add bias to the subsequent message processing, because they have enough time to engage in issue relevant bolstering of their initial attitudes, as well as in counterarguing of opposing positions. Thus, the longer the delay between the warning and the message, the stronger the resistance to the influence of the counterattitudinal message (Cialdini & Petty, 1981). Conversely, unwarned subjects are less biased initially, because they do not have the time to access their attitude-consistent knowledge and they are less resistant to the message.

Unlike forewarning of message content, forewarning of persuasive intent is not time sensitive when inducing resistance, because it does not provide the recipient with the

topic and thus, the recipient is not aware which issue-relevant cognitions to access prior to message exposure (Cialdini & Petty, 1981; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Based on previous research, Petty and Cacioppo (1986b) concluded that forewarning for persuasive intent reduces persuasion by eliciting counterarguments during message presentation. Further, Petty and Cacioppo (1979b) proved that such information processing is biased, by presenting subjects only with strong message during a forewarning for persuasive intent experiment. The results revealed that the inhibiting effect of forewarning (i.e., reduced persuasion, increased counterargumentation, and reduced favorable thoughts) was greater under high than low involvement conditions. This proves that the warning induced biased rather than objective processing. Additional factors that could lead to increased persuasion after a forewarning are self-esteem; cognitive consistency; conformity; and/or moderation (see Cialdini & Petty, 1981 for more information).

6. As motivation and/or ability to process arguments are decreased, peripheral cues become relatively more important determinants of persuasion.

Conversely, as argument scrutiny is increased, peripheral cues become relatively less important determinants of persuasion.

This postulate indicates that there is a trade-off between message elaboration and the effectiveness of peripheral cues, because in some persuasion contexts people may be unmotivated or unable to engage in either objective or biased message elaboration. From the previous postulates it became clear that in order to follow the central route to persuasion, people have to be both motivated and able to engage in effortful elaboration. Yet, three more conditions are equally probable (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). First, at the time of message exposure people might have high ability, but low motivation to process

the message. In this case little argument processing will occur and it will be based predominantly on cues. Second, the motivation can be high, but the ability low, in which case the person most likely will engage in whatever processing is possible. Person's thoughts, for example, will be guided by preexisting attitudes rather than the arguments in the message. Such elaboration is most common when the issue is important to the person, but he/she does not understand the arguments of the message, or such arguments are not present, or if the person already possesses unfavorable thoughts about the issue. With respect to the ELM, the attitude change that results from either of the aforementioned elaboration types is equally enduring (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981), because if the person subsequently becomes motivated or able to process the issue, attitude change may occur via the central route (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b).

Finally, when both motivation and ability to process the message are low, any influence that occurs will be a result of peripheral cues only. Petty and Wegener (1999) concluded that the trade-off hypothesis is based on the previously discussed multi-role notion of variables (i.e., the impact of variables serving as cues under low elaboration conditions can be reduced, unchanged, enhanced, or reversed when the elaboration likelihood is increased). Thus, the hypothesis implies "that a variable is less likely to have its impact on attitudes via a peripheral process as the elaboration likelihood is increased." (Petty & Wegener, 1999, p. 60).

The previous literature discussed variables that applied exclusively to high elaboration conditions. In those cases the ELM expects that the attitudes will be determined primarily by argument quality. Conversely, when the elaboration likelihood is

low, peripheral cues will guide the attitudes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Source credibility, for example, is one of those cues.

Source credibility, as a peripheral cue, has a direct impact on persuasion resistance. Important components of source credibility are expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, similarity, and power. An experiment (Petty et al., 1981) asked the subjects to evaluate a policy statement that proposed comprehensive exams prior to graduation. The exam was to be instituted next year (high involvement), or after 10 years (low involvement). Further the report was prepared either by high school class (low source expertise) or the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (high source expertise). The argument quality in the experiment also was manipulated. The results revealed that under high involvement, only argument quality affected attitudes, but source expertise did not, while under low involvement condition source expertise was more persuasive than the presented argument. With respect to the trade-off postulate, the study concluded that under low involvement, increasing source expertise enhanced attitudes regardless of message quality, while under high involvement source expertise was irrelevant for attitude formation (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Likewise, Tormala and Petty (2004) found that under low elaboration condition, source credibility conferred greater certainty. On the other hand, in a high elaboration condition people that resist persuasion from high credibility source, solidify their initial attitudes and they become predictive of behavior. Under the same condition resistance to an inexpert source does not predict attitude-behavioral intentions. A plausible explanation for persuasiveness of high versus low credibility source under low involvement is that low credibility source cues the recipients that the message should not be trusted.

On the other hand, high credibility source might be rejected and low credibility source might be more persuasive when certain conditions are met. For example, when a message concerns issues of low involvement or of prior knowledge, high credibility sources will be more persuasive only for counter attitudinal appeals. For proattitudinal appeals low credibility sources will be more persuasive (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981).

Further, experiments have shown that recipients would exercise more positive thinking of the source when the speaker employs a perspective that reflects their self-schematization (Cacioppo et al., 1982). Conversely, a source attractiveness and need for cognition manipulation revealed that unattractive source had the same effect on both individuals with high and low need for cognition, whereas attractive source had significantly higher effect on individuals low in need for cognition than those high in need for cognition (Cacioppo, Pety, Kao, & Hargitt, cited in Cacioppo et al., 1986).

The number of message arguments is a peripheral cue (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b; Cook et al., 2004) that induces attitude change based on message factors when the personal relevance of the message is low. Petty and Cacioppo (1984) proved this statement in their study on the mere number of arguments and personal involvement. The results showed that under low personal relevance, similar to source credibility, the number of arguments could affect persuasion, regardless if the actual content of the arguments is scrutinized. In particular, when the issue was of low involvement, increasing the number of arguments increased the message persuasiveness, regardless of argument quality. A plausible explanation for this phenomenon was the heuristic processing that given the large number of arguments; the proposal must have been

carefully researched (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). Not surprising, the high involvement issue relied mostly on argument quality than quantity.

Biased processing along the peripheral route is determined by factors such as the rewards or punishments with which the message is associated. This method is known as operant conditioning of attitudes and hypothesizes that some responses become more (less) likely because of its positive (negative) consequences. Petty and Cacioppo (1981) acknowledged that many of the feelings and reactions toward objects, issues, or events are based upon previously conditioned responses. Thus, one of the most obvious peripheral routes is to use the so-called classical conditioning, where the advocated position is associated with things that the target already feels positive toward, such as food or money, or negative toward, such as electric shock. A third principle of attitude learning is the vicarious classical conditioning, where the target is exposed to another person (i.e. the model) who is rewarded or punished for expressing certain attitudes. Such principle could be successfully applied toward acquiring positive or negative attitudes (toward a minority group for example) when the target has limited knowledge about or has never been exposed to the attitude object before (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981).

