

ATTITUDE CHANGE AS A FUNCTION  
OF REPETITION OF PERSUASIVE  
MESSAGES AND PRODUCT BRAND  
FAMILIARITY

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ATTITUDE CHANGE AS A FUNCTION OF REPETITION OF PERSUASIVE  
MESSAGES AND PRODUCT BRAND FAMILIARITY

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An Abstract  
Presented to  
the Graduate Council of  
Austin Peay State University

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In Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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by  
Mark Wayne Dickey  
May, 1982

## ABSTRACT

This study examines attitude change as a function of repetition of persuasive messages and product brand familiarity. In a three-factor mixed design, 48 familiar and unfamiliar college students were exposed, via slide projection, to either four similar or four identical advertisements advocating a particular target product. Subjects indicated attitude toward the product by responding to an attitude questionnaire for each exposure. Unfamiliarity with the advocacy, as well as exposure to similar messages, were expected to enhance attitude over repetition. As predicted, results indicated that message repetition has an overall positive effect on post-exposure attitude change. This effect, however, was not significantly affected by subject familiarity. More importantly, a significant increase in positive attitude appears to be a function of the type of message exposure. Results supported the prediction of a positive relationship between exposure to similar messages and attitude.



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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Mark Wayne Dickey entitled "Attitude Change as a Function of Repetition of Persuasive Messages and Product Brand Familiarity." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Psychology.

Garland E. Blair  
Major Professor

We have read this thesis and  
recommend its acceptance:

James E. Ricks  
Second Committee Member

John A. Martin  
Third Committee Member

Accepted for the  
Graduate Council:

William H. Ellis  
Dean of the Graduate School

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES. . . . .	vii
LIST OF FIGURES . . . . .	viii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Review of the Literature. . . . .	3
Purpose of the Study. . . . .	7
Research Hypotheses . . . . .	8
Limitations of the Study. . . . .	9
2. METHOD . . . . .	10
The Sample. . . . .	10
Description of the Communications . . .	10
Procedure . . . . .	10
3. RESULTS. . . . .	14
4. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	26
Discussion. . . . .	26
Recommendations for Future Research . .	28
REFERENCES. . . . .	30
APPENDIX. . . . .	32



## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Mean Attitude Change and Standard Deviation as a Function of Message Repetition, Product Familiarity, and Message Exposure . . . . .	16
II. Mean Attitude Change as a Function of Message Repetition and Message Exposure . . . . .	18
III. Mean Attitude Change as a Function of Message Repetition and Product Familiarity . . . . .	19
IV. Mean Attitude across Repetitions as a Function of Product Familiarity and Message Exposure . . . . .	21
V. Summary of the Analysis of Variance . . . . .	22

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Mean Attitude Change of all Groups Combined as a Function of Repetition . . . . .	24
2. Mean Attitude Change as a Function of Message Repetition and Message Exposure . . . . .	25

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The problem of repetition in advertising has long been of concern to media planners in that it is often difficult to judge how often, how long, and in what media combinations to run an advertisement or campaign. The problem is compounded by the avalanche of advertising which bombards consumers on a daily basis and competes for valuable selective attention. It has been these problems, along with the escalating expense of advertising campaigns, that have led to an increase in advertising research involving such measures as opinion and attitude, learning and recall, purchase intention and actual sales. Research involving such measures have aided the media planner in the scientific development and employment of specific advertising strategies for different marketing situations.

Traditionally, research focusing on the recall of advertisements has been a popular topic of the psychological investigation of persuasion (Messmer, 1979). Much research (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Miller & Campbell, 1959; Watts & McGuire, 1964) has been conducted on the hypothesis that acceptance of a communication is, to some extent, a function of learning or retention of content. It is well established that repetition enhances retention and subsequent recall, and is one of the most influential variables affecting memory and hence learning. However, even though there exists a connection between repetition and learning, there exists little supporting evidence that persuasion is a



function of retention of persuasive arguments (Hovland et al., 1953; Insko, 1964; Miller & Campbell, 1959; Watts & McGuire, 1964). It can be concluded that repetition may enhance retention of persuasive arguments but such retention is not sufficient to produce attitude change. Therefore, research involving recall as a function of repetition appears to be an inadequate avenue of inquiry into an understanding of attitude change.

Although the literature abounds with studies concerning the effects of repeated exposure to advertising, relatively little research has concentrated on the attitudinal effects of repetition. Cacioppo and Petty (1979) note the inadequacy of research addressing the attitudinal effects of repeated exposure to persuasive communications. They point out that the lack of such research by marketing researchers and social psychologists is surprising due to its frequent occurrence in and significance to everyday life. Similarly, studies which have examined brand attitudes as the dependent measure and advertisements as the stimuli have shown little congruency as to the effects of repetition. Grass and Wallace (1969) reported a significant positive relationship between advertising repetition and brand attitude, while Ray and Sawyer (1971) failed to find a statistically significant relationship. However, the authors of the latter study pointed out that it is important to note that the non-significant result may have been the result of demand characteristics inherent in the experimental design.

Regardless of the paucity of research and the incongruency

of results in the analysis of repetitive effects on attitude, further exploration promises to be a fruitful area of inquiry. As methodologies are refined so should our understanding of the effects of repetition on attitude change. The need for further attitude investigation within an advertising context is recognized and is paramount to the state of the advertising profession.

### Review of the Literature

The present study is designed to examine certain aspects of persuasive communication as they affect attitude change. Specifically, the repetition of persuasive communications within an advertising medium will be the object of investigation. Evidence has indicated that repetitive persuasive communication may serve not only as a method of increasing consumer awareness but possibly as an avenue to achieve attitude change (Foxall, 1980).

Past research (Goldberg, 1954; Wilson & Miller, 1968; Johnson & Watkins, 1971) has shown that repeated presentation of a persuasive message does not produce more immediate attitude change than does a single presentation. An important characteristic among these studies in their failure to obtain a repetition effect is that they all repeated identical messages.

Conversely, McCullough and Ostrom (1974) hypothesized that in a situation in which similar persuasive communications are employed as stimuli, a positive relationship will be found between the number of message repetitions and increasingly favorable subject attitudes. These investigators presented

to subjects, via slide projection, five similar advertisements of two product classes, each with argument topics phrased in different ways and accompanied by a different photograph. Five different sequences of the five advertisements within a product class were prepared according to Latin square counterbalancing. Subjects were instructed to write every thought, comment, or opinion they had about an advertisement in a standardized response booklet. The dependent variable was the subject's net cognitive response score obtained by subtracting the number of negative from the number of positive responses. Data analysis revealed that, as predicted, the overall mean cognitive response score was positively related to the number of previously viewed advertisements.

McCullough and Ostrom argue that the inability of past studies to generate a repetition effect is due to subjects not receiving new information as a function of repetition. Evidence supporting this argument can be found in the research of Sears and Freedman (1965). Their study shows that subjects are more willing to change their attitudes when they think a message contains new information than when they expect a message to repeat previously encountered information. This finding is explained by proposing that expectation of new information provides a satisfactory justification for relinquishing previous commitments, thereby allowing greater agreement with the new advocated position.

An additional reason for McCullough and Ostrom's hypothesis that positive attitude change will follow the repetition of similar messages is provided in a study by Brock, Albert,



and Becker (1970). It was demonstrated that subjects show higher selective attention to a new communication advocating a known position than to a previously encountered message. The increase in attention to a new communication is attributed to the subject's preference for novel information over familiar information. McCullough and Ostrom relate this finding as support for their study by associating subject's exposure to each similar advertisement as a novel encounter, thus creating an increase in attention across repetition. Identical advertisements would not be expected to generate increases in attention across repetition due to lack of novelty.

It can be concluded from the McCullough and Ostrom study that when similar rather than identical messages are employed, repetition does have an immediate effect on post-exposure attitude. The authors pointed out that it appears preferable to maximize the number of different advertisements included in an advertising campaign but not necessarily the arguments raised. Old arguments, slightly rephrased and presented in a new context, can be just as effective in reducing commitment and facilitating attention deemed significant in creating positive attitude.

The present study will consider the repetition of messages as an independent variable and, in addition, will address another variable known to affect attitude change, stimulus familiarity. Zajonc (1968), in his work with stimulus familiarity, found that repeated exposure to nonsense words or photographs produced favorable attitude change.

However, the more familiar the subjects were with the exposed material, the smaller the attitude change produced. Zajonc explained this finding by proposing that familiarity with stimuli reduces exploration and curiosity. Unfamiliar stimuli engages curiosity through orienting an individual's attention toward its novelty. Increased attitude change through repeated exposure to unfamiliar stimuli is achieved until novelty of the stimuli is diminished. Thereafter, attitude change stabilizes as the stimuli becomes familiar. In essence, the novel unfamiliar stimulus becomes more attractive through repetition in its progression to becoming more familiar.

Similarly, previous consumer knowledge of an advertised product has been found to affect the repetition function. Winter (1973), in a laboratory experiment, hypothesized that individuals with high product brand familiarity would experience less favorable attitude change than individuals with low brand familiarity. Subjects were exposed to four identical televised advertisements for each of 16 product brands tested over a four week period. Analysis of the data revealed that product brand familiarity did have an effect on post-exposure attitude. Specifically, subjects experiencing the most favorable attitude change were those with the least level of brand familiarity. High levels of brand familiarity were found to suppress the development of favorable attitude change produced by repeated exposure. This finding is consistent with Zajonc's hypothesis.

In addition, Winter found that exposure effects were

primarily significant during the first and second exposures when subjects were most likely unaware of the nature of the experiment. Also, the more unfavorable the attitude prior to exposure, the greater the favorable attitude change produced by repeated exposure regardless of brand familiarity.

### Purpose of the Study

It is important to note that the Winter experiment employed the repetition of identical advertisements in the study of product brand familiarity and attitude change. The repetition of different, but similar, advertisements was not considered. It has been shown (McCullough & Ostrom, 1974) that message repetition can increase positive attitude in a situation where similar communications are employed. Likewise, McCullough and Ostrom did not consider brand familiarity as an independent variable in their research. The purpose of the present experiment was to examine the two variables collectively to determine the interactive effects of brand familiarity with the repetition of identical and similar messages.

The importance of this investigation was twofold. First, the goal of media planners is generally to achieve maximum favorability toward a product or service through the persuasion generated by repetitive advertising. Increased knowledge of the repetition function would enable media planners to better schedule advertising to fit the degree of brand familiarity of particular market segments. Product brand familiarity has been shown to affect the reception of advertising in general and alter its persuasive effects. An understanding of



how brand familiarity affects consumers receptivity to similar and identical messages would increase the proper employment of such messages for specific marketing goals.

Secondly, it is generally agreed that the repetition of identical advertisements can often lead to annoyance and irritation toward the product advertised. It is the responsibility of media planners to schedule advertising in such a manner so as to attenuate negative affect. This responsibility would enable advertising to achieve maximum effectiveness by ensuring its acceptance among the public.

### Research Hypotheses

The present experiment was designed to test the following hypotheses:

- H1: When product brand familiarity (familiar/unfamiliar) is held constant, subjects exposed to similar persuasive messages will achieve greater positive attitude change as a function of repetition than subjects exposed to identical messages.
- H2: When message exposure (similar/identical) is held constant, subjects unfamiliar with the advocated product brand will achieve greater positive attitude change as a function of repetition than familiar subjects.
- H3: The greatest degree of positive attitude change was predicted to be achieved with subjects unfamiliar with the advocacy of similar messages.
- H4: The least degree of positive attitude change was predicted to be achieved with subjects familiar

with the advocacy of identical messages.

### Limitations of the Study

The present experiment was conducted in a laboratory environment where complete control over exposure was possible. Although experimental control is necessary for ascribing causal inferences, such control also creates an artificiality that may limit applicability of the data. It is not known how information obtained from this laboratory study may relate to actual exposure in the field under more natural conditions.

In addition, the objectives of the study were confined to attitude change toward a particular product brand. A goal of media planners is knowledge of how, and to what extent, advertising contributes to purchase behavior. The present experiment does not address actual purchase behavior or purchase intention of individuals as influenced by previous knowledge of the brand and repetitive advertising.

Inasmuch as the present study was significant in contributing to knowledge of immediate attitude change, the investigation was limited in that the persistence of change was not known. Delayed attitude change measured at intervals following different exposure levels to advertising would provide additional knowledge of the influence of repetition.

## Chapter 2

### METHOD

#### The Sample

The subjects were 48 male and female, undergraduate and graduate, college students enrolled at Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, Tennessee. All participants volunteered to serve in the investigation with some receiving extra points for their participation. There were 12 subjects in each of the four treatment categories.

#### Description of the Communications

The persuasive messages employed in the present experiment were eight current, four-color magazine advertisements published during 1981. Half of the advertisements advocated the qualities of the target product, Bose stereo systems, while the other four were bogus advertisements promoting Barclay cigarettes. The purpose of the bogus advertisements was to guise the nature of the study and to decrease subject monotony and attention decrement likely to be experienced especially among subjects exposed to identical advertisements. Each of the advertisements for each advocacy was similar in appeal but had different pictorial layouts and copy stressing different qualities of the product. The magazine advertisements were photographed and developed into slides for projection.

A taped recording of the copy of each advertisement was made to accompany the slide presentation. This was deemed necessary in order to maximize exposure affect.

#### Procedure

The present experiment employed a three-factor mixed



design with repeated measures on one factor. Specifically, the design involved the manipulation of three variables: familiar/unfamiliar subjects; similar/identical advertisements; and repeated exposure to advertising.

Subject familiarity with the target product was determined prior to assignment to one of four experimental conditions. Subjects indicated their familiarity by signing the appropriate section of a volunteer request sheet. "Familiar" was defined as any reasonable knowledge of the quality and reputation of the product. "Unfamiliar" was defined as no knowledge whatsoever of the product. There were 11 female subjects classified as familiar and 13 males classified as familiar. Twenty-one female subjects were classified as unfamiliar and three males classified as unfamiliar.

The experiment consisted of a series of sessions where subjects were tested in groups of from one to five individuals. Upon arrival at the testing location, subjects were asked to complete a research consent form required by the university, as well as a short questionnaire designed to assess subject familiarity with various product brands. The target product was listed among these brands and was the only product under investigation in this experiment. Subjects indicated familiarity of each product by responding to a three-point Likert type scale. Target product familiarity on this questionnaire was used to confirm each subject's proper assignment to the appropriate experimental conditions.

In order to guise the true nature of the experiment, subjects were led to believe that the purpose of the investi-



gation was to determine whether attitude differences exist among different advertising strategies. Subjects were informed that they would see, via slide projection, four advertisements for each of two different product brands. Advertisements for the two product brands, accompanied by a taped recording of the copy, were alternately presented to the subjects.

Subjects were required to complete a ten-point semantic differential type attitude questionnaire for each exposure of an advertisement. Subjects indicated their attitude toward either the particular advocacy, the particular advertisement, or both, by circling the appropriate response for each of six questions. Subjects were informed to consider each advertisement separately and not to refer to previous responses. Each advertisement was projected for 90 seconds.

In the first condition (familiar/unfamiliar subjects-similar advertisements), four different sequences of the eight different target product and bogus product advertisements were prepared according to Latin square counterbalancing. The purpose of counterbalancing was to neutralize any unusual effects of a particular advertisement. Twenty-four subjects were exposed to similar advertisements with 12 subjects classified as familiar and 12 as unfamiliar. Three subjects within each classification were exposed to each of the four different sequences. There were 11 males and 13 females in the first condition.

In the second condition (familiar/unfamiliar subjects-identical advertisements), each of the eight similar target product and bogus product advertisements employed in the

10

first condition was repeatedly employed across four sequences. Twenty-four subjects were exposed to identical advertisements with 12 subjects classified as familiar and 12 as unfamiliar. Three subjects within each classification were exposed to each of the four sequences. There were 5 males and 19 females in the second condition. Following the termination of the experiment, all subjects were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

## Chapter 3

### RESULTS

The following analyses were made utilizing data obtained from subjects' repetitive exposure to the target product.

1. Determine the degree of positive attitude change achieved by familiar subjects repeatedly exposed to similar advertisements.
2. Determine the degree of positive attitude change achieved by unfamiliar subjects repeatedly exposed to similar advertisements.
3. Determine the degree of positive attitude change achieved by familiar subjects repeatedly exposed to identical advertisements.
4. Determine the degree of positive attitude change achieved by unfamiliar subjects repeatedly exposed to identical advertisements.

The following group comparisons were made with product brand familiarity held constant:

1. Compare positive attitude change of familiar subjects repeatedly exposed to similar advertisements with positive attitude change of familiar subjects repeatedly exposed to identical advertisements.
2. Compare positive attitude change of unfamiliar subjects repeatedly exposed to similar advertisements with positive attitude change of unfamiliar subjects repeatedly exposed to identical advertisements.

The following group comparisons were made with message exposure (similar/identical advertisements) held constant:



1. Compare positive attitude change of familiar subjects repeatedly exposed to similar advertisements with positive attitude change of unfamiliar subjects repeatedly exposed to similar advertisements.
2. Compare positive attitude change of familiar subjects repeatedly exposed to identical advertisements with positive attitude change of unfamiliar subjects repeatedly exposed to identical advertisements.

