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**DIFFERENT POSITIVE FEELINGS LEADING TO DIFFERENT AD  
EVALUATIONS: THE CASE OF COZINESS, EXCITEMENT AND ROMANCE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study contributes to the debate about the valence-based versus the multi-dimensional views of feelings. By conducting an experiment using 317 subjects, we compared the differential impact of three different positive feelings on ad effectiveness. Support for the multi-dimensional view of feelings was found in the sense that ad- and context-evoked coziness, excitement and romance had a different impact on attitudes to ads. Moreover, in the area of context effects further support for the multi-dimensional view of feelings was found: the exciting, the romantic and the cozy ads scored best after recounting a feeling-congruent story.

## INTRODUCTION

From the eighties onwards, several researchers have demonstrated that, next to cognitions, feelings could also play an important role in the formation of judgments on advertising. (Holbrook and O'Shaughnessy 1984; Batra and Ray 1986; Stout and Leckenby 1986; Burke and Edell 1987; Holbrook and Batra 1987; Geuens and De Pelsmacker 1998; Fabrigar and Petty 1999; etc.).

Not only should the feelings induced by an ad itself be taken into account, the feelings people experience before watching ads are also important. In the remainder of this paper, we will refer to these emotions as "context-induced emotions". The latter can be caused by many different things, one of which is the program, article or ad pod in which the ad is embedded.

Reviewing the literature, it seems that most researchers who have attempted to answer the question of how context-induced or ad-evoked feelings influence our thinking and judgment have focused on the comparison between the effect of positive versus negative feelings (e.g., Goldberg and Gorn 1987; Kamins, Marks and Skinner 1991; Ayelsworth and MacKenzie 1998). However, more and more researchers (e.g., Babin, Darden and Babin 1998; Raghunathan and Pham 1999; Mitchell et al. 2001) are convinced that the valence dimension does not suffice and more dimensions need to be taken into account to understand the differential effects of different emotions of the same valence. We would like to contribute to the debate on the merits of the unidimensional (valence-based) versus multidimensional views of feelings by investigating whether three context- and ad-induced feelings of the same valence, namely coziness, romance and excitement, have different impacts on ad evaluations. A second objective is to study the interaction effects between context-induced and ad-evoked feelings.

## **IMPACT OF DIFFERENT FEELINGS OF THE SAME VALENCE**

### **Valence-based versus multi-dimensional views of feelings**

The majority of the studies on the impact of positive and negative feelings on ad evaluation are based on the assumption that all feelings are bipolar and can be placed on a continuum going from “positive” at one end to “negative” at the other (e.g., Green, Goldman and Salovey 1993; Russell and Carroll 1999). One important implication of this valence-based view of feelings is that different feelings of the same valence, such as sadness, anger, and fear, or coziness, romance and excitement, would exert similar influences on judgment and choice.

Recently, however, an increasing number of researchers (e.g., Babin, Darden and Babin 1998; Raghunathan and Pham 1999; Mitchell et al. 2001) have questioned the assumption that all positive and all negative feelings are equal and lead to similar effects on information processing and judgment formation. In their view, dimensions other than valence alone should be considered in accounting for the specificity of different emotions. With respect to context-induced feelings, for example, Mitchell et al. (2001) investigated the impact of context-induced happiness, sadness and anger on the effectiveness of a neutral ad. They concluded that the negative feelings of anger and sadness lead to different effects, although these effects are more similar to one another than they are to the positive feeling of happiness. Raghunathan and Pham (1999) investigated the impact of anxious, sad and neutral feelings, induced by means of an empathy task, on decision making with respect to gambling and job selection. They found that affective states of the same valence have a different impact, in the sense that “anxiety and sadness convey distinct types of information to the decision-maker and prime different goals. While anxiety primes an implicit goal of uncertainty reduction, sadness primes an implicit goal of reward replacement” (Raghunathan and Pham 1999, p56). Anxious people were thus more inclined to choose for low-risk/low-reward options, while sad people preferred the high-risk/high reward options.

Also with respect to ad-evoked feelings, indications exist that not all feelings of the same valence lead to similar effects. According to Batra and Ray (1986) affective responses to advertisements can be divided into three different categories of positive

feelings, namely 1) surgency, elation, vigor/activation (SEVA); 2) deactivation; and 3) social affection. These categories do not appear to be equally important in the formation of attitudes and purchase intentions. Burke and Edell (1989) classified 54 ad-evoked feelings into three main categories, which they called upbeat, warm and negative feelings. Each feeling category had a different influence on attitudes through its distinct relation with different cognitive judgments.