7. Attitude changes that result mostly from processing issue-relevant arguments (central route) will show greater temporal persistence, greater prediction of behavior, and greater resistance to counterpersuasion than attitude changes that result mostly from peripheral cues.

This postulate specifies the different consequences of attitude change induced via the central or the peripheral route. Thus, high elaboration leads to stronger attitudes than low elaboration (Cialdini et al., 1976; Petty, 1994). It is important to infer that one of the

influence paradigms that require the most effortful thinking is role playing (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Previous research has found that role playing is more effective procedure for changing attitudes than passive exposure, because people engage in biased information search; because they value more the arguments that they alone have generated; and because they remember better the arguments they have generated (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). Thus, the attitude change, based on role playing should show greatest temporal persistence, prediction of behavior, and counterpersuasion resistance.

According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986b; p.22),

“... the greater the organization and accessibility of attitudes and attitude-relevant information for persuasion occurring via the central than the peripheral route render people more able to report the same attitude over time, to defend their belief, and to act on them.”

Cacioppo et al. (1986) for example, discovered that the attitudes of individuals high in need for cognition were more predictive of behavioral intentions than were the individuals low in need for cognition, because the former engaged in more issue-relevant thinking. With respect to attitude-behavior predictability, Petty et al. (2002, p.724) introduced the term *attitude confidence*, i.e. “subjective sense of conviction or validity regarding one’s thoughts” and discovered that the more confident one is in one’s attitude, the more that attitude is predictive of behavior. Likewise, the more one is confident in one’s thoughts the more those thoughts are predictive of attitudes.

A study on attitude resistance (Haugtvedt & Petty, 1992) compared newly formed attitudes (advertising of a fictional answering machine) along the central and peripheral routes. The advertising was developed to include both sufficiently strong arguments and

positive peripheral cues that would persuade respectively individuals with high need for cognition and low need for cognition. The results revealed that newly formed attitudes along the central route persisted longer than newly formed attitudes along the peripheral route. Also, newly formed attitudes along the central route resisted an immediate counter message stronger than the newly formed attitudes along the peripheral route.

Petty and Cacioppo (1986b) acknowledged that although the consequences of persuasion along the central route are desirable, they are hard to achieve, because the recipient has to be both able and motivated to engage in effortful elaboration. In reality persuasion occurs most often along the peripheral route, but such persuasion has a short-lived effect. That is why it is necessary to constantly remind the targeted audiences about the cues that form the favorable attitudes, because at some later point the reminders could be effective to induce attitude change (e.g., purchase a product or vote for a candidate) that could further enhance motivation and ability (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b).

#### *Theoretical and empirical limitations of the ELM*

Through the years the ELM has garnered some praise. Eagly and Chaiken (1993; p.321) inferred that one of the biggest strengths of ELM is that it “. . . provides a powerful empirical framework for studying a diverse list of source, message recipient, and contextual variables.” This empirical framework specifies only three ways in which variables can affect persuasion, e.g., variables as arguments, as peripheral cues, and as influencing elaboration in an objective or biased manner, yet the model can integrate a large number of individual and situational variables (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Likewise, O’Keefe (1990) praised the ELM for being an important theoretical framework that accounts for the controversial findings from previous research. Pratkanis (1986)

concluded that the model is a basis for application in many diverse areas such as advertising and psychotherapy. For example, today, the ELM is persistently used in health communication research (see Cameron, 2009 for discussion).

Ajzen (1987; p.1009) called the model “. . . a revolution in the study of communication and persuasion.” Yet, the author acknowledged that much work needs to be done, because the model does not incorporate, for example, fear appeal and humor in persuasion, as well as it does not distinguish between thoughts generated by a message and belief held as a result of the message. Thus, the criticism of the model for theoretical and empirical limitations constitutes a much larger pool of studies, when compared to the thoughts of its proponents.

#### *ELM as a descriptive theory*

One of the main criticisms toward the ELM is that it has been framed as a more descriptive, than exploratory persuasive theory, as it has been regarded primarily as a description of the processes that occur when a persuasive message induces attitude change (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Cook et al., 2004). For example, the ELM does not explain why particular arguments are strong or weak, or why prior knowledge should motivate biased processing, while exposure to many arguments should motivate objective processing, etc. (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Thus, Cook et al. (2004) concluded that if the ELM is officially accepted as a descriptive model, many of the problems would disappear, because a descriptive model does not necessarily entail the attribution of cause and effect, and in this case “. . . issues regarding causal flow and the confounding of explanation of independent relationships are irrelevant.” (Cook et al., 2004, p.321).

*Argument quality:*

Since argument quality is central to the ELM, it deserves special attention in the model criticism. According to Mongeau and Stiff (1993), the ELM defines argument quality in terms of the nature of message cognitions generated by the argument, instead of the nature and structure of the argument. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) observed that the difference between strong and weak arguments in many ELM studies is based on inherent strength, plausibility, or believability of the message arguments. Thus, the strong arguments usually associate the attitude object with positive attributes, while the weak arguments associate it with less favorable or negative attributes. O’Keefe (1990, p.110) summarized the arguments so far, in a quite expressive manner:

“To say that ‘under conditions of high elaboration, strong arguments have been found to be more effective than weak arguments’ is rather like saying ‘Bachelors have been found to be unmarried’ . . . this is not a discovery; it is not an empirical result or finding . . .”

Thus, ELM does not explain what in the *strong arguments* makes them persuasive under high elaboration conditions (O’Keefe, 1990).

Eagly and Chaiken’s (1993) main argument was that arguments are improperly named, based on their strength, because “. . . argument valence, not argument strength, was manipulated in the relevant studies.” (p.325). Since the quality of each argument comprises of argument strength and argument valence, the model opponents (Areni & Lutz, 1988; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Mongeau & Stiff, 1993) called for reinterpretation and proposed *argument quality* to be relabeled *argument valence*, claiming that such change would not reduce the internal validity of the existing research on the ELM.

