An Investigation into the Persuasiveness of Puffery in Advertising:
A Mixed Method Approach

by

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A Thesis
Presented to
The University of Guelph

In partial fulfilment of requirements
for the degree of
Master of Science
Marketing and Consumer Studies

Guelph, Ontario, Canada

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PERSUASIVENESS OF PUFFERY IN ADVERTISING: A MIXED METHOD APPROACH

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This thesis examines the usage of puffery in advertising. Puffery refers to highly exaggerated or “over-the-top” claims and is commonly used as a legal defense when advertising is alleged to be misleading or deceptive, given that a “reasonable” consumer should not believe a “puffed” claim. Using a mixed method approach and Vitaminwater as the focal product, this thesis investigates whether “puffed” claims, despite being highly exaggerated and largely non-believable, are likely to be persuasive to consumers and consequently misleading. First, a semiotic analysis of Vitaminwater advertising and labeling was carried out to illustrate the use of puffery in the brand’s marketing communication and the potential for such claims being misleading. Second, an experimental study was conducted that exposed participants to Vitaminwater advertisements possessing verbal or visual puffery claims, non-puffery claims, or a control condition. Participants were asked to fill out a self-response questionnaire pertaining to the advertisements they were shown, including measures relating to their involvement, general attitudes toward the ad, believability toward the claims or claim credibility, purchase intentions, as well as the perceived healthiness of the product. The research sheds light on the legal aspects of deception in advertising and informs policy makers and regulators about the potential influence of puffery. Results show that policy makers should potentially re-evaluate statements regarding deceptive/misleading advertisements that contain puffery as they can be persuasive regardless if a claim is direct or implied in the advertisements.
Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank Dr. Timothy Dewhirst, my advisor, for all his hard work, encouragement and advice that he has given me throughout this process. Tim did a phenomenal job of helping me remain focused and stay on track, as well as provide support for me through the development of my thesis.

I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Vinay Kanetkar, Dr. Wonkyong Lee, and Ms. Lianne Foti. Each committee member offered their respective skills, experience and knowledge to me throughout the long journey of completing this project.

I would also like to thank all of the M.Sc. classmates and friends I have made along the way. We have all helped each other at times and it makes the goal that much easier to obtain.

I would also like to thank my friends and family for continuously supporting me and allowing me to realize that the tough times are always worth it, and that in the end, the accomplishment will be well deserved.
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Strategic marketing and tactically positioning products creates an opportunity for corporations to obtain customers and achieve a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Specifically, marketers are able to portray their products in a manner, which elicits emotional feelings, and conveys a message that is relatable and desirable for the consumer. Marketers will sometimes blur the truth and even explicitly make marketing communication statements that aren’t necessarily correct or even attainable. There is seemingly, at times, a fine line between legal and illegal forms of advertising and recently several major food companies have been scrutinized by misinforming the public about what their products truly consist of. For example, companies such as Campbell’s Soup have been targeted by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) for communicating misleading claims, the most notable for implying their product was “heart healthy,” when it actually had high quantities of sodium (Campbell’s Soup Co., 1992). Misleading food labels provide a recent example of marketing communication craftiness and place issues of marketing ethics into the spotlight. Ward and Martens (2000), for example, show how companies have placed “health claims” on food products in order to gain a competitive advantage, while not apparently concerning themselves with the repercussions or harm they can cause from making said claims.

In the U.S., several companies have been forced to remove “health claims” from their products after the FTC has intervened and proven that the claims were inappropriate and violate laws. In saying this, some of the laws concerning misleading advertising appear to provide considerable latitude, and in some cases appear to favour the marketer over the consumer. Russell, Metcalf, and Stephens (1981) provide a convincing example that deceptive advertising,
and the formal definition, needs to be made more clear and encompassing after an analysis of policies. The definition they provide for deceptive advertising is: “An advertisement is misleading if it creates, increases or exploits a false belief about a product’s performance” (Russell, Metcalf, and Stephens, 1981, p. 12).

Another issue that raises concern is the recognition of “puffery” within advertisements. Puffery potentially takes the burden of legality away from the advertiser and marketer as it basically deems the ad in question so misleading or exaggerated that no reasonable consumer should actually believe the claim being made. Puffery not only convolutes the definition of deception in advertising, it also allows advertisers and marketers to make claims that generate attention and ultimately lead to sales (Boudreaux, 1995). Puffery, being introduced as a legal term in advertising, has prompted considerable confusion and led to an increased number of lawsuits between advertisers, competitors, and consumers and has policy implications worth addressing.

As obesity rates escalate, yet the desire for a healthy lifestyle continues to spread across North America, it is no surprise that “healthy” choices have transcended into the beverage industry. What started as strictly marketing labels on food products, such as Blue Menu, Heart and Stroke and Reduced Salt products, we have now seen an explosion in the healthy beverage industry. Notoriously, sugar content has been watched and controlled in both the food and beverage industry (Seiders and Petty, 2004). Currently we have seen the advent of products being marketed for their lack of (or reduced) sugar content and even more recently certain products marketed for added benefits, such as minerals, calcium, and vitamins. Marketing communication for certain beverages either explicitly state these added benefits directly within their advertisements or imply this through their creative visuals. There is no question that some
drinks do contain healthy ingredients and that there are healthier alternatives than certain beverages such as pop. On the other hand, the degree to which these drinks portray themselves to be an essential part of a healthy, balanced diet appears sometimes quite misleading.

This thesis examines the marketing communication of Vitaminwater, a Coca-Cola product, and attempts to determine if their advertising and product labels may be deemed misleading and deceptive. The rationale for focusing on Vitaminwater was based on the fact that marketing communication for the product commonly claims to be an integral piece in a consumer’s “healthy lifestyle”. Also, the Centre for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) has launched a lawsuit against Coca-Cola, claiming that marketing communication for Vitaminwater is deceptive (CSPI, 2009). Coca-Cola has taken the defense that their advertisements contain “puffery”, and no reasonable consumer should believe the claims in question. As “puffery” is a main conceptual concern for this thesis, it seems relevant to choose a product where the health claims made in advertising are purported to be mere exaggerations of the truth.

**Research Question:**

To what extent can marketers claim that puffery is not believable to the ‘reasonable consumer’ and insist their claims shouldn’t influence consumers? Verbal and visual puffery will be examined to determine the degree of persuasiveness that may be inherent in print advertisements from both a consumer and semiotic perspective.
1.1 Research Goals/Objectives

There have been several bodies of literature and research conducted pertaining to misleading advertising, especially in the food domain. With the upsurge in health-related beverages offered, there is ample opportunity to focus on deceptive marketing communication, specifically relating to puffery in advertisements. As aforementioned, puffery is a legal defense and position that marketers can take when they are being accused of misleading advertising. Puffery maintains that consumers should effectively not believe the claims being made, as they are overly exaggerated and boastful. Although this may be true, marketing communications continue to evolve and adapt according to the regulatory environment and there appears to be a competitive advantage to create highly persuasive messages that still remain legally sound. For this thesis, a mixed-methods approach is used, through enlisting a semiotic analysis that is complemented with an experimental design consisting of advertisement manipulations. The semiotic analysis provides rich qualitative data that is used to validate and inform the manipulation aspects of the advertisements that were shown to study participants to evaluate their response to puffed ads. In turn, insight is provided regarding whether the ads being studied might be considered misleading and deceptive.

Using a semiotic approach and referring to the guidelines such as those used by Penn (2000), various dimensions of the advertisements are reviewed and discussed on both a connotative and denotative level. From here, an experimental design, using advertising manipulations, provides a consumer perspective and adds to the discussion relating to deceptive/misleading advertising and policies relating to puffery. Using semiotics provides only a partial depiction of the actual influence that the advertisement carries. With the inclusion of
multiple perspectives, added support is provided as to the whether the puffery in advertising is inherently deceptive.

Through gaining a semiotic perspective as well as the perspective of various consumers, an evaluation of deceptiveness and the presence or non-presence of puffery inherent in several advertisements is established. Grunert and Dedler (1985) were able to show the difficulty in actually policing deceptive/misleading advertisements due to the overwhelming amount of ads we are subjected to daily, as well as the rather “relaxed” laws that are currently in place. Consumer research is needed to determine whether or not an ad is in fact misleading and deceptive, and this can be evaluated using an experimental manipulation of ads and by also using copy-tests. Having the consumer’s perspective will add support and strength to the conclusion about whether or not advertising is deemed deceptive/misleading, as well as provide insight that the FTC and other regulatory bodies could potentially accept if a legal opportunity arose involving the product in question. For this thesis, the sample of participants is representative of the individuals that are both users of the products and potential or future users.

Through further analysis of FTC regulations pertaining to deceptive advertising and the guidelines that are in place regarding an ad being deemed deceptive, an experimental design has been developed to deliver a clear result regarding whether marketing communication for Vitaminwater may be considered misleading. Puffery is manipulated to determine whether or not reasonable consumers do in fact dismiss claims that are supposedly puffery, or if they believe them and are persuaded by them like non-puffed claims. The results provide insight as to the persuasiveness of certain claims and whether or not the current deception statements – and legal viewpoint of puffery – need re-evaluation to further protect consumers and competitors alike.
In the following sections, deceptive and misleading advertising will be discussed through a legal lens, as well as the ways in which it can affect both consumers and corporate actors alike. An examination of puffery will follow, as it is commonly used as a defense in deceptive and misleading advertising lawsuits and is the aspect of deceptive advertising that will be manipulated in the experimental portion of this thesis. Finally, previous cases involving copy-tests and rulings by the FTC will be investigated as well as previous research relating to the “halo effect”, self-regulatory goals, and misleading claims and labels that lead to behavioural changes in consumers’ consumption and purchasing habits.

It may be a rather ambitious goal, but to influence public policy and reveal that there needs to be more stringent regulation and guidance regