Single vs. Multiple Signage: Applying Limited Capacity Message Processing to Fans’ Recognition and Recall of In-Stadium Advertising

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Stadiums are starting a new trend in signage display techniques. With the innovation of digital signage, stadiums are surrounding their field with the signage of one single sponsor, and digitally rotating to the next sponsor periodically. While this rotating technique is becoming more common (Lee & Faber, 2007), little is known about whether the technique is more effective in creating consumer recognition and recall of corporate sponsors than the traditional cluster method.

The main drive behind the rotating signage technique is the limited capacity model of mediated message processing (Lang, 2000). According to the limited capacity theory, information is processed through three sub-processes (i.e., encoding, storage, and retrieval) and there is limited amount of information the brain can process at once (Lang, 2000). Sport fans may be able to process one or two, or may be five advertisements placed in the stadium at the same time. As fans’ primary attention is on the action taking place on the field, they may have limited capacity to encode and store information of signage advertisements (Lee & Faber, 2007). This limitation may be an issue when multiple signage’s are displayed at the same time and overload an individual’s encoding and storage capacity, thus leads to minimal information retrieval afterwards. However, little is known about how fans process in-stadium signage as a source of secondary information (Lee, Potter, & Pedersen, 2018). Accordingly, the current study proposes two hypotheses guided by the limited capacity model of mediated message processing (Lang, 2000) in order to determine optimum number of advertisements embedded in a stadium.

Hypothesis: The single-signage rotation technique generates greater encoding rates (as indicated by brand recognition; H1) and retrieval rates (as indicated by brand recognition; H2) and recall than multiple-signage rotation, followed by the cluster technique.

About 90 participants (3 groups of 30 members each) will be recruited from a public university located in the Northeast part of the United States in February 2019. Participants will be shown the same 10-minute video clip of a soccer match, but, randomly equipped with one of three different advertising strategies for 10 corporate sponsorships (i.e., single advertisement throughout stadium periodically rotating to next sponsor, a set of 5 different brands advertised in stadium signage that rotate back and forth, and the traditional “cluster” of in-stadium advertisements). All other aspects (e.g., brand logos, numbers of corporate brands, game processing) will remain same. After watching the video clip, subjects will be asked to complete the questionnaire items involving their team identification to teams (Bradley & Lang, 1994) and their recall/ recognition of the brands (Lee & Faber, 2007) that would have appeared over the course of the clip.

It is expected that the single-sign rotation technique will help fans recall the sponsorship better than the traditional way. Findings of this research will help brands to evaluate sponsorship opportunities with teams based on display techniques used in the stadium. Findings will also help stadium managers to design techniques that grasp fans’ attention and make their stadiums more appealing to potential sponsors.