

Radboud Universiteit



Bachelor's Thesis

The Effect of Displaying Arguments in Advertisements for Durable Products.

Author: Imke Janssen

Student number: s1023610

First supervisor: Julija Baranova

Second assessor: Emily Felker

Study degree: BA International Business Communication

Faculty: Faculty of Arts

University: Radboud University

Date: 07.06.2021

Abstract

Today, we are more and more surrounded by advertisements. Advertisers have come up with all kinds of ways to attract our attention and persuade us. One of those ways is the use of arguments (Blair, 2012). Previous research has investigated how different types of arguments have different effects on the persuasiveness of the advertisement. However, no research has been done on the effects of consumer's persuasiveness when advertisements use or do not use arguments. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of using arguments in advertising on persuasiveness. For this study, a between-subject experiment among 175 Dutch speakers was used. An online questionnaire, containing three advertisements that either included or excluded an argument. The results show higher persuasiveness when an advertisement contains an argument. This means that the consumer's attitude will change and will more likely buy the product when an argument is displayed in an advertisement. Future research should focus on the different dimensions of persuasiveness and examine if the same holds for non-Dutch advertisements.

Keywords: *arguments, advertising, persuasiveness, attitude*

Introduction

People are more and more exposed to advertisements, in the streets, on television, and in publications. Arguments are important in advertising. This study will examine whether displaying arguments in print advertisements has an effect on the persuasiveness of the advertisement.

Arguments are common in verbal interaction. In this line of literature, they are also known as reasons or accounts. A more general concept is that of reasons, which involve causal statements for behaviour. Accounts, on the other hand, are a subtype of a reason which are used for delicate actions (Baranova & Dingemanse, 2016). Reasons and their subtypes are defined as an answer to the potential ‘why’ question (Antaki, 1994). In this article, the term arguments will be used, because this term is most frequently used in marketing, which is the context of this study. Arguments are seen as one or more reasons for doing something, such as – but not limited to – to adopt or maintain an attitude such as a belief but also such as to engage in an activity (Blair, 2012). Research has largely focused on arguments in what situations they occur and the functions they have.

Arguments are common in spoken communication. They are often used by speakers to persuade others of their opinions, to evoke a desired reaction. Arguments often arise in circumstances that are unpredictable, not in line with the pre-existing knowledge. In these situations, more information is needed to link the current situation to the pre-existing knowledge. They have an interactional function and serve to make situations more readily understandable and increase the ultimate likelihood of compliance (Baranova & Dingemanse, 2016). Furthermore, presenting an argument is about inviting others to adopt the attitude in question on the basis of the reasons offered for it, that, because they accept the reasons, and they judge the reasons to justify adopting the attitude (Pinto, 2010).

Baranova and Dingemanse (2016) have distinguished three domains in which arguments provide this function in the context of request sequences produced in spoken interaction. The first one is about matters of information. When something is informationally underspecified participants of the verbal interaction cannot fully understand what is meant, it may lack crucial information. If this is the case, arguments can provide the missing information to help specify what is going on. The other domain has to do with the social relation. In this case, arguments have the function to explain why the recipient should do or should not do

something. The last one is about the action that can be behind the verbal interaction, e.g., joking or complaining. Arguments can emphasise these additional actions or make them explicit (Baranova & Dingemanse, 2016). Therefore, in general, providing arguments can place verbal interaction in a larger context involving pre-existing knowledge available to the interactants and their pre-existing relationship.

This is not only the case for spoken interaction. Arguments can be used to achieve similar goals in advertising. In advertisements, a certain statement is made about a product and to elaborate that statement an argument can be used. To enable the identification of arguments for advertisements, the following definition is formulated: argumentation uses language to justify or refute a standpoint, with the aim of securing agreement in views (Van Eemeren, Jackson & Jacobs, 2015).

Advertisements are intended to persuade customers to buy the product or service (O'Guinn et al., 2000). Persuasion is a successful intentional effort at influencing another's mental state through communication in a circumstance in which the persuadee has some measure of freedom (O'Keefe, 2002a, p. 5). According to O'Keefe (2002a), persuasion only occurs if the mental state of the persuadee is indeed changed. Therefore, advertisements are types of persuasive documents. Persuasive documents are designed with the aim of influencing reader's attitudes through the transfer of information, with the readers having a certain degree of freedom (O'Keefe, 2002a).

Advertising makes use of reasons that are given for preferring the brand over others or over nothing, or for buying the product rather than its competitors or not at all (Blair, 2012). As Blair speaks of reasons, this study - as stated earlier - preferably speaks of arguments. Arguments can contain information that will eventually persuade the consumer to buy a product. Different kinds of arguments have different influences on the attitude towards the advertisement. The arguments that are given in advertising can refer to the direct utility of the product or the benefits of this particular brand (Blair, 2012). An example of such arguments are the valued approvals of others for having made that purchase (Blair, 2012). The use of argumentation in marketing communication has the purpose that the consumers will accept the advertisement and buy the advertised product.

