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TOWARDS A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN EMOTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF ADVERTISING SLOGANS

WAN-CHEN WANG
ASST. PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING
FENG CHIA UNIVERSITY
TAIWAN


ABSTRACT

Slogans have been extensively employed as a vital component in advertising campaigns. Overall, the slogan-related research revealed that to a great extent this research has investigated effects connected to brand awareness, issues concerning how to make a slogan memorable, and relationships between consumer demographic characteristics and slogan learning and assessment. Nevertheless, examining the role emotion plays in advertising slogans is important. This study tested the conceptual model and hypotheses developed based on existing literature. Thus, this research intends to understand how consumers' emotional responses to advertising slogans influence advertising effectiveness by integration with the new theoretical research construct: the consumer's emotional corridor. Compared to previous researcher's suggestion for overall assessments of continuous measures, the construct seems to be more beneficial for measuring consumers' emotional responses to advertising slogans.

KEYWORDS

Advertising effectiveness, Advertising slogan, Emotional response.

INTRODUCTION

logans have a positive influence on their brands and function as carriers of brand equity (Dahlen and Rosengren, 2005; Rosengren and Dahlen, 2006). On the whole, a review of the slogan-related research reveals that this research has investigated primarily the effects of brand awareness, issues concerning how to make a slogan memorable (e.g., Bradley and Meeds, 2002; Dahlen and Rosengren, 2005), relationships between consumer demographic characteristics (e.g., Dotson and Hyatt, 2000), and slogan learning and assessment (e.g., Dahlen and Rosengren, 2005). Nevertheless, it is important to investigate how consumers' emotional responses to advertising slogans affect advertising effectiveness. This question needs to be addressed with the intention to uncover the role and nature of emotions elicited by advertising slogans and their effect on the development of advertising effectiveness.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Most advertising with a substantial feeling constituent involves heavy repetition (Aaker et al., 1986). Advertising commercials can be structured to extract various affective responses that continuously shift while the commercial unfolds (Baumgartner et al., 1997). The researcher is faced with the question as to whether the existing system relationships between these different affect patterns influence individuals' overall advertisement judgments. Researchers from the field of psychology (e.g., Davidson et al., 1990; Schwartz, 1990) have argued that an incident may evoke emotions of mixed intensity involving one dominant and several non-dominant emotions, which are firmly embedded in memory, in connection with the stimulus representation. Based on the above, there is an absence of linkage between repetitive emotions, mixed emotions and the dominant emotion. In addressing this gap, the present study focuses particularly on examining the dynamic characteristics of the emotional process and the connection among the above mention.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

This research contributes to the existing literature by establishing the construct of the consumer's emotional corridor, which appears to be more advantageous for measuring consumers' emotional responses to advertising slogan

OBJECTIVES

This research aims to achieve an in-depth understanding of consumers' emotional responses to advertising slogans and their impact on the development of advertising effectiveness.

HYPOTHESES

COGNITIVE APPRAISALS

Cognitive appraisal theorists consider that emotions are elicited from a subjective evaluation of the situation and that it is not the actual situation that induces emotions, but the psychological assessment (Scherer, 2001). Researchers have suggested that the cognitive appraisal approach is a promising avenue for studying emotions in consumer behavior contexts (e.g., Johnson and Stewart, 2005; Watson and Spence, 2007). Researchers (e.g., Fasseur and Geuens, 2006; Martensen et al., 2007) have found a significant relationship between positive emotion and advertising effectiveness. Thus, the positive emotions and their associated appraisals will have a significant effect on advertising effectiveness. Therefore, the following hypothesis relates to cognitive appraisal:

H1 *cognitive appraisals*: Positive emotions and their associated appraisals have a positive effect on attitudes towards the advertisement.

PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT

Consumers process advertisements more actively, devote more time and cognitive effort to advertisements (Celsi and Olson, 1988), and focus more on product-related information in the advertisements (Celsi and Olson, 1988) when product involvement is high. Involvement, specifically product involvement, has been proved a major determinant of consumer behavior and advertising response (e.g., Zaichkowsky, 1985, 1994). In addition, some scholars differentiate between cognitive involvement and affective involvement (e.g., Park and Young, 1986) or rational and emotional involvement (e.g., Laurent and Kapferer, 1985). Cognitive involvement highlights a person's informational processing activities and the attainment of idealization states (Zaichkowsky, 1994). Affective involvement emphasizes an individual's feelings and accomplishments of particular emotional states, and it is employed to illustrate all emotions, moods, and feelings evoked by an object (McGuire, 1974). Therefore, the following hypothesis relates to product involvement:

H2 *product involvement1*: The level of product involvement has a negative relationship with the preference of emotional appeals.

H2 *product involvement2*: The level of product involvement has a positive relationship with the preference of cognitive involvement.

H3 *product involvement3*: The level of product involvement has a negative relationship with the preference of affective involvement.

GENDER

Gender differences in emotions, personality, and values have been found significant (Guimond et al., 2007). Numerous studies have found that women are more emotionally sensitive compared to men (e.g., Burriss et al., 2007; Chentsova-Dutton and Tsai, 2007). Therefore, the following proposition will be examined in relation to gender:

H3 *gender*: Gender differences have a significant effect on the consumer's emotional responses to advertising slogans.

EMOTIONAL RESPONSES

Scherer (2005, 2009) confirmed that emotions are conceptualized as an emergent, dynamic process derived from an individual’s subjective appraisal of an important event. Important lessons from neuroscience have revealed that emotional and memory systems are dynamic and change momentarily (DuPlessis, 2005; Marci, 2006). Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed in relation to emotional responses:

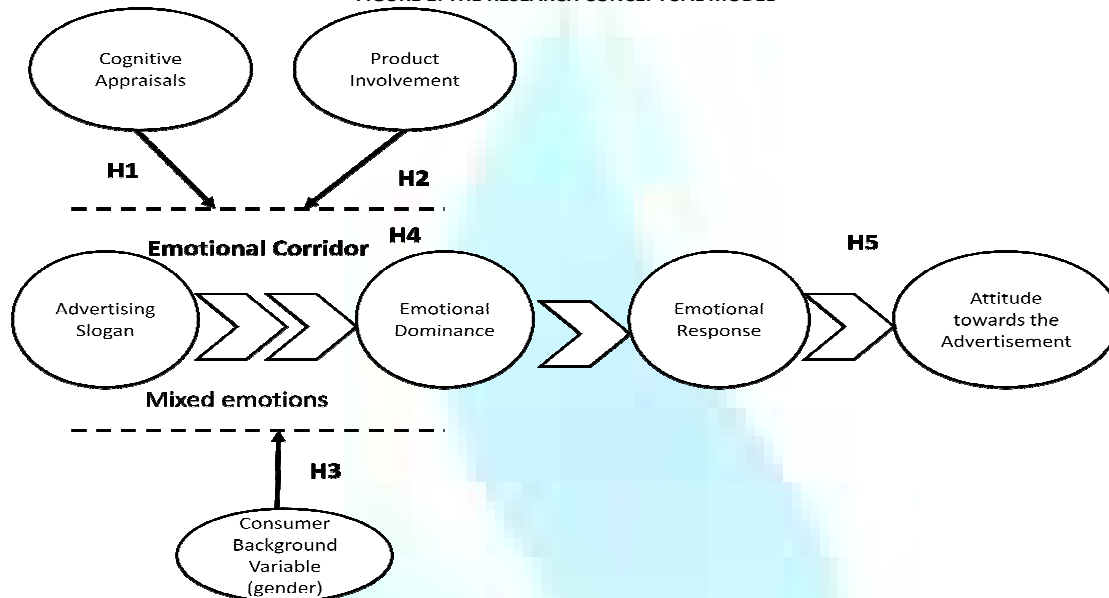
H4 *emotional responses*: The greater the repetition of exposure, the higher the variability of consumers’ emotional responses.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ADVERTISEMENT (AAD)

Past research has shown that emotions affect attitudes towards the advertisement and greatly motivate consumption behavior (e.g., Derbaix, 1995; Morris et al., 2002) Therefore, the following propositions will be examined in relation to attitude towards the advertisement (Aad):

H5 *Aad*: Consumers’ emotional responses to the advertising slogan have a positive relationship with the likelihood of attitudes towards the advertisement (Aad). Hence, this research conceptualises consumers’ emotional responses to advertising slogans as an “emotional corridor” which is fluid and dynamic. The “emotional corridor” is here defined as a corridor for emotions to pass through, which contains repetitive emotions and/or mixed emotional experiences and individuals’ emotional perceptions are blurred. If the emotional responses are prolonged, the individuals’ emotional states will be reinforced and one emotion will become dominant and prevail. Figure 1 presents the research conceptual model.