Previous studies provide some initial evidence that different feelings of the same valence can lead to different effects. This would imply that we cannot extrapolate the known effects of, for example, happiness and sadness to all positive and negative feelings, respectively. As Lerner and Keltner (2000, p. 475–476) say: “Valence-based approaches may sacrifice specificity in the service of parsimony.” In other words, the valence-based view of emotions may oversimplify emotional experience and may conceal the distinctions among negative or positive emotions.

### **Valence and arousal**

As indicated above, one explanation for the differential effects of different feelings of the same valence can be found in the notion that valence is not the only dimension that matters. Indeed, many researchers have suggested that emotions can be positioned in at least two dimensions: the valence dimension (also called the pleasure dimension) going from positive to negative and the arousal dimension going from sleepiness to high activation (e.g., Watson and Tellegen 1985; Russell 1980). According to this two-dimensional view, each feeling is characterized by a certain level of pleasure and arousal and can be placed on a certain point in the two dimensional space. The closer the emotions are positioned to each other, the more similar they are.

As far as the pleasure dimension is concerned, most studies tend to indicate that the experience of a positive feeling, either induced in the context of an ad or evoked by the ad itself, has a positive effect on the formation of an attitude toward that ad and toward the advertised brand (e.g., Goldberg and Gorn 1987; Yi 1990; Kamins et al. 1991; Shapiro et al. 2002).

Concerning the influence of arousal on ad evaluations many authors agree that there exists an inverted U relationship (Mehrabian and Russell 1974). This relationship indicates that feelings that involve a very high or very low level of arousal will lead to little information processing and negative ad evaluations. When individuals experience a feeling with a very low level of arousal they are more likely to become bored or lazy, lowering their desire and motivation to process any information and negatively affecting their attitude toward the stimulus. When arousal increases, people become more enthusiastic and they will be induced to process the message more thoroughly. This enthusiasm is likely to be transferred to the person's ad evaluation. However, once the (moderate) optimal arousal level is exceeded, any further increase in the arousal level might result in stress situations, leading to fatigue and exhaustion and a decrease in favorable evaluations of the stimulus.

This theory has been tested and confirmed for feelings directly evoked by the stimulus-such as an ad-itself (e.g., Mehrabian and Russel 1974; Steenkamp, Baumgartner and van der Wulp 1996). However, also in relation to prior-induced feelings, evidence for this U-shaped effect can be found (e.g., Tavassoli, Shultz and Fitzsimons 1995; Shapiro, MacInnis and Park 2002). For example, Tavassoli, Shultz and Fitzsimons (1995) investigated the relationship between the respondents' level of involvement (arousal) while watching a soccer game and their attitude towards embedded ads. They predicted and found an inverted-U relationship between a continuum of low (through moderate) to high program involvement and attitude towards the ad (Aad).

In contrast to the foregoing, the excitation transfer paradigm (Cantor and Zillman 1982; Singh and Churchill Jr. 1987; Gorn, Pham and Sin 2001) posits that the arousal evoked in the context of an emotional advertisement might be transferred to and intensify the corresponding response to the ad. As a result, high (versus low) context-induced arousal improves ad and brand evaluations for positive ads and causes less favorable ad and brand evaluations for negative ads. However, for an excitation transfer to occur two conditions need to be fulfilled (Reisenzein 1983). First, a short period should be left between the two arousing events. Second, the subjects should misattribute the arousal to the emotional ad (and not to the prior inducing source). For example, Cantor and Zillman

(1982) found that it was not the commercials immediately shown after the arousing context, but rather those shown some time after that were positively affected.

In contrast, according to the inverted-U relationship explanation arousal can have an impact on peoples' motivation to process and positively evaluate a certain ad, irrespective of whether the arousal is attributed to the context of the ad or to the ad itself. In this study, since respondents will not be asked to wait between context and ad evaluation, we expect that no excitation transfer will take place. Therefore, we base our hypotheses on the inverted-U model.

H1a: A context that induces a highly arousing positive feeling leads to less positive ad and brand evaluations than a context inducing a moderately arousing positive feeling.

H1b: Positive context-induced feelings of a similar arousal level lead to equally positive ad and brand evaluations.

H2a: An ad evoking a highly arousing positive feeling leads to less positive ad and brand evaluations than an ad evoking a moderately arousing positive feeling.

H2b: Positive ad-evoked feelings of a similar arousal level lead to equally positive ad and brand evaluations.

## **INTERACTION BETWEEN CONTEXT AND AD EVOKED FEELINGS**

A second objective of this study is to find out whether the effect of the three positive feelings will be the same if we take into account both the context-induced feeling and the feeling evoked by the advertisement.