There are multiple processes of acceptance and behavioural change. One of the models that can be distinguished is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1981, 1986; Petty et al., 2004). The Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion handles a general theory of attitude change (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981). It provides a foundation to organize, categorize and understand persuasion through communication (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The ELM contains two different routes: the central route and the peripheral route. The central route is based on the thoughtful consideration of arguments central to the issue, whereas the peripheral route is based on affective associations connected to peripheral cues in the persuasion context (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). In general, the ELM shows the ways in which different variables can have an impact on persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Figure 1 presents the diagram of the ELM.

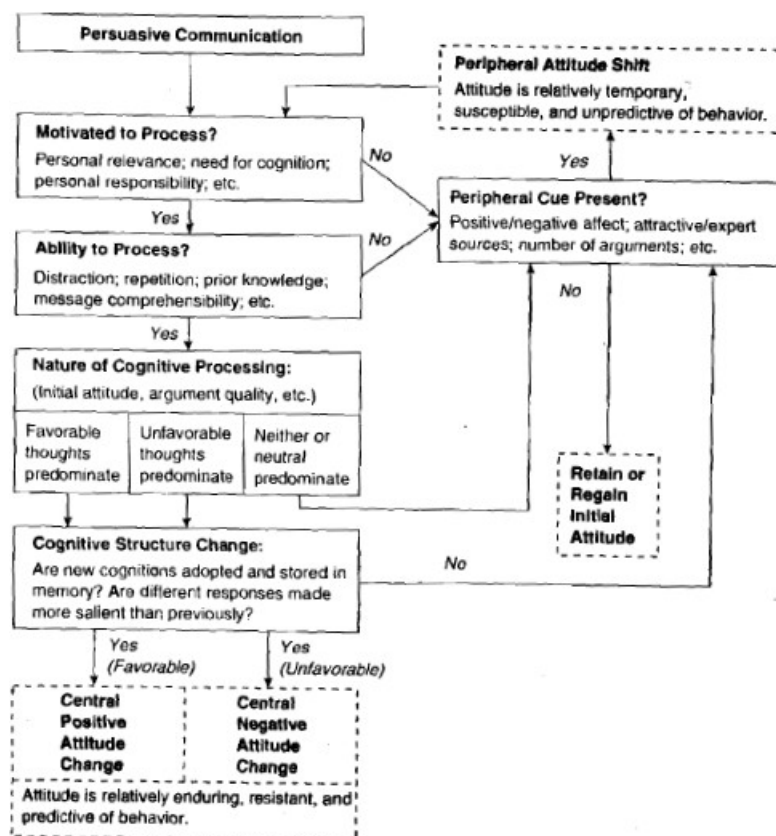


Figure 1. The ELM © Petty & Cacioppo (1986)

The underlying principle of this model is that people want to have the right attitudes (Hoeken et al., 2019). The ELM displays a central route and peripheral route to illustrate individual attitude change (Teng et al., 2014). The reason for circumstance is that people believe it is important that their evaluations of items or behaviours are correct when it is disturbing to find

out that you have maybe voted for the wrong person or bought the wrong bike. Still, attitudes are not universal (Hoeken et al., 2019). That is because everyone has different ideas about certain matters. For example, which car is the best. The acceptance process works when people carefully consider all relevant arguments (Hoeken, 1997). With more positive responses being generated towards the product, the attitude becomes more positive, and it is more likely that behaviour, e.g., buying the product, will occur. In other words, leads to persuasion. This model is considered as one of the most useful models in the theory of persuasion and the most commonly used model to understand information processing toward attitude change (Bitner and Obermiller, 1985; Lien, 2001; Cook et al., 2004). The ELM applies to this study since the focus is on persuasion and attitude change and this study combines them both.

Particularly, in this study, we see persuasiveness of an advertisement as based on three dimensions: attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the product, and intention to buy. These dimensions are taken from Se-Hoon Jeong (2008). From the definitions of persuasiveness and a persuasive document by O’Keefe (2002a) that were stated earlier, we can link the person’s mental state to the attitude. There is still no generally accepted definition of attitude. The definition by Eagly and Chaiken (1993) is mostly used: “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor.” In other words, an attitude is an evaluative judgement about a concept. This concept can be any distinguishable concept, for example, a product or an advertisement. When using advertisements for products, it is intended that the consumers’ attitude will be changed and that in addition the product will be bought.

Argumentation in verbal interaction has been researched thoroughly. However, little is known about arguments that are provided within the context of marketing, in particular print advertising. In spoken interaction withholding an argument is more common and can be beneficial in eliciting a desired response in spoken interaction (Baranova & Dingemanse, 2016). In this context providing arguments that are potentially already available to the recipient might have negative consequences and not elicit the desired response. If this also applies to advertising is not yet investigated. In advertising arguments are used a lot, however, it is not clear whether advertisements would possibly benefit from withholding an argument. There are two possible ways arguments could have an effect on the persuasion. In the first

case, persuasion occurs through the use of arguments. In the second case, no argument plays a persuasive role. This study will investigate which of these cases is true.

There are many different products or services. Products have been classified into five groups (Miracle, 1965). A distinction that can be made out of two of these groups is that of nondurable products and durable products. Nondurable products include perishable goods such as fruit, beverages, clothing. They are purchased and consumed frequently and rapidly (Choi et al., 2019). In the current study, we focus on durable goods. Durable goods have specific characteristics. These products include long-lasting durable goods such as furniture, automobiles, and machinery, purchased and consumed slowly and less frequently, while carrying higher risks in that outcomes may be uncertain for some time after purchase (Arens, 1999; Richens & Bloch, 1986; Seo et al., 2016).

The focus in this study is on the durable goods because arguments will most likely be examined more carefully for these goods, in other words, they tend to have higher levels of involvement (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Zaichkowsky, 1985). The distinction between certainty and uncertainty corresponds closely to durable and nondurable products and the purchase decisions (Smith & Bristor, 1994). The decision for buying a durable product is made rather infrequently for relatively expensive items such as cars and laptops. Therefore, it comes with more uncertainty than nondurable products, which are made frequently for inexpensive items (Smith & Bristor, 1994). In order to be persuaded to buy a durable product, consumers, therefore, want more information and will go through all the data carefully. Displaying arguments in the advertisement could therefore positively influence the purchase intention.

To sum up, everything that has been stated so far, arguments are used to give extra information about a concept (Baranova & Dingemanse, 2016). They present several reasons in order to persuade another or others (Blair, 2012). Arguments are not only used in verbal interaction but also occur in the marketing context. However, this particular context has not yet been investigated on the presence or absence of arguments.

As a consequence, the literature above has been translated into the following research question: *How does textual argumentation affect the persuasiveness of advertisements for durable goods?* As stated in the literature, durable products are more involved with

uncertainty and therefore need more information in order to get the consumer to purchase the product (Smith & Bristor, 1994). Also, given that a consumer's attitude will affect their intention to purchase (Miller et al., 1971; Aaker and Keller, 1990; Faircloth et al., 2001; Nan, 2006), the following hypothesis has been formulated: *The persuasiveness of the advertisement will be increased by the presence of an argument.*

As for the societal relevance of this research, it will be an addition to the advertising world. In general, the purpose of this research is to contribute to scientific and societal matters in marketing. When advertisers know when to use and when not to use arguments in their advertisements this could benefit the successfulness of the advertisements. The main goal is to find out if just as in spoken interaction, e.g., when making a request, withholding arguments is more beneficial than providing an argument (Baranova & Dingemanse, 2016). In general, this study might change the view on communication in advertising. It might be that we have to use conversational rules more often in advertising.

Method

Materials

The independent variable has two levels: presence and absence of an argument. These arguments were presented by means of advertisements. Therefore, the stimulus material consisted of six advertisements. For each of the products that were used there was a different advertisement. Furthermore, for each product, there were two different advertisements for both conditions. The products that were advertised belong to the group of durable products. The 3 kinds of products that were advertised: a washing machine, a car, and a laptop. There are several studies that have used these products and recognize these products as durable goods (Choi et al., 2019; Desai & Purohit, 1999; Punj & Staelin, 1983; Sathya & Indirajith, 2018). The advertisements are displayed below. In the first condition, the advertisement will be used without an argument, in the second condition they will be complemented by an argument.

Advertisement 1. Washing machine without an argument



Advertisement 2. Washing machine with an argument



Advertisement 3. Car without an argument



Advertisement 4. Car with an argument



Advertisement 5. Laptop without an argument



Advertisement 6. Laptop with an argument



The arguments that are given in these advertisements refer to the direct utility of the product or the benefits of this particular product (Blair, 2012). The arguments contain a causal connective ‘because’ and provide new information otherwise not available from the advertisement to make the argument clearly recognizable as an argument linguistically.

Subjects

In total, 262 participants participated in this study. However, 53 of the participants did not finish the questionnaire. Furthermore, there were 33 participants that did not have a sufficient fluency level of Dutch. In addition, there was one participant who was younger than 18 years old. Therefore, in total, 175 participants (55 male and 120 female) from different educational levels (secondary school, MBO, HBO, WO, with the most frequent level of education being WO) between 18 and 77 years old ($M = 27.68$, $SD = 13.46$) voluntarily participated in this study. The fluency level of Dutch had to be between 5 and 7 on a 7-point Likert scale. Therefore, the participants with a fluency level of 4 or lower were eliminated from the participants. The participants with a fluency level of Dutch between 5 and 7 (on a 7-point Likert scale), with a mean of 6.81 and a range of 2. In addition, the participants had different living situations (alone, with their parents, student house, with a partner, with a partner and children, without a partner with children, with the most frequent level of living situation is with their parents).

A Chi-square test showed no significant relation between the condition of the advertisement and gender ($\chi^2(1) = 1.377$, $p = .791$). Therefore, there was no difference between the conditions for men and women. Furthermore, a Chi-square test showed no significant between condition of the advertisement and education level ($\chi^2(4) = 1.716$, $p = .788$). This means that the conditions for the different education levels were similar. Another Chi-square test showed

no significant relation between condition of the advertisement and level of Dutch ($\chi^2(2) = 1.101, p = .577$). Accordingly, there was also no difference between the conditions for the different levels of Dutch. Finally, a Chi-square test showed no significant relation between the condition of the advertisement and living situation ($\chi^2(5) = 2.596, p = .762$). To conclude, the conditions for every living situation were similar. A one-way ANOVA showed no significant effect of the conditions of the advertisements on the age ($F(1,173) < 1$). Therefore, the distribution of the age within the two conditions is the same. These analyses show that the distribution of gender, education, level of Dutch, living situation and age are similar. The distribution of the participants for each condition is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of the participants

| Condition | Number of participants | |
|-----------|------------------------|----|
| | Without argument | 91 |
| | With argument | 84 |

Design

In this study, a 1-factor between-subjects design with one independent variable being the presence of arguments (2 levels: present – not present) was used. Therefore, this study has two conditions. The participants were only shown one of the conditions. The dependent variable is the persuasiveness of the advertisement. The questionnaire that was used for this study can be found in Appendix A.

Instruments

The dependent variable, persuasiveness of the advertisement, has been measured using multiple-level scales with various items measuring the attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the product, and purchase intention, based on Jeong (2008). In alignment with earlier findings on empirical Likert scale usage, a 7-point Likert scale was used to ensure higher internal consistency reliability (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011).

The attitude toward the ad has been measured with four semantic differential items: good/bad, favourable/unfavourable, pleasant/unpleasant, and appealing/unappealing. This scale has been documented and tested (Lutz et al., 1983; MacKenzie et al., 1986) and was, therefore, suitable to use for this research. The reliability of ‘attitude towards the ad’ comprising four items

was acceptable: $\alpha = .89$. Consequently, the mean of all four items was used to calculate the compound variable ‘attitude towards the ad’, which was used for further analyses.

In addition, the attitude towards the product has been measured with four semantic differential items: good/bad, favourable/unfavourable, pleasant/unpleasant, and appealing/unappealing. This scale has been documented and tested (Lutz et al., 1983; MacKenzie et al., 1986) and was, therefore, suitable to use for this research. The reliability of ‘attitude towards the product’ comprising four items was also acceptable: $\alpha = .89$. Consequently, the mean of all four items was used to calculate the compound variable ‘attitude towards the product’, which was used for further analyses. For the purchase intention, it was not necessary to do a reliability analysis since there was only one item on which this dimension was measured.

The means of the compound variable of ‘attitude towards the ad’, the compound variable of ‘attitude towards the product, and the variable ‘purchase intention’ were used to calculate the compound variable ‘persuasiveness’

Procedure

The procedure was the same for all the participants. The experiment was individually by means of an online questionnaire. When approaching the participants, no information or clues about the research purposes was disclosed. If the person agreed to participate, the link to the questionnaire was sent to the person concerned. After clicking on the link, the participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions using the online randomiser that the program Qualtrics offered. The participant either filled in the questionnaire with the advertisements that are presented with an argument or the one with advertisements without arguments. The beginning of the questionnaire provided a short description of the study and our contact information. Additionally, it was mentioned that participating in this experiment was completely voluntarily and anonymous. The participants’ informed consent was secured. Then demographic questions were asked. After that, the participant was presented with 3 advertisements, one at a time. After each advertisement, they had to answer 9 questions about the persuasiveness of the advertisement. The participant is asked to answer these questions. When completing the questionnaire, all the participants were thanked for their participation. On average, the questionnaire took 4,37 minutes to complete. After receiving enough answers to our questionnaire, an analysis of no response had to be done. Only the questionnaires that were actually completed could be used to answer the research question.

Statistical treatment

By using a one-way ANOVA, the effect of arguments in advertisements on the degree of persuasiveness was established. Furthermore, three additional one-way ANOVAs were performed to establish the effect of arguments on the three different dimensions of persuasiveness individually (Se-Hoon Jeong, 2008) and the use of arguments in advertisements.

Results

Persuasiveness

A one-way analysis of variance showed a significant effect of type of advertisement (with or without argument) on persuasiveness ($F(1,173) = 7.603, p = .006$). The persuasiveness of advertisements with an argument ($M = 12.39, SD = 2.78$) was higher than for advertisements without an argument ($M = 11.35, SD = 2.21$). The means and the standard deviations can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations (between brackets) for the version of the advertisement on persuasiveness.

| Version of the advertisement <i>n</i> | Persuasiveness <i>M(SD)</i> |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Without argument ($n = 91$) | 11.35(2.21) |
| With argument ($n = 84$) | 12.39(2.78) |
| Total ($n = 175$) | 11.85(2.55) |

Attitude towards the advertisement

A one-way analysis of variance showed a significant effect of type of advertisement (with or without argument) on the attitude towards the advertisement ($F(1,173) = 7.520, p = .007$). The persuasiveness of advertisements with an argument ($M = 3.98, SD = 1.05$) was higher than for advertisements without an argument ($M = 3.58, SD = .90$). The means and the standard deviations can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations (between brackets) for the version of the advertisement on attitude towards the advertisement.

| Version of the advertisement <i>n</i> | Advertisement attitude <i>M(SD)</i> |
|--|--|
| Without argument ($n = 91$) | 3.57(.90) |
| With argument ($n = 84$) | 3.98(1.05) |
| Total ($n = 175$) | 3.77(.99) |

Attitude towards the product

A one-way analysis of variance showed no significant effect of type of advertisement (with or without argument) on attitude towards the product ($F(1,173) < 1$). The persuasiveness of

advertisements with an argument ($M = 4.78$, $SD = .97$) was higher than for advertisements without an argument ($M = 4.69$, $SD = .95$). The means and the standard deviations can be found in Table 4.

Table 4. Means and standard deviations (between brackets) for the version of the advertisement on attitude towards the product.

| Version of the advertisement | Product attitude |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>n</i> | <i>M(SD)</i> |
| Without argument ($n = 91$) | 4.69(.95) |
| With argument ($n = 84$) | 4.78(.97) |
| Total ($n = 175$) | 4.73(.96) |

Purchase intention

A one-way analysis of variance showed a significant effect of type of advertisement (with or without argument) on persuasiveness ($F(1,173) = 10.280$, $p = .002$). The persuasiveness of advertisements with an argument ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.18$) was higher than for advertisements without an argument ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.04$). The means and the standard deviations can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. Means and standard deviations (between brackets) for the version of the advertisement on purchase intention.

| Version of the advertisement | Purchase intention |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>n</i> | <i>M(SD)</i> |
| Without argument ($n = 91$) | 3.09(1.04) |
| With argument ($n = 84$) | 3.63(1.18) |
| Total ($n = 175$) | 3.35(1.14) |

Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine what the effect is on persuasiveness towards the presence or absence of arguments in advertisements. In this case, advertisements for durable products. The hypothesis that advertisements with arguments will cause a higher persuasiveness than advertisements without arguments is accepted. The results show that whether an advertisement contains an argument or not has an effect on the persuasiveness. More specifically, the use of arguments increases the persuasiveness of the advertisement.

Remarkably, when separating persuasiveness into the three dimensions discussed in this study (Se-Hoon Jeong, 2008), not every dimension displays a significant result. The results of the different dimensions of persuasiveness show that attitude towards the advertisement and purchase intention are significantly higher when arguments are presented. However, regarding the attitude towards the product, it makes no difference whether arguments are displayed or not.

The results of the present study are in line with the hypothesis that was formulated based on different research findings. Smith and Bristor (1994) stated that durable products are more involved with uncertainty and therefore need more information to purchase the product. In addition, Baranova and Dingemanse (2016) have distinguished three domains in which arguments provide a certain function, one of which is that of information. Something can be informationally underspecified, causing participants of interaction to not fully understand what is meant. When this is the case, arguments can provide the information that is missing to alleviate what is meant. As a result of this study, arguments provide the additional information that is needed. The information that was provided in this study refers to the direct utility or the benefits of the particular product (Blair, 2012). This new information was not available for the participants with the advertisement without an argument. Therefore, the advertisement without an argument contained too little information and did not have the ability to avoid the uncertainty involvement (Smith & Bristor, 1994).

In addition, the results of this study thus present, that consumers are more likely to accept the advertisement with a durable product when an argument is displayed. This is in line with Hoeken (1997), who stated that the acceptance process of the ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; 1986; Petty et al., 2004) works when people carefully consider all relevant arguments. This can be related to durable goods, as these products carry higher risks in that outcomes

may be uncertain for some time after purchase (Arens, 1999; Richens & Bloch, 1986; Seo et al., 2016). Therefore, they are more involved with uncertainty and need more arguments in order to be persuaded (Smith & Bristor, 1994). When there are more positive responses generated towards the advertisement, it is more likely that the consumer will be persuaded. Given the results of this study, arguments can provide this.

As stated before, in spoken interaction withholding an argument is more common (Baranova & Dingemanse, 2016). In this context, providing arguments will not elicit a desired response. In contrast, the present study found that this does not apply to the advertising context. In this context, arguments play a persuasive role. Additionally, in line with Baranova and Dingemanse (2016), advertisements are comparable to the interactional situations where information cannot be derived from the context and needs to be provided explicitly in the form of an argument. Nevertheless, these different communication contexts display different outcomes. Therefore, not all communication contexts are the same and the same rules do not apply to all communication contexts. However, it still needs to be taken into account that the present study only focused on durable goods in the advertising context. For durable goods arguments will most likely be examined more carefully (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Zaichkowsky, 1985). Accordingly, considering that this study only focused on a narrow concept of the advertising context is crucial to bear in mind.

The present study found a significant effect for the use of arguments in advertising on persuasiveness. However, the dimensions of which persuasiveness exists do not all show a significant effect on their own. The results show that arguments have a significant effect on attitude towards the advertisement and purchase intention, nevertheless no significant effect for the use of arguments was found for attitude towards the product. To interpret these results, the study of Eagly and Chaiken (1993) can be used. This study stated that when we want to persuade a consumer to buy the product, we usually use an advertisement. Moreover, an advertisement and a product are two distinguishable concepts (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). This could create that the participants actually see the advertisement separately from the product. In which they might be able to not consider the argument of the advertisement at all when only the concept product is being evaluated. In addition, the advertisement is intended to change the consumers' attitude and the product will be bought. The product itself is not used to persuade the consumer. The consumers have a general attitude towards the product, and this does not change. Then the use of arguments does not have an effect on the attitude.

Another possibility is related to the fact that, in this study, the questions measuring the two different concepts (attitude towards the advertisement and attitude towards the product) were the same for both concepts. Consequently, the participants might feel forced to make a difference in their answers. In other words, there is a response bias within the responses of the questionnaire, more specifically it copes with the social desirability (Furnham, 1986). This means that participants of a questionnaire deny all socially undesirable traits and claim the socially desirable ones (Nederhof, 1985). Additionally, they have the tendency to say things which place the speaker in a favorable light (Nederhof, 1985). Hence, the participants assume that since the concept is different, but the questions are equal, the answers should be different.

In general, it can be concluded that using arguments in advertising for durable goods is generally better than not using arguments. This can be practically relevant for advertisers, as it provides the knowledge that the use of arguments is better than not using arguments when advertising durable products. When advertisers know when to use arguments in their advertisements this could benefit the successfulness of the advertisements. In the context of durable goods, advertisers are advised to use arguments in the advertisements that are used to promote the durable good. More specifically, advertisers should use utility arguments or arguments that contain the benefits of the durable product (Blair, 2012) in their durable goods advertisements.

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the participants of the study were mostly female and highly educated. Consequently, this sample does not represent the population that makes use of durable goods in general. For future research, it is highly valued that studies try to attempt to obtain well-balanced samples between gender and level of education to provide a better representation of the entire population, because gender and level of education can influence the participants' responses.

Secondly, there is a possibility that the living situation has an influence on how relevant durable products are for the participants. When a person lives on his/her own and has a stable income, it might be more accessible to buy durable goods. Whereas, when someone lives in a student house, the involvement with durable goods could be less high. It might be less relevant for them to buy durable goods, while they presumably will be provided by the proprietor, or the choice of purchase needs to be made with others. The relation between living situation and the use of arguments in advertisements for durable goods can be further

investigated. The involvement with durable products regarding the living situations should be measured. Accordingly, it is possible to display how relevant the products are for specific living situations.

Thirdly, the arguments that were used in the advertisements referred to the direct utility and the benefits of the durable product displayed in the advertisement. As stated in this article, argumentation uses language to justify or refute a standpoint, with the aim of securing agreement in views (Van Eemeren, Jackson & Jacobs, 2015). In this study, the standpoint is the durable good which is then supplemented with utility and beneficial arguments. However, the utility arguments used in this study were only based on a specific property of the durable good contains. While there are other types of utility arguments which could have been used as well, such as the valued approval of others for having made that purchase of the specific durable good (Blair, 2012). Therefore, in future research, different kinds of utility arguments could be added in the advertisement. Causing that it becomes evident which kind of utility argument provides the highest persuasiveness.

Furthermore, future research should focus on different types of goods since there are many different types of products. As stated in the literature, products have been classified into five groups (Miracle, 1965). The durable goods that have been investigated in this study relate to one of the groups (Miracle, 1965). The remaining four groups can be investigated in the context of argumentation use in advertising in future research. Consequently, a more general conclusion for the use of arguments in different kinds of advertisements can be drawn.

In addition, one specific group that has the interest of being researched in this context is that of nondurable goods, the contradicting group of the one this study examined. In contrast to durable goods, nondurable products are purchased and consumed frequently and rapidly (Choi et al., 2019). The distinction between certainty and uncertainty corresponds closely to durable and nondurable products and the purchase decisions (Smith & Bristor, 1994). Nondurable products are lower in uncertainty involvement, which causes that purchases of these goods are made more frequently for inexpensive items (Smith & Bristor, 1994). Therefore, it could be that arguments are not considered as carefully as they are with durable goods. Displaying arguments in the advertisement could therefore have a different effect on the persuasiveness for nondurable goods.

In the end, the items to measure the attitude towards the advertisement and the attitude towards the product should be differentiated in future research. The two different dimensions should be measured in two different ways. Consequently, participants will not see a relation between the two questions asked to measure the dimensions. Therefore, a response bias is less likely to occur when they do not feel forced to differentiate their answers.

In conclusion, this study has examined how the use of arguments in advertisements of durable products effects the persuasiveness. According to the findings of the present study, advertisers are recommended to use utility arguments in their advertisements displaying durable products, in order to evoke higher persuasiveness. However, one dimension of persuasiveness needs to be taken into account since it showed no significant result. Overall, the study suggests that there is a link to the conversational literature. Nevertheless, the different communication contexts do provide different outcomes when handling arguments. Furthermore, there are several limitations that need to be taken into account, among which the demographics of the participants, the influence of the living situation, and the type of utility argument that was used. These limitations can be enhanced in future research. In addition, future research should also utilize advertisements with nondurable goods and make sure that questions for different concepts differ in order to avoid response bias.

References

- Aaker, D.A. and Keller, K.L. (1990), Consumer evaluations of brand extensions, *Journal of Marketing*, 54, pp. 27-41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299005400102>
- Antaki, C. (1994). *Explaining and Arguing: Social Organization of Accounts*. SAGE Publications.
- Arens, W.F. (1999). *Contemporary Advertising*. McGraw-Hill.
- Baranova, J. & Dingemanse, M. (2016). Reasons for requests. *Discourse Studies*, 18(6), 641-675. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445616667154>
- Bitner, M. J., & Obermiller, C. (1985). The elaboration likelihood model: Limitations and extensions in marketing. *Advances in Consumer Research*. 12(1). 420-425.
- Blair, J.A. 2012 Argumentation as Rational Persuasion. *Argumentation*, 26, 71-81. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10503-011-9235-6>
- Choi, Y.K., Yoon, S., Kim, K. & Kim, Y. (2019). Text versus pictures in advertising: effects of psychological distance and product type. *Marketing Department Journal Articles*, 107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2019.1607649>
- Cook, A. J., Moore, K., & Steel, G.D. (2004). The taking of a position: A reinterpretation of the elaboration likelihood model. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*. 34(4): 315-331. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5914.2004.00252.x>
- Desai, P.S. & Purohit, D. (1999). Competition in Durable Goods Markets: The Strategic Consequences of Leasing and Selling. *Marketing Science*, 18(1), 42-58. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.18.1.42>
- Eagly, A.H. & Chaiken, S. (1993). *The psychology of attitudes*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

- Faircloth, J.B., Capella, L.M. and Alford, B.L. (2001), “*The effect of brand attitude and brand image on brand equity*”, *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 9(3), 61-75.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10696679.2001.11501897>
- Furnham, A. (1986). Response Bias, Social Desirability and Dissimulation. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 7(3), 385-400. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869\(86\)90014-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(86)90014-0)
- Hoeken, H. (1997). Een model voor de rol van argumenten in het overtuigingsproces. In H. van den Bergh, D. Janssen, N. Bertens, & M. Damen (red.), *Taalgebruik ontrafeld*, 55-65. Dordrecht: ICG.
- Hoeken, H., Hornikx, J., Hustinx, L., (2019). Persuasive Texts: Research and Design. *Unpublished draft*, 5-171.
- Jeong, S.H. (2008) Visual Metaphor in Advertising: Is the Persuasive Effect Attributable to Visual Argumentation or Metaphorical Rhetoric?, *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 14(1), 59-73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14697010701717488>
- Laurent, G. & Kapferer, J.N. (1985) Measuring consumer involvement profiles. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 22, 41-53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378502200104>
- Lien, N.H. (2001). Elaboration likelihood model in consumer research: A review. *Proceedings of the National Science Council, Republic of China, Part C. 11(4)*: 301-310.
- Lutz, R. J. (1983) Attitude toward the ad as a mediator of advertising effectiveness: determinants and consequences, *Advances in Consumer Research*, 10, 532–539.
- MacKenzie, S. B. et al. (1986) The role of attitude toward the ad as a mediator of advertising effectiveness: a test of competing explanations, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 23(2), 130–149. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378602300205>

- Miller, S.J., Mazis, M.B. and Wright, O.L. (1971), “*The influence of brand ambiguity on brand attitude development*”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 8(4), 455-9.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/002224377100800408>
- Miracle, G.E. (1965). Product characteristics and marketing strategy. *Journal of Marketing*, 29(1), 18-24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224296502900104>
- Nan, X. (2006), “*Affective cues and brand-extension evaluation: exploring the influence of attitude toward the parent brand and attitude toward the extension ad.*”, *Psychology and Marketing*, 23(7), 597-616. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20148>
- Nederhof, A.J. (1985). Methods of coping with social desirability bias: a review. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 15(3), 263-280.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420150303>
- O’Guinn, Allen, and Semenik. (2000), *Advertising*, (2nd ed.). South-Western College Publishing.
- O’Keefe, D.J. (2002a). *Persuasion: Theory and research* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Petty, R.E. & Cacioppo, J.T. (1981). Attitudes and persuasion: Classic and contemporary approaches. Dubuque, IO: Brow.
- Petty, R.E. & Cacioppo, J.T. (1986). *Communication and persuasion: Central and peripheral routes to attitude change*. Springer.
- Petty, R.E., Rucker, D.D., Bizer, G.Y. & Cacioppo, J.T. (2004). The Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion. In J.S. Seiter, & G.H. Gass (eds.), *Perspectives on persuasion, social influence, and compliance gaining* (pp. 65-89). Allyn & Bacon.
- Pinto, R.C. (2010). The Uses of Argument in Communicative Contexts. *Argumentation*, 24, 227-252. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10503-009-9174-7>

- Punj, G.N. & Staelin, R. (1983). A Model of Consumer Information Search Behavior for New Automobiles. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(4), 366-380.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/208931>
- Richens, M. & Bloch, P. (1986). After the new wears off: the temporal context of product involvement. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(2), 280-285.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/209067>
- Sathya, P. & Indirajith, R. (2018). A Study on Purchase Behavior of Consumer Durable Goods with Special Reference to Tiruvarur District. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management*, 6(2), 100-107.
- Seo, J., Yoon, S. & Vangelova, M. (2016). Shopping plans, buying motivations, and return policies: Impact on product returns and purchase likelihood. *Marketing Letters*, 27(4), 645-659. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11002-015-9381-y>
- Smith, J.B. & Bristor, J.M. (1994). Uncertainty Orientation: Explaining Differences in Purchase Involvement and External Search. *Psychology & Marketing*, 11(6), 587-607.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.4220110606>
- Teng, S. Khong, K.W. & Goh, W.W. (2014). Conceptualizing Persuasive Messages Using ELM in Social Media. *Journal of Internet Commerce*, 13(1), 65-87.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15332861.2014.910729>
- Van Eemeren, F.H., Jackson, S. & Jacobs, S. (2015). Argumentation. In: Reasonableness and Effectiveness in Argumentative Discourse. *Argumentation Library*, 27, 3-25.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20955-5_1
- Zaichkowsky, J.L. (1985). Measuring the involvement construct. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12(3), 341-52. <https://doi.org/10.1086/208520>

Appendix A. Layout online questionnaire

Introduction and consent

Beste deelnemer,

Bedankt dat u wil deelnemen aan ons onderzoek. Wij zijn vijf studenten van de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen. Momenteel zitten wij in de laatste fase van onze Bachelor International Business Communication. Door het invullen van deze enquête helpt u ons bij het afronden van de laatste fase van onze studie. Wij doen onderzoek naar advertenties van producten.

De antwoorden zijn volledig anoniem en u heeft het recht om de vragenlijst op elk moment te stoppen zonder daarvoor een reden te geven. De enquête zal ongeveer 5 minuten duren. Er zijn geen goede of foute antwoorden.

Mocht u vragen hebben wat betreft ons onderzoek, neem dan contact op met onze docent Dr. Baranova (e-mail: j.baranova@psych.ru.nl). Als u klachten heeft betreffende het onderzoek, dan kunt u ook bij haar terecht.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Nathan Miango

Sanne Teunissen

Lisa van der Burgt

Fleur Kok

Imke Janssen

Ik heb bovenstaande informatie gelezen en geef toestemming om door te gaan naar de enquête.

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Nee, ik wil niet meedoen | Ja, ik wil meedoen |
|--------------------------|--------------------|

Ik ben 18 jaar of ouder

| | |
|-----|----|
| Nee | Ja |
|-----|----|

Demographic variables

Hoe oud bent u?

Wat is uw geslacht?

- ☐ Man
 - ☐ Vrouw
 - ☐ Anders,
-

Ik ben vloeiend in Nederlands:

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|----------|------------------------|------|----------------------|
| Heel erg mee oneens | Mee oneens | Een beetje mee oneens | Neutraal | Een beetje mee eens | Eens | Heel erg mee eens |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|----------|------------------------|------|----------------------|

Wat is uw woonsituatie?

- ☐ Ik woon alleen
 - ☐ Ik woon met een partner
 - ☐ Ik woon met mijn partner en inwonende kinderen
 - ☐ Ik woon zonder partner met inwonende kinderen
 - ☐ Ik woon in een studentenhuus
 - ☐ Anders,
-

Wat is uw hoogst genoten opleiding?

- ☐ Basisonderwijs
- ☐ Voortgezet onderwijs
- ☐ MBO
- ☐ HBO
- ☐ WO
- ☐ Zeg ik liever niet

Dependent variables

Wasmachine (conditie 1 of 2)

Ik vind de **advertentie...**

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| 1. Slecht | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Goed |
| 2. Ongunstig | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Gunstig |
| 3. Onaangenaam | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Aangenaam |
| 4. Onaantrekkelijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Aantrekkelijk |

Ik vind het **product...**

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| 5. Slecht | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Goed |
| 6. Ongunstig | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Gunstig |
| 7. Onaangenaam | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Aangenaam |
| 8. Onaantrekkelijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Aantrekkelijk |

De kans dat ik het product ga kopen is...

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| 9. Zeer waarschijnlijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Zeer onwaarschijnlijk |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|

Auto (conditie 1 of 2)

Ik vind de **advertentie...**

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| 1. Slecht | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Goed |
| 2. Ongunstig | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Gunstig |
| 3. Onaangenaam | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Aangenaam |
| 4. Onaantrekkelijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Aantrekkelijk |

Ik vind het **product...**

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| 5. Slecht | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Goed |
| 6. Ongunstig | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Gunstig |
| 7. Onaangenaam | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Aangenaam |
| 8. Onaantrekkelijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Aantrekkelijk |

De kans dat ik het product ga kopen is...

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| 9. Zeer waarschijnlijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Zeer onwaarschijnlijk |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|

Laptop (conditie 1 of 2)

Ik vind de **advertentie**...

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| 1. Slecht | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Goed |
| 2. Ongunstig | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Gunstig |
| 3. Onaangenaam | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Aangenaam |
| 4. Onaantrekkelijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Aantrekkelijk |

Ik vind het **product**...

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| 5. Slecht | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Goed |
| 6. Ongunstig | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Gunstig |
| 7. Onaangenaam | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Aangenaam |
| 8. Onaantrekkelijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Aantrekkelijk |

De kans dat ik het product ga kopen is...

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| 9. Zeer waarschijnlijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Zeer onwaarschijnlijk |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|

Ontzettend bedankt dat u de tijd heeft genomen om deze enquête in te vullen. U heeft ons daarmee enorm geholpen!