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Mass media advertising: Information or wallpaper?

Smit, E.G.

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Modelling advertising use

In this chapter, various studies are analysed to further elaborate on the conceptual model of advertising use. By means of a meta-analysis previous studies from the field of advertising research are systematically compared and integrated. These studies will be used to give a general description of advertising use, in terms of different behaviours and measurements of these behaviours, and to build a model to explain advertising use. After describing the method (Section 2.1) and selection process (Section 2.2), various studies on advertising use are compared in Section 2.3 and 2.4. In Section 2.5 a central variable related to advertising use—a person's evaluation of advertising—is further investigated. This evaluation of advertising is in line with the beliefs and evaluation of these beliefs in the Expectancy Value theory of Palmgreen and Rayburn (1985), which explains media use by the expectations (‘gratifications sought’) people have concerning this use, the medium or its content (see Figure 1.1 in the previous chapter). Section 2.6 summarises all variables and relations by presenting the summary model. This model defines the ‘state of the art’ (from 1985 to March 1997) in research about advertising use and explaining concepts.
2.1 Method

The principle of meta-analysis is, to use the rather poetic words of Van den Hooff (1996, p.61), "standing on the shoulders of giants" or "building on knowledge which was gathered by other researchers and theorists in the same field, to be able to 'stand on their shoulders' and look just a little further". Meta-analysis is a method of systematic literature search based on a precisely stated question, which aims to conduct the literature search in an objective and scientifically accepted way, by extracting the data (variables and relationships) from the studies, and analysing this in a replicable way (Light & Pillemer, 1984).

The meta-analysis can be quantitative, resulting in an aggregate correlation between variables based on the individual correlation scores of the studies used, or more qualitative (exploratory) in order to establish hypotheses on relationships between relevant variables (Bouwman & Neijens, 1991; Van den Hooff, 1994, 1996). The meta-analysis presented in this chapter is exploratory in nature. The aim is to further explore the concept of advertising use by means of studies in the field of advertising research. The central question to be answered by means of this meta-analysis is: 'Which variables and relationships were found in previous studies to explain advertising use?'

Based on theories on media use, 'advertising use' was defined in the previous chapter as behaviour of media users with regard to advertising in these media. This behaviour consists of the selection or avoidance of advertising, the exposure to the advertisements themselves (confrontation) and the amount of attention which is paid to them. The focus is on advertising in general or in specific media instead of effects of specific advertisements, such as awareness, comprehension or likeability. The problem, however, is that in order to measure 'advertising reach' or 'exposure' in a survey, 'awareness' of specific advertisements is often used (see previous chapter, Figure 1.4).

2.2 The selection process

The studies used in the meta-analysis are extracted from different sources (see Table 2.1). As a supplement to the published studies, some business reports (unpublished studies) and conference papers are included in the analysis.
Table 2.1: Overview of sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>source</th>
<th>description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Abstracts</td>
<td>overview of articles in psychological journals, available on CD-ROM ('PsycLit')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociological Abstracts</td>
<td>overview of articles in sociological journals, available on CD-ROM ('sociofile')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Abstracts</td>
<td>Sage's published overview of articles in communication journals, not electronically available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>search on WWW pages of American universities and advertising organisations, such as the Advertising Research Foundation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

extra: scanning of some Dutch journals which are not listed in the above overviews: Blad(dossier), Tijdschrift voor Communicatiewetenschap (formerly: Massa-communicatie) and Tijdschrift voor Marketing.


references in books or other overviews which are not included in the above sources, such as conference papers (especially World Wide Readership and Esomar) or articles in Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising.

In order to limit the selection process, three ‘restrictions’ were used. First, the selection was restricted by the central concept of this research project (advertising use), which was ‘translated’ in the keywords to be used in the online search process (see Table 2.2). Studies were selected in which advertising use was not only measured but related to other variables that possibly explain this use as well.

Table 2.2: Overview of keywords

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>keywords used for ‘use’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘advertising’ in combination with ‘attend(ing)’, ‘attention’, ‘avoidance’, ‘avoid(ing)’, ‘behavior(s)’, ‘confrontation’, ‘confront(ing)’, ‘listen(ing)’, ‘noted’, ‘notice’, ‘noticing’, ‘read(ing)’, ‘select(ion)’, ‘switching (channels)’, ‘use(s)’, ‘using’, ‘view(ing)’, ‘watch(ing)’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The selection of studies was further restricted by the period of publishing. A period of ten years was chosen as a second selection criterion. Because this research project started in 1994, studies published between 1985 and the end of 1994 were used. This period was extended by two more years in April 1997. So only studies published before April 1997 were used in this meta-analysis. Studies published before 1985 were only used if a lot of authors referred to it, such as the ‘classic’ study of Bauer and Greyser (1968), and the study of Bunn (1982).

The third and final selection criterion is the article’s nature. As this literature search also aims to determine ‘the state of the art’ in research
on advertising use, only articles were selected which were based on empirical research. This restriction has implications for any books used in this work. Books are seldom restricted to studies which were not published before and most often give an overview of the results of others as well. As a result, books were excluded from this analysis, the only exception being dissertations.

Studies on the use of the remote control appeared to be a difficult category, because these studies mostly deal with media behaviour instead of advertising behaviour. The selection strategy was to include only those studies in which something was said about using the remote control to avoid commercials on television or radio.

As a result of this selection process, 50 studies were selected. These studies were categorised according to medium, method and sample (see Table A1.1 in the appendix). An overview of these studies shows that of all medium types, television advertising was the most studied (68%). Print advertising (newspapers, magazines, or both) was the focus of research in 30% of these studies. In only three of the selected studies a comparison between print and broadcast advertising was made (Bauer & Greyser, 1968; Mittal, 1994; Pfau, 1990). In two other studies, advertising was studied regardless of the medium in which it appeared: Rogers and Smith (1993), and Burns and Foxman (1989) studied respondents' reactions to statements about advertising in general. How advertising use was measured, is further described in the next section.

2.3 Overview of advertising behaviours

Advertising use was summarised as kinds of behaviour or activities of media users regarding advertising content. As mentioned before, studies were selected which report advertising activities such as attention, avoiding, listening, noticing, noting, reading, selecting, switching channels, viewing or watching (see keywords in Table 2.2). It appeared that half of the selected studies report advertising use that refers to avoidance of advertising content (25 studies). These studies deal with television commercials or commercial breaks which were avoided by switching channels, measured directly by some sort of electronic meter or measured indirectly by asking people to what extent they generally avoid commercials on radio or television.

The other articles deal with advertising use that refers to the amount of attention given to advertising content in different media, exposure to television or radio commercials, watching television commercials, viewing time, reading print advertisements or the number of specific advertisements seen or noted (29 studies). All these types of advertising behaviour have some kind of measurement of 'open eyes in front of advertising space' or attention to advertising content in common, albeit by means of different methods and different degrees of mental activity. To measure advertising behaviour, observation, recording or

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self-reporting methods are used. The copy-test is a widely used method in studies on the number of advertisements 'seen' or 'noted'. In a copy-test the respondent is asked to go through the magazine or newspaper and to specify what pages he or she had noticed before (Neijens & Smit, 1996, p.155). For convenience, literature findings with respect to 'avoidance' and 'attention' will be presented separately.

**Avoidance of advertising**

Channel switching, doing something else, drop in rating, increase in electricity figures, zapping or zipping are used to indicate avoidance of television advertising. All these terms have the avoidance of commercials or commercial breaks in common. Their main difference is a difference in measurement instead of differences in type of behaviour (see Table 2.3). All studies deal with commercial avoidance on television, the only two exceptions being the study of Lee and Katz (1993), in which respondents were asked about their avoidance of commercials on videocassettes, and the study of Abernethy (1991) on (car) radio listening.

Table 2.3: Studies on avoidance (25 studies)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>method:</th>
<th>references:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>observation</td>
<td>Capocasa &amp; Lucchi (1986); Cronin &amp; Menelly (1992); Horsley (1986); Sapolsky &amp; Forrest (1989); Tyler Eastman &amp; Newton (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>panel</td>
<td>Danaher (1995); Intomart (1996); Van de Laar &amp; Breemhaar (1991); Mittal (1994); Oomens, Roest &amp; Vaessen (1993); Zufryden, Pedrick &amp; Sankaralingam (1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>survey</td>
<td>Abernethy (1991); Bakker (1995); Capocasa &amp; Lucchi (1986); Greene (1988); Hester &amp; Greenberg (1985); Lee &amp; Katz (1993); Research International (1995); Royne Stafford &amp; Stafford (1996); Sapolsky &amp; Forrest (1989); Weimann (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>recorded by audio tape: Abernethy (1991); electricity figures: Bunn (1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not reported</td>
<td>Lanigan (1997)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observation is done by guest-observers ('spies') who note in small booklets what the members of a household are doing in front of the television set and how often they change channels. In two studies, observation was used in a more experimental setting in which the subjects were asked to watch a video with commercial breaks. The use of the remote control was observed by a video camera (Sapolsky & Forrest, 1989) or by an audio tape which recorded the 'hum' (noise) of the motor of the video (Cronin & Menelly, 1992).

Six studies made use of panel data. In the studies of Intomart (1996), Van de Laar & Breemhaar (1991) and Oomens, Roest & Vaessen (1993), data of the Dutch national CKO-panel were used. The viewing behaviour of these approximately 1000 households was registered by means of an electronic meter, the so called 'people meter'. Danaher (1995) used comparable data from New Zealand. The data analyses in

Modelling advertising use
Mittal (1994) and Zufryden, Pedrick and Sankaralingam (1993) are based on data of a consumer panel and Nielsen’s scanner data, respectively.

The studies based on survey data all report self-reported avoidance behaviour. Three of these studies compare these results with other measures such as observation by a video camera (Sapolsky & Forrest, 1989), ‘spies’ (Capocasa & Lucchi, 1986) or by an audiotape (Abernethy, 1991). Registered and reported behaviour appeared to be different: the respondents claimed to avoid more commercial breaks than they actually did. In the other studies, statements about possible behaviours during commercial breaks or estimates of the amount of avoidance were presented to respondents followed by the question to what degree these behaviours concerned them. The study of Bunn (1982) is different. Bunn analysed electricity demands of British citizens after 5PM. The increase in electricity demand during commercial breaks was seen as an indication of a drop in television viewing.

Attention to advertising

Various methods were used to measure attention given to advertising, exposure to commercials, watching, viewing time, reading advertisements or the number of specific advertisements seen or noted. As mentioned before, these types of behaviour vary in their degree of attention paid to advertising content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>method:</th>
<th>references:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>observation</td>
<td>television: Capocasa &amp; Lucchi (1986); Horsley (1986); Krugman, Cameron &amp; McKearney (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experiment as panel study</td>
<td>radio: Abernethy (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in which use is recorded)</td>
<td>television: Goodstein (1993); Intomart (1996); Olney, Holbrook &amp; Batra (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(self-reported behaviour)</td>
<td>television vs. radio: Buchholz &amp; Smith (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(copy-test)</td>
<td>print: James &amp; Kover (1992); Celci &amp; Olson (1988)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>print</td>
<td>radio: Abernethy (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>television: Agastini &amp; Bruté (1989); Bakker (1995); Burns &amp; Foxman (1989); Capocasa &amp; Lucchi (1986); Horsley (1986); Intomart (1993, 1995); Kitchen (1985); Walker &amp; Dubitsky (1994); Yorke &amp; Kitchen (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>print: Hollander &amp; Renckstorf (1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>radio: television and print: Bauer &amp; Greyser (1968)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>video: Lee &amp; Katz (1993)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attention was directly measured by students observing their families watching commercial breaks (Capocasa & Lucchi, 1986; Horsley, 1986; Krugman, Cameron & McKearney, 1995) or by recording attention in an experimental setting. The amount of radio commercial listening...
time was for example recorded by a tape recorder connected to the car radio (Abernethy, 1991). To record television commercial viewing time, a stopwatch was used by the experimenter (Olney, Holbrook & Batra, 1991).