Further, Areni and Lutz (1988) observed that the distinction between argument quality and argument valence is crucial, because responses to argument valence could be generated at a much lower level of involvement along the continuum, than responses to argument quality. Thus, argument quality (i.e., plausibility and logical coherence of argumentation) might require higher levels of motivation and ability for message processing, than would do argument valence (i.e., the positivity of attributes ascribed to the attitude objects by the arguments) (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). As a result, the ELM opponents insist that the model's assumption that argument quality determines persuasion and the peripheral cue does not, should be revisited.

*Attitude change:*

Another term that needs revisiting is the *attitude change*. Traditionally, research designs measure attitude change as the difference between the attitude prior to and post to message exposure. According to Hamilton, Hunter, and Boster (1993), in the ELM studies the receivers do not have an impression on the message topic (e.g., comprehensive senior examination or new pen), which infers that the receivers did not have a preexisting attitude. Based on this argument, Hamilton et al. (1993) concluded that attitude change can occur only when there is enough involvement to process the message, as well as a preexisting attitude. Conversely, attitude change could not occur along the peripheral route, because there is not enough elaboration or preexisting attitude. Hence, the process that occurs along the peripheral route should be called *attitude formation* (Hamilton et al., 1993).

Similar to argument quality and attitude change labeling, O'Keefe (1990) expressed concerns about the concept of involvement used in the ELM. Based on the

model's explanation *involvement* is the personal relevance of the topic. Yet, this is only one possible facet, as the concept of involvement is multifaceted, e.g. person's judgment of the importance of the issue; the degree to which the person is committed to a stand on the issue, etc. (O'Keefe, 1990). Such distinction is important, because the different facets might not have the same effect as the widely studied personal relevance.

*Central vs. peripheral route and single vs. parallel processing:*

Another flaw in the ELM is that it fails to explain the psychological processes that underlie the model's criteria patterns, which makes it difficult to test (Stiff, 1986; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Mongeau & Stiff, 1993). Based on the ELM, source attractiveness, for example, should influence persuasion as a peripheral cue when personal relevance is low, while under high-personal relevance condition it would be a persuasive argument. Yet, Eagly and Chaiken (1993) argued that the pattern-matching strategy is fallible, because the aforementioned effect of source credibility might not be the only one possible. The authors stated that it would be equally plausible that peripheral mechanisms and central route processing ". . . can exert additive effects on persuasion." (p. 322), or both could exert persuasive effect on people who are willing to engage in effortful thinking.

Likewise, Stiff (1986) based his criticism on the fact that the ELM posited two mutually exclusive routes to persuasion (prior to Petty and Cacioppo emphasized the idea of the continuum in 1986), and claimed that individuals are not limited to a single cue processing and could parallel several central message and peripheral cues at a time. The performed meta-analysis revealed that when involvement increased, the effect of source credibility also increased. Thus, the results suggested that while at low levels of involvement individuals process few central and peripheral cues, at moderate levels of

involvement they are motivated to process both types of cues and have the capacity to do so (Stiff, 1986).

*The peripheral route:*

The peripheral route to persuasion is the one that raises the most questions. According to some (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), the peripheral route lacks theoretical depth, because the theories that comprise the peripheral-route-to-persuasion group are too heterogeneous.

Likewise, Hamilton et al. (1993) acknowledged that the peripheral route relies heavily on three preexisting theories of attitude change, i.e. reinforcement theory, balance theory, and social judgment theory. In their review the authors concluded that the predictions of those three theories are not relevant to the assumptions of the peripheral route in the ELM. Further, the model does not explain the limitations of the theories, which renders the ELM logically inconsistent (Hamilton et al., 1993).

Eagly and Chaiken (1993) inferred that while the model assumes the conditions under which the peripheral route is activated, it does not explain which mechanism has been used and why, as well as whether all peripheral cues are equally strong persuaders. Further, the idea behind ELM is that the two routes are not separated, but part of an elaboration continuum. Thus Petty and Cacioppo proposed that different elaboration processes could be placed along the continuum and not only at the two ends. Yet the peripheral route mechanisms are the ones that cause persuasion in the absence of argument scrutiny. Following the logic, it turns out that the central route processing theories could vacillate along the continuum, while the peripheral route ones are exclusively located at the lower end of the continuum (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993).

In a similar vein, Morris, ChongMoo, and Singh (2005) stated that affect does not occur only along the peripheral route, as the ELM claims. The performed experiment revealed that individuals high in need for cognition (i.e., cognitive elaborators) scored much higher on the pleasure-arousal-dominance scale, as well as on purchase intent scale, than did individuals low in need for cognition (i.e., cognitive misers). This finding suggests that “[c]ognitive elaborators may generate a higher emotional response than cognitive misers and purchase intent is related to emotional response; the higher emotional response, the stronger the purchase intention.” (Morris et al., 2005, p. 93).

*Multiple roles of variables:*

Another major flaw, widely pointed by the ELM critiques (Stiff & Boster, 1987; Perloff, 1993; Cook et al., 2004), is that the model is difficult to falsify. The problem stems from the postulate that variables could affect persuasion in three different ways - as arguments, as peripheral cues, and as influencing elaboration in an objective or biased manner. Thus, the postulate permits the ELM to explain all possible outcomes (Stiff & Boster, 1987) and that persuasion would always occur if not by one then by other means of the model, regardless of the results (Cook et al., 2004). Stiff and Boster (1987, p.251) concluded:

“Until Petty and Cacioppo can specify a priori all of the situational and individual difference factors that determine whether a stimulus provides a central cue, a peripheral cue, or both, the ELM will remain impossible to falsify. As such, it has limited utility for predicting persuasive outcomes.”

*Other issues:*

Another worrisome aspect of the ELM is the limited number of topics that are employed in the model research. The two dominating topics are senior comprehensive exams and tuition charges. According to O’Keefe (1990), just like the limited number of respondents in persuasive studies raises a red flag for their reliability, so should be a theory that rests on evidence from few message topics.

Similarly, Mongeau and Stiff (1993) warned that the entire model has not been tested yet. They supported this notion with the statement that the ELM consists of input (i.e. argument quality, issue involvement, source expertise), process (i.e., cognitions and evaluations of argument quality, issue involvement, and source expertise), and output (attitudes and behaviors) variables. So far, research has tested predominantly the relationships between input and process variables, or input and output variables, using only ANOVA, but not process-output relationship or the all three variables together (Mongeau & Stiff, 1993).

