

## *Animals in Advertising*

*Written & Researched by Charleigh Carthy*

### **Introduction**

Animals have been used in advertisements for years. These animals can be seen all over and have the ability to positively change brands engagement and a customer's intentions with the product. The research attempts to answer the question: *are young adults who are exposed to alcohol commercials involving animals are more likely to feel happy when seeing the product compared to advertisements that do not include animals in their advertisements?*

### **Methods**

This study uses four advertisements (2 Budweiser and 2 Bud-light) to see if users' feelings towards the brand change after watching the advertisement. For observing advertisements in this study, the survey is being examined through the survey methodology. Survey methodology is the study of survey methods and uses a variety of data collection methods like questionnaires, such as this one. Unfortunately, a limitation to a quantitative survey approach is close-ended multiple-choice questions, which do not allow in-depth answers to explore how the participant thinks. For this research, close-ended questions are needed to help see patterns between the data and track if participants associate happiness with the commercial regarding its use of animals or not. This is because close-ended questions limit the participants to simplifying their answer and making it simpler for the participant to answer. The data allows us to see if the user still or changes their association of happiness with the brand based on the company's tactics such as

animals or a mascot. Primary research will be collected and analyzed after being transformed from pivot tables and into a cross-table analysis where these results will be presented.

### **Sample Method for participants:**

To gain participants this study was conducted through snowball sampling. One participant was sent the survey and asked to share the survey with other participants in the age demographic of this study required. Participants were not given any incentive to take this survey.

### **Participants**

A total of 13 females (56.5%) and 9 males (39%) participated in the study. The participants' ages were primarily between the ages of 21 (83%).

### **Research Design and Instruments.**

Participants were asked to complete a consent document before taking the survey. The survey for this study included 14 questions, 4 of them regarding a one-minute ad. The survey itself took approximately 5 - 6 minutes. If they decide to participate in this study, they will be asked to answer a few questions regarding their interactions with alcohol, how often they consume alcohol, and a follow-up question after watching each ad. Questions were broken down into Likert scales. Likert scales are helpful because they allow participants to answer based on a level from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questions presented were followed: When asked if they drank alcohol, 21 out of 23 (92%) said yes, 1 said no (4%), and 1 did not answer (4%). 10 out of the 23 (43%) said they drink 3-5 days a week, 11 (48%) said they drink 1-2 times a week and 1 said they do not drink at all weekly (4%).

Although it is a small surveyed group, they are a good match for the data because a majority consume alcohol. According to Caetano (2014), 15.9 years is the mean age for the first drink. Out of 4.7 million people, 82.9% began drinking before the age of 21 and 61% before the age of 18. When asked another question not regarding alcohol, but instead having bought a purchase based on an advertisement before, 13 said yes (57%) and 10 said no (43%). Participants were asked to take the survey through a text message sent by a friend. Participants were then asked to pay attention to their emotions towards a brand before watching the advertisement and after. After exposure, the participant asked if they still felt happiness towards the brand or if they had changed their opinion if they had stated earlier they do not associate happiness with it.

## **Results**

This study focused on analyzing consumers' feelings towards brands regarding their use of animals in advertisements. Of the four commercials viewed, two included animals, and those two had a high association with happiness. A flaw in my data was that both commercials involving animals were Budweiser commercials and the two not involving animals were BudLight commercials. The data collected shows that viewers before exposure to the advertisement involving animals did not associate their brand with happiness, but after did.

**Feeling of happiness in regard to Budweiser vs Budweiser Animal Advertisement**

**Figure 1**

Feeling of Happiness with Budweiser after watching Commercial					
Feeling of Happiness with Budweiser before Commercial	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree		50% (n=1)		50% (n=1)	
Neutral		11.11% (n=1)		66.67% (n=6)	11.11% (n=1)
Agree		11.11% (n=1)	11.11% (n=1)	44.44% (n=4)	44.44% (n=4)
Strongly Agree				100% (n=1)	

**Figure 2:**

Feeling of Happiness with Bud-Light after watching Commercial				
Feeling of Happiness with Bud-Light before Commercial	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Strongly Disagree		50% (n=5)		50% (n=1)
Disagree		50% (n=5)		50% (n=5)
Neutral		25% (n=2)	37.5% (n=3)	37.5% (n=3)
Agree	12.5% (n=1)	12.5% (n=1)	12.50 (n=1)	62.5% (n=5)
Strongly Agree				100% (n=1)

