The Psychological Connections between Advertisements and Consumer Behavior

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Acknowledgements
Over the past five months, I have been working on my last assignment in the Master Program in Business and Economics at Luleå University of Technology. It has been a very challenging task faced with many difficulties which in the end was solved through determination and hard work.

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Abstract

Advertising is a complex form of communication consisting of strategies and processes with primary intentions to influence consumer thoughts, feelings, and actions in order to induce positive consumer response. The field of advertising and promotion is currently undergoing changes that will affect and transform the field forever. In order to adapt to these changes, a deeper understanding of consumer behavior and advertising techniques is needed.

The purpose of this thesis is to gain a deeper understanding of which attributes in a video advertisement can affect the consumers’ attitude towards the advertisement and how they in turn affect consumer behavior. A study was conducted where sample videos were shown to individual participants who thereafter partook in an in-depth interview to uncover their personal motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings regarding the sample videos. Five attributes of the advertisements were examined to answer the research question. The empirical data provides evidence that certain factors of an advertisement have a greater effect and influence on consumer attitude formation. The factors are in the end presented in a purposed conceptual framework.
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1 Introduction

This chapter begins with an introduction to the subject at hand, followed by a research background and a problem discussion. The purpose of the study will then be explained and a specific research problem will be formulated.

Advertising is a complex form of communication consisting of strategies and processes with primary intentions to influence consumer thoughts, feelings, and actions in order to induce positive consumer response (Kim & Cho, 2012). Belch and Belch (2008), define it as an integral part of the social and economic system that has within our complex society evolved into a vital communications system for both consumers and businesses.

The importance of advertising was recognized as far back as World War II, when theories and models concerning advertising strategies were beginning to be developed (Kim & Cho, 2012). During this time, the majority of marketers primarily used traditional mass media to promote their advertising messages to the public. In the modern world however, nearly everyone is affected by advertising or promotions to some degree with the primary intentions being to affect the target audiences’ purchase intentions, thoughts, feelings, and eventually their actions. There are now numerous types of media outlets that support advertising, such as radio, television, print ads, and the internet. Small and large companies increasingly rely on advertising and promotion to deliver their carefully prepared messages to the target audiences. (Belch & Belch, 2008)

The field of advertising and promotion is currently undergoing changes that will affect and transform the field forever. The changes are approaching and altering nearly every aspect of the field such as clients demanding improved results from their economic investments, more pressure on smaller advertising agencies to be lean yet still remain highly creative, large agencies looking to increase their market shares, consumers no longer responding to traditional forms of advertising, and new technologies being introduced that may in fact reinvent the whole process and perspective of advertising. Both the private and public sectors have realized their successes rely heavily on their abilities to communicate effectively and efficiently with their target audiences. This implies that the advertising agencies also need to recognize the need for change in order to survive and adapt to the ongoing changes in the field of marketing. (ibid)

Through the growth of the internet and the introduction of mobile devices, advertisers began to conduct online advertising which uses the internet or more generally, the electronic or online media to deliver their marketing messages. This enabled them to reach a broader audience, attract new customers, and better retain their existing customers; all in a shorter amount of time. From what historically began as simple text advertisements, later evolved into ads with motion video and sound as the restrictions associated with low bandwidth dial-up connections were lifted with electronic innovation. (Shankar & Hollinger, 2007)
Since the introduction of the first online video in 1993 (The New York Times, 1993), video content on the internet has added a new dimension to the web’s ability to communicate and entertain the viewer. The term was called Web Video Revolution and most marketers are unaware of the effects web video is having and even today do not consider that it is redefining the rules of online marketing strategies. While the objective to motivate clicks and raise brand awareness remain the same, studies have shown that video advertisements can significantly raise the viewers’ initial attitude towards the brand, even if it initially was considered to be neutral or negative. (Strout, 2007)

1.1 Background
Consumer behavior is described by many professionals and academics as being the key to modern-day marketing success (Demirdjian & Senguder, 2004). Researchers have continuously attempted to understand consumer behavior with progress being made in various fields of research (Smith, Terry, Manstead, Louis, & Wolfs, 2008). Consumer behavior is still a relatively new and young discipline in comparison to most academic fields (Kernan, 1995). It is still in development and is proving to be complex, full of controversies and contradictions. (Demirdjian & Senguder, 2004)

The concept of marketing establishes the consumer as the center of marketing strategy and therefore legitimized consumer behavior as it can provide a conceptual framework and offer strategic thinking for conducting successful segmentations of markets. However, one must look to several social science disciplines to fully understand how each discipline plays a vital role in consumer behavior. The discipline of economics tend to focus more on the dynamics of economic systems rather than explaining why individual consumers behave the way they do (ibid). Advertising, as seen from an economic perspective, can be referred to as a vehicle used to help consumers evaluate such values as price, quality, location, and reputation in order to minimize the time and efforts used to search for information concerning a product that the consumers desire (Kim & Cho, 2012). The discipline of psychology focuses more on the individual behavior and provides information on things such as motivation, perception, learning, beliefs, attitudes, etc. These attributes are used to explain why consumers behave the way they do. Social psychology and sociology also affect consumer behavior in the presence of other individuals or groups. (Demirdjian & Senguder, 2004)

According to Kim and Cho (2012), the goal of advertising is to communicate different types of marketing information in order to connect buyers and sellers in the market place. By implementing advertising concepts and theories from psychology, such as social, clinical and general psychology (ibid); the advertising messages could prove to be more successful (Demirdjian & Senguder, 2004). Accomplishing a successful advertisement could simplify the consumers’ decision-making processes by implementing relevant information and making the decision processes part of routine behavior (Kim & Cho, 2012). Advertising can therefore
decrease the likelihood that a consumer will switch to a competing product, regardless of the prices charged. (ibid)

1.2 Problem discussion
As mentioned in the background, the importance of advertising has long been recognized by both the private and public sectors (Belch & Belch, 2008). With consumers no longer responding to traditional marketing techniques and clients demanding better results from their economic investments (ibid), one of the biggest challenges for companies and marketers will be to convince the consumers to specifically buy their products (Pelau, 2011). With the increasing level of competition from competing brands, it has become more and more difficult for advertisers to break through the clutter of competing advertisements and gain the consumers’ attention in order to build memory and association for the advertised brand. (Pieters, Warlop, & Wedel, 2002)

With consumer behavior being described as the key to modern-day marketing success (Demirdjian & Senguder, 2004), the need for a deeper understand on consumer behavior and knowing how marketers should implement theory from psychology into their advertisements is of vital importance. Academic literature can provide an abundance of methods and strategies on how to influence the different aspects of consumer behavior through various advertising techniques. There is however a lack of literature that presents the most appealing and effective attributes of an online video advertisement from the consumer’s perspective.

By purposing a conceptual framework that takes into consideration the theories of consumer behavior and appealing advertising techniques to the minds of the consumers; a purposed conceptual framework could be presented that provides a deeper understanding of how to affect and alter the consumers’ attitudes towards the advertisement. By achieving this, companies can improve their communication with their target audiences and strive for more effective and efficient advertising communication. With a functioning conceptual framework, the chances of successfully conducting online video campaigns could be raised and consumer behavior could better be influenced.

1.3 Purpose
The purpose of this thesis is to gain a deeper understanding of which attributes of a video advertisement can affect the consumers’ attitude towards the advertisement and how they affect consumer behavior.

1.4 Research Question
RQ: What are the most appealing factors in an online video advertisement?
2 Literature Review

In this chapter, the relevant theories, literature, and factors regarding advertising that are needed to answer the purpose and research question is presented. It begins with an introduction to consumer behavior to clarify the reader of the psychological traits associated with advertising.

2.1 Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is the process and actions which people conduct when searching, purchasing, using, evaluating, and consuming products or services to satisfy their needs and wants (Belch & Belch, 2008). Understanding consumer behavior and the motives which lead to this behavior, is of vital importance for both companies and marketers in order to implement the right marketing instruments (Pelau, 2011). Researchers within the area of consumer buying behavior attempt to explain the various purchasing decisions that consumers make, based on the understanding of consumer behavior (ibid). The consumer decision-making process views buying behavior as a problem-solving process and consists of different stages which the consumer journeys through as they purchase a product or service (Turley & LeBlanc, 1993). The process also involves several internal psychological processes which influence the general decision-making process of the consumers (Belch & Belch, 2008). The psychological processes are motivation, perception, attitude formation, integration, and learning. (ibid)

![Decision Making Process](image)

Figure 1 - The Decision Making Process (Belch & Belch, 2008)

Since the thesis is generally more focused around the psychological attributes of the consumers, more emphasis will be placed on the psychological processes of the decision-making process.