Each subject's score for each of the six attitude questions was totaled to yield an overall subject attitude score for each of the four message repetitions. A total of 60 points was possible for each exposure. The overall scores for each of the 12 subjects within each of the four groups were totaled to yield a grand attitude score for each of the four message repetitions. Table 1 indicates the overall mean attitude change and standard deviation as a function of message repetition, product familiarity, and message exposure. Message repetition was found to have an overall positive effect on subject's attitude change for each of the experimental groups with the exception of the fourth exposure where attitude actually decreased or remained unaffected for three groups. The only group showing actual gains across all repetitions was achieved by familiar subjects exposed to identical advertisements. However, the groups showing the greatest overall gains were achieved by familiar and unfamiliar subjects exposed to similar advertisements. These two groups showed positive attitude gains across the first three repetitions but actually decreased during the fourth repetition. Unfamiliar



Table 1

Mean Attitude Change and Standard Deviation as a Function of  
Message Repetition, Product Familiarity, and Message Exposure

Experimental Groups	Repetition								Attitude Change
	1		2		3		4		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Familiar/Similar	38.2	12.5	40.5	10.5	45.5	9.3	42.4	9.3	7.3
Familiar/Identical	45.6	6.6	46.3	6.8	47.1	5.0	47.5	6.4	1.9
Unfamiliar/Similar	35.9	11.2	40.7	12.9	41.8	13.3	39.1	9.7	5.9
Unfamiliar/Identical	34.8	9.4	35.8	11.1	34.5	11.1	35.7	10.8	1.0

subjects exposed to identical advertisements showed fluctuating gains and losses in positive attitude as a function of repetition.

As would be expected, familiar subjects exposed to similar advertisements achieved greater positive attitude change than familiar subjects exposed to identical advertisements. Moreover, unfamiliar subjects exposed to similar advertisements achieved greater positive attitude change than unfamiliar subjects exposed to identical advertisements. As would not be expected, unfamiliar subjects exposed to similar advertisements achieved less positive attitude change than familiar subjects exposed to similar advertisements. Moreover, unfamiliar subjects exposed to identical advertisements achieved less positive attitude change than familiar subjects exposed to identical advertisements.

Table 2 indicates the mean attitude change as a function of message repetition and message exposure. Message repetition was found to have a positive effect with all subjects exposed to similar advertisements of the target product across the first three repetitions. However, the fourth exposure produced a decline in attitude similar to that achieved during the second repetition. All subjects exposed to identical advertisements showed a fluctuating change in attitude across repetition with little overall positive gain.

Table 3 indicates the mean attitude change as a function of message repetition and target product familiarity. Message repetition was found to have a positive effect with all familiar subjects across the first three repetitions. However, the

Table 2

Mean Attitude Change as a Function of  
Message Repetition and Message Exposure

Message Exposure	Repetition			
	1	2	3	4
Similar	37.0	40.6	43.6	40.7
Identical	40.2	41.0	40.8	41.6

Table 3

Mean Attitude Change as a Function of Message  
Repetition and Product Familiarity

Product Familiarity	Repetition			
	1	2	3	4
Familiar	41.9	43.4	46.3	45.1
Unfamiliar	35.3	38.2	38.1	37.4



fourth repetition produced a slight decline in attitude below that achieved during the third repetition. All unfamiliar subjects showed an increase in positive attitude during the second exposure but successively declined during the third and fourth exposures.

Table 4 indicates the mean attitude across repetitions as a function of product familiarity and message exposure. The mean scores were obtained by summing each subject's scores across repetitions and then obtaining a grand sum for these scores. The grand sum was divided by  $n=12$ . A total of 240 points was possible for each of the four experimental groups. As would be expected, the table shows that familiar subjects exposed to either similar or identical advertisements were more positive toward the target product than unfamiliar subjects. In addition, the table indicates little difference in positive attitude generated between similar and identical advertisements.

Attitude change scores were subjected to a three-way analysis of variance containing the within-subjects effect of repetition and the between-subject factors of product familiarity (familiar/unfamiliar subjects) and message exposure (similar/identical advertisements). Table 5 shows the summary of the analysis of variance. In regard to overall product favorability, target product familiarity did have a significant effect on attitude ( $F= 6.87$ ,  $df= 1/44$ ,  $p < .025$ ). As previously noted, familiar subjects tended to rate the advertisements and their advocacy higher than unfamiliar subjects. However, there was no significant difference in

Table 4  
Mean Attitude Across Repetitions as a Function  
of Product Familiarity and Message Exposure

	Familiar	Unfamiliar	Total
Similar	166.7	157.6	324.3
Identical	186.6	141.0	327.6
Total	353.3	298.6	

Table 5  
Summary of Analysis of Variance

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F
Total	21847.5	191		
Between Subjects	17653.25	47		
Familiarity (A)	2248.17	1	2248.17	6.87*
Advertisement (B)	7.92	1	7.92	<1
A X B	1003.75	1	1003.75	3.06**
Error Between	14393.41	44	327.12	
Within Subjects	4194.24	144		
Repetition (C)	330.18	3	110.06	4.06***
A X C	59.42	3	19.80	<1
B X C	216.33	3	72.11	2.66****
A X B X C	9.61	3	3.20	<1
Error Within	3578.71	132	27.11	

\*p < .025  
 \*\*p < .10  
 \*\*\*p < .01  
 \*\*\*\*p < .05

positive attitude generated between similar and identical advertisements in overall product favorability. There was a slight interaction effect between familiarity and message exposure ( $F = 3.06$ ,  $df = 1/44$ ,  $p < .10$ ).

In addition, message repetition had a significant effect on overall attitude change for all groups combined ( $F = 4.06$ ,  $df = 3/132$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Figure 1 indicates the overall mean attitude change of all groups combined as a function of repetition. Increased gains in positive attitude was achieved in succession across the first three repetitions but sharply declined during the fourth repetition.

Mean attitude change as a function of message repetition and product familiarity was found to be non-significant. However, mean attitude change as a function of message repetition and message exposure was found to be significant ( $F = 2.66$ ,  $df = 3/132$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Figure 2 indicates the significant effect. As previously noted, subjects exposed to similar advertisements achieved significant gains in positive attitude across the first three repetitions while subjects exposed to identical advertisements showed no significant gain.

Although message repetition and the interactive effects of message repetition with message exposure were significant sources of variance, the combined interactive effects of repetition with product familiarity and message exposure proved non-significant.



Figure 1  
Mean Attitude Change of All Groups  
Combined as a Function of Repetition

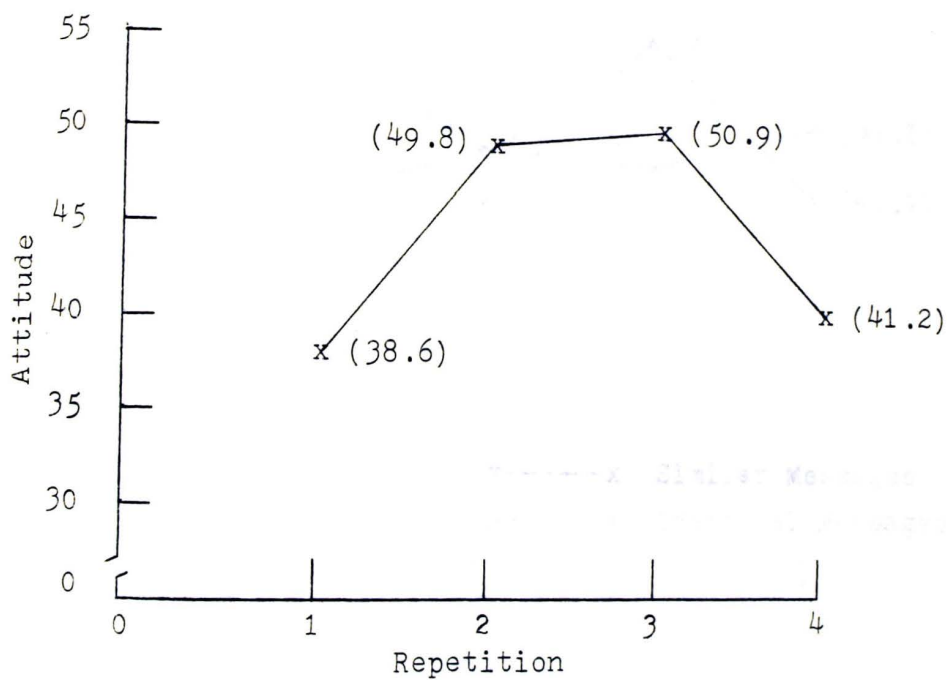
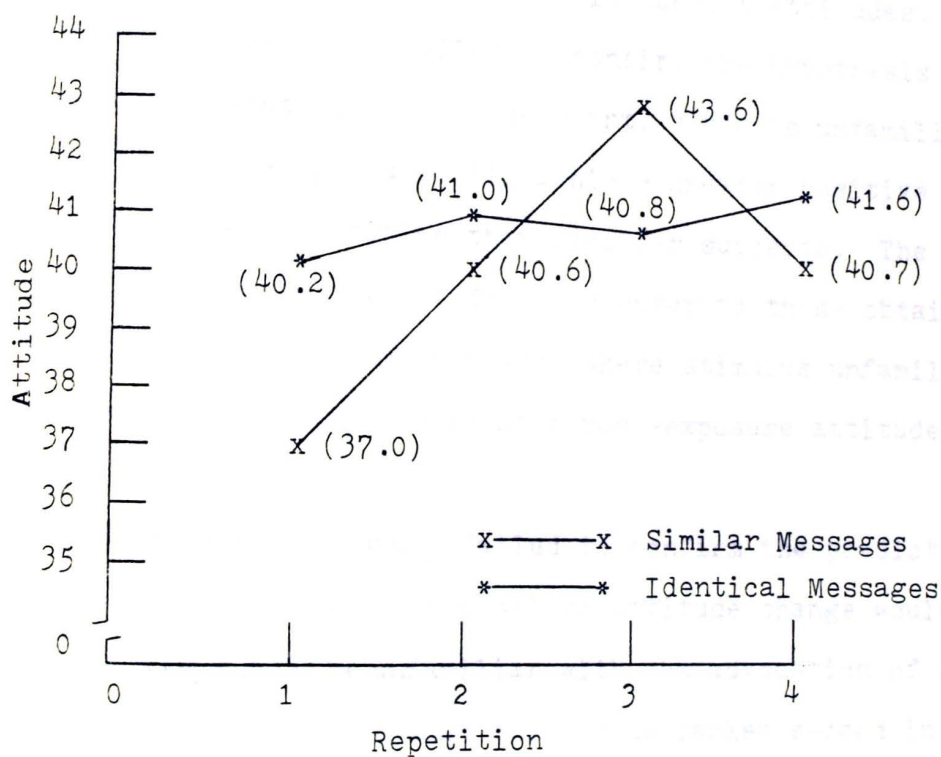


Figure 2  
Mean Attitude Change as a Function of  
Message Repetition and Message Exposure



## Chapter 4

### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present research confirmed the hypothesis that when product brand familiarity is held constant, subjects exposed to similar advertisements achieved greater positive attitude change as a function of repetition than subjects exposed to identical advertisements. This confirmation contributes support to the findings of McCullough and Ostrom (1974) where it was found that repetition of similar persuasive communications led to increasingly favorable subject attitudes.

However, the study failed to confirm the hypothesis that when message exposure is held constant, subjects unfamiliar with the advocated product will achieve greater positive attitude change over repetition than familiar subjects. The results obtained in this study run counter to those obtained by Zajonc (1968) and Winter (1973) where stimulus unfamiliarity was associated with greater post-exposure attitude change.

In addition, the study failed to confirm the prediction that the greatest degree of positive attitude change would be achieved with subjects unfamiliar with the advocacy of similar advertisements. Although this group ranked second in degree of positive attitude change achieved over repetition, the greatest gains were made with familiar subjects exposed to similar advertisements.

Moreover, the research failed to confirm the hypothesis that the least degree of positive attitude change would be achieved by subjects familiar with the advocacy of identical

messages. This group ranked third in degree of positive attitude change and was the only group to show successive gains in attitude across all four repetitions. Unfamiliar subjects exposed to identical advertisements generated the least degree of positive attitude change.

The failure of the present experiment to confirm the hypotheses concerning target product familiarity and attitude change may be due, in part, to the criteria differentiating familiar from unfamiliar subjects. "Familiar" was defined as any reasonable knowledge of the quality and reputation of the product while "unfamiliar" was defined as no knowledge whatsoever of the product. The possible range of familiar subjects was much broader including both novice subjects familiar only with the product name and connoisseurs of the product class. Novice familiar subjects, being less familiar with the product, might be expected to be more affected by repetitive advertising than "expert" familiar subjects with greater fixed attitude. A predominance of novice familiar subjects within the sample might explain the inability of unfamiliar subjects to achieve greater post-exposure attitude change.

The failure to adequately differentiate the familiarity criteria might explain why subjects unfamiliar with the advocated product and exposed to similar advertisements failed to achieve the greatest degree of positive attitude change. Similarly, the explanation might apply to the unconfirmed hypothesis that the least degree of positive attitude change would be achieved by subjects familiar with the advocacy of identical messages. A predominance of novice familiar subjects



within the sample might achieve attitude change equal to, or in excess of, that achieved by unfamiliar subjects, thus obscuring the true effect of familiarity.

As noted previously, familiar subjects exposed to identical advertisements was the only group to show successively increasing positive attitude change, although minimal, across all four repetitions. Two groups showed declines in attitude on the fourth exposure while another group remained relatively unaffected. Exposure effects were greatest during the second and third exposures, the periods when subjects were most likely unaware of the nature of the experiment. The minimal and decreasing attitude change effects of the fourth exposure are not readily explained but might possibly be due to subject monotony and attention decrement experienced by the last exposure. The effect may also be attributed to subjects' invalid perception of experimenter expectation that advertisements for the same product should be rated similarly.

In conclusion, the present experiment revealed that message repetition has an overall positive effect on post-exposure attitude change. This effect, however, does not appear to be significantly affected by subjects' familiarity with the target product although some expectations were confirmed. More importantly, the increase in positive attitude change over repetition appears to be a function of the type of message presented.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

The present study was successful in showing the repetitive effects of similar and identical advertisements on attitude change. However, the findings need to be replicated with

subjects obtained from different populations and with different advocations employed. The target product advertisements employed in this experiment advocated a superior product. Additional research should be conducted with moderate or inferior advocations to determine whether attitude differences exist among different quality products.

The present experiment was unable to significantly attribute attitude change to product familiarity. It is recommended that future research employ strict criteria to differentiate levels of familiarity. Perhaps three levels (low, moderate, and high) would influence the response pattern.

In addition, it is not known how persistent was the attitude change produced or how additional exposures to advertising would affect attitude. It would be important for future research to examine delayed attitude change following various exposure levels as well as the time interval between exposures since each might influence the response pattern.

Lastly, it is of ultimate consideration to relate product attitude research to actual purchase behavior. Such research would be of limited importance to consumer behaviorists and media planners should its findings not be applicable to purchase behavior. Consumer purchase behavior should be the final dictate of the effectiveness of marketing oriented attitude research.

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## APPENDIX

## Product Brand Familiarity Survey

### Directions

Please indicate your degree of familiarity with each of the product brands listed on the following page by circling the appropriate response. The scale portrays a familiarity range from familiar to unfamiliar. Familiar refers to any reasonable knowledge of the product brand regardless of your use of the brand. Unfamiliar refers to no knowledge whatsoever of the brand. Uncertain refers to an indecision to classify a brand as familiar or unfamiliar.

### Hand Calculators

Lloyd's	Familiar	Uncertain	Unfamiliar
Hewlett Packard	Familiar	Uncertain	Unfamiliar
Casio	Familiar	Uncertain	Unfamiliar

### Cigarettes

NOW	Familiar	Uncertain	Unfamiliar
Barclay	Familiar	Uncertain	Unfamiliar
MORE	Familiar	Uncertain	Unfamiliar

### Stereo Speaker Systems

Clarion	Familiar	Uncertain	Unfamiliar
Bose	Familiar	Uncertain	Unfamiliar
Technics	Familiar	Uncertain	Unfamiliar

## Product Brand Attitude Survey

### Directions

You will be shown eight advertisements representing two advocations (four advertisements for each advocacy). These advertisements will be projected on the screen in front of you. In addition, you will hear a taped recording of the written copy of each advertisement. Each advertisement will remain on the screen 15 seconds following the taped recording. You are asked to complete six questions for each exposure of an advertisement by responding to a 10-point scale ranging from a very negative response to a very positive response. Please indicate your attitude toward the particular product brand or the advertisement by circling the appropriate number on the scale. A separate rating scale is provided for each advertisement on separate pages of the response booklet. Each advertisement is to be considered separately; do not refer to previous responses. Please turn the page in the response booklet following completion of the rating of a particular advertisement. If you have any questions concerning these directions please call upon the experimenter at this time. Thank you for your cooperation and participation in this experiment.



### Product Brand Attitude Survey

1. How would you rate the truthfulness of the advertisement in its advocacy of the product?  
(Very untruthful) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Very truthful)
2. How would you rate the quality of the product compared to similar products?  
(Very inferior) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Very superior)
3. How would you rate the persuasiveness of the advertisement for the product?  
(Very nonpersuasive) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Very persuasive)
4. How would you rate the attractiveness of the advertisement for the product?  
(Very unattractive) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Very attractive)
5. How would you rate your overall favorability toward the product?  
(Very unfavorable) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Very favorable)
6. How would you rate your overall favorability toward the advertisement?  
(Very unfavorable) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Very favorable)