### **Affective consistency**

Some studies have found a negative effect of an 'emotional match' between the context and the ad appeal. For example, Aaker, Stayman and Hagerty (1986) found

support for the adaptation theory that suggests that feelings, induced by a prior advertisement, serve as a reference point. “A prior commercial that induces a lower specific feeling than a subsequent commercial should create a lower reference point and therefore enhance the feeling induced by the subsequent commercial.” (Aaker, Stayman and Hagerty 1986, p.367). So a warm ad, for example, is expected to be experienced as warmer (and to lead to more positive ad evaluations) if it is preceded by an ad evoking a feeling other than warmth because the reference point to which it is being compared is lower. Another explanation for the finding that ads will be liked more and remembered better when they are preceded by an ad that evokes a different feeling than by a similar emotional appeal is that incongruent ads (in terms of the feelings invoked) are perceived as more innovative and interesting because a ‘new’ feeling is experienced (De Pelsmacker, Geuens and Anckaert 2002).

In contrast to these findings—that might only apply to feelings induced by prior advertisements—the majority of the researchers investigating the impact of feelings induced by a program, an article, or a mood induction task found a positive impact of consistency between the context-induced and the ad-evoked feelings on ad evaluations (Murphy, Cunningham and Wilcox 1979; Kamins, Marks and Skinner 1991; Bower 1991; Coulter 1998). Different explanations have been provided for this affect consistency effect. A first explanation is based on the idea that, compared with people in a neutral mood, people in a positive or a negative mood tend to be more altruistic (Cialdini, Darby and Vincent 1973). People in a sad mood, for example, are expected to try and change their sad mood by engaging in altruistic behavior. So, when people in a bad mood watch a sad advertisement, they might feel sadness or empathy for the person in the ad and this may lead them to react positively to the ad. Kamins, Marks and Skinner’s “Consistency Effects Model” (1991) is based on this explanation and implies that context/ad congruency will be directly and positively related to Aad, due to some type of empathic response.

According to Bower (1991), affective consistency can also indirectly influence Aad, through the “affect priming” mechanism. He states that each feeling is related to a specific memory node. This node stores all information related to that feeling. A feeling node can be activated by a certain (feeling inducing) event, and this will further lead to

the activation of other connected nodes. As a result, stimuli that match the feelings that people are experiencing at a given moment, will be evaluated more positively and processed more thoroughly, because people devote more attention to these stimuli.

A third explanation for the affect consistency effect comes from Schuman and Thorson (1990) and was supported by Coulter (1998). According to them, people may like (and want to continue) the experience of the mood they are in or they may not. For example, people may want to keep watching an emotional movie that is interrupted by a commercial block, or they may want to stop watching the movie because they do not like it. In the former case, the individuals will positively react to an emotionally congruent ad, because it allows them to continue the pleasant emotional experience. In contrast, when individuals want to alter their current emotional state (for example when they were watching an emotional program they did not like) they will negatively evaluate an emotionally congruent ad. Therefore, context/ad congruency will only be effective when individuals want to remain in their current mood.

### **Affective consistency between context-induced and ad-evoked emotions**

Although this affect consistency effect has only been tested in relation to the valence-based approach of feelings (treating all feelings of the same valence as congruent), we also expect them to be valid for different feelings of the same valence. Following the reasoning of Bower (1991), for example, we expect that when a person is watching an enjoyable program evoking a specific positive feeling, all memory nodes connected to this feeling will be activated. It is unlikely, however, that the memory nodes of all positive feelings will be activated. For example, the memory node of an excited feeling is unlikely to be activated by watching a cozy (warm) movie. Thus, when watching a cozy and warm movie, ads evoking an excited feeling, as opposed to a cozy (warm) feeling, are expected to be evaluated less positively. Also the third explanation of the affect consistency effect is likely to be applicable to different feelings of the same valence. For example, when people like watching a warm and cozy program, they will also like watching cozy (warm) advertisements, because this enables them to continue experiencing this cozy feeling. An exciting ad, on the other hand, might interrupt the

experience of this enjoyable cozy feeling, with less positive ad evaluations as a consequence.

Based on the foregoing and following the assumption of the affect consistency effect, we posit the following hypothesis:

H3: The effect of prior induced feelings and ad evoked feelings on ad and brand evaluations will be more positive when both feelings are the same than when they are not.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

Most previous studies that support the multi-dimensional view of emotions have mainly concentrated on explaining the differential effect of different negative feelings (e.g., Raghunathan and Pham 1999; Mitchel et al. 2001). However, in practice we notice that marketers still make more use of positive feelings than negative ones when creating advertisements. Therefore, in this study, we concentrate on the differential effects of different positive feelings. Examining Russel's (1980) circumplex model, we chose to investigate the impact of coziness, romance and excitement. The reason for this choice is threefold, 1) all three feelings are highly positive, 2) coziness and romance are both equally moderately arousing, while excitement is a high arousal feeling and 3) all three feelings are often encountered in both theory and practice.

Coziness can be conceptualized as warmth as in Aaker, Stayman and Hagerty (1986): a highly positive emotion that people enjoy in their relationships with family or friends, involving a moderate level of arousal (Aaker, Stayman and Hagerty 1986; Chaudhuri and Watt 1995). Romance can be defined as "companionate love" in Huang (2004): "a quiet intimacy in a relationship. It describes the gentle feeling of affection one feels for a partner [...]. Companionate love involves a limited amount of sexual implication and is therefore the type of romantic love that is high in pleasure, but intermediate in arousal" (Huang 2004, p.55, 57).

Similar to Russell (1980) and Batra and Ray (1986), we consider SEVA feelings, to which excitement belongs, as an affective response that is both very pleasant and very arousing.

Although emotions are personal, we assume that (for the majority of people) the emotions of coziness and romance are pretty similar in terms of pleasure and arousal while excitement is rather similar in pleasure, but differs on the arousal dimension.

## **Pretest**

*Ad creation.* We chose to create ads for a fictitious travel agency (Fargo Travel) because the three feelings under investigation are both relevant and representative for this product category: two necessary conditions for feelings to have an impact on ad evaluation and processing (Pham 1998). All ads had the same layout with at the top a picture of a plane together with the brand name (Fargo Travel) and the slogan “Worldwide in good hands”. On the remaining part of the print ads, a large, vague (emotional) picture was shown on which the product information was printed. For the finishing touch, several smaller pictures were placed around the page. The pictures were manipulated in order to evoke the respective feelings.

The cozy ad (see Appendix 1) shows a couple of friends sitting around a campfire. The little pictures show different scenes like a happy family riding with the bike, children playing in the sea and in the sand, some animals, a woman quietly reading a book, etc. The romantic ad (see Appendix 2) shows a couple walking on the beach with the beautiful sunset on the background. The little pictures at the site of the ad show mainly couples being in love, a romantic beach cabin, and a couple of animals in a romantic pose. The exciting ad (see Appendix 3) shows a man who jumps in the air. The surrounding pictures show all kind of active scenes like rafting, horse riding, surfing, people running through the water, etc.

In a pretest, it was tested whether the ads evoked the intended feelings and level of arousal, by means of a web-based questionnaire. Each of the twenty-one respondents evaluated the ads on a 6-item, 7-point emotion scale, ranging from “the ad does not evoke this feeling at all” (1) to “the ad evokes this feeling completely” (7). Each feeling was measured by two items (coziness: cozy and warm, romance: romantic and in love,

excitement: excited and sensational). Because the two items for the three respective feelings were highly correlated, means were calculated to form a composite measure of coziness, romance and excitement, respectively (see Table 1).

Table 1 shows that both the cozy and the romantic ad scored high on coziness, but differed significantly in the extent to which romance was evoked. After seeing the romantic ad, respondents felt significantly more romantic than after seeing the cozy ( $t_{39} = 5.44$ ) or the exciting ad ( $t_{39} = 11.70$ ). Furthermore, respondents experienced significantly stronger feelings of excitement after reading the exciting ad than after reading the cozy ( $t_{39} = 11.13$ ) and the romantic ad ( $t_{39} = 9.58$ ).

Next to testing the ad-evoked feelings, we also tested the level of arousal the ads evoked. For measuring arousal, we used four items on a 7-point scale. The items included calmness (this item was reversed), enthusiasm, action and energy. Cronbach's alpha of these four items was very high (.89) and therefore we created one general arousal item by calculating the mean. As expected, t-tests revealed that the arousal evoked by the most exciting ad was significantly higher than the arousal evoked by the cozy ( $t_{40} = 8.33$ ) and the romantic ads ( $t_{39} = 9.97$ ). The difference between the arousal evoked by the cozy and the romantic ads was not significant ( $t_{39} = .95$ ,  $p = .35$ ).

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Insert Table 1 about here

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## **Procedure**

Three hundred and seventeen undergraduate students, aged between nineteen and twenty five, participated in the study in exchange for a lottery ticket providing them with a 75% chance of winning a movie ticket.

A web-based 3 (cozy, romantic, exciting context) X 3 (cozy, romantic, exciting ad) between-subjects design was set up, using the program "The Websurveyor". The main advantages of using a web-based questionnaire are that respondents are not interviewed in a laboratory setting and that they can fill out the questionnaire at their own pace and at a time of their choice. The disadvantages are the non-representative nature of

the Internet population and the lack of control over the environment. Since the study population consisted of undergraduate students that all had access to Internet, the non-representative nature did not pose a problem. To minimize the second problem, respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire in a quiet room, where no interruption was possible and when they had enough time.

An email was sent to approximately three thousand students, randomly assigned to one of the nine conditions (about three hundred and thirty students per condition), with a brief description of the research and a request for participation (knowing that they had 75% chance of winning a movie ticket). Students that were willing to participate were asked to click on a link that led them immediately to the questionnaire. The first page of the questionnaire contained a short introduction to the authors and the object of the research. The only information given about the objective of the study was that the questionnaire actually contained two independent studies. One was said to be about creating a large inventory of life events. The second study was said to deal with the effectiveness of advertisements. Furthermore, the participants were asked to work alone and quietly, and were assured that their answers would be handled completely anonymously. The instruction page was followed by the feeling induction task. In this task, participants were asked to think about a cozy and warm, about a romantic and loving or about an exciting and sensational event in their own life. Participants were given a few minutes to write down this event in as much detail and as vividly as possible. This feeling induction technique has been used by many researchers in the past (Forgas and Ciarrochi 2001; Abele and Gendolla 1999; Bless et al. 1990; etc.) and is expected to evoke stronger feelings than when respondents have to read an emotional story about an unknown character. The feeling manipulation task was followed by a manipulation check. Then the test ad was shown followed by several questions. These questions contained the dependent measures and the manipulation checks.

## **Measures**

*Manipulation checks.* To assess the success of our manipulations, similar manipulation checks as in the pretest were used, both for context-induced and ad-evoked feelings (see Table 2). Respondents felt significantly more romantic after recounting a

romantic story than after recounting a cozy ( $t_{209} = 7.48$ ) or an exciting story ( $t_{204} = 8.20$ ). Furthermore, they felt more excited after recounting an exciting rather than a cozy ( $t_{212} = 7.95$ ) or a romantic story ( $t_{204} = 7.18$ ). Similarly, respondents felt more romantic after seeing the romantic ad than after seeing the cozy ( $t_{207} = 12.97$ ) or the exciting ad ( $t_{211} = 14.92$ ). Furthermore, respondents experienced stronger feelings of excitement after reading the exciting ad than after reading the cozy ( $t_{209} = 11.21$ ) or the romantic ad ( $t_{212} = 10.98$ ). It is remarkable, however, that for all the ads the means of the intended feelings are lower than in the pretest, but the scores for these intended feelings are still significantly higher than the scores for other feelings.

To measure context-induced and ad-evoked arousal, the same four items were used as in the pretest of the advertisements. Table 2 shows that after recounting an exciting story respondents were significantly more aroused than after recounting a cozy ( $t_{212} = 15.13$ ) or a romantic story ( $t_{204} = 14.39$ ). Similarly, the exciting ad evoked a higher level of arousal than the cozy ( $t_{209} = 9.86$ ) or the romantic ad ( $t_{212} = 13.27$ ).

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Insert Table 2 about here

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### **Dependent measures**

*Attitude towards the ad (Aad).* Aad was measured using four 7-point semantic differential scales, anchored by the adjectives “bad–good”, “negative–positive”, “dislike–like” and “desirable–undesirable” (Simons and Carey 1998). Cronbach’s Alpha for the Aad items was .92, indicating a high degree of internal consistency. Therefore, the mean of the four Aad items was calculated to obtain a global Aad measurement.

*Attitude towards the brand (Ab).* Ab was also assessed by four 7-point semantic differential scales, anchored by the statements “Fargo Travel looks like a bad brand to me–Fargo Travel looks like a good brand to me”, “I don’t like Fargo Travel–I like Fargo Travel”, “the brand Fargo Travel is desirable–the brand Fargo Travel is undesirable” and “I feel negatively about Fargo Travel–I feel positively about Fargo Travel” (Simons and

Carey 1998). Cronbach's Alpha for Ab was .93. Therefore, the mean of the four Ab items was calculated.

## RESULTS

To test the hypotheses, the dependent variables Aad and Ab were entered into a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with context- and ad-evoked feelings as the independent variables. As shown in Table 3, results of the MANOVA indicate significant main effects for context- and ad evoked feelings as well as an interaction effect.

