

AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE COGNITIVE EFFECTS  
OF INVOLVEMENT FOR A PRINT ADVERTISEMENT

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An attitude is often described as consisting of three components, namely the cognitive, affective, and conative components. The cognitive component refers to an individual's awareness and understanding of a stimulus. The emotional aspects of an attitude are described by the affective component (i.e., interest, evaluation, feeling, conviction, and yielding). Finally, an individual's tendencies toward action relate to the conative component (i.e. intentions and behavior). Although theorists agree to the existence of the three components, they disagree to the manner in which the components are related to each other. It is not clear whether the components are related in a hierarchical fashion, parallel fashion, or in both ways. Furthermore, for those who believe that the components are related hierarchically, there is disagreement concerning the order in which the components are related to each other, especially under varying levels of involvement (Finn 1982).

#### Purpose

This paper presents the results of an empirical study that compares subjects with low enduring involvement to those with high enduring involvement in terms of their reactions to a print advertisement.

#### Procedures

Undergraduate students who were taking an introductory marketing course served as the subjects for this study. On four consecutive class periods, the students were asked to spend the first ten minutes of class reading one page from a university newspaper. Prior to their first exposure to the newspaper page, the students were told that they were to evaluate the contents of a university newspaper. However, they were not told that they were participating in an advertising study, nor were they told to examine any particular article or advertisement.

On the first, second, and fourth class periods, the newspaper page contained the advertisement for "Springtime Shampoo." On the third class meeting, the shampoo advertisement was omitted from the newspaper page to help ensure that the students would not become aware of the particular advertisement under investigation. (A post-test question indicated that the students were not aware of the purpose of the study.) Immediately following the fourth administration, subjects responded to a questionnaire that measured their attitude toward Springtime Shampoo as well as their involvement with shampoo. Each subject's involvement with shampoo was measured with a twenty-two item involvement scale that was developed by Lastovicka and Gardner (1979). Students were asked to complete the involvement scale in reference to the shampoo they used most often.

#### Conclusion

The results of this study offer weak support for those theorists who believe that attitude change is more likely to occur under a high involvement condition rather than a low involvement condition.

#### REFERENCES

- Finn, W. F. (1982), "It Is Time to Lay the Low-Involvement Hierarchy to Rest," in Proceedings of the Association for Consumer Research, 13th Conference, 99-102.
- Lastovicka, J. L. and D. M. Gardner (1979), "Components of Involvement," in Attitude Research Plays for High Stakes, J. C. Maloney and B. Silverman, eds. Chicago: American Marketing Association, 53-73.