The first stage of the decision-making process is problem recognition. According to Belch and Belch (2008), it occurs when the consumer notices a need and becomes motivated to solve the issue. The difference in the consumer’s ideal state and actual state is the root of the recognition. For example, the consumer could realize that there exists a situation which is appealing to them and they want the situation to be like that instead of the situation they have now. There exist a number of reasons to why this recognition could occur such as replenishing the stock, dissatisfaction, new needs or wants, related products or purchases, market-encouragement, or new products. (ibid)
The way a consumer becomes motivated to solve the recognized problem will have a great influence for the remainder of the decision process. A consumer can for instance purchase an item solely for functional purposes while another consumer can see the purchase purely from a fashionable perspective. To better understand the reasons behind the consumer purchasing behavior, marketers dedicate great focus on examining motives which are the factors that oblige the consumer to make the purchase.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (A. H. Maslow, 1943) is an attempt to formulate a theory of human motivation which can be used to understand the motivation of consumers. The hierarchy is established around five basic human needs; physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. The physiological needs refer to the basic things needed to sustain life, such as food, water, shelter, clothing, and sex. The safety needs refer to the feeling of security and sanctuary from physical harm. The social needs refer to need of having social, loving and satisfying relationships which provide a feeling of acceptance, belonging and affection. The self-esteem needs refer to the feeling of accomplishment and gaining recognition, rank, and respect from others. The self-actualization needs refer to a desire to fulfill one’s own personal potential and receive a positive feeling to self-fulfillment. (ibid)

Involvement can be referred to the advertisers’ ways of getting the consumer engaged in the advertisement by getting them to stop, spend time, and become involved in the marketing message (Kim, Haley, & Koo, 2009). By doing this, the advertisers get their messages known and remembered by the consumers in an ever-increasingly cluttered and competitive advertising market.

The second stage of the consumer decision-making process is information search which according to Belch and Belch (2008), is when the consumer begins to search for information required to make the purchasing decision. The search for information is divided into two categories; internal search and external search. Internal search refers to the scanning of information stored in the consumer’s memory in order to recall past experiences or knowledge regarding the purchasing alternatives. External search refers to the gathering of additional information when the internal search does not provide enough information. External sources include; personal sources, market-controlled sources, public sources, and personal experiences. (ibid)

Perception is the process by which an individual interprets information to establish their own personal, meaningful view of the world. It is an individual process where the outcomes depend on internal factors such as the individual’s beliefs, experiences, needs, moods, and expectations. Marketers are particularly interested in how the consumers acquire and use the information because it is important when the marketers formulate their communication strategies. Examples of the areas of interest are how consumers sense external information, how they select and attend to various sources of information, and how the information is interpreted and given meaning. (ibid)
An important part of perception is _sensation_ which is the immediate and directs response of the senses such as taste, smell, sight, touch, and hearing. These senses can be stimulated by an advertisement, package, brand name, or a point-of-purchase display. The importance to understand the consumers’ psychological reactions to a market stimulus has been recognized by marketers. The visual effects of an advertisement can for example be used to affect the consumer’s senses to create a positive representation and allow them to establish a positive perception of the brand name or product. (ibid)

The third stage of the consumer decision-making process is _alternative evaluation_ when the consumer compares the various purchasing alternatives identified as being a potential solution to their initial consumption problem. (ibid)

According to Turley and LeBlanc (1993), _evoked set_ refers to when the consumers identify the available alternatives from their initial information search, select a set of appropriate brands and will only purchase from these approved brands. The consumers will there view these sets of brands as viable alternatives to solve the purchasing problem at hand (ibid). According to Belch and Belch (2008), the goal of advertising and promotional strategies is to increase the probability of the current brand being included within the consumers’ evoked set of consideration during the alternative evaluation.

_Attitudes_ are a summary of an individual’s overall feelings or evaluation towards a specific object. The attitude can be a representation of the individual’s own experiences or an earlier pre-taught response from their past. Consumers can have attitudes towards objects that are of importance for marketers such as attitudes towards endorsers, brands, companies, product categories, retail stores, and advertisements. The attitudes are of great importance to marketers because they theoretically summarize the consumer’s evaluation of an object and represent positive or negative feelings and behavioral tendencies. (ibid)

Another important aspect of the alternative evaluation is the method in which consumers combine the gathered information about the characteristics of brand to finalize a purchasing decision. This is known as the _integration process_ which is when the product knowledge, meanings, and beliefs are pooled together to evaluate two or more alternatives. Consumers often make purchasing decisions based on formal integrations strategies that usually require examinations and comparisons of the alternatives’ specific attributes. Consumers can however also make certain decisions based on simple decision rules. These rules are known as _heuristics_. (ibid)

According to Belch and Belch (2008), the _Affect Referral Decision Rule_ is a type of heuristic which is based on the consumer making a decision established on their overall impression or immediate evaluation of the various alternatives of brands provided to oneself at the time. The decision rule implies that the consumers take into consideration the affective impressions of the
brands they have stored in their memory and make a decision on their overall impressions rather than comparing the detailed attributes of the alternatives. (ibid)

The fourth stage of the consumer decision-making process is the purchasing decision. This is when the consumer makes a decision based on all the preceding searches and evaluations of the alternative brands. Two aspects that affect the purchasing decision is purchase intention and brand loyalty. (ibid)

According to Nasermoadeli, Ling, and Maghnati (2013), purchase intention refers to the buyers’ predisposition of which brand to select during their purchasing decision. Purchase intention can measure the likelihood of a consumer purchasing a specific product (Chi, Yeh, & Tsai, 2011). The greater the purchase intention is, the more willing the consumer will be to buy the product. The purchase intention is influenced by the consumers’ experiences, preferences, and external environments from where they collect information, evaluate alternatives, and eventually make their purchasing decisions. (ibid)

According to Bennett and Rundle-Thiele (2005), brand loyalty is refers to when a base of loyal consumers have a preference for a particular brand which results in their repeated purchase of that specific product. This allows marketers to charge a premium price and reduce the cost of conducting business by reducing acquisition and promotional costs. (ibid)

The fifth and final step of the consumer decision-making process is postpurchase evaluation. According to Mahapatra, Kumar, and Chauhan (2010), once the product is purchased, the consumer will conduct an assessment and evaluate its performance in the process of consumption. The consumers will either experience a sensation of satisfaction or dissatisfaction which will possibly determine how likely they are to buy that specific product or brand again. Satisfaction occurs when the consumers’ expectations are met by the perceived performance. Dissatisfaction occurs when the experience performance falls short of that which the consumers expected. (ibid)

According to Belch and Belch (2008), another possible outcome of a purchase is cognitive dissonance. Shultz and Lepper (1996), define it as a psychological state of tension that people are motivated to reduce. This implies that a consumer might feel doubt over a previous purchasing choice due to the difficulty they experienced making that purchasing decision. (ibid)

Behavioral learning theories are according to Belch and Belch (2008) based on the stimulus-response orientation. This implies that learning occurs as a result of the responses to external stimuli in the environment. Behavioral learning theorists believe learning occurs through a connection between a stimulus and a response and through it modifies behavior. (ibid)

According to Nord and Peter (1980), behavior modification can happen through two types of environmental manipulation; those which result in respondent- or classical conditioning and those which produce instrumental- or operant conditioning. Classical conditioning refers to a
class of behavior which is controlled by stimuli which precede the subsequent behavior. These behaviors are assumed to be non-susceptive to conscious control by the individual, instead directed by the automatic nervous system. *Operant conditioning* refers to behaviors which are assumed to be under the conscious control of the individual. As where classical conditioning behaviors are provoked by stimuli which occur prior to the response; operant conditioning behaviors are provoked by consequences which occur after the behavior. For example, if a monetary rebate is given at the time of the purchase, the likelihood that the consumer will purchase in the same store in the future again will increase, given other things being equal. (ibid)

### 2.2 Attitude towards Advertisement

When attempting to understand the causes of consumer behavior, attitude has been acknowledged by researchers of its importance within the subject. *Attitude towards advertisement* can be defined as a tendency to react in a positive or negative way towards an advertisement in a moment of exposure. (Wahid & Ahmed, 2011)

Goldsmith, Lafferty, and Newell (2000), purpose in their research a conceptual model of the relationships between endorser credibility, corporate credibility, and reaction to advertising. In this model, they claim a credible endorser can serve as an important antecedent in evaluations of advertisements and brands. They strengthen this argument by stating that a credible endorser has been shown to have a positive effect on consumers’ attitudes towards the advertisement and attitudes towards the brand. The model can be seen below.

![Figure 2 - Relationships between Endorser Credibility, Corporate Credibility, and Reaction to Advertising. (Goldsmith, Lafferty, & Newell, 2000)](image)

The model demonstrates that two aspects, endorser credibility and corporate credibility, affect the attitude towards advertisement which is a motive and cause to consumer behavior according to Wahid and Ahmed (2011).
2.3 Elaboration Likelihood Model
Developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), purposes that communication can be persuasive in two ways: the central route and peripheral route. The ELM demonstrates that the elaboration likelihood is a function of two rudiments, motivation and ability to process the advertising message (Belch & Belch, 2008). Motivation can be such things as involvement, personal relevance, and the individual’s needs and arousal intensities. The ability to process the message depends on the individual’s awareness, intelligence, and opportunity to process the message. (ibid)

According to Morris, Woo, and Singh (2005), the central route emphasizes the parts of the message that are of high relevance to the viewer. The receiver is assumed to be very active and involved in the communication process and the ability and motivation to attend, understand, and evaluate the messages are high (Belch & Belch, 2008). The greater the relevance and interest the individual demonstrates towards the topic of the message, the more likely they will be to elaborate or take action upon receiving the message (Morris, Woo, & Singh, 2005). The central aspect generally deals with the content of the message, such as the text, words, or the written material in the message. (ibid)

The peripheral route emphasizes the parts of the message that has little or no relevance to the viewer (ibid). The receiver is assumed to be lacking the motivation or ability to process information and is not likely to engage in any cognitive processing (Belch & Belch, 2008). As opposed to the central route, where the content of the message is in focus, here the viewer is more receptive and influenced by superficial message cues such as color usage, music, people, lifestyles, or visual effects. (Morris, Woo, & Singh, 2005)

2.4 Visual Effects
Visual imagery has been adopted as a consumer behavioral construct as it possesses potential for enticing information stored in long-term memory into working memory. Tapping long-term memory is believed to lead to greater communications effectiveness and therefore visual imagery is of practical use to advertising strategists (Burns, Biswas & Babin, 1993). According to Toncar and Fetscherin (2012), influencing consumer response with the usage of visual imagery has only recently been acknowledged with the same degree of sophistication as for example verbal elements in advertising. Rossiter and Percy (1980), states that visual content in advertising is just as capable of influencing consumer attitude as verbal content. With the recent advancement in research, it has become clear that visual elements in advertising can be used to affect consumer response, consumer attitude, and consumer behavioral change. (Toncar & Fetscherin, 2012)

2.5 Music
According to Allan (2007), music in advertisements is more likely to positively than negatively affect the consumers’ response to an advertisement. Belch and Belch (2008), define it as an important part of many television commercials and adding music to an advertisement can enable emotional sensations that make consumers more receptive to the advertising message. Music in
advertisements can be used in contexts such as background music, jingles, capturing attention, breaking through advertising clutter, communicate a key selling point, establish an image or position, or add feelings. (ibid)

According to Lantos and Craton (2011), a consumer’s reaction to commercial music is likely a function of the role the music plays in the advertisement. The roles presented by Lantos and Craton are *Foreground Music* and *Background Music*. (ibid)

Foreground music is the essential part of the commercial, playing the thematic, message-enhancing role of the advertisement. This type of music is attention-grabbing, unique, likely to be part of an affect-based commercial, and probably relies heavily on the lyrics being used in the song. Foreground music can be used to carry the message of the advertisement through musical lyrics, such as a jingle. A musical jingle is used to generate a brand image, mood, feeling, or assist recall of advertising slogans (Lantos & Craton, 2011). Jingles are proven to enhance memory for advertising slogans as stated by Yalch (1991). According to Belch and Belch (2008), Jingles can even by themselves serve as a basis for a musical commercial.

Background music is the less dominant and less noticeable music in an advertisement. It is usually purely composed out of instrumental music which makes it less distinct and less likely to be affect-based than foreground music (Lantos & Craton, 2011). According to Belch and Belch (2008), consumers are more likely to choose a product when it is commercially presented against a background of music they liked rather than one they disliked.

### 2.6 Endorsers

Chi, Yeh, and Tsai (2011), states that in order to get consumers to better memorize products, marketers tend to get experts or famous celebrities to share their experiences and knowledge to promote a product or service. Getting endorsers to recommend a specific product brand can create an endorsement effect which improves the consumers’ reliability and increases purchase intention. (ibid)

Belch and Belch (2008) define endorsements as a communicator who is observed by the viewer as being knowledgeable or as someone with expertise. To the consumer, this will appeal to be more persuasive than someone who is perceived as less of an expert within the specific subject. This can also be referred to as *source credibility*. (ibid)

According to Sertoglu, Catli, and Korkmaz (2014), the use of endorsements in marketing can be employed to achieve positive publicity and good recall from customers. Endorsers can be seen as attractive, dynamic, intelligent, and possessing likable qualities in the eyes of the consumers (Cronin, 2003). Endorsements can be in the form of a celebrity, created spokesperson (Sertoglu, Catli, & Korkmaz, 2014), or a corporate leader (Belch & Belch, 2008). The usage of celebrities in advertisements are believed to enhance the viewers’ attention to the advertisement, making it more notable, credible, desirable, and increase the appeal of the product. These characteristics
are believed to have certain connections to the viewers and can be associated and transferred to the product being advertised. (Cronin, 2003)

The process of the viewer being influenced by the communicator is known as *internalization*. Internalization refers specifically to when an individual accepts ideals such as opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and/or behavior to the extent where they are seen as self-relevant and the individual aspires to attain them. If the viewer then internalizes their attitude or opinions, it becomes a part of their belief system and it can be sustained long after the message has elapsed from their memory. (Warren, Schoen, & Schafer, 2010)

### 2.7 Message Structure

According to Belch and Belch (2008), marketing communications usually involves several topics that a marketing communicator wants to spread. Knowing the best ways to spread and communicate these topics is a very important aspect of the advertising strategy and by being aware of ways to best overcome any opposing standpoints a receiver might have. Research has been conducted on this area including subjects such as order of presentation, conclusion drawing, message sidedness, refutation, and verbal versus visual message characteristics. (ibid)

According to Belch and Belch (2008), the order of presentation of a persuasive message is a basic consideration in the advertising design process. Research conducted on memory and learning indicated that points presented during the beginnings and endings of messages are generally better remembered. This suggests that a marketing message should present its strongest arguments during the early or late parts of the message and never in the middle. (ibid)

Presenting the prime arguments in the beginning of the advertisement assumes a *primacy effect*, meaning information presented at the start is most effective. Presenting the prime arguments at the end assumes a *recency effect*, meaning information presented at the end is most effective. (ibid)

The importance of the order of presentation is dependent on the length of the advertisement. For short, video advertisements lasting between 15 or 30 seconds, the order of presentation is less critical. Long advertisements with lots of detailed messages however, the order of presentation is critical. (ibid)

Order of presentation can also be critical when the messages are received by viewers with low involvement and minimal interest. If the advertisement presents the brand name’s strongest selling points at the beginning and repeats them again at the end, it will enhance the level of attention, recall and retention. (ibid)

### 2.8 Message Appeals

The choice of appeal in an advertising message is one of the most important strategy decisions according to Belch and Belch, (2008). The appeal of an advertisement is the way in which the advertisement moves the consumer to hold their attention, communicate towards their wants and
needs, excite their interests, and to influence their feelings towards a product, service, or cause, (Kim & Cho, 2012). Appeals can be divided into two categories: informational/rational appeals and emotional appeals. *Informational/rational appeals* refer to explaining and providing the information regarding the product’s characteristics and functional benefits that the consumer can obtain upon purchase. *Emotional appeals* refer to the addressing of the consumers’ feelings by providing emotional images. Advertisement appeals can be further classified into informational/rational, emotional, combining informational and emotional, teaser, fear, and humor. (ibid) According to Belch and Belch (2008), it is believed that an effective advertisement combines the practical, logical and rational reasons with emotional values.

2.8.1 **Humor in Advertisements**

According to Madden and Weinberger (1984), studies have shown that 94 percent of advertising practitioners find the usage of humor in advertising to be effective when aiming to capture attention.

Humor is a challenging construct that has been studied by linguists, philosophers, physiologists, and scholars for many years (Goulas & Weinbergber, 2006). Though the concept of humor is difficult to define (Swani, Weinberger, & Gulas, 2013), a research review conducted by Goulas and Weinberger (1992), compiled factors that can influence humor based on the research done within the subject to gain insights on the effects. The factors considered were attention, comprehension, persuasion, source credibility and source liking. (ibid)

Each factor was analyzed in order to attempt to delineate the impact humor and to determine the efficiency of humor as a communications device. (ibid)

2.8.1.1 **Attention**

According to Madden and Weinberger (1984), 55 percent of advertising research executives considers humoristic advertisements to be superior to non-humoristic advertisements when capturing attention. The literature regarding this topic verifies the choices made by the majority of advertising research executives because according to Goulas and Weinberger (1992), the majority of studies indicate that humor has a positive effect on attention in advertising.

2.8.1.2 **Source Credibility**

The majority of studies regarding humor within source credibility claims there are circumstances where it actually damages source credibility. The reasons to why the mixtures of opinions exist are identified between two factors: nature of the source or nature of the humor. The overall conclusion of the research however, indicates that it is unlikely that source credibility can be enhanced by the use of humor in an advertisement. (ibid)

2.8.1.3 **Source Liking**

The linkage between humor and liking is stronger than most other factors and studies prove that humor enhances source liking. This aspect should not be underestimated as marketing literature gives strong support for improved liking through the usage of humor. (ibid)
3 Conceptual Framework

In the previous chapter, the theoretical literature was presented which will now be connected to the research question in the current chapter. The conceptual framework will be used as a coordination system for the report’s data gathering.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a conceptual framework describes the main topics of study and can be presented either graphically or in a narrative form. The framework clarifies the main topics, constructs and variables, and the relationships that exist among them. (ibid)

3.1 The Developed Framework

As mentioned in the first chapter, the mission of this thesis to find out what combinations of attributes is most appealing to use in a commercial video advertisement. The purpose is defined into a lone research question which is then meant to be answered with the use of a purposed model. The purposed model will be made consisting of relevant and cohering literature that can be used to determine what aspects of content affect the attitude towards the video advertisement.

3.1.1 Attitude toward the Advertisement

The foundation of the purposed model will be constructed around the existing model made by Goldsmith, Lafferty, and Newell (2000), where they tested consumer reaction to advertising as a function of endorser credibility and corporate credibility influencing the attitude towards the ad, the brand, and the consumers’ purchase intentions. The purposed model that will be used in the study will only be taking one part of the existing model: what influences the attitude towards the advertisement.

With other literature, the various functions that affect the attitude towards the advertisement can be added to the purposed model. This can provide a broader perspective of what functions affect the attitude towards the video advertisement.

3.1.2 Visual Effects

The model will be including visual effects as it is believed to lead to greater communications effectiveness and therefore visual effects can be of practical use to advertising strategists (Burns, Biswas & Babin, 1993). This could imply that visual imagery could have an influence on the consumers’ attitude towards the advertisements.

3.1.3 Music

The model will include music as a factor as it can be used to enable emotional sensations that make consumers more receptive to the advertising messages (Belch and Belch 2008). Subcategories for music will be Foreground Music and Background Music representing the different roles presented by Lantos and Craton (2011).

3.1.4 Endorsers

The model will include endorsers as a factor (Goldsmith, Lafferty, & Newell 2000), (Belch & Belch, 2008), (Sertoglu, Catli, & Korkmaz, 2014), (Cronin, 2003). Endorsers have a big impact
on the viewer’s perception and attitude towards the advertisement. Subcategories for endorsers will be endorser credibility according to Goldsmith, Lafferty, and Newell (2000).

3.1.5 Message Structure
The model will include message structure as a factor. According to Belch and Belch (2008), knowing the best ways to spread and communicate a commercial message is a very important aspect of the advertising strategy. Subcategories for message structure will be order of presentation.

3.1.6 Message Appeals
The model will include message appeals as a factor. According to Belch and Belch (2008), one of the most important creative strategy decisions an advertiser makes involves the decision on which appeal is the most appropriate for the advertisement. Subcategories for message appeals will be humor.
The Purposed Framework

After assembling all the relevant literature provided in the literature review chapter, the purposed model for answering the research question is presented on the next page.

Table 1 - The Purposed Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Concept Description</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Operational Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Developed Framework</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Towards</td>
<td>The consumers’ feelings and reactions towards the advertisement.</td>
<td>Goldsmith, Lafferty, &amp; Newell (2000)</td>
<td>Finding the aspects of advertising that affect the attitude towards the advertisement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Advertisement</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wahid &amp; Ahmed (2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Effects</td>
<td>Usage of visual effects to influence the consumers’ attitude towards the product being advertised.</td>
<td>Toncar &amp; Fetscherin (2012)</td>
<td>Finding out what influence visual effects have upon the advertisement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rossiter &amp; Percy (1980)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Burns, Biswas &amp; Babin (1993)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>The addition of music to an advertisement to enable emotional sensations that make consumers more receptive to the advertising message.</td>
<td>Lantos &amp; Craton (2011)</td>
<td>Finding out the importance of the role music plays in the advertisement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreground Music</td>
<td></td>
<td>Belch &amp; Belch (2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; Background Music</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yalch (1991)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Allan (2007)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Endorsers</td>
<td>Getting experts or famous celebrities to share their experiences and knowledge to promote a product or service.</td>
<td>Chi, Yeh, &amp; Tsai (2011)</td>
<td>Finding out what effects endorsers have upon the advertisement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sertoglu, Catli, &amp; Korkmaz (2014)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cronin (2003)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Warren, Schoen, &amp; Schafer (2010)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Message Structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order of Presentation</td>
<td>Distributing the advertising message topics according to an advertising structure strategy.</td>
<td>Belch &amp; Belch (2008)</td>
<td>Finding out what parts of the advertising messages stay with the consumers’ memories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Appeals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>The way in which the advertisement moves the consumer to ultimately influence their feelings towards the product being advertised.</td>
<td>Kim &amp; Cho (2012)</td>
<td>Finding out what effect appeals have upon the advertisement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Belch &amp; Belch (2008)</td>
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<td>Madden &amp; Weinberger (1984)</td>
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<td>Goulas &amp; Weinbergber (2006)</td>
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<td>Goulas &amp; Weinberger (1992)</td>
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</table>
4 Method
In this chapter, the method structure is presented of how the data gathering is to be conducted and how the research question will to be answered. The chapter also analyzes the risks associated with the chosen method structure.

4.1 Research Method
Qualitative research refers to an unstructured, exploratory research design founded on small samples which can provide insight, deepness, and a greater understanding of the matter at hand (Malhotra, Birks, & Wills, 2012). It enables a diversity of methods to be used in a flexible manner which allows participants to be more expressive and reflective with their views or opinions. It is therefore applied to capture the unhampered behaviors, experiences, and feelings of the participants. (ibid)

Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to gain a deeper understanding of which attributes of a video advertisement can affect the consumers’ attitude towards the advertisement and how they affect consumer behavior.

Based on the purpose of this study, the suitable approach for the research study is qualitative research. A qualitative research study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the subject, which is the main purpose of this thesis. The idea is to attain the thoughts and feelings from a small group of participants to better comprehend their behaviors and gain insight, deepness, and a better understanding on consumer behavior.

4.2 Research Design
Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), refers to research as following an exploratory, descriptive or explanatory purpose, or a combination of these types of research designs. The way in which the research questions are asked will eventually involve the research being exploratory, descriptive, descriptive and explanatory, or explanatory. (ibid)

An exploratory study refers to the understanding of a problem which is perceived as unfamiliar or perplexing. It allows the researcher to ask open questions in order to gain insight and a deeper understanding of what is happening regarding the subject. There are various ways of conducting exploratory research; expert interviews, in-depth individual interviews, or focus groups. (ibid)

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), descriptive research refers to gaining an accurate profile of events, persons or situations in order to get a rich perception of the issue. It is necessary to be conducted when the researchers need an understanding of the subject of which they want to collect data from, prior to the collection of data. (ibid)

RQ: What are the most appealing factors in an online video advertisement?

The research question is of both exploratory and descriptive nature. It aims to gain a deeper understanding of what is appealing to the participants in an online video advertisement and also
attaining an accurate profile of which of those factors are most appealing. Given the duality of the research question, the research design will be taking on a combination of exploratory and descriptive purpose.

4.3 Research Strategy
According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), a research strategy can be defined as a plan of action of how a researcher will go about answering their research questions and achieving their goals. It is the methodological connection between the philosophy and the subsequent selection of methods used to collect and analyze data (ibid).

An in-depth interview is a qualitative research method which refers to an unstructured, straight, personal interview where a single participant is questioned by the interviewer about personal fundamental motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings regarding the research topic. The researcher asks the questions while the participant answers them. The essential part of the interview is establishing an understanding of the participant’s experiences and motivations. In order to reach an understanding, a certain style of social and interpersonal interaction is needed to create the in-depth feeling which provides intimacy; the style of conversation one finds among close friends and certain types of friendships. The in-depth interview is based on topic guides that are made up of several topics covering a broad range of issues within the research topic. As an interview progresses from the topic guides, the order of questions is driven by the interviewer’s perception of what would be the appropriate questions to ask in order to draw out the best out of the participant. If the desired understanding is achieved, the interview moves back to another topic guide where the interview continues from there on. (Malhotra, Birks, & Wills, 2012)

According to Malhotra (2009), observation methods are used in descriptive research which involves the recording of the behavioral patterns of people, objects and events. It is recorded in a systematic manner in order to acquire information about the research topic. In an unstructured observation, the researcher observes all aspects of the research topics that seem relevant to the situation at hand. This form of observation is suitable when flexibility is required in the observation in order to recognize the key components of the problem and to develop a hypothesis. It is also appropriate to conduct when the problem has yet to be finalized. Natural observation occurs when the behavior being observed is taking place as it happens in the current environment of the observation. The advantage of a natural observation is that it will more accurately reflect upon the research topic. (ibid)

4.4 Data Collection Method
The data collection method for this study will be in-depth interviews where the data will be collected through individual, personal interviews that will strive to resemble the style of conversation one finds among close friends or certain types of friendships. The goal is to obtain insight and deep understanding of the participants’ fundamental motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings regarding the factors of an online video advertisement. By asking questions about
their experiences and motivations behind their opinions, the data should provide insight to gain a
deeper understanding.

The study will also be conducting unstructured- and natural observations which will help gain a
better reflection of the behavior taking place as it happens in the current environment of the
observation. The observations will be taking place as the participants view the sample video
advertisements prior to the in-depth interviews.

By using a combination of in-depth interviews and observations, the research strategy gains the
benefits of triangulation. According to Malhotra, Birks, and Wills (2012), to defend the
validation of data, triangulation is an appropriate term which is defined as the usage of two or
more sources that enables cross-verification. Comparing different kinds of data and methods
enables greater reflection and better understanding of causes of effects involved. (ibid)

4.5 In-Depth Interview Questions
According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), the questions and topics of an interview
should be based on the theory, literature, own experiences, common sense, or a combination
these matters.

The interview guide in this thesis will be based on the frame of reference and the literature from
previous chapters. Since the goal of the data gathering was to capture the spontaneous reactions
and interpretations of the viewers in order to support the conceptual framework, the questions
have been formulated to appropriately capture these aspects.

4.6 Sample Videos
The sample videos that have been selected to be displayed for the participants are four
advertising videos from the company Old Spice. The commercials promote a series of
deodorants and shampoos towards male consumers. The advertisements are of a humoristic
nature and all include an endorsement appearance by the actor and former National Football
League player, Terry Crews (IMDB, 2014). The advertisements can be considered contentious
and shocking to some viewers as they are verbally very loud and visually dramatic. Each
advertisement lasts for about 30 to 40 seconds where the viewer experiences all the aspects of an
online video advertisement that the research study is out to examine. The advertisements have
received much attention on the internet with the advertisements receiving several million views
on their YouTube page (YouTube, 2012) and are therefore considered by the author as being
appropriate sample videos to use for this thesis. Not only have many people have viewed the
advertisements, but many have also “liked” the videos on the YouTube page, further suggesting
the advertisements’ success.
4.7 **Direct or Indirect Approach**
According to Malhotra, Birks, and Wills (2012), based on whether the purpose of the project is known to the participants, the classification of the qualitative research will either be a *direct approach* or an *indirect approach*.

Direct approach refers to when the purpose and motives of the project is disclosed to the participant. Direct approach is more commonly used when conducting either focus groups or in-depth interviews. The extent of which the motives behind the project are revealed can vary during the beginning of the study. The researcher must overweigh how much ‘directness’ to use in order to get the participants to behave naturally. (ibid)

In this thesis report, the direct approach will be applied due to the usage of in-depth interviews and the need for the participants to reflect upon the research purpose in question.

4.8 **Sample Selection**
The study is limited to examine current and potential students at Luleå University of Technology. Current students are considered those being active within educational studies at the present time of the study and potential students being those who have applied to the university.

4.9 **Participants**
There were a total of seven participants in this study and they were all students at Luleå University of Technology. Their ages were in between 20 and 27 years old and their various educational programs included economics, civil engineer, and nursing. All the participants received an identical briefing prior to any participation in the study. The briefing included general information about the study, the notification that the interview was audio recorded, their answers were to be kept confidential, that they were in no way forced to answer any questions that did not want to answer, and their right to end the interview at any time they wanted. Each participant was then asked if they were willing to participate in this study. All responded with full cooperation.

4.10 **Reliability**
According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), *reliability* refers to the likelihood of the data collection techniques and analytical procedures producing similar or consistent results if they were replicated by a different researcher at another occurrence.

Certifying reliability is not an easy task due to the many risks involved. Some of the risks that have been identified are: *participant error* such as fluctuation in the participants’ performances, *participant bias* such as false responses given by the participants, *researcher error* such as alteration in the researchers’ interpretations, and *researcher bias* such as tapering with the recordings of responses. (ibid)
4.11 Validity
According to Malhotra, Birks, and Wills (2012), validity refers to the degree to which the measurements represent the actual research topic under investigation. In other words; the degree to which the measurements actually measure what the researchers intended to assess (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012).

Certifying perfect validity requires no measurement inaccuracies (Malhotra, Birks, & Wills, 2012), which in this case is also a very difficult mission. Some of the risks that have been identified are; testing such as the participants’ altering attitudes towards the research upon being informed of the testing, instrumentation such as changes in the research instruments being used, and mortality such as if the participants would withdraw from the study. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012)

5 Data Presentation
This chapter will present the empirical data. The gathered data was all collected from seven different in-depth interviews all consisting of Swedish students at Luleå University of Technology. The students interviewed were four males and three females, each having their own face-to-face interview with the author of this thesis. Each question asked is presented in a summarized paragraph, expressing the overall opinions and anomalies if there were any. Each question serves to prove a particular aspect of the purposed conceptual framework. The questions are therefore divided into similar categories used in the purposed conceptual framework.

5.1 Visual Observations
Prior to the interview, a natural observation was conducted during the viewing of the sample videos. The natural observation observed the participants’ behaviors taking place as they happened in the current environment of the observation. Many of the participants had smiles on their faces while watching the advertisements. Occasional chuckles and giggles were mostly observed throughout the observation. Only two participants managed to actually produce a full hearted laugh during the viewings. Other behaviors being observed were shock and amusement.

5.2 Attitude towards the Advertisement
Upon being asked to recall what the viewer just witnessed, the participants recalled watching an Old Spice commercial promoting a deodorant or shampoo that “blocks” odor. Other observations mentioned were Terry Crews, 16 hours of blocking, and an overhyped man. There were no significant differences between the participants’ answers while recalling the advertisement.

When being asked how the viewer would describe the commercial to someone else, participants explained it as a funny commercial, lot of visual effects, manly, rather intense, macho, powerful, with a tendency to be loud, and overreacted. Other comments that were mentioned were strange,
annoying, macho, masculine, weird, typical American, and a lot going on. Females tended to describe the commercials with more negative attributes than the males did.

When being asked to explain their attitudes towards the advertisements, the overall impressions were positive. Every female however, explained that while initially their attitude towards the advertisements started out positive, it became negative as the commercials progressed. Every male except one individual explained that their attitudes were positive throughout the commercials and remained positive even after. The one male who did not concur with the rest of the males explained that he had seen several Old Spice commercials before and therefore found them a little annoying, yet still considered the commercials to be funny. Other quotes explaining their attitudes were for example happiness, joyful, powerful, fun, humor, extreme, weird, skeptical, and too much.

When being asked if they found the advertisements interesting, most participants initially replied their answers as no. The explanations to their lack of interests were however directed towards the product, not the advertisements. The interests towards the advertisements were however consistently strong with all the viewers. The viewers who initially said yes to having an interest for the advertisements did not refer their interest to the product, but to the advertisement by itself. There were no differences in interest between the genders and every participant agreed that their interests towards the advertisements were high due to the many things happening on the screen, the endorser, and the humoristic theme of the advertisement. Quotes being used to explain their interests were for example “great stuff”, “really funny”, “didn’t look like a regular Swedish commercial”, “fun all the time”, “unexpected”, “I like the brand itself more than the product”, “really don’t know what to expect”, “a bit childish”, and “over exaggerated”.

5.3 Visual Effects

When being asked what visual effects were used and how they would describe them, the overall impressions were that they were cheap, poorly executed, and not very impressive. This did not however come across as negative with the viewers because everyone seemed to agree that the poor visual effects worked to the advertisements advantage. The reasons for this anomaly were explained by referring that the poor visual effects were expected from an advertisement like this and it fitted in with the general theme of the advertisement. The theme of the advertisement was described as humoristic and not very serious. The other participants, who did not share this particular view, still insisted that the poor visual effects worked well with the general theme and “lack of seriousness” of the advertisement. All participants stated that the visual effects used in the advertisements bestowed a positive effect on the advertisements. Quotes being used to describe the visual effects were for example “I think it works to their advantage”, “you become more interested in the advertisement because it has some visual effects”, “really bad, but I think that’s what was expected of them”, “I think it works to their advantage actually, they did it in a cheap and fun way”, and “it kind of matched and worked together”.

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5.4 Music
When being asked to recall what music of jingles they remembered, the participants either instantly mentioned the Old Spice jingle or reenacted the melody using their voice. There were only two participants who could not recall any music or jingle when being asked. After being reminded of it by hearing the interviewer reenact the melody using his voice, did they recall the Old Spice melody.

When being asked to express their feelings and thoughts about the music, every participant mentioned that the jingle would probably help them remember the advertisement and the brand. Every male participant had positive attitudes with the jingle while the female participants merely acknowledged the catchiness of the melody yet still found the melody to positively affect their attitudes. While not all the participants mentioned that the melody made them immediately associate that specific melody with the brand or advertisement, the male individual who was familiar with Old Spice and their commercials mentioned that he instantly recognized the product from the melody.

5.5 Endorsers
When being asked to recall what person was present during the advertisements, every participant had no trouble recalling Terry Crews, the main actor in the advertisements. Even though not everyone referred to him by name, as only two participants knew who he was, two recognized him but did not know his name, and three participants had no idea who he was. They all however recalled his presence in the advertisements, could label his portrayed characteristics, and recognized him as the center of attention for the advertisements. Quotes used to describe his characteristics were for example “funny”, “body builder”, “really tough guy”, “powerful”, “masculine”, “loud”, “manly man”, “fit”, and “hyper active”. The most common adjectives were body builder, masculine, and loud.

When being asked to reflect upon the affects the participants believed the actor had on them, the males either acknowledged that his physical form or his humoristic characteristics affected their perception in some way or another. One male participant mentioned that he had the sudden urge to spend more time exercising while another recognized the actor had a keen sense of humor. The females however, did not believe the actor affected their perception in a positive way. One female participant described his presence as exaggerated while another labeled her thoughts concerning him as being “cheesy”. All the participants however stated that they believed the actor sustained their interests in the advertisement and many of his actions had influence on their perceptions and attitude formations.

When being asked if there was anything they liked about the actor used in the advertisements, some expressed positive affections stating they enjoyed his comical approach, he was fun to watch, and that he spread happiness to the viewers. Only one participant could not express any positive affection towards the actor. It was a female participant who merely said “No, I don’t think so. I think he was too much to handle.”
When being asked if there was anything the participants admired about the actor that they would like to imitate or internalize, only two male participants admitted the temptation. One participant envied the actor’s confidence while the other wanted similar physical power to that of the actor. The remaining participants, including all females, had no desire to be anything like the actor.

When asked to express their feelings of credibility towards the actor, half of the male participants admitted they found the actor’s presence as reassuring because of his assumed expertise and knowledge of the product. The other half of the male participants stated they did not trust that the actor possessed any expertise within the subject, however admitted that he possibly helps to sell the product by merely appearing as an endorser. The female participants did not express any feelings of credibility towards the actor, stating that his lack of seriousness and exaggerated behavior inspired no affections of trustworthiness for the product or the advertisement. Quotes used to describe the credibility for the actor were for example “figure of authority”, “he should know what products are good”, “yes, due to his expertise”, “he is just there to sell it”, “recognizing him helps to sell the commercial and the product”, “I don’t think he inspires any trustworthiness for the product or the advertisement”, and “he was way too exaggerated to be serious”.

5.6 Message Structure

When being asked to recall what was said during the advertisements, only one female participant was unable to recall anything from what she had just seen. The other participants unanimously recalled the overall message and theme of the advertisement or a specific a specific word that was repeated several times during the interview. What was most frequently recalled was that the deodorant blocked odor for 16 hours, lots of shouting, the Old Spice brand, and power. One participant managed to remember and isolated scene where a vending machine appeared after the actor expressed his desire for potato chips.

When being asked to recall what usually happened towards the endings of the advertisements, recollection of either the jingle played at the end, the actor screaming, or that the product blocks odor for 16 hours was mentioned. Two female participants managed to recall nothing from the endings and two other participants recalled a screaming tiger.

When asked to recall what usually happened at the beginnings of the advertisements, all the male participants specifically recall the actor. One female participant didn’t manage to recall anything while the other two female participants managed to recall a scene where the main actor met another actor who later was overpowered by the main actor.

When asked to recall what usually happened during the middle of the advertisements, some participants could not recall anything. Only one male participant managed to recall a specific incident where the scene took place in the main actor’s armpit. Two other male participants recalled hearing information about the product but could not specify what was said and had trouble recalling the scenes it took place.
When asked if the order of presentation seemed relevant or important to their attitudes towards the advertisements, all the participants responded negatively meaning they did not consider the order of presentation of the marketing messages to be of importance.

5.7 Message Appeal

When asked if the advertisements were considered by the viewers to be humorous, everyone except one female participant agreed. Another female participant admitted that they were funny in the beginning, but became too much to handle as they progressed. When asked to elaborate why they considered the clips to either be humorous or not, all the participants who considered it humorous referred to the actor as the source of the humor. The fact that he was unpredictable and randomly executed actions which were considered as nonsense was the overall explanation from the participants claiming it to be humorous. The two female participants who either did not believe it was humorous or had doubts, also referred to the actor as the cause to the lack of humor. Explanations to these opinions were referred to lack of understanding and that the actor was too much to handle.

When asked to reflect upon how the humor either enhanced or reduced the quality of the advertisements, there was a unanimous view that the humor did in fact enhance the advertisements. Some male participants reflected that the commercial was raised to a different level compared to other advertisements while others merely recognized that humor perhaps raised the appreciation and potential memory recall with the viewers.

When asked to elaborate on how the humor of the advertisement affected their attention for the advertisement, the viewers attained the assumption that humor better captured their attention and maintained it, due to the fact that it was humorous. Only two female participants were not sure of the affects humor bestowed upon the advertisement. They further explained that they had a difficult time keeping up with the advertisement and that they did not understand the humor. Their quotes were “everything was so fast I didn’t quite understand what I was supposed to understand” and “I didn’t even understand what the product was for, it shows that you were not focused on the product, but more focused on what was going on”. All participants however were focused throughout the viewing of the advertisements and their attentions never quite varied as it progressed.

When asked to further elaborate on how the humor affected their feelings of credibility for the advertisement, the participants actually believed that humor had a negative effect on the advertisements’ credibility. The impression of lack of seriousness was the rudimentary cause for this skepticism while other claimed that the fact that it was humorous made it seems less accountable. There was one female participant who claimed the contrary, that even though the credibility for this advertisement was low, she believed that it became higher once she realized that it was a humorous commercial.
When asked to further elaborate on the affects humor had on their liking of the advertisement, the participants unanimously believed humor had many positive effects. Even though some female participants claimed that they did not initially like the advertisement, they understood and believed that humor had an influence on the liking of the advertisement. Some motivated this by claiming that because it was humorous, they watched and listened more intensely compared to other commercials that they normally would not pay attention to.
6 Data Analysis

In this chapter, the empirical data presented in chapter five will be compared to the frame of reference in chapter three. Later in chapter six, the discussion and conclusions will be made.

According to Malhotra (2009), there are three steps that should be followed when analyzing qualitative data:

1. Data Reduction, when the researcher chooses which parts of the data to emphasize, minimize, or set aside.
2. Data Display, when the researcher develops a visual representation of the data in form of a chart, diagram, or matrix. The display helps emphasize the patterns and interrelations within the data.
3. Conclusion drawing and verification, when the researcher considers the importance of the analyzed data and assesses its implications for the research question.

The presented data from the previous chapter of this study is taken and analyzed according to Malhotra’s (2009), steps.

Table 2 - Data Display for RQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Data Support Theory</th>
<th>Data Supports Theory to some Extent</th>
<th>Data Does Not Support Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards the Advertisement</td>
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6.1 Attitude towards the Advertisement

The theory states that when attempting to understand the causes of consumer behavior, attitude has been acknowledged by researchers because of its importance within the subject. It is defined as a tendency to react in a positive or negative way towards an advertisement in a moment of exposure (Wahid & Ahmed, 2011). The proposed conceptual framework and the theories included attempt to prove that each of the factors included within the proposed framework influence the attitude towards the advertisement in some way. The gathered data is analyzed below in each factor where they are put against the theories from existing literature. The gathered data from all the factors suggests that every factor affects the consumers’ attitude toward the advertisement except for message structure. More details can be read in each factor.
6.2 Visual Effects

The visual effects were described by the participants as cheap, poorly executed, and not very impressive. This would initially portray a rather negative influence on the attitude towards the advertisements as the consumers’ perceptions and sensations are described with negative adjectives. The participants however stated that the cheap, not very impressive, and poor visual effects worked well with the humoristic and unserious theme of the advertisement. According to the theory stating that visual effects can affect consumer response, consumer attitude, and consumer behavioral change (Toncar & Fetscherin, 2012, and Rossiter & Percy, 1980), the fact that visual effects can influence consumer attitude is supported by the data to some extent. One might initially assume that the proper reaction would be if the consumers describe the visual effects with positive adjectives; that would lead to a positive attitude towards the advertisement as perceptions lead to attitude formation according to the consumer decision-making process (Belch & Belch, 2008). This is however not what has happened in this particular case. The viewers described the visual effects with negative adjectives, though later referring to the correlation between the visual effects and the message appeal as being the cause of the positive perception. This implies that the message appeal had an effect on the perception of the visual effects.

The data in this case thereby supports the theory to some extent. It did so by showing that visual effects can have an effect on consumer response, consumer attitude, and consumer behavioral change though it needed the influence from the humoristic message appeal to form a positive attitude formation. The influence that the humoristic message appeal had on the visual effects in this case, is not supported by the theories.

6.3 Music

When asked to recall if there was any music or jingles played, all participants eventually recalled the jingle used in the advertisements. Participants were even able to mimic the tune of the jingle using their voices supporting the extent to which the jingle was embedded in their memories. The participants also acknowledged the catchiness of the melody and their thoughts about it being well embedded within their long-term memories. The theory stating that jingles can enhance memory for advertising slogans (Yalch, 1991), could thereby be supported by the gathered data. The benefits of having the jingle embedded in the consumers’ long-term memories can be referred to the information search step of the consumer decision-making process (Belch & Belch, 2008). The search for information is divided into two categories; internal search and external search. Internal search refers to the scanning of information already stored in the consumer’s memory in order to recall past experiences or knowledge regarding the purchasing alternatives. If the jingle is embedded in the consumers’ long-term memories, the internal search could provide the consumers with the alternative for the advertised brand as they theoretically could recall the jingle that reminds them of the brand. The possibility for this scenario to encounter seems however rather low according to the author of this thesis.
The participants described experiencing positive feelings from the jingle in the advertisement. Using the consumer decision-making model to analyze the effects the musical jingle had on the consumer, the musical jingle is interpreted by the viewers’ sensations which is the immediate and directs response of the senses, in this case hearing. The senses then create a positive representation which allows the viewer to establish a positive perception. The viewer’s perception later forms the personal view of the advertisement which in turn leads to the consumer’s attitude formation and attitude towards the advertisement. The participants never described any negative associations towards the jingle and only spoke positively about its effects and influences. The theory stating that music in advertisements is more likely to positively than negatively affect the consumers’ response to an advertisement (Allan, 2007), is in this case supported by the gathered data.

Though the musical jingle was frequently recalled by the participants, it was not emphasized as the main contributor to the liking of the advertisement by the viewers. It did affect the attitude towards the advertisement according to the participants, however not as much as other factors.

6.4 Endorsers

Every participant was instantly able to recall the main endorser of the advertisements without any trouble and expressions of positive affections stating enjoyment of his comical approach, spreading happiness to the viewers, and he was fun to watch. Referring to the consumer decision-making process (Belch & Belch, 2008) to explain the consumer behavior, the sensations interpreted from the endorser had positive influences on the participants’ perceptions of him. The participants described their sensations of the endorser’s characteristics as “powerful”, “macho”, “funny”, “manly”, and “loud”; these sensations later becoming their perceptions of the endorser. The perceptions then allowed the viewers to form their attitudes towards the endorser as their view of him leads to their initial attitude formation. The attitudes towards the endorser were described by the participants as positive with only one participant not able to express any positive affection towards the actor.

The theory stating that the use of endorsements in marketing can be employed to achieve positive publicity and good recall from customers (Sertoglu, Catli, & Korkmaz, 2014) and the theory stating that endorsers can be seen as attractive, dynamic, intelligent, and possessing likable qualities in the eyes of the consumers (Cronin, 2003), are both theories which can be supported by the gathered data. Achieving positive publicity can be done through the recognizability of the endorser as he brought the positive associations of his humoristic characteristics to those who recognized him from before. For those who did not recognize him, the endorser immediately impacted a strong first impersonation that the participants perceived as positive. This could help achieve good recall of the advertisement as the participants now are able to recall who he was and associate him with the Old Spice commercials. Their perceptions of him being humorous, dominant, masculine, flamboyant, and bold lead these particular
participants to develop positive attitudes towards the endorser meaning he possessed likeable qualities in the eyes of the consumers.

When being asked to describe the commercials the participants had just seen, some descriptions were: funny commercial, lots of visual effects, manly, rather intense, macho, powerful, a tendency to be loud, and overreacted. If one compares these to the description of the endorser’s characteristics described by the participants, one could notice the similarities such as the dual mentioning of funny, manly, macho, powerful, and loud. These are of course the perceptions the endorser has bestowed upon the sensations of the viewer and now has also affected the perception of advertisement. This could therefore support the theory stating that the characteristics of the endorser are believed to have certain connections to the viewers and can be associated and transferred to the advertisement (Cronin, 2003). The endorser clearly has had a large influence upon the advertisement in this case as the descriptions of the advertisement are very similar to the descriptions of the characteristics of the endorser.

When asked to express their interests for the advertisements, the participants all referred the endorser as a cause to their interests and attention. All the participants believed the actor sustained their interests in the advertisement and many of his actions had influence on their perceptions and attitude formations. The theory stating that the usage of celebrities in advertisements is believed to enhance the viewers’ attention to the advertisement (Cronin, 2003) is therefore also supported by the gathered data. The endorser is believed to enhance the viewers’ involvement in the advertisement meaning they are highly focused on it. If the involvement is high, the viewer could be more receptive to the advertising messages enabling them to better experience sensations. By experiencing sensations, a perception could then be formed leading to attitude formation.

Though not all participants recognized the endorser or even knew who he was, his influence and role in the advertisements were recognized by all the participants as they labeled him the center of attention for the advertisements. In comparison to the other factors, the participants were more enthusiastic and capable to speak about the main endorser during the interviews. The endorser had in this case a rather large influence on the advertisement and provided both positive and a few negative affects to the consumers’ attitude towards the advertisements.

6.5 Message Structure
The theory states that knowing the best ways to spread and communicate message topics is a very important aspect of the advertising strategy. Research conducted on memory and learning indicated that points presented during the beginnings and endings of messages are generally better remembered (Belch & Belch, 2008). The participants managed to either recall a general manner that a scene was portrayed or a specific scene when being asked to recall what happened during the beginnings and endings of the advertisements. When being asked to recall what happened during the middle sections of the advertisements, none of the participants were able to recall anything upon request. The data gathered could to some extent support that points
presented during the beginnings and endings of an advertisement are generally better remembered in the memories of the consumers. The data does not however support that it is a very important aspect of the message strategy or that it affects the attitude towards the advertisement.

6.6 Message Appeal

There was a unanimous view from the participants that the humoristic theme of the advertisement did in fact enhance the commercials. Referring to the consumer decision-making process (Belch & Belch, 2008); the humoristic appeal of the advertisement is interpreted by the viewers’ sensations. If the viewer then indeed finds the advertisement humorous, they’ll establish their own perception of the advertisement as humorous and later form their attitudes out of their perception. In this case, the participants who found the advertisement humorous gave positive reflections, for example the commercials were described as being raised to a different level compared to other advertisements because of the humor. The participants, who did not find the advertisements humorous or as humorous as the other participants, merely recognized that it could enhance the potential memory recall of the viewers and that humor perhaps raised the appreciation of the advertisement. Participants claimed that because it was humorous, they watched and listened more intensely compared to other commercials that they normally would not pay attention to. Theory stating that humor enhances source liking (Madden & Weinberger, 1984) is thereby supported by the gathered data. The participants unanimously believed humor had many positive effects on their liking of the advertisement even though some female participants claimed that they did not initially like the advertisement. They understood however that humor had an influence on the liking of the advertisement.

The viewers claimed that humor better captured their attention and maintained it, due to the fact that it was humorous. Referring to the consumer decision-making process (Belch & Belch, 2008), capturing the viewers’ attention through humor affects the motivation of the consumer. In this case, by speaking to their self-esteem or self-actualization needs and raising their involvement through humor, the viewers’ attention towards the advertisement could be better captured and sustained by simply entertaining the viewer. It can be assumed that if the viewer finds the humor entertaining, the viewer will keep watching, which in this case the participants did. The theory states that the appeal of an advertisement is the way in which the advertisement moves the consumer to hold their attention, communicate towards their wants and needs, excite their interests, and to influence their feelings towards a product, service, or cause, (Kim & Cho, 2012). Another theory states that 94 percent of advertising practitioners find the usage of humor in advertising to be effective when aiming to capture attention (Madden & Weinberger, 1984) which could raise the question if the usage of humor in advertisements is effective. All the participants were focused throughout the viewing of the advertisements and their attentions never quite varied as it progressed. The viewers claimed that humor better captured their attention and maintained it, due to the fact that it was humorous. These theories are therefore supported by the gathered data.
Further theory regarding humor within source credibility claims there are circumstances where it actually damages source credibility (Madden & Weinberger, 1984). The participants actually believed that humor had a negative effect on the advertisements’ credibility. The impression of lack of seriousness was the rudimentary cause for this skepticism while other claimed that the fact that it was humorous made it seems less accountable. Referring to the consumer decision-making process (Belch & Belch, 2008), the impression of lack of seriousness comes from the viewers’ perception of the advertisement where the fact that it was humorous, in this case damaged the source credibility. In this case, the negative perception goes on to form a negative attitude formation in the mind of the consumer towards the advertisement. The theory is thereby supported by the gathered data, however there is no theory stating source credibility can affect attitude towards the advertisement. The consumer decision-making process enables this theoretical influence however.

Humor has in this case had rather large influence on the overall attitude towards the advertisement. The participants referred to the fact that the commercials were humorous several times when explaining the causes for positive feedback. A key example of this was the reference to the endorser’s humoristic characteristics. Much of the commercial was seemingly built around the humor of the endorser and the humoristic theme of the advertisement. These two factors seemed to work well with the viewers and were more often than other factors the cause for positive attitude formation. Applying a message appeal, in this case humor, supports the theory that the choice of appeal in an advertising message is one of the most important strategy decisions in advertising (Belch & Belch, 2008).
7 Findings and Conclusions
In this chapter, the findings and conclusions will be drawn for this master’s thesis. The purpose of this thesis has been to gain a deeper understanding of which attributes of a video advertisement can affect the consumers’ attitude towards the advertisement and how they affect consumer behavior. It has also been a purpose to find the most appealing factors for an online video advertisement. This has been done by investigating a sole research question in chapter one and will in this chapter be answered with findings and conclusions. Implications for theory, practitioners, and further research will also be presented at the end.

7.1 Research Question: “What are the most appealing factors in an online video advertisement?”
This thesis has developed a deeper understanding for the attributes in a video advertisement that can affect consumer behavior as well as provide an understanding for what the most appealing factors are to use in an online video advertisement. The two most influential and appealing factors in an online video advertisement is the usage of an endorser and applying a message appeal. The empirical data suggest that these two factors were the most influential on the viewers’ attitudes towards the advertisements out of all the other factors examined. Humor was the appeal chosen for the specific advertisements shown in this study. It influenced not only the attitudes towards the advertisements, but enhanced source liking, improved the viewers’ attention span by better capturing it and being able to maintain it, communicated towards their wants and needs, excited their interests, and influenced their feelings. The participants frequently referred to the humoristic message appeal when being asked to describe their positive attitudes towards the advertisements. The endorser possessed characteristics that for the participants induced positive influences on the viewers’ attitudes towards the advertisements. Similar to the message appeal, the endorser did not only influence the viewers’ attitudes towards the advertisements, but was also able to achieve positive publicity, good recall, enhance the viewers’ attention to the advertisement, and associate and transfer the characteristics of the endorser to the advertisement. The participants most frequently referred to the endorser for their positive attitudes towards the advertisements.

Two other factors that managed to influence the viewers’ attitude towards the advertisements were visual effects and music. Though the empirical data suggests these two factors did not have as big of an influence as message appeal and endorsements, the data suggests they can both influence and improve attitude towards the advertisement. It was shown that music was both able to positively affect the consumers’ response to an advertisement and enhance memory for the advertised slogans. The data also suggests that visual effects were able to affect consumer response, consumer attitude, and consumer behavioral change. To do so however, it needed the influence from the humoristic message appeal to form a positive attitude formation. The participants recognized the influences of both music and visual effects, however did not consider them to be their prime motivators for positive attitude formation.
The fifth factor examined was message structure. The data suggests that points presented during the beginnings and endings of messages are generally better remembered, however it did not affect the attitudes towards the advertisements and the participants did not consider that it was a very important aspect of the advertising strategy. It could still be considered within an advertisement to achieve better recall; however the message structure is left out of the final proposed conceptual framework due to the fact that it did not affect the attitude towards the advertisements.

- Endorsers and message appeal as the most appealing factors in an online video advertisement.
- Music and visual effects are also appealing in an online video advertisement as they can affect attitude towards the advertisement.
- Message structure can achieve better recall; however is not amongst the most appealing factors in an online video advertisement nor does it affect attitude towards the advertisement.

The final purposed conceptual framework is presented on the next page. This conceptual framework can provide insight and a deeper understanding on what aspects of an online video advertisement are most appealing to the viewer and how they affect consumer behavior.
### Table 3 - Final Purposed Conceptual Framework

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<th>Concept</th>
<th>Concept Description</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Operational Value</th>
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<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Endorsers</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Message Appeals</strong></td>
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### 7.2 Implications for Theory

This thesis has come up with some alternate implications for some of the literature theory used in the study. By providing deeper understandings of the attributes in a video advertisement that can affect consumer behavior as well as the most appealing factors to use in an online video advertisement; the literature used in the developed conceptual framework was in turn compared to gathered data concerning the subject. The gathered data would either support the theories, support the theories to some extent, or they would not support the theories at all. Conclusions and findings would then be made from the support of the data. This is where the thesis could contribute to new findings and purposed implications to relevant theory and two implications were found.
The theory by Toncar and Fetscherin (2012) stated that visual elements in advertising can be used to affect consumer response, consumer attitude, and consumer behavioral change. The participants did not find that the visual elements alone affected their response, attitude or behavioral change. They did however refer to the collaboration between the humoristic appeal and the visual effects to being able affect their responses, attitudes and behavioral changes. They argued that if the visual effects stood alone, they would not work to affect positive responses with the consumers. However, with the humoristic appeal in the advertisements, the poor visual effects suddenly fit and worked well to affect positive responses, attitudes, and behavioral changes. Collaboration between two advertisement factors could, according to the gathered data, work to affect or improve consumer response, consumer attitude, and consumer behavioral change.

The theory of message structure by Belch and Belch (2008) stated that knowing the best ways to spread and communicate message topics is a very important aspect of the advertising strategy. The data gathered really only supported the fact that spreading the important message topics accordingly, simply improved consumer recall of the advertisements’ messages. One might argue that message structure is an important aspect of advertising strategy, though the participants and the author of this study disagree regarding its importance. The data suggests that message structure does not affect consumer attitude towards the advertisement and was therefore left out of the final purposed conceptual framework.

### 7.3 Implications for Practitioners

The conceptual framework can provide insight and a deeper understanding on which aspects of an online video advertisement are most appealing to the viewer and how they affect consumer behavior. By focusing on the provided factors of the purposed conceptual framework, advertising practitioners can have a greater chance of success to positively affect attitude change towards the advertisement and better affect consumer behavior.

The study suggests that factors such as endorsers and message appeals can have a greater influence on the viewers’ attitudes towards the advertisements. Practitioners can thereby place greater focus on these factors in order to achieve more affective positive effects on consumer perceptions and attitude formation.

Music and visual effects are also capable of affecting attitude formation though not as efficiently or affectively as endorsers or message appeals.

### 7.4 Implications for Further Research

This thesis investigates what factors of an online video advertisement are most appealing from the consumers’ perspective by providing a deeper understanding of consumer behavior. Further research is needed to confirm this thesis’ findings and conclusions. Conducting experiments on a larger scale with larger diversifications of participants from different social and economic
backgrounds could be a suggestion for further research. Further suggestions for areas of further research are presented below.

- Finding and examining more factors in advertisements that could be included in the purposed conceptual framework.
- Using different sample videos could provide a different perspective and perhaps may produce different results on the attitudes towards the advertisements.
- Exposing the participants to a different viewing environment by not informing them of what is being examined prior to the viewing.
- Examining each individual factor of the conceptual framework to find additional effects on consumer behavior.

7.5 Limitations

The study for this thesis has had its limitations. The thesis was limited to conduct the in-depth interviews on students at Luleå University of Technology which was a voluntary limitation. An involuntary limitation was the time and work force available to conduct this thesis. Initially, the author had an additional colleague and five months to write this thesis. The colleague unfortunately resigned after two and a half months which left the author with half the time left to start a new thesis. With only half the time and double the work load, some involuntary limitations were experienced throughout this thesis due to the unfortunate resignation.
8 References


8.1 Secondary References

http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0187719/ (Collected 2014)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXvtany3mSE (Collected 2014)
Appendix

Interview Guide

1. What did you just watch?
   - How would you describe these commercials to somebody?
   - How would you explain your attitude towards the advertisement?
   - Did you find this advertisement interesting?
   - Can you elaborate on your interests for this advertisement?

2. What did you think of the visual effects in these advertisements?

3. What music or melodies do you recall was used in these advertisements?
   - What did you think of the music used in these advertisements?
   - Please describe the music that was used in these advertisements.
   - Can you elaborate on the affects you believe it will have on you?

4. What person was used in these advertisements?
   - Did you recognize the person used in these advertisements?
   - Please describe the person in the advertisement.
   - Can you elaborate on the affects you believe the person had on you?
   - Can you elaborate on your feelings of credibility towards the person?
   - Is there anything you like about this person?
   - Is there anything about this person you would aspire to be?

5. What was said during the advertisement?
   - What was said at the end?
   - What was said at the beginning?
   - What was said in the middle?
   - Do you find the order of presentation to be relevant to your attitude towards the advertisements?

6. Do you consider these clips to be humorous?
   - If yes: Can you elaborate on why it was humorous?
     - Followed by...
   - To what extent did the humor enhance the advertisement in your opinion?
   - If no: Can you elaborate on why it was not humorous?
     - Followed by...
   - To what extent did the humor decline the advertisement in your opinion?
     - Can you further elaborate on the effects it had on your attention?
     - Can you further elaborate on the effects it had on your credibility for the source?
     - Can you further elaborate on the effects it had on your liking of the advertisement?

7. Would you like to see more commercials?