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Insert Table 3 about here

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First, we looked at the main effect of the context-induced feelings on Aad and Ab. It was hypothesized that respondents would evaluate ads better after recounting a (moderately arousing) cozy or romantic story than after recounting a (highly arousing) exciting story (H1a). Ad evaluations after recounting a cozy and a romantic story were expected to be similar (H1b). Independent sample t-tests (see Table 4) support this hypothesis and reveal that Aad is indeed significantly lower after recounting an exciting story than after a cozy ( $t_{213} = -2.89$ ), or romantic one ( $t_{205} = -2.00$ ). Ab is also significantly lower after recounting an exciting story than after a cozy story ( $t_{213} = -3.64$ ). However, the difference in Ab after recounting an exciting compared with a romantic story is only marginally significant ( $t_{205} = -1.68$ ). There are no differences, however, between the conditions in which a cozy or a romantic story was recounted (Aad:  $t_{210} = .76$ ; Ab:  $t_{210} = 1.72$ ). These results tend to support our expectations stated in Hypotheses 1a and b, and are in line with findings of previous studies indicating that people that are highly aroused react more negatively to subsequent stimuli than do people that are moderately aroused (e.g., Tavassoli, Clifford and Fitzsimons 1995).

Concerning the ad-evoked feelings it was hypothesized that the highly arousing exciting ad would be evaluated less positively than the moderately arousing cozy and romantic ads (H2a). The cozy and the romantic ad were expected to be evaluated equally

positively (H2b). From Table 4 however, it is clear that this hypothesis was not supported. Independent sample t-tests show that the cozy ad is significantly less effective than the romantic (Aad:  $t_{207} = -2.29$ ; Ab:  $t_{207} = -.53$ ) or the exciting ad (Aad:  $t_{209} = -2.97$ ; Ab:  $t_{209} = -3.20$ ). The romantic and the exciting ad are found to be equally effective (Aad:  $t_{212} = -.59$ ; Ab:  $t_{212} = -.72$ ).

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Insert Table 4 about here

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Next to the significant main effects of context-induced and ad-evoked feelings, ANOVA analysis also revealed a significant interaction effect, indicating that the main effects do not hold under all conditions.

It was hypothesized that ads would be more positively evaluated when context-induced and ad-evoked feelings were the same than when they were different (H3).

Before discussing the individual interaction effects in detail, we grouped all the conditions in which the context- and ad-evoked feelings were the same on the one hand, and the ones in which they were different on the other. Results of an independent sample t-test, comparing ad and brand attitudes for the two groups, support Hypothesis 3. Indeed, Aad and Ab are more positive for ads evoking a similar feeling as the context ( $M_{aad} = 4.67$ ,  $M_{ab} = 4.50$ ) than for ads evoking a feeling different from the context ( $M_{aad} = 3.73$ ,  $t_{315} = 5.55$ ,  $p_{aad} < .001$ ;  $M_{ab} = 3.88$ ,  $t_{315} = 4.92$ ,  $p_{ab} < .001$ ).

Figures 1a and 1b show the interaction effects in detail. From these graphs, it is indeed clear that the three ads score better after the respondents have recounted a story about a similar feeling as the one evoked by the ad than after recounting one about a different feeling. More specifically, a cozy ad scored better after respondents recounted a cozy story than after recounting an exciting (Aad:  $t_{70} = 4.48$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Ab:  $t_{70} = 5.10$ ,  $p < .001$ ) or a romantic story (Aad:  $t_{67} = 2.18$ ,  $p = .03$ ; Ab:  $t_{67} = 2.54$ ,  $p = .01$ ). The exciting ad scored better after recounting an exciting story than after a romantic (Aad:  $t_{66} = 2.81$ ,  $p = .007$ ; Ab:  $t_{66} = 2.56$ ,  $p = .013$ ) or a cozy one (Aad:  $t_{70} = 1.69$ ,  $p = .095$ ; Ab:  $t_{70} = 1.05$ ,  $p = .30$ ). Finally, the romantic ad scored better after respondents had recounted a romantic story rather than an exciting (Aad:  $t_{72} = 4.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Ab:  $t_{72} = 3.87$ ,  $p < .001$ ) or a cozy (Aad:  $t_{65} = 2.07$ ,  $p = .04$ ; Ab:  $t_{65} = 1.03$ ,  $p = .31$ ) one. However, the difference in

evaluation of the exciting ad after recounting an exciting versus a cozy story, and the difference in the evaluation of the romantic ad after recounting a romantic versus a cozy story are only (marginally) significant for A<sub>ad</sub> and not significant for A<sub>b</sub>.

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Insert Figure 1a and b about here

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## DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was twofold. First of all, we wanted to find out whether different positive feelings—both induced by the context and evoked by the ad—had the same or a different impact on ad evaluations. Second, we investigated the interaction effects of the context- and the ad-induced feelings. We measured respondents' evaluations of a cozy, a romantic and an exciting ad after they have recounted a cozy, a romantic or an exciting life event. Some interesting results were found.

First, we found that ads are evaluated more negatively after respondents had recounted an exciting life event than after describing a romantic or a cozy one. The cozy and the romantic story did not lead to different ad evaluations. This result fully supports Hypotheses 1a and 1b and could be explained by the arousal evoked by recounting the stories. The arousal measure showed that respondents were highly aroused after recounting an exciting story, while they were only aroused to a low to moderate degree after recounting a romantic or a cozy story. In line with the findings of Tavassoli, Shultz, and Fitzsimons (1995), the highly aroused respondents were probably too stimulated and evaluated the subsequent ad less favorably than the moderately aroused respondents.

Second, the ad evoking a cozy feeling appeared to be less effective than the romantic or the exciting ad. No difference was found between the effectiveness of the romantic and the exciting ads, however. A possible explanation for this unexpected finding is our choice of sample. It is not surprising that the feelings of romance and excitement in relation to traveling are more relevant to students between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, while the feeling of coziness (a family feeling, children playing, etc.) is not of primary interest to them. The finding that the exciting ad did not receive worse evaluations than the romantic ad could be explained by the possibility that,

although significant, the difference in arousal between the romantic and the exciting ads was not strong enough to account for differences in ad evaluation. Indeed, manipulation checks reveal that the level of arousal evoked by the exciting ad is lower than that evoked by recounting an exciting story.

By showing that ad-evoked and context-induced coziness, romance and excitement can lead to different ad evaluations, these results lend support to the idea that different feelings of the same valence should be treated differently with respect to their effect on ad and brand evaluations. Furthermore, the MANOVA analysis revealed that context- and ad-evoked feelings interact significantly. As hypothesized, the feeling-evoking ads scored better after recounting a life event during which a similar feeling was experienced than one during which a different feeling was experienced. More specifically, the cozy ad scored best after recounting a cozy story, the exciting ad scored best after recounting an exciting story and the romantic ad scored best after recounting a romantic story. However, concerning Ab, the evaluation of both the romantic and the exciting ad when shown after recounting a congruent (romantic or exciting, respectively) story did not differ significantly from an evaluation made after recounting a cozy story. A possible explanation could be that the feeling evoked by the recount of a cozy story was not completely incongruent with the feelings caused by the events shown in the romantic and the exciting ad. Indeed, the cozy stories the respondents described were generally about having a good time with their friends or with their lover. However, the feeling caused by recounting a cozy story was probably less congruent with the romantic and the exciting ad than the feelings caused by romantic and exciting stories, respectively.

In general, the results are in line with findings in previous research (Murphy, Cunningham and Wilcox 1979; Kamins, Marks and Skinner 1991; Bower 1991; Coulter 1998).

### **Future research**

This study shows that taking two dimensions (pleasure and arousal) into account is still not sufficient to account for different effects of all different feelings. In fact, the results indicate that, even though coziness and romance are positioned together in the two dimensional space of pleasure and arousal, they do not produce the same effects on ad

and brand evaluations. Therefore, further research is necessary to find out what it is that causes the differential effects of coziness and romance. Some researchers (e.g., Smith and Ellsworth 1985; Roseman 1991) suggest a cognitive approach to obtain a more detailed insight into the impact of specific emotions. According to these researchers, emotions are the consequence of the cognitive appraisals of the environment. This cognitive appraisal approach explicates many more dimensions than the “valence-arousal” approach to differentiate among feelings and is thus likely to offer a more detailed understanding of individual feelings.

Furthermore, the effects of other positive feelings should be investigated and compared, as well as the effects of different negative feelings. It would be interesting, for example to investigate what combinations of positive and negative feelings are most effective.

Some limitations of this study also call for future research.

A first limitation is the sample we used for this study. Respondents were all students between eighteen and twenty-five years old. These results might not generalize to other consumer groups like for example, young parents, elderly people, teenagers, etc. Each of these groups might react differently to each of the three ad-evoked feelings. For example, children might react more negatively to a romantic ad, and the exciting ad might be less attracting to young parents or elderly people. Possibly these consumer groups will evaluate a cozy ad much better than do students. Further research is therefore needed to see how different consumer groups react to different emotional appeals. In addition, the effect of other variables could be investigated, such as product category use, preferences for travel activities, whether or not respondents are in a relationship or have children, etc.

Finally, the fact that the experiment was completed by means of a web-based questionnaire reduced our control over the effectiveness of the manipulations. Future research might verify whether the results remain the same when conducting the experiment in a lab setting.

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**TABLE 1**

**Pretest for ad evoked-feelings and arousal**

<b>Ad</b>	<b>Feelings evoked by the ads</b>			
	<u>cozy<sup>a</sup></u>	<u>romantic<sup>a</sup></u>	<u>exciting<sup>a</sup></u>	<u>arousal<sup>b</sup></u>
1. Cozy	5.43 <sup>2,3</sup>	4.23 <sup>2,3</sup>	2.18 <sup>3</sup>	3.27 <sup>3</sup>
2. romantic	6.33 <sup>1,3</sup>	6.57 <sup>1,3</sup>	2.50 <sup>3</sup>	3.03 <sup>3</sup>
3. exciting	3.40 <sup>1,2</sup>	2.28 <sup>1,2</sup>	5.86 <sup>1,2</sup>	5.46 <sup>1,2</sup>

a: correlations between the items per construct ranged from .626 to .854 and are all significant on .001 level

Superscripts indicate a significant difference with the indicated feeling on a .001 level

b: cronbach's  $\alpha$  for ad-evoked arousal = .89

**TABLE 2****Manipulation check for ad-evoked and context-induced feelings and arousal**

<b>Ad/context</b>	<b>Feelings evoked by the ads</b>				<b>Feelings evoked by the contexts</b>			
	cozy <sup>a</sup>	romantic <sup>a</sup>	exciting <sup>a</sup>	Arousal <sup>b</sup>	cozy <sup>a</sup>	romantic <sup>a</sup>	exciting <sup>a</sup>	Arousal <sup>b</sup>
1. Cozy	5.04 <sup>2,3</sup>	2.83 <sup>2</sup>	3.23 <sup>3</sup>	3.74 <sup>3</sup>	5.13 <sup>2,3</sup>	3.64 <sup>2</sup>	3.11 <sup>3</sup>	3.36 <sup>3</sup>
2. romantic	4.71 <sup>1,3</sup>	5.23 <sup>1,3</sup>	3.37 <sup>3</sup>	3.55 <sup>3</sup>	4.47 <sup>1,3</sup>	5.17 <sup>1,3</sup>	3.13 <sup>3</sup>	3.56 <sup>3</sup>
3. exciting	3.44 <sup>1,2</sup>	2.65 <sup>2</sup>	4.94 <sup>1,2</sup>	4.96 <sup>1,2</sup>	3.70 <sup>1,2</sup>	3.38 <sup>2</sup>	4.47 <sup>1,2</sup>	5.39 <sup>1,2</sup>

a: correlations between the items per construct ranged from .380 to .810 and are all significant at .001 level

b: cronbach's  $\alpha$  for ad-evoked arousal = .71, for context-induced arousal = .82

Superscripts indicate a significant difference with the indicated feeling on a .001 level. Only the difference in coziness between the cozy and the romantic ad is significant on a .05 level.

**TABLE 3****Multivariate and univariate analysis of variance results: context and ad-evoked feelings and Aad and Ab**

MULTIVARIATE				
Factor	Wilks' Lambda	df	F-value	p-value
Context-induced feeling	.96	4, 614	3.37	.010
Ad-induced feeling	.95	4, 614	4.09	.003
Context-induced feeling X ad-induced feeling	.88	8, 614	5.01	<.001
UNIVARIATE				
Dependent variable	Source of variation	df	F-value	p-value
Aad	Context induced feeling	2,308	4.136	.017
	Ad-evoked feeling	2,308	6.307	.002
	Context-induced feeling X ad-evoked feeling	4,308	9.221	< .001
Ab	Context induced feeling	2,308	6.222	.002
	Ad-evoked feeling	2,308	7.425	.001
	Context-induced feeling X ad-evoked feeling	4,308	7.744	< .001

**TABLE 4****T-test for impact of context- and Ad-Evoked Feelings on Aad and Ab**

<b>Ad/context</b>	<b>Impact of ad-evoked feelings</b>		<b>Impact of context-induced feelings</b>	
	Aad	Ab	Aad	Ab
1. Cozy	3.69 <sup>2,3</sup>	3.79 <sup>2,3</sup>	4.28 <sup>3</sup>	4.33 <sup>3</sup>
2. romantic	4.16 <sup>1</sup>	4.17 <sup>1</sup>	4.13 <sup>3</sup>	4.09
3. exciting	4.28 <sup>1</sup>	4.28 <sup>1</sup>	3.71 <sup>1,2</sup>	3.82 <sup>1</sup>

Superscripts indicate a significant difference with the indicated feeling on a .05 level.

**FIGURE 1**

**Interaction effects of context-induced and ad-evoked feelings on Aad**