Due to all critique, the replies from both proponents and opponents of the model, as well as the myriad of research, ELM has evolved through the years. Some of the aforementioned limitations are not relevant anymore, yet others remain controversial and still call for reformation. As one of the major controversies that still requires attention, Choi and Salmon (2003, p.66) proposed the development of normative model of communication structure that would specify “. . . which cues are processed centrally, which peripherally, under what conditions, and by whom and test it.”

## *Hypotheses*

The general focus of this study is on the effect of product placement in newscasts on viewers' recall. This effect would be measured by comparing it to the recall effect from commercials under high and low involvement condition.

From the previous review it became clear that viewers engage in conscious elaboration when newscasts are considered. Further, Jo (2004) discovered that people tend to elaborate more effortful on the message when it is presented in news editorial than when it is presented in advertising. Thus, there is enough evidence to claim that viewers process the messages from the news along the central route.

The same could not be said about the product placements in newscasts. The viewers are deceived that they are being presented with real, unbiased news, which in turn means that they do not have the ability to elaborate on the actual product placement, because they are not aware of its presence. Hence, product placement could not persuade along the central route, because both conditions (i.e., motivation and ability) are not met.

Some might argue that viewers are not as passive and they could differentiate between stealth advertising and news. In fact, research has shown that the majority of viewers considered themselves "marketing savvy," and acknowledged that they are aware of the product placement and VNR placement practices on TV news (Newell et al., 2009). Yet, in a study performed by Broaddus et al. (2011), an average of 46 percent of the time the researched sample was not able to identify the VNRs in the newscast, because the sample was not aware of being presented with VNRs.

Thus, this study argues that, since viewers focus on the actual news and do not elaborate effortful on the advertised product or brand, under high involvement condition

product placement in newscasts has little effect on product recall. In particular, the following hypothesis will be tested:

H1a: Under high involvement, product placement in newscasts has weaker effect on viewers' recall than commercials.

H1b: Under low involvement, product placement in newscasts has stronger effect on viewers' recall than commercials.

Due to its indirect nature, unlike advertising, product placement does not usually provide the viewers with factual information about the product, which leads to the expectation that it will rely more on affective processes, rather than on the cognitive aspect of the experience (Russell, 1998). Further, Norris and Colman (1993) discovered that as programs were rated more involving, challenging, worth remembering, and attention grabbing, the lower was the recall of advertisements embedded in these programs. Hallahan (1999b) observed similar pattern where advertising presented with quality arguments performed equally as well as news on recall. What is more, news with weak arguments performed just as well as news with strong arguments, and as well as advertising with strong arguments (Hallahan, 1999b). A statement, that proves one more time, that the perceived distinction between editorials and commercials lays in the third person credibility effect.

On the other hand, as previously explained, viewers exert greater counter attitude toward commercials, because they are aware of their persuasive intent. Yet, Petty and Cacioppo discovered that while favorable advocacies required between three and five repetitions for greatest recall, the unfavorable ones took only between one and three repetitions. The counterattitudinal advocacies elicited a greater number of topic-relevant

thoughts than did the proattitudinal advocacies, which also suggests that superior recall of the message arguments supporting the unfavorable rather than the favorable advocacy should be expected. Thus, it is expected that commercials will have a superior recall than product placement (H1b).

Likewise, based on the ELM source credibility postulate, under low involvement condition product placement should have stronger recall effect than advertising.

Results from studies utilizing the ELM revealed that under high involvement, only argument quality affected attitudes, but source expertise did not, while under low involvement condition source expertise was more persuasive than the presented argument. With respect to the trade-off postulate, the study (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b) concluded that under low involvement, increasing source expertise enhanced attitudes regardless of message quality, while under high involvement source expertise was irrelevant for attitude formation.

This study acknowledged earlier that many consider publicity, and consecutively product placement in news, to have stronger effect on recall than advertising, because of the assigned credibility. Yet, the notion that under high involvement source credibility is not relevant could be related to the present study, providing additional support for H1a.

Based on the third party endorsement effect and the credibility assigned to news programs, this study proposes its second hypothesis:

H2: Product placement in news programs negatively influences news credibility.

As outlined in the literature review, the term *third-party endorsement* refers to the fact that the media is regarded as an independent source of information and as such, it has no reason to communicate biased or false messages (Hallahan, 1999a; Eisend, & Küster,

2011). The media independence, combined with the uncovered persuasive effect of product placement is expected to affect news credibility.

## Chapter Three:

### Methodology

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of product placement in newscasts on viewers' recall of the placed product and whether the recall is affected by program and product involvement. Thus, hypotheses *H1a* and *H1b* stated that: Under high (low) involvement, product placement in newscasts has weaker (stronger) effect on viewers' recall than commercials (advertising). This study also aims to measure if product placement affects news credibility and in what way, presenting *H2*, which proposed that: Product placement in news programs negatively influences news credibility. In order to identify a relationship between involvement and recall, as well as between PAT and news credibility, the study compares the product recall from product placement and commercial, by implementing a 2x3 experimental design.

A controlled experiment was conducted to test these hypotheses. According to Miller and Levine (1996), experimental designs are suitable for persuasion studies, because they allow the necessary control to specify and manipulate the source or message characteristics that will be compared. The stimulus material was obtained from an actual news broadcast. Three different versions were created that would satisfy the requirements of the experiment for three persuasive appeal types. The first version depicted an uninterrupted 6-minute segment of an evening newscast and was used as a control condition. The second version included the same segment, but a McDonald's cup was added to the scene to simulate product placement. The third version included the same

segment as the first two, without product placement, but was interrupted by a commercial break that also included a McDonald's commercial.

The experiment design followed the one utilized by Owen and Karrh (1996). The participants were separated in six groups. In three of the groups, the viewers' involvement was additionally manipulated to achieve high program involvement. As per Petty and Cacioppo, the participants in the high-involvement groups were informed that after the video they will participate in a discussion about the amount of violence presented in the news. In order to avoid social loafing, the participants were advised that everyone in the group will have an opportunity to verbally express their own opinion on the topic.

With respect to program involvement, Petty and Cacioppo already revealed that personal responsibility is an important factor for higher cognitive involvement. Using this factor, the present study tried to manipulate the level of involvement with the presented newscast. Similar strategies for manipulating involvement were used by Petty and Cacioppo in several of their studies, as well as by Lee and Faber (2007).