In the study of Goodstein (1993), respondents were asked to note the time shown on a little clock in front of them. In the two print studies, attention to advertising space was recorded by means of a stopwatch (James & Kover, 1992) and by using an event recorder (Celci & Olson, 1988), which was described as follows: "Each recorder contained a roll of pressure sensitive paper in which a mark was made whenever a subject pressed the button. Because the speed of the paper was constant and closely calibrated, the distance between marks could be converted into the times between events (button presses). Instructions printed on the back of each page in the ad booklet told subjects to press the event recorder button (...). Thus, the distance between marks reflects the time a subject spent attending to each ad" (p.217).

Advertising behaviour was also measured indirectly by asking the respondents to keep a diary to report for given time periods the amount of attention they paid to programs and commercials (Intomart, 1993, 1995) or by asking respondents in a survey about the time they watch, listen or read advertisements (Abernethy, 1991; Agostini & Brulé, 1989; Burns & Foxman, 1989; Capocasa & Lucchi, 1986; Hollander & Renckstorf, 1989; Yorke & Kitchen, 1985).

In some studies, respondents were asked how many advertising pages they have noticed in print. This noticing or 'noted scores' is based on copy-test research, which is done face-to-face. Respondents are asked if they remember having seen (or not having seen) specific pages ('recognition'). In two studies, noticing is measured by the percentage of commercials that was recognised by respondents a day after exposure (Walker & Dubitsky, 1994) or by asking respondents whether they have seen one or more advertisements on a video tape (Lee & Katz, 1993).

2.4 Advertising use explained

The selected studies were further analysed for their relations between advertising use and the other (explaining) variables. These variables and relations were recorded in a database, which consisted of 214 relations. The variables were clustered in the following groups of variables: characteristics of the user, the situation of use, characteristics of the medium and ad content. User related variables are demographics or a person's evaluation of the medium and its advertising content. Medium related variables are for instance the program around the commercials or the break in which these commercials were scheduled. The variables used in the different studies to explain advertising use will be described next.
Before discussing these variables, some remarks are necessary (see also Bouwman & Neijens, 1991). First, studies were compared which differ in country, sample (nature and size), and method. These studies also differ in their analysis of the relation between variables; in some studies the strength of the relations (based on procedures, such as LISREL and regression analysis) was measured on a interval or ratio scale, while in other studies relations were described in terms of 'more and less'. All these differences were not taken into account. All relations mentioned in the literature were included in the database, irrespective of the study’s nature.

A second remark refers to the nature of the relation itself. The relations, which are to be combined to a so-called 'summary model', are based on different studies. This means that the relation between variable $X_1$ and $Y$ is based on study A, and the relation between $X_2$ and $Y$ is based on study B. It is not clear, however, if and how $X_1$ and $X_2$ are related to each other and therefore to $Y$. Only research that includes all variables can tell the effect of each of them.

**Avoidance as dependent variable**

Most studies focused on explaining avoidance behaviour by situation related variables (such as the viewers' equipment or day of the week) and medium related variables (characteristics of the commercial breaks and programs around these breaks). Also demographic variables were included in these studies. Only a few studies included 'psychological' user related variables, such as attitudes or opinions on advertising. Table A1.2 in the appendix lists all variables that were related to one of the avoidance behaviours (channel switching, zapping, zipping or doing something else).

**[User characteristics: general]**

Demographics such as age and sex are frequently related to avoidance of commercials. The studies show that younger viewers and men switch more often than older people or women. Education also appeared to be related to switching, although this relation is not conclusive. Some studies report a positive relation, while others state that people with a lower education avoided more television commercials.

Other variables with a ‘positive’ effect on avoidance were: affinity with the medium, the amount of television use and avoidance in other media. People who were price-consciousness or part of large households avoid advertising less often.

**[User characteristics: evaluation of advertising]**

In some studies people’s avoidance behaviour is related to their attitude to advertising. Van de Laar and Breemhaar (1991) claim that ‘moderate switchers’ are more positive about television advertising than the viewers who switch seldom or often. Lee and Katz (1993), and Mittal (1994) on the other hand conclude that people who were negative about
advertising tried to avoid commercials more often. Agreement with statements about the function of advertising (beliefs) was also measured in studies on avoidance behaviour. Most of the viewers engaging in zapping or zipping behaviour thought that television advertising irritates (Bakker, 1995; Research International, 1995) or bores, bewilders and patronises (Lanigan, 1997). Motives for zapping or zipping were the beliefs about boredom and overload. Curiosity on the other hand results in zapping but not in zipping (Royne Stafford & Stafford, 1996). Evaluation of the commercial content was not related to avoidance behaviour (Cronin & Menelly, 1992; Sapolsky & Forrest, 1989; Intomart, 1996). The factor 'evaluation of advertising' will be further explained in Section 2.5.

[Situation of use]
The studies show that if audience members possess certain equipment, such as a remote control device, they use it to switch channels on television or radio. Switching increases during the evening. In the study of Capocasa and Lucchi (1986) switching of television channels depends on events during the evening ('course of the evening'). Other activities, such as a telephone call or an unexpected visit, were more important than media use. The third temporal variable is day of the week. Channel switching (television) appeared to be reduced in weekends. Also the number of other viewers influenced the amount of switching negatively.

[Medium characteristics: scheduling]
Avoidance of television commercials is also influenced by characteristics of the programs around the break: viewers changed channels more often when they were watching sports or a movie. Commercials around news and during soaps on the other hand were less avoided. Secondly, commercials, which were targeted at specific age groups, were less avoided. The popularity of a program is the third factor that influences rating. It appeared that commercials during popular programs were less avoided by switching. Commercials in a break after a popular program were more avoided.

Another scheduling factor is the break itself: the number of switches appeared to be influenced by the type of break (in-program or not), the number of advertisements in the break and the length of a break. Breaks that interrupted a program were less avoided by channel changing than breaks at the beginning or end of a program. In-program breaks at the end of a long program were avoided as well. Another factor is the number of commercials in a break. Channel switching increases when there are more (shorter) advertisements in a break (called a 'clutter'). Also commercials at the end of a break have less opportunity to be seen, because switching increased during the break; especially in longer breaks.
Ad content appeared to be related to commercial avoidance (Sapolsky & Forrest, 1989). It showed that familiarity of the commercial was negatively related to avoidance, in other words: respondents who were familiar with the commercial shown reported less zipping behaviour. Another study, however, showed that there was no effect of commercial characteristics – such as product category or familiarity with the commercial – on switching behaviour (Intomart, 1996; Van Meurs, 1998).

The above groups of variables related to avoidance of commercials are summarised in Figure 2.1. The variable ‘evaluation of advertising’ will be expanded in Summary model III (see Figure 2.3).

**Figure 2.1: Summary model part I: Avoidance of advertising explained**

**Attention as dependent variable**

Studies on avoidance relate advertising behaviour mainly to situation of use and medium-related variables. Studies on variables concerning paying (some) attention to advertising on the other hand, put relatively more emphasis on the influence of ad content and ‘psychological’ user characteristics such as a person’s evaluation of advertising. Table A1.3 in the appendix lists all variables found with respect to attention.

[User characteristics: general]

In general, women pay more attention or notice more advertisements than men do. Some authors explain this by the traditional housewife-role of most women. Women appeared to be more positive about
advertising, especially about advertising as an information source (Burns & Foxman, 1989).

It appeared that older people saw more advertisements in various media (Bauer & Greyser, 1968) and stated that they used advertisements as an information source (Burns & Foxman, 1989). In the study of Intomart (1995), however, younger people paid more attention to television commercials. Also the effect of income differs per study. People with higher incomes saw more advertisements, according to Bauer and Greyser (1968), but used advertisements less as an information source and watched ads less to buy new things (according to Burns & Foxman, 1989).

Other variables that are positively related to noticing ads are: frequency of medium use, price-consciousness, and product use (whether a person already uses the advertised product or intends to buy it).

[User characteristics: evaluation of advertising]
An important factor in paying attention to advertisements is whether people like advertising or not. It appeared that attitude to advertising in general or attitude to advertising in a specific medium is positively related to attention to advertising.

Beliefs about the role of advertising in society or the function of advertising in people’s personal lives are also related to advertising use. Beliefs about the untruthfulness of advertising and degree of irritation by advertising showed a negative relation with attention. Agreement with statements about the usefulness of advertising (‘informative’) is positively related to attention to or noticing of print advertisements. The factor ‘evaluation of advertising’ will be further explained in Section 2.5.

[User characteristics: evaluative judgements]
In three studies, attention to magazine advertisements (Celci & Olson, 1988) or commercials (Goodstein, 1993; Olney, Holbrook & Batra, 1991) was explained by an attitudinal evaluation of the specific advertisements. This evaluation was performed by independent judges. Prior affect (Goodstein, 1993) and involvement felt (Celci & Olson, 1988), as well as the attitudinal dimensions ‘entertainment’ and ‘curiosity’ (Olney, Holbrook & Batra, 1991), were positively related to viewing time. In the latter study the same commercials were also rated on two emotional dimensions: pleasure and arousal. Both emotions showed a positive relation with viewing time. All these factors refer to persons’ subjective experiences, feelings or attitudes towards the ad ($A_{ad}$).

[Situation of use]
In Horsley’s study (1986), attention varies during the evening. Attention is at its lowest during the afternoon and the early part of the evening and then grows throughout the night, peaking at 10:00 – 10:30 PM.
(news program). The attention level is approximately the same during the week and in the weekend. However, men appeared to have a higher attention level for commercial breaks at the weekend (while there was no direct relationship found in this study between sex and attention).

[Medium characteristics: scheduling]
Program type, break type and break length are not only related to drops in ratings (see avoidance), but also to increases in ratings of commercial breaks. A break on another channel can cause an increase in ratings (Intomart, 1996). And in Kitchen's study (1985) it was observed that people watch mid-programme breaks more often than breaks at the end of a program. Another factor is ad position. The study of Abernethy (1991) showed that radio commercials at the end of a break are less noted than the first ones in a string. The third scheduling factor is channel type. In a Dutch study on attention to television commercials, it was found that respondents paid more attention to commercial broadcasting as compared to public broadcasting (Intomart, 1995).

'Scheduling' of print advertising refers to the position of an advertisement. Studies on noticing print ads show that magazine ads were more noted by the respondents when put in the first part of the magazine, at the left page and next to editorial content instead of other ads (Van der Molen & Robben, 1991). Newspaper ads were better noticed when put in the News section (TMP, 1996).

[Medium characteristics: ad content]
One way to catch the reader's attention is to enlarge the size of the advertisement and to use colour in the (print) ad. A second attention getting factor is the extent to which commercials are typical or unique, meaning "the extent to which a commercial differs from other advertising" (Olney, Holbrook & Batra, 1991, p.443). A third way in catching a viewer's attention (or to get the advertisement noted by a reader) is by certain appeals in the advertisement. Commercial appeals representing feelings appeared to be positively related to the commercial viewing time of the respondents. Facts on the other hand resulted in shorter periods of viewing. An appeal to the brand or product advertised also resulted in more attention.

The groups of variables related to attention to advertising are summarised in Figure 2.2. Evaluation of advertising in general is further described in the next section.
2.5 Evaluation of advertising further explained

There seems to be a general consensus that the overall attitude of consumers towards advertising is negative. This is particularly true of overall attitudes towards television advertising (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1992; Mittal, 1994; Sepstrup, 1991). Despite this general negative evaluation of (television) advertising, consumers differ in the degree to which they are negative or positive about advertising. Moreover, they differ in the reasons that underlie their attitudes. Alwitt and Prabhaker (1992) propose that these reasons are based on what people know about advertising and how it is relevant to them. What people know refers to the beliefs people have, while its relevance refers to the specific function that advertising can serve for a consumer and how this fits into his or her life (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1992, 1994). This line of thinking builds, according to these authors, on the foundation provided by Bauer and Greyser (1968), Muehling (1987), McQuail, Blumler and Brown (1972), and others.

To gain a better understanding of a person's evaluation of advertising, this concept will be discussed in more detail in this section. The studies in which a relation was found between a person's evaluation and use (see Table A1.2 and Table A1.3 in the appendix), were used as a starting point to collect some extra studies. Twenty-six studies were used to create a third database of variables and relations. This database is equivalent to the database described in Section 2.4. Table A1.4 in the appendix lists several studies on evaluation of advertising, such as

[General beliefs]
Alwitt and Prabhaker (1992, 1994) based their general beliefs about television advertising on the study of Bauer and Greyser (1968), for instance: ‘Advertising results in better products for the public’, ‘Most advertising insults the intelligence of the average consumer’ and ‘Advertising often persuade people to buy things they shouldn’t buy’. These statements are also used, albeit in a somewhat revised version, by Muehling (1987) and by Pollay and Mittal (1993).

In most studies perceptions of economic costs and benefits of advertising, and perceptions of execution of the commercials are related to overall liking of television advertising. The more respondents perceive that television advertising has benefits and that it is well executed, the more they like it (positive attitude). The more they perceive that there is too much advertising on television (irritation) and that advertising is offensive or deceptive, the less they like it (negative attitude).

[Personal beliefs or functions]
Advertising can serve different functions for individuals. Advertising can be a source of entertainment as much as it is fun to watch television advertisements. Or advertising can offer information about products or services. In most studies, these two functions appeared to be positively related to liking of advertising (positive attitude). Although not studied as often, advertising can offer a way to express or affirm someone’s own values (‘affirmation of value’) or helps a person learn to act with others (‘social learning’).

[General user characteristics]
As mentioned in Section 2.4, people are in general more negative about advertising as age or income increases. Women are a little more positive about advertising. Dislike of television programs appears to be a strong reason for viewers to dislike television advertising as well. In another study it was found that people who dislike television advertising and who avoid it as much as possible, tend to be light television viewers and read more quality press instead of popular. Two other variables are found to be positively related to liking: the number of television sets in a household and product use.
Another factor that is related to evaluation of advertising is the medium in which advertising appears. The disliking of television advertising on the one hand and liking of print advertising on the other, is explained by the perception of control users have or do not have ('pacing'). Television is accused of intruding in a person's life, especially if compared to print. Figure 2.3 summarises the variables related to evaluation of advertising in general.

![Figure 2.3: Summary model part III: Evaluation of advertising](image)

### 2.6 Summing-up: a model of advertising use

The different studies which were used in this chapter to expand the theoretical framework of the first chapter, show that most of these studies dealt with avoidance of television commercials or paying (some degree of) attention to advertising in print or on television. Studies on avoidance of advertising mainly focus on medium related variables - such as program type, type of break, or ad position - to explain this kind of advertising behaviour. Studies on paying attention to advertising on the other hand, put relatively more emphasis on ad content and 'psychological' user variables. One of these variables is the user's evaluation of advertising, which was among other variables explained by the general beliefs people hold about advertising and functions of advertising in their personal lives. In general, a positive evaluation of advertising results in more attention to advertising content, and a negative evaluation gives rise to avoidance behaviour. These beliefs and
evaluations are in line with the Expectancy Value theory as described in the first chapter. The integration of Figures 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 results in the following summary model in Figure 2.4 that shows the different groups of variables that are related to advertising use.

- **User**
  - General beliefs: execution, role in society, scheduling
  - Liking advertising (attitude)
  - Functions: entertainment, information, affirmation of value, social learning

- **Medium & Content**
  - Scheduling: program type, channel type, break type, position
  - Ad content: familiarity, uniqueness
  - Size of ad, appeals
  - Colour

- **Avoidance attention (advertising use)**
  - Pacing/control

- **Situation**
  - Equipment
  - Temporal variables
  - Number of other viewers

**Figure 2.4: Summary model of advertising use**

At first sight, this summary model fits the theoretical framework of the previous chapter by presenting a specification of the global user characteristics (general, beliefs, functions and attitude), the situation of use and medium characteristics. In more detail, differences occur due to differences in terminology: expectations are not studied as such, but beliefs and functions are. This evaluation of advertising — in general or judgements to specific advertisements — is found as an important variable related to advertising use. Moreover, this model shows that only a few variables are (to some degree) under the control of the advertiser: scheduling and ad content. Most variables are under the control of the users themselves. In sum, this model offers several interesting variables for the empirical part of this dissertation. The answer to "Why do people use advertising?" should be found in characteristics of the users themselves, their evaluation of advertising, situation of use and characteristics of the medium in which advertising appears.

Different methods were briefly discussed in this chapter as well. Observation, experiment, panel and survey were mostly used in the various studies to measure avoidance as well as attention to advertising. By means of the first three methods, use could be observed, registered ('people meter') or recorded; sometimes in a natural environment and sometimes in a laboratory. The advantage of these methods is the
possibility of a direct measurement of behaviour instead of asking respondents to recall their behaviour, which is the case in a survey. Disadvantages however are the costs (panel) or the difficulty of applying the method to a large sample (observation, experiment). Moreover, observation is not appropriate for measuring not observable (mental) constructs such as motives and attitudes. The next chapter presents the methods that are used in this research project. Main data about advertising use are collected by means of a survey (self-reported behaviour).
Notes chapter 2

1 This study is also presented in Van Meurs and Ligthart (1996), and in Van Meurs (1998a).

2 Karin Schut assisted me in collecting different studies on evaluation of advertising during her internship at the Department of Communication, University of Amsterdam (April until August 1995). She also wrote her Master’s thesis about this subject (Schut, 1995).

3 I thank Anita Elberse, who helped me to collect extra studies on advertising behaviour (April 1997).

4 During a presentation of this study (for the Dutch society of market research (NVMI) on May 28, 1997) the question arose whether research on media comparison was done before 1985. If so, the results could have brought researchers to the conclusion that broadcast and print were not comparable and therefore not relevant to study. To see whether media comparison in advertising research was done before 1985, we checked conference papers (Esomar and World Wide Readership) and articles in the Journal of Advertising Research. It proved that this was not the case.

5 In four studies avoidance of advertising as well as attention to advertising was measured.

6 The respondents were also able to count the advertisements they saw by means of a hand counter.

7 Two categories of studies on the evaluation of specific advertisements (so called ‘likeability studies’) are found in the literature. The first category of studies aims at gauging what viewers feel or think after seeing these advertisements (forced exposure). Schlinger (1979), for instance, asked respondents to describe commercials by selecting adjectives from a list (‘Viewer Reaction Profile’). Based on a factor analysis it was then possible to analyse commercials in terms of their likeability. Other ‘classic’ reaction profiles are Wells’ reaction profile (1971) based on describing print advertisements by adjectives on bipolar scales, and Leavitt’s multidimensional profile (1970) based on evaluating television commercials by selecting adjectives of a list (unipolar scales). Also Aaker and Bruzone (1981, 1985), Aaker and Stayman (1990), Biel and Bridgewater (1990), and Greene (1992) used adjectives to describe advertisements. DuPlessis (1994a, 1994b) on the other hand, used Schlinger’s statements to measure likeability of television commercials. In a number of articles these reaction profiles and underlying dimensions or factors are compared (see for instance Aaker & Stayman, 1990; DuPlessis, 1994a).

A second category of studies on the evaluation of specific advertisements put more emphasis on the measurement of the attitude construct ($A_w$), its antecedents (cognitive or affective reactions to the brand or advertisement), and relations with attitude to the brand ($A_b$) (see for instance: Batra & Ray, 1986; Broach, Page & Wilson, 1995; Lutz, 1985; Lutz, McKenzie & Belch, 1986; MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989).