**Figure 3:**

Feeling of Happiness with Budweiser after watching Commercial				
Purchased a product based on how an ad made you feel	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Yes	7.69% (n=1)		46.15% (n=6)	38.46% (n=5)
No	22.22% (n=2)	11.11% (n=1)	66.67% (n=6)	

**Table 1** indicates that out of the 23 participants, 17 of them (73.9%) associated the feeling of happiness with Budweiser compared to 11% who were neutral, and 13% who disagreed. This is the first question that is used to get an understanding of the participants' and their feelings towards animals in advertisements but also towards the company Budweiser.

**Table 2** indicates that 14 out of the 23 participants (60.8%) disagree with associating the feeling of happiness with the brand Bud-Light after watching the advertisement. The ad regards the Bud-Light Knight, the Bud-Lights mascot, similar to the Budweiser puppy. This disagreement post ad compared to Budweiser which has a 73.9% association with happiness indicates a connection between brand and advertisement.

**Table 3** looks at if participants previously have purchased a product based on how an advertisement made them feel vs the feeling of happiness associated with Budweiser after with

the commercial featuring the animals. 46.15% (6) of participants said they have purchased a product based on how an ad made them feel and associated happiness with the Budweiser ad, 38.46% strongly agreed with that feeling of happiness towards the Budweiser ad and also purchased a product based on an ad.

### **Limitations**

The internal validity of a survey instrument measures precisely what it is intended to measure. Using a Likert scale and close-ended questions throughout the study allowed data to be collected to help test the hypothesis that *young adults who are exposed to alcohol commercials involving animals are more likely to feel happy when seeing the product compared to advertisements that do not include animals in their advertisements*. One thing that could have been done differently is including different advertisements for both Bud-Light and Budweiser. It was brought to my attention that both Budweiser ads included animals and Bud-Light included none. Also, including more responses to how often people drink alcohol would have been more inclusive. Including monthly instead or on top of weekly options, would have been able to open the survey to more participants. By doing so, this could have allowed more information regarding the presented data and allowed for more trends to be seen.

### **Discussion**

The hypothesis of *young adults who are exposed to alcohol commercials involving animals are more likely to feel happy when seeing the product compared to advertisements that do not include animals in their advertisements* shows a positive relationship with the cross-tabulations presented above. When asked the question if participants associated happiness with Budweiser before and after watching the advertisement including the ad 73.9% of the participants agreed. McCutchen (2005) suggested that using animals is a common tactic because

consumers are attracted to, and fascinated by animals. Therefore, using animals has been suggested as a way to increase sales as consumers associate the animal with the brand, just as shown in the data presented above.

### **Reference List**

Caetano, R., Mills, B. A., Vaeth, P. A. C., & Reingle, J. (2014, May). *Age at first drink, drinking, binge drinking, and DSM-5 alcohol use disorder among Hispanic National Groups in the United States*. Alcoholism, clinical and experimental research. Retrieved March 22, 2022, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4063311/#:~:text=Among%20those%2012%20and%20older,began%20>

McCutchen, B. (2005). Animal Magnetism Draws in Readers. *B to B*, 90(16), 34.

### **Appendix A:**



# ENDICOTT COLLEGE

## **ELECTRONIC CONSENT FORM for research study entitled Animals and Advertising**

**You are invited to participate in a research study. This survey considered how consumers view beer ads featuring different elements. This study is being conducted by Charleigh Carthy, an undergraduate student at Endicott College, as an assignment in CMM370 Communication Research Methods.**

**Researchers are required to provide a consent form, such as this one, to inform you about the purpose of the research being conducted but also to describe the risks & benefits of participating so you can make an informed decision about participating.**

Before beginning this survey, please note that your participation is entirely voluntary. In order to participate, you must be 18 years or older. There is no incentive for your participation, however the data used will be beneficial for research purposes.

**Purpose:** This survey considered how consumers view beer ads featuring different elements. The survey consists of 14 questions, 4 of them regarding a one minute ad. This survey should take approximately 5 - 6 minutes. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer a few questions regarding your interactions with alcohol, how often you consume alcohol, and a follow up question after watching each ad. Please answer the questions honestly as this survey is completely anonymous and does not ask you to disclose your identity.

