

A Study on First Order and Second Order Conditioning In Background Music in Advertising

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ABSTRACT:

Classical conditioning in advertising is used by firms to get consumers buy the things instead of the competition. There are two experiments – one by Gom and the other by Mcseeny and Bierly. Gom's experiment highlights the problems of demand characters, awareness, arousal etc. Mcseeny and Bierly looked at the statistical issues the first being that increasing the trials increases the percentage of Conditioned Response. Finally we see that higher order conditioning is being used by firms in video commercials nowadays.

Keywords: *Classical Conditioning, Higher order Conditioning, Background Music*

INTRODUCTION

Second Order conditioning in advertising has rarely been used by firms who sell products to get consumers to purchase from them instead of their competition. This essay will briefly explain what first order and second order conditioning is. It will examine the problems with experiments on second order conditioning in advertising and briefly look at two experiments which try to overcome these problems in testing second order conditioning in advertising. The essay will then look at what advertisers need to remember when using second order conditioning and then give examples of how companies can use second order conditioning in their advertising campaigns.

Pavlov's main belief was that learning occurred through association. The dog associated Pavlov with the food and would then salivate. It occurs when two stimuli CS (conditioned stimulus) and UCS (unconditioned Stimulus) are continuously paired together and cause a CR (conditioned response).

There are a number of concepts drawn from Pavlov's research:

1. **Acquisition:** first stage of learning(repeated a few times)
2. **Stimulus Generalisation:** Instead of using one particular stimulus you can change and use another one
3. **Extinction:** Refers to the disappearance of the conditioned response due to the non-appearance of the unconditioned stimulus
4. **Spontaneous Recovery:** The re-emergence of the conditioned response with the reintroduction of the unconditioned stimulus

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5. **High Order conditioning:** The moving from one stimulus to another (Noonan, 2010)

Gorn's experiment tested on 244 undergraduate students at McGill University on how music affected consumer's product choices. The subjects were exposed to a neutral CS a pen was used for this, either a light beige or light blue one depending on which group. The CS was paired with liked or disliked music (UCS). The subjects were told very little about the CS. The US was decided before the experiment based on previous experiments. There were four different groups used in the experiment which were looking at a slide show to expose them to the CS and the UCS. Group 1 were shown the light beige pen with liked music, Group 2 were shown the light beige pen with disliked music, group 3 the light blue pen with liked music and group 4 the light blue pen with disliked music. At the end the groups were giving questionnaires and had to pick which pen they would purchase. The results showed that 79% choose the pen associated with the liked music and 30% choose the pen associated with the disliked music. (Gorn, 1982)

This study was noticeable because it covered problems that in previous studies had not been covered. The following problems have been associated with experiments in Classical Conditioning:

Demand Characteristics: If the subjects are aware of the CS and the UCS they may respond to the CS positively because they think that is what the experimenter wants them to do.

Lack of Awareness: The subject may not be aware that the CS in the advertisement may affect them. This can result in the subject convincing themselves and the experimenter that they are being reasonable.

Arousal: Product information must be kept to a minimum in testing for classical conditioning. If not the UCS in the advertisement might cause arousing interest in the product information. By keeping product information to the least as possible it allows the UCS to change attitudes directly.

Exposure VS Classical Conditioning: If a subject has developed an attitude towards a product it is because they have been exposed to this product before in an advertisement. However with classical conditioning the subject is choosing a product because they are after associating the product with a positive or negative. (Gorn, 1982)

The first noticeable study on classical conditioning effects was by Gorn in 1982. Previous studies include Gresham and Shimp 1985; Kleine, Macklin, and Bruvold 1986; Macklin 1985.

In advertising the advertised product is the conditioned stimulus (CS), this is then developed through association with other stimuli (UCS) that are reacted to positively therefore being the conditioned response (CR).

McSeeney and Bierley wanted to show a more accurate test of classical conditioning in advertising. The experiment tested whether consumer attitudes toward a product can be conditioned with advertising a product and second whether classically conditioned attitudes can be stronger with more trials being done. The subjects uncovered to the trials, showed much more happy attitudes towards the brand compared to that of the control groups that did not show any

attitude change. The conditioned response was changeless no matter of the number of different showings of the CS and the US.

These results revealed that conditioning can occur in advertising. The nice images used in pairing the brand had a very good affect on the attitudes towards the brand.
(Elnora W. Stuart, 1987)

The experiments above have revealed enough evidence that the attitude towards a brand can be classically conditioned.

Since these experiments, advertisers have used classical conditioning to advertise their products. Advertisers will show their product (CS) and will try to associate it with some sort of feeling or emotion (UCS) to get consumers to have a conditioned response (CR) towards their products. Advertisers have to be careful to present the CS with the UCS or else the product may be forgotten or its original attraction may be lost this is drawn from Pavlov's research known as extinction and spontaneous recovery as mentioned above. (Grant, 2012)

Second Order Conditioning

Learning from McSeeney and Bierley's experiment we may devise an experiment where a favourable or positive Background Music (CS1) is associated with some sort of feeling or emotion (UCS) to get consumers to have the desired feeling or emotion (conditioned response (CR)) toward the music. Then the Background Music (CS1) is paired with a product brand (CS2). This is the second order conditioning where the Background music becomes the unconditioned stimuli (UCS) for the product brand (CS2).

The following are examples of advertisements that use classical conditioning:

Coca Cola 'Catch' Commercial

This was a television campaign that had Coca Cola (CS2) with upbeat and happy background music in the advertisement (CS1). (Classical Conditioning, 2012). The result was a association of Coca Cola (CS2) with the feeling of joy and happiness (UCS).





Sony Walkman 'Detail in Motion' Commercial

This advertisement associates the Sony Walkman Video Player (CS2) with feelings of energy, music and sexy (UCS). The background song (CS1) was no. 1 at the billboard top 10 music hits in 2010. This would make people's response to the video player being 'sexy walkman'. (Sony Walkman Video Player,

2010)

CONCLUSION

As examined in this essay it is clear that classical conditioning of the second order is used in video advertising.

Pervious experiments were not that viable because they did not use the correct basic requirements when testing for classical conditioning

There may be very little experiments backing up classical conditioning in video commercials but it is very clear in commercials and advertisements. Many Video Advertisements have a nice music in the background if they want consumers to act positively towards their products. They will use mostly music which are at the top of the charts and favoured by the majority of the demography.

Advertisers need to remember when using the classical condition approach that they must show the UCS, the CS1 and the CS2 together so that the product is not extinct.

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