FIGURE 1: THE RESEARCH CONCEPTUAL MODEL



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

McDonald’s advertising slogan was chosen because it belongs to world renowned and long-established brand that is familiar to Taiwanese consumers. McDonald’s commitment is to provide a joyful environment for consumers. Consumption emotion includes a set of emotions, such as joy (Kuenzel and Yassim, 2007). Madrigal (1995) found that enjoyment had a strong relationship with satisfaction. Pride concerns feelings of superiority (Laros and Steenkamp, 2005). Additionally, happiness, anger, sadness, and boredom are primary emotions (Murray and Arnott, 1993). Hence, in this study, six emotions were chosen for testing, i.e., joy, happiness, pride, anger, sadness, and boredom.

In East Asia, a marketing style called the “night market” has been very successful (Wu and Luan, 2007). According to a report of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications Tourism Bureau, night markets take the first place as a domestic tourist site. They can contribute more than 10 billion New Taiwan dollars a year, with the Feng Chia night market being the famous night market in Taiwan. Thus, this survey research was conducted in the Feng Chia night market with an aim to approach various consumers (Malhotra, 1996).

This study used a systematic sampling technique. It is expected that the disadvantages caused by the use of the night market can be compensated for by employing the probability sampling technique. This survey was carried out over a period of three weeks that included weekdays and weekend days in order to avoid respondent bias. The sample comprised 191 shoppers in Taichung. Table 1 presents the sample characteristics.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Gender	McDonald’s	
	N	Percentage
Female	100	52.4
Male	91	47.6
Total	191	100

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

This study had to develop a questionnaire of such cognitive appraisals as the lack of well-established measures of the cognitive appraisals especially designed for advertising slogans. Additionally, this research proposed the consumer’s emotional corridor construct. Hence, this study conducted semi-structured interviews with an aim to define cognitive appraisals that consumers use for advertising slogans and to validate the research model. The snowballing technique was used to recruit participants for the semi-structured interviewees. Out of 12 participants, 5 were female participants and 7 were male. Their average age was 37.5 (ranging from 20 to 52). Overall, drawing on the insights from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, this qualitative interview reconfirmed the preliminary conceptual framework that was developed for this study. The appraisals proposed by Ortony, Clore, and Collins (1988), the Revised Personal Involvement Inventory (RPII) proposed by Zaichkowsky (1994) to measure involvement, and the measure of purchase intention (PI) proposed by Spears and Sigh (2004) were used due to their suitability, reliability, and validity. All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). This research applied Principle Component Analysis (PCA) with oblique rotation to condense the information obtained regarding cognitive appraisals and involvement of the tested advertising slogans. The oblique rotation allows for some correlation between factors. Hence, oblique rotation could yield important and meaningful factors (Hutcheson and Moutinho, 2008). For the cognitive appraisals data, four factors were extracted (Table2). For the involvement data, two factors were extracted (Table3). In addition, one-factor solution, based on a minimum eigenvalue of one, appeared suitable for attitudes towards the advertisement (Table 4).

Principal Factor analysis and Cronbach’s Alpha analysis (and Pearson analysis if applicable) were conducted to test the reliability and validity of all adopted scales and extracted factors (see Appendix 1). The results revealed that all scales are unidimensional and reliable.

TABLE 2: EVALUATION OF MCDONALD'S COGNITIVE APPRAISAL FACTORS

No	Items	McDonald's (KMO: 0.823)				
		Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Communalities
		Value&	Novelty	Outcome		
		Certainty		Desirability		
1	pleasant feelings			0.804		0.692
2	enjoyable feelings			0.766		0.613
3	attractiveness			0.699		0.609
4	appeal			0.659		0.654
5	desirability			0.706		0.692
6	expectancy			0.687		0.653
7	worth	0.803				0.662
8	value	0.823				0.703
9	reliability	0.853				0.740
10	trustworthiness	0.860				0.742
11	freshness		0.950			0.909
12	novelty		0.945			0.904
13	other agency			0.596		0.657
14	self-agency				0.843	0.728
Eigenvalues		5.88	1.749	1.272	1.057	
Cumulated variance explained %		0.71127				
Percentage of variance explained		41.999	12.493	9.086	7.549	

Note: Only factor loadings of at least 0.4 are presented

TABLE 3: EVALUATION OF MCDONALD'S INVOLVEMENT FACTORS

No	Items	McDonald's (KMO: 0.883)		
		Factor1	Factor2	Communalities
		Affective factor	Cognitive factor	
1	important	0.721		0.6
2	interesting		0.695	0.486
3	relevant	0.725		0.536
4	exciting	0.781		0.616
5	means a lot to me		0.832	0.692
6	appealing	0.865		0.761
7	fascinating	0.787		0.669
8	valuable		0.824	0.679
9	involving	0.758		0.605
10	needed		0.839	0.709
Eigenvalues		5.151	1.202	
Cumulated variance explained %		63.53%		
Percentage of variance explained		51.511	12.023	

Note: Only factor loadings of at least 0.4 are presented

TABLE 4: FACTOR SOLUTIONS OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE ADVERTISEMENT OF MCDONALD'S

No	Items	McDonald's	
		Factor	Communalities
		KMO: 0.764	
1	like	0.818	0.669
2	react favourably	0.766	0.586
3	feel positive	0.715	0.512
4	feel good	0.849	0.721
Eigenvalues		2.488	
Percentage of variance explained		62.197	

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The stepwise OLS regression was applied for this study. According to Wright (1997), the stepwise regression method is appropriate for exploratory model building. With the intention to investigate the consumer's emotional corridor, "three-hit-theory" and "projective sentence completion techniques" were chosen. In particular, participants were first required to say each slogan aloud three times. Each time after saying the slogan aloud, they were asked to report their perceptions of emotions. In other words, the slogan was embedded in three phrases that the participants had to repeat, thus prolonging their emotions. Subsequently, participants were asked to identify their dominant emotion in relation to the slogan. This was intended to obtain the participant's dominant emotion to the advertising slogan. More specifically, the dominant emotion was regarded as the consumer's emotional response and was modeled in the regression models. In general, most respondents did not appear to have any difficulty in responding to the questionnaires. This study chose the three most dominant emotions as explanatory variables. Since they are dummy variables, this research used effect coding to code the three highest ranking emotions. Table 5 shows the frequency of dominant emotions.

TABLE 5: FREQUENCY OF DOMINANT EMOTIONS

Dominant Emotion / Frequency	McDonald's
Joy	90
Happiness	41
Pride	24
Sadness	0
Anger	7
Boredom	28
Missing	1
Total	191

Three variables appear to significantly influence attitude towards the advertisement. The three variables are cognitive appraisal-outcome desirability (Beta=0.359, p<0.000), effect coding (joyful: bored) (Beta=0.269, p<0.000), and affective involvement (Beta=0.191, p<0.01). The adjusted R square for the three explanatory variables was 0.321 in the regression model (Table 6). The cognitive appraisals-outcome desirability appeared to exert the greatest influence on the dependent variable.

The results also showed that compared with the 'bored' emotion, the 'joyful' emotion exerts the greatest positive influence on attitude towards the advertisement. Since joy is a positive emotion (Laros and Steenkamp, 2005), this finding is consistent with previous research (e.g., Faseur and Geuens, 2006; Martensen et al., 2007). These studies revealed a positive relationship between positive emotion and attitude towards that advertisement. Affective involvement had the smallest effect on the model in this study. This result supports the findings of previous research (e.g., MacKenzie and Spreng, 1992), which indicated that attitude towards advertisements affects the peripheral route to persuasion. Positive beta value indicates that the subjects are more likely to have a favorable attitude towards the advertisement when they are affectively involved with the product. All beta values for these three variables were positive.

TABLE 6: OLS STEPWISE REGRESSION RESULTS

Dependent variable: Attitude towards the advertisement							
Step	Variables entered	Coefficients		t	Significance	R Square	Adjusted R Square
		Unstandardised (B)	Standardised (Beta)				
	Constant	1.794		6.374	0.000		
1.	M Cog (outcome desirability)	0.358	0.359	5.154	0.000	0.221	0.216
2.	Effect coding (joyful: bored)	0.252	0.269	3.882	0.000	0.300	0.290
3.	Affective involvement factor	0.176	0.191	2.818	0.005	0.334	0.321

* The F values are all significant at 0.000 level.

This study conducted repeated measures analysis of variance on the six emotions, with participants' gender as the between-subject factor and participants' emotional responses at three times as the within-subjects factor. Table 7 presents the results of these tests. Four out of six emotions were significantly different each time. This means that after participants said the McDonald's slogan aloud three times, their perceptions of the emotions of joy, happiness, pride, and boredom differed significantly. Nevertheless, males and females did not differ in their perceptions of emotions. Interaction between participants' gender and times was not significant.

Overall, the repeated measures analysis outcomes confirmed the dynamic nature of the consumers' emotional responses to the advertising slogan. However, gender and interaction between participants' gender and the number of times participants read the slogans aloud did not reach statistical significance. The results support those researchers who claimed that gender difference would vanish due to the exposure to a new situation that causes an overwhelming emotional experience (Kring and Gordon, 1998; Robinson and Clore, 2002). However, the results contradict those of researchers who claimed that female respondents have stronger emotional responses (e.g., Becht and Vingerhoets, 2002; Morre, 2007). With the intention to provide a clear overview of the generalized research results given above, the results of all the proposed hypotheses are presented in Table 8.

TABLE 7: REPEATED MEASURES ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITH PERCEPTION OF EMOTIONS AND GENDER

	McDonald's			
Joy	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Within-subjects effects (times)				
times	2	14.305	19.771	0
times * gender	2	0.025	0.034	0.966
Between-subject effects (gender)	1	11.534	2.178	0.142
Happiness				
Within-subjects effects (times)				
times	2	8.017	11.444	0
times * gender	2	1.068	1.524	0.219
Between-subject effects (gender)	1	16.056	2.968	0.087
Pride				
Within-subjects effects (times)				
times	2	3.758	8.354	0
times * gender	2	0.152	0.338	0.713
Between-subject effects (gender)	1	4.515	1.081	0.3
Sadness				
Within-subjects effects (times)				
times	2	0.42	2.6	0.076
times * gender	2	0.019	0.118	0.889
Between-subject effects (gender)	1	0.599	0.784	0.377
Anger				
Within-subjects effects (times)				
times	2	0.223	0.695	0.5
times * gender	2	1.165	3.635	0.027
Between-subject effects (gender)	1	0.021	0.023	0.88
Boredom				
Within-subjects effects (times)				
times	2	2.155	3.751	0.024
times * gender	2	0.982	1.709	0.182
Between-subject effects (gender)	1	7.024	2.872	0.092

TABLE 8 HYPOTHESES TEST RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Hypothesis	Description	McDonald's
H1cognitive appraisals1	Positive emotions and their associated appraisals will have a positive effect on attitudes towards the advertisement.	Support
H1cognitive appraisals2	Positive emotions and their associated appraisals will have a positive effect on attitudes towards the brand	Support
H1cognitive appraisals3	Positive emotions and their associated appraisals will have a positive effect on purchase intention.	Support
H2product involvement1	The level of product involvement has a negative relationship with the preference of emotional appeals.	Support
H2product involvement2	The level of product involvement has a positive relationship with the preference of cognitive involvement.	Support
H2product involvement3	The level of product involvement has a negative relationship with the preference of affective involvement.	Support
H3gender	Gender difference will have a significant effect on the consumers' emotional responses to advertising slogans.	Not support
H4emotional responses	The greater the repetition of exposures, the higher the variability of consumers' emotional responses.	Support
H5 Aad	Consumers' emotional responses to the advertising slogan have a positive relationship with the likelihood of attitudes towards the advertisement (Aad).	Support

CONCLUSION

A new theoretical research construct has been developed by this research, the consumer's emotional corridor, providing the missing link between repetitive emotions, mixed emotions and the dominant emotion, which appears to be more advantageous for measuring consumers' emotional responses to advertising slogans compared to previous researcher's suggestion for overall assessments of continuous measures. For example, Polsfuss and Hess (1991) calculated the mean score across the advertisement as a measure of overall advertisement. The identical or similar mean could be generated by a flat affect pattern and affect curves with positive or negative slopes, although respondents may not assess them identically (Hughes, 1992). Fredrickson (2000) employed the peak-and-end rule, however, it is difficult to decide which should be modeled as an explanatory variable. Accordingly, this research argues that the consumer's emotional corridor construct provides insights into consumers' emotional responses to advertising slogans that are more rational.

LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study is exploratory in nature. Compared to most confirmatory studies, the present study lacks to some extent statistical rigor and sophistication, although it benefitted from the probability sampling technique and introduced probability elements. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to the entire population. Further research should use a probability sample in order to generalize results. This study chose the well know advertising slogans. However, participants might have already had their own opinions about the brands and/or slogan before completing the questionnaires, which may have influenced the results to a certain extent and produce bias. Further research could employ fictitious advertising slogans that would be entirely new to participants to reduce or eliminate bias.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: MCDONALD'S COGNITIVE APPRAISAL FACTORS SCALE OF RELIABILITY ANALYSIS & PEARSON CORRELATION

McDonald's						
	Corrected Item-to-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach	Pearson Correlation		
Value & Certainty			0.868			
worth	0.676	0.848		1		
value	0.713	0.834		0.774** 1		
reliability	0.742	0.822		0.510** 0.536** 1		
trustworthiness	0.747	0.82		0.506** 0.545** 0.866** 1		
Outcome Desirability			0.858			
pleasant feelings	0.708	0.817		1		
enjoyable feelings	0.623	0.829		0.725** 1		
attractiveness	0.673	0.821		0.529** 0.392** 1		
appeal	0.66	0.822		0.559** 0.417** 0.688** 1		
desirability	0.734	0.812		0.552** 0.514** 0.626** 0.571** 1		
expectancy	0.709	0.814		0.500** 0.480** 0.574** 0.576** 0.762** 1		
other agency	0.262	0.885		0.267** 0.283** 0.169* 0.136 0.185* 0.228** 1		
	Mean	Std. Deviation				
Novelty						
freshness	3.24	0.837		1		
novelty	3.21	0.857		0.821** 1		

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

MCDONALD'S PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT FACTORS SCALE OF RELIABILITY ANALYSIS & PEARSON CORRELATION

McDonald's				
	Corrected Item-to-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach	Pearson Correlation
Affective factors			0.870	
important	0.666	0.849		1
relevant	0.638	0.854		0.630** 1
exciting	0.673	0.848		0.477** 0.515** 1
appealing	0.786	0.828		0.608** 0.540** 0.639** 1
fascinating	0.594	0.861		0.415** 0.358** 0.506** 0.611** 1
involving	0.669	0.849		0.501** 0.490** 0.520** 0.633** 0.501** 1
Cognitive factors			0.821	
interesting	0.549	0.815		1
means a lot to me	0.661	0.766		0.496** 1
valuable	0.673	0.761		0.459** 0.537** 1
needed	0.702	0.747		0.456** 0.599** 0.651** 1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

MCDONALD'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE ADVERTISEMENT SCALE OF RELIABILITY ANALYSIS & PEARSON CORRELATION

McDonald's				
	Corrected Item-to-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's a	Pearson Correlation
Attitudes towards the advertisement			0.797	
like	0.643	0.728		1
react favourably	0.58	0.759		0.501** 1
feel positive	0.521	0.786		0.389** 0.423** 1
feel good	0.692	0.703		0.646** 0.503** 0.489** 1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

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