### *Experiment design*

The actual experiment took place as follows. To test the hypotheses, a 2x3 factorial experiment was conducted that includes two groups of independent variables (high and low program involvement) and persuasive appeal type (product placement, commercial, and none), to examine the dependent variable (product recall). A full design was used, resulting in an experimental setting with 6 different treatment stimuli:

1. High involvement product placement
2. High involvement commercial

3. High involvement control
4. Low involvement product placement
5. Low involvement commercial.
6. Low involvement control

Participants were recruited from a large class of USF undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory Mass Communications course. Students who were less than 18 years of age were excluded from participating in this study.

Upon entering the classroom, students were asked to voluntarily participate in a study, conducted by a graduate student of the School of Mass Communications. Students wishing to participate in the study were given a questionnaire booklet containing the measurement instrument. Further, subjects were informed that their participation is voluntary and will not affect their student status in any way.

Before presenting the video, the participants were informed that the purpose of the study is to measure their perception of the level of violence in local news. Further, in the groups with high program involvement, participants were informed that at the end of the experiment, they would engage in an active discussion where everyone would be able to express their own opinion.

After the video, the questionnaire was distributed and instructions for its fulfillment were given. With respect to the questionnaire, subjects were asked not to turn to next page before they answer all questions on the current page. The first two questions were open ended and aimed at measuring free recall. Subjects were informed about the 3 minutes time limit. Next, the questions measuring program involvement and news credibility were included, followed by implicit questions, discussed in brief earlier. It is

important that the participants will take the implicit questionnaire prior to any other questions, in order to avoid explicit recall.

After the implicit questionnaire, based on Roehm et al.'s (2004) design, the participants received a distracter question that is not important for the actual study, but was used to help clear the short-term memory. They were asked to list the three most recent movies they have seen. Finally, they were presented with the explicit and demographics questions.

#### *Instrumentation.*

As per Jo (2004) and Owen and Karrh (1996), to measure free brand recall, participants were presented with two open ended questions, asking them which news/characters and which commercials/brands they remember seeing. Responses were coded to yes/no depending on whether the subjects recognized the particular brand or not (i.e. McDonald's).

Program involvement was measured with a Likert-type scale, derived from Cho and Boster's (2005) three-factor model. The model emphasizes the multidimensional nature of involvement in measurement (Cho & Boster, 2005; Quick & Heiss, 2009). It distinguishes between three types of involvement: value- (VRI), impression- (IRI), and outcome-relevant involvement (ORI). Yet, this paper focuses only on ORI, because it is a strong predictor of information seeking, which distinguishes it from the other two types (Cho & Boster, 2005). The statements that measure program involvement were: 1) Whether or not I watch the news has little impact on my life (Reversed); 2) My life would be changed if I adjust my habit of watching news; 3) My life would not change much if my watching news (Reversed); 4) My watching the news has little effect on me

(Reversed); 5) It is easy for me to think of ways that watching news affects my life; 6) It is difficult for me to think of ways that watching news (Reversed); 7) All in all, the effect of watching news on my life would be small (Reversed); 8) Watching the news affects my daily life. The manipulation check for program involvement was embedded in the instrument itself and no pre-test manipulation was performed.

News credibility also was measured to see if it actually plays a role in product recall. The statements included the following items: 1) Most of the information on the newscast I just saw is believable; 2) I do not believe the things I saw and heard on the newscast (Reversed); 3) I find the newscast I just saw to be credible.

Law and Braun (2000) advised that the effectiveness of product placement depends on how it is measured. The authors suggested that besides the widely used explicit memory tests that measure recall and recognition by asking questions directly related to the presented products, the implicit memory tests are also important. The implicit tests do not require conscious recollection. Rather, they measure choice and take into consideration the effects of previous exposure on consumer judgment, such as brand reputation and validity of an advertising claim (Law & Braun, 2000). The presence of two different tests is justified by the notion that explicit recall and recognition measures are not capable of detecting the more subtle effects of product placement and cannot tap into the learning without awareness processes involved in processing product placements (Law & Braun-LaTour, 2004). To sum up, the main distinction is that in the implicit tests there is no direct reference to the item being tested and they measure brand choice and preference outside the program content (Law & Braun-LaTour, 2004).

Next, the memory for both product placement and advertising were assessed with aided recall test that was expected to weed out the tendency to guess (Moorman et al., 2012). It was based on the Memory Characteristics Questionnaire (MCQ), developed in 1988 by Johnson, Foley, Suengas, and Raye, and later used by Law and Braun (2000). The main purpose of MCQ is to test recognition (e.g., remembering hearing about the brand; where it was located; how it was presented; what it looked like; etc.). Thus a predetermined list of familiar and unfamiliar brands was presented to the respondents. The list included brands that were placed in the program and those that were in the commercial break, as well as equal amount of false brands as foils. During results measure, those questions were dropped.

A product involvement scale also was included in the questionnaire to measure subjects' involvement with McDonald's. A condensed version of the Personal Involvement Inventory (PII), originally created by Zaichkowsky in 1985, was used to measure product involvement. The original PII has 20 items, but Lichtenstein, Bloch, and Black (1988) have condensed it to 9 items. The scale measures enduring product involvement and is a 7-point semantic differential scale.

Finally, the questionnaire included basic demographic questions. (The complete questionnaire could be found in Appendix A).

Prior the experiment, a manipulation check for persuasive appeal type (PAT) also was performed. Several mass communication experts were asked to identify the level of distinction between the three different types. They observed them and agreed that there is a difference between product placement, commercial and control type, which lead to a successful manipulation check for PAT.

## Chapter Four:

### Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of product placement in newscasts on viewers' recall of the placed product and whether the recall is affected by program and product involvement. Thus, hypotheses *H1a* and *H1b* stated that: Under high (low) involvement, product placement in newscasts has weaker (stronger) effect on viewers' recall than commercials (advertising). This study also aimed to measure if product placement affects news credibility and in what way, presenting *H2*, which proposed that: Product placement in news programs negatively influences news credibility. In order to identify a relationship between involvement and recall, as well as between PAT and news credibility, the study compared the product recall from product placement and commercial. The experiment followed a 2x3 factorial research design that included two groups of independent variables (high and low program involvement) and persuasive appeal type (product placement, commercial, and none), to examine the dependent variables (product recall and news credibility) (Table 1).

Table 1

*Pre-test research design and number of participants for each cell*

Involvement/PAT/N# of participants	Product Placement	Commercial	Control
High Involvement	29	33	15
Low Involvement	29	36	22

A total of 169 undergraduate students participated in the experiment. Of them, 164 identified their sex, which lead to a total of 92 female and 72 male participants (Table 2). The six treatment stimuli were randomly dispersed among the six groups of subjects. Group 1: n=29; group 2: n=33; group 3: n=15; group 4: n=29; group 5: n=36; and group 6: n=22.

Table 2

*Crosstabulation*

Count		Total		
		female	male	
Persuasive Appeal Type	PP	34	24	58
	Commercial	37	34	71
	None	21	14	35
Total		92	72	164

Next, composite measures from the multi-item scales were created and used to increase validity and reliability of the measures. Descriptive statistics for the items used to measure program involvement (Table 3), product involvement (Table 4), and news credibility (Table 5) provided a summarized description of the data's basic features.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics – Program Involvement*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
NI1 Whether or not I watch news, has little impact on my life	168	4.4286	1.81666
NI2 My life would be changed if I adjust my habit of watching news	168	3.7976	1.69734
NI3 My life would not change much if my watching news changed	166	3.7771	1.77654
NI4 My watching the news has little effect on me	167	4.3234	1.75715
NI5 It is easy for me to think of ways that watching news affects my life	168	4.3095	1.72322

NI6 It is difficult for me to think of ways that watching news may affect my life	167	4.3892	1.80311
NI7 All in all, the effect of watching news on my life would be small	168	3.7500	1.77727
NI8 Watching the news affects my daily life	168	3.4583	1.72288
Valid N (listwise)	165		

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics - News Credibility*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
NC1 Most of the information on the newscast I just saw is believable	168	5.7917	1.11524
NC2 I do not believe the things I saw and heard on the newscast	168	5.8929	1.13219
NC3 I find the newscast I just saw to be credible	167	5.4611	1.28826
Valid N (listwise)	167		

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics – Product Involvement*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PI1 Unimportant - Important	160	2.4187	1.62323
PI2 Irrelevant - Relevant	159	2.8428	1.85395
PI3 Useless - Useful	158	3.1456	1.87788
PI4 Worthless - Valuable	159	3.0377	1.76781
PI5 Not beneficial - Beneficial	158	2.4684	1.76545
PI6 Nonessential - Essential	158	2.1456	1.54271
PI7 Not needed - needed	160	2.2063	1.55445
PI8 Of no concern to me - Of concern to me		2.4658	1.64329
PI9 Means nothing to me - Means a lot to me	160	2.4375	1.55684
Valid N (listwise)	157		

Program involvement and News credibility were measured with a 7-point Likert-type scale where 1= strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree. The highest mean score for Program involvement provided item NI1 Whether or not I watch news, has little impact

on my life ( $M = 4.43$ ,  $SD = 1.82$ ) and the lowest - NI8 Watching the news affects my daily life ( $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = 1.72$ ). For News credibility the highest mean score was for NC2 I do not believe the things I saw and heard on the newscast ( $M = 5.89$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ). Conversely, the lowest mean was for item NC3 I find the newscast I just saw to be credible ( $M = 5.46$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ). Product involvement was measured with a 7-point Semantic differential scale, where item PI3 Useless – Useful scored the highest mean ( $M = 3.15$ ,  $SD = 1.88$ ) and PI6 Nonessential – Essential the lowest ( $M = 2.15$ ,  $SD = 1.54$ ).

A Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the multi-items scales that measure news involvement, product involvement, and news credibility. All three scales revealed good to excellent result for Cronbach's alpha, which prevented the exclusion of any component of the multi-item scales. As presented in tables 3, 4, and 5, Program Involvement scale consisted of 8 items ( $\alpha = .92$ ); News Credibility scale consisted of 3 items ( $\alpha = .81$ ), and Product Involvement of 9 items ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

### *Hypotheses testing*

Hypothesis 1 stipulated that under high (low) involvement, product placement in newscasts has weaker (stronger) effect on viewers' recall than commercials (advertising). A Crosstabulation between free recall, persuasive appeal type, and involvement revealed the actual number of participants who were able to recall freely the commercial or product placement, depending on the involvement condition (Table 6). The results did not reveal any significant differences between free recall of product placement and commercial. Further, those that remembered seeing the McDonald's cup, under high involvement condition, were half the number ( $n=25$ ) of those that did not recall the product ( $n=51$ ), which provides support for the first part of the hypothesis, H1a. Yet,

similar results were obtained in the low involvement condition where n=26 remembered the cup and n=60 were not able to recall it freely. A chi-squared test was performed to measure the difference in free product recall, based on high and low program involvement. The results are not statistically significant ( $X^2=.133, p = .716$ ). Therefore, it cannot be drawn a conclusion that under high involvement condition viewers recall the product less than under low involvement. Since the involvement manipulation was not successful for this experiment, the design was modified from pre-test 2x3 to post-test 1x3 experiment design, where the involvement remains constant for all groups.

Table 6

*Crosstabulation for Persuasive Appeal Type, Free Recall, and Involvement*

Involvement			Do you remember seeing any products or brands		Total
			MacDonald's	no	
High	Persuasive Appeal Type	PP	12	17	29
		Commercial	13	21	34
		None	0	13	13
	Total		25	51	76
Low	Persuasive Appeal Type	PP	11	18	29
		Commercial	15	21	36
		None	0	21	21
	Total		26	60	86
Total	Persuasive Appeal Type	PP	23	35	58
		Commercial	28	42	70
		None	0	34	34
	Total		51	111	162

Further, program involvement did not show significant differences between the different persuasive appeal types: product placement ( $M = 1.50, SD = 0.50$ ) and

commercial ( $M = 1.52$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ), suggesting that program involvement in this experiment did not affect brand recall, regardless of appeal type.

Hypothesis 2 stipulated that product placement in news programs negatively influences news credibility. A one-way ANOVA compared the means for Program involvement, Product involvement, and News credibility by PAT provided only partial support for H1 (Table 7). The results revealed a significant relationship between PAT and News Credibility ( $F=4.953$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) In order to provide a more detailed explanation for this relationship a one-way ANOVA compared the means for the three different persuasive appeal types, based on news credibility (Table 8). The mean for product placement ( $M = 5.39$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ) was somewhat lower than the means for commercial ( $M = 5.90$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ) and the control condition ( $M = 5.87$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ). This difference suggests that product placement has a less favorable effect on news credibility than commercials and/or none. Thus, providing a support for H2. Further, the results did not provide any statistically significant information for the relationship between PAT and program involvement and product involvement.

Table 7

*Program Involvement, Product Involvement, and News Credibility by PAT*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Program Involvement	Between Groups	7.307	2	3.654	1.878	.156
	Within Groups	315.200	162	1.946		
	Total	322.507	164			
News Credibility	Between Groups	9.581	2	4.791	4.953	.008
	Within Groups	158.636	164	.967		
	Total	168.217	166			

Product Involvement	Between Groups	1.031	2	.515	.288	.750
	Within Groups	275.947	154	1.792		
	Total	276.978	156			

Table 8

*Mean and Standard Deviations for News Credibility by PAT*

Persuasive Appeal Type	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
PP	5.3908	58	1.11544
Commercial	5.9061	71	.89475
None	5.8684	38	.92525
Total	5.7186	167	1.00666

## Chapter Five

### Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to determine the effect of product placement in newscasts on viewers' recall of the placed product. Further, this study aimed to determine whether the recall is affected by program and product involvement. Thus, several hypotheses were presented. Hypotheses *H1a* and *H1b* stated that: Under high (low) involvement, product placement in newscasts has weaker (stronger) effect on viewers' recall than commercials (advertising). This study also aimed to measure if product placement affects news credibility and in what way. Thus, *H2* proposed that: Product placement in news programs negatively influences news credibility.

Hypothesis 1 was based on the ELM and postulated that under high involvement condition viewers would not remember seeing a product placement, because they are processing the news along the central route, whereas the placement would persuade them along the peripheral route. This hypothesis was partially supported. On one hand, as proposed, the viewers under high program involvement condition registered a weak product placement recall. On the other hand, the same held true for the viewers, whose program involvement was not additionally manipulated. Thus, Petty and Cacioppo's theory for subjects' involvement manipulation did not hold true for the present experiment.

There might be several reasons for this outcome. For one, many of the participants might not have exerted effortful processing while watching the news. As

outlined earlier in the paper, ELM's Postulate 2 stipulates that for a central route processing to occur, both motivation and ability to elaborate on an issue should be present (Chaiken & Trope, 1999). If one of them is missing then other options such as high motivation to elaborate, but low ability (e.g. disrupted by distraction); or high ability, but low motivation (e.g. low relevant message), or even low motivation and low ability, also exist. The experiment was held under laboratory conditions, in order for distraction to be ruled out. Yet, the participants were not tested for level of motivation and message relevance. Thus, the unsuccessful involvement manipulations might have been a result of low message relevance.

The study was not able to provide full support for Hypotheses 1a and 1b. No significant differences were registered between program involvement and recall, based on the three different product appeal types. These results contradict Owen and Karrh's (1996) statement that viewers give more credibility to VNR-based messages within news program, than to similarly structured advertisement messages and hence, viewers recall products better when they see them in news than in commercials. Thus, for the present study, source credibility could be ruled out as a factor that might affect product recall. This conclusion is in accordance with previous studies (Hallahan, 1999a; Hallahan, 1999b; Jo, 2004; Verčič, Verčič, & Laco, 2008) that revealed that editorial does not necessarily outperform advertising when source credibility is considered.

From a modality standpoint, the present research did not support Balasubramanian et al.'s (2006) and Romaniuk's (2009) theories that dual-mode placements generate better cognitive outcomes than single-mode placements. The experiment contained a visual only subtle product placement and a dual-mode prominent

commercial. Yet, the results did not reveal any significant differences in the product recall for the two conditions.

Hypothesis 2 stipulated that product placement in news programs negatively influences news credibility. As stated in the literature review, product placement is the golden middle way between editorial and commercials. On one hand, product placement enjoys the high credibility that comes from the editorial content and on the other, marketers control the message and can avoid the negative information effect (Eisend & Küster, 2011). The results from this study showed that there is a difference between the effect that commercials and product placement have on news credibility. In particular product placement scored lower than commercials, thus suggesting that it has a less positive effect on news credibility.

These results are in accordance with previous studies that revealed that the manipulative intent, when detected, has the potential to generate feelings of betrayal and possibly a backlash, particularly for media that are expected to be highly credible (Bhatnagar et al., 2004).

The effect of product placement on news credibility could also be directly related to the lack of increased program involvement and the subjects' elaboration along the peripheral route. According to the ELM and the trade-off postulate in particular, under low involvement, increasing source expertise enhances attitudes regardless of message quality, while under high involvement source expertise is irrelevant for attitude formation (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Thus, viewers who elaborate along the peripheral route will rely highly on source expertise, unlike those who are highly involved with the program content. Following the ELM logic, those who rely on peripheral cues, if they detect the

product placement persuasive intent, they will change their attitude toward the program easier than those who are highly involved with the program and rely more on content than source credibility.

Further, the credibility was not affected by the program or product involvement, yet the results from this study revealed several important points:

- Viewers are aware of the existence of product placement in newscasts and although, as per the ELM, such placements should persuade along the peripheral route, they are being noticed and acknowledged.
- Viewers are aware of the marketing purpose of such placements and the fact that they see them in newscasts could hurt the program credibility.
- The same does not hold true for commercials, because viewers know that commercials are paid for and are openly presented as such during the commercial break.

## Chapter Six:

### Conclusions

#### *Limitations*

The present study has several limitations. Program involvement was manipulated by using the personal responsibility factor. Petty and Cacioppo hypothesized that the greater the personal responsibility for evaluating an issue, the more people should be willing to exert effortful thinking about the issue-relevant arguments (Petty et al.,1980). Thus, the participants in the high-involvement groups were informed that after the video they will participate in a discussion about the amount of violence presented in the news. During this study the manipulation check for involvement was embedded in the instrument itself. Yet, the involvement manipulation was not successful as it did not provide any statistically significant differences between high and low involvement. Hence, the researcher acknowledges that the lack of pre-test for involvement manipulation is a major limitation in this study.

The sample that was used was a convenient sample, but might not be the most accurate one for the present research. Future research needs to discover what age group is watching evening newscast the most and study that particular group about product placement recall. The idea is that the most loyal viewers should be the ones who most actively process the information from the newscast, thus engaging in central elaboration.

Further, the controlled environment also might have affected the results of the experiment. In a way, participants were “forced” to watch the news, which to certain

extent excludes distraction and higher involvement, respectively. Yet, when it comes to recall differences between product placement and commercial, previous research (Romaniuk, 2009) has shown that the modality differences between the two persuasive types are equally applicable to forced, as well as to natural-viewing environments, experimental designs, and pretests.

Future research should attempt to study this problem in a natural for the viewer environment. As stated earlier, for studies that measure commercial recall, scholars (Moorman et al., 2007; Moorman, Willemsen, Neijens, & Smit, 2012) recommend the use of naturalistic conditions without any forced exposure, because the effect of program involvement on commercial recall is predominantly mediated by program exposure.

Another option for manipulating the viewers' involvement with the news would be to present the sample with local or out of state newscast, thus resting the experiment on the theory for proximity and involvement.

### *Implications*

The paper has important implications for the existing empirical and theoretical knowledge, as well as for practitioners. On one hand, not only can practitioners distribute information and imagery for their clients to very large audiences, but clients can also receive credibility from the editorial environment-something clients may have difficulty accomplishing through advertising. Further, the higher level of credibility may be transferred to the brand or company featured in the product placement.

On the other hand, the producers should know if the risk they take by using product placement in news is worth, since the main difference between placements and commercials is the program credibility they enjoy. As the study revealed, the program

credibility dropped when viewers encountered a product placement, as compared to commercial or no interruption at all. The underlying manipulative intent of product placement could be detected and thus, generate feelings of betrayal, especially for media that are expected to be highly credible. This implication concerns marketers as well, whose reputation also could be affected by the perceived betrayal.

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## Appendix A

### News Questionnaire

### Student Opinion Questionnaire

The principal investigator in this study is in the process of evaluating students opinions related to the amount of violence in the news, presented daily in the local media. (After the video every one of you will have an opportunity to express his/her opinion on the topic and engage in group discussion). Please take a few minutes to watch the video that will follow. Next, you will find a series of statements about your opinions and attitudes. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement by writing the appropriate number from the scale in the space provided. Please answer as honestly as possible. There is no right or wrong answers. Your responses to this questionnaire will remain completely anonymous. Thank you, in advance, for completing this questionnaire.

#### **INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT**

**This research is being conducted by Fany Georgieva, graduate student, School of Mass Communications, University of South Florida. The study is being supervised by Dr. Kelly Page Werder, School of Mass Communications, University of South Florida, 4202 E. Fowler Ave., CIS1040, Tampa, FL 33620-7800; (813) 974-6790. Your responses are voluntary and will remain confidential to the extent provided by law. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer, and you have the right to withdraw consent at any time without consequence. There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation in this research and you will receive no compensation for your participation. Neither your course status nor your grade will be affected by your decision to participate or not to participate in this study. If you have any questions concerning the procedures used in this study, you may contact the principle investigator at e-mail address [fgeorgie@mail.usf.edu](mailto:fgeorgie@mail.usf.edu) or at cell (813) 410-5434. Also you can contact the study supervisor at [kqpage@usf.edu](mailto:kqpage@usf.edu) or by calling (813) 974-6790. Questions or concerns about your rights as a participant can be directed to the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board at (813) 974-9343.<sup>1</sup>**

**Instructions:** Using the space bellow, please respond to the following two questions as completely as possible, without discussing your answers with others. You have 3 minutes to respond.

1. Please indicate as many news as you could remember from the video?
2. Please indicate any brands or products you remember seeing in the video?

**PLEASE DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL INSTRUCTED TO DO SO!**

**Instructions:** Using the scale below, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by writing the appropriate number in the blank provided.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Undecided	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

- \_\_\_ 3. Whether or not I watch the news, has little impact on my life.
- \_\_\_ 4. My life would be changed if I adjust my habit of watching news.
- \_\_\_ 5. My life would not change much if my watching news changed.
- \_\_\_ 6. My watching the news has little effect on me.
- \_\_\_ 7. It is easy for me to think of ways that watching news affects my life.
- \_\_\_ 8. It is difficult for me to think of ways that watching news may affect my life.
- \_\_\_ 9. All in all, the effect of watching news on my life would be small.
- \_\_\_ 10. Watching the news affects my daily life.
- \_\_\_ 11. Most of the information on the newscast I just saw is believable.
- \_\_\_ 12. I do not believe the things I saw and heard on the newscast.
- \_\_\_ 13. I find the newscast I just saw to be credible.

**Instructions:** Please circle the answer that best corresponds to your personal preferences.

14. When renting a car, if you get to choose the make, which one would you rent?

- a). Ford
- b). Honda
- c). Nissan
- d). Buick
- e). None of the above

15. Please circle your choice of fast food restaurant?

- a). Wendy's
- b). Taco Bell
- c). McDonald's
- d). Burger King

e). None of the above

16. Which store would be your preferable choice for grocery shopping?

a). Publix

b). Winn-Dixie

c). Walmart

d). Sweetbay

e). None of the above

17. What about appliance store? What would be your preference?

a). Sears

b). Famous Tate

c). Rent-A-Center

d). Home Depot

**PLEASE DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL INSTRUCTED TO DO SO!**

**Instructions:** Please list the titles of five movies you have recently seen. You will have 2 minutes to complete the task

**PLEASE DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL INSTRUCTED TO DO SO!**

**Instructions:** Please circle the answer that, according to you, best corresponds to what you saw on the video.

18. The first news in the video was about:

- a) Obama's inauguration
- b). Nightclub shooting
- c). Arrested police officer
- d). Martin Luther King Jr.

19. Customers of which company had an issue with their bill:

- a). Bright House
- b). Teco
- c). Progress Energy
- d). T-Mobile
- e). Do not remember

20. The car commercial that you saw on the video was about:

- a). Mazda
- b). Pontiac
- c). GMC
- d). Subaru
- e). There was no car commercial

21. The newscast presented the new chief police office of which city?

- a). Largo
- b). Sarasota
- c). Ellenton
- d). Tampa
- c). Do not remember

22. The commercial break was:

- a). In the beginning of the video
- b). Somewhere in the middle of the video
- c). Somewhere at the end of the video
- d). There was no commercial break.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

**Instructions:** Listed below are a few demographic questions about you that will help us to understand your answers. Please write or select the appropriate response.

23. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

24. What is your current academic level?

Freshman  Sophomore  Junior  Senior  Graduate  Other

25. How long (in years) have you been a student at USF? \_\_\_\_\_

26. What is your sex? \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male

27. What is your ethnicity?

Caucasian  African-American  
 Hispanic  Pacific Islander  
 American Indian  Asian  
 Other

**Thank you for participating in this study!**