**Risks:** The questions participants will be asked during the survey will have no more risk or harm than one would experience in everyday life. Participants will not benefit directly from this study. However, by completing a semi-structured survey, participants will contribute to scholarly research in the field of Communication and Advertising.

**Confidentiality/Privacy:** The data collected from this survey will be confidential and only used for research purposes. The data will be kept in a password protected laptop. However, due to the nature of internet surveys, we cannot guarantee that data will not be distributed elsewhere.

Thank you for participating in the survey. If you have any questions, please contact the primary researcher, Charleigh Carthy (ccarthy@mail.endicott.edu)

☐ I consent to this study

Are you an Endicott College student?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other

Are you over 21 and under 39?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you drink alcohol?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, how often do you drink alcohol?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-2 times a week
- ☐ 3-5 times a week
- ☐ 6-7 times a week

Have you ever purchased a product based on how the commercial made you feel?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you typically see alcohol commercials in your day to day life?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Once you turned 21, how did you know what beer to ask for when out with friends?

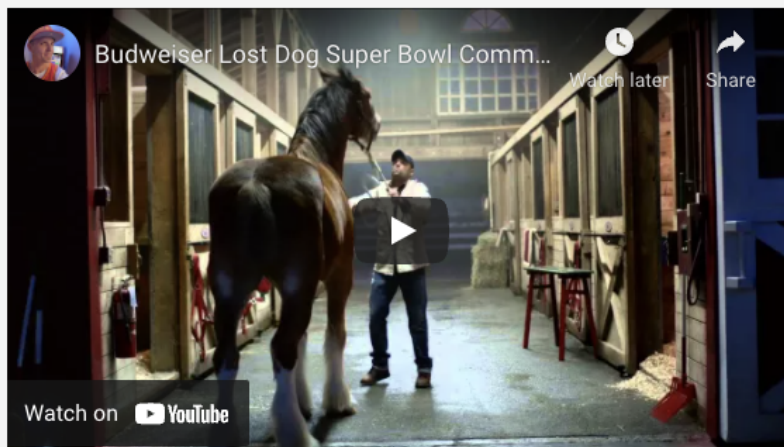
- ☐ A friend recommended it
- ☐ My parents drank it
- ☐ Saw an ad for it
- ☐ Other

**I associate the feeling of happiness with the company Budweiser.**

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

**I associate the feeling of happiness with the company Bud-light.**

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree



**I associate the feeling of happiness with the company Budweiser after watching this commercial.**

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree



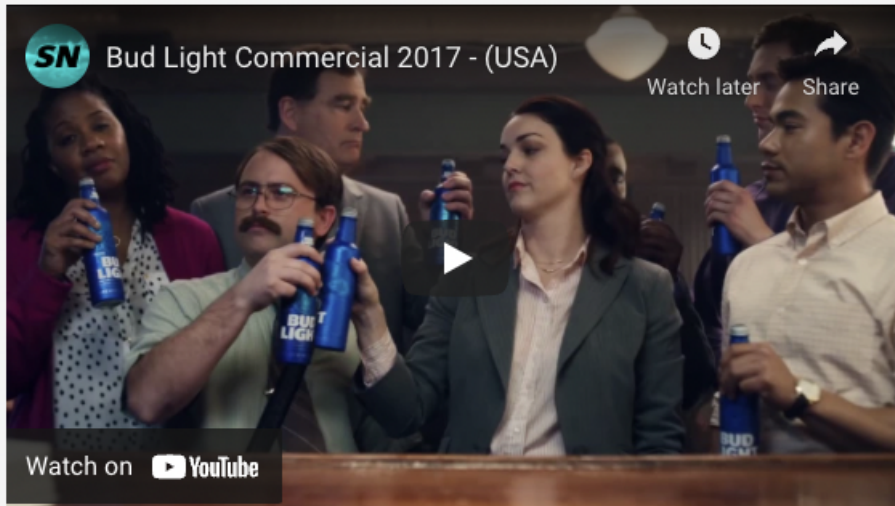
**I associate the feeling of happiness with the company Bud-light after watching this commercial.**

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree



**I associate the feeling of happiness with the company Budweiser after watching this commercial.**

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree



**I associate the feeling of happiness with the company Bud-light after watching this commercial.**

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree