Thematic congruence, interest of the product, and typicality on memory for advertisements

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We studied how the thematic congruence between advertisement and program, the interest of the product, and the typicality of the advertisement’s elements, affect the memory for ads in radio, television, and press. In laboratory experiments and survey studies that manipulated the thematic congruence, inconsistent results were found, and the interest of the product has been proposed as explanation for those results. We hypothesised better memory for congruent ads when products are interesting, and better for incongruent ads when products are no interesting. We also expected higher accuracy (A’) for low typicality elements, those coherent with the nature of the product, but less likely to appear in an ad. Participants were exposed to a single media with two ads embedded, and, after a distractor task, they completed a true/false recognition task. Similar results were obtained in the three media. There were more hits and false alarms with high-typicality elements of the no interesting product, and accuracy (A’) was higher for the low-typicality elements. There were no differences as a function of thematic congruence, likely because participants had not the option to select the materials. The results also suggest the importance of highlighting the distinctive features of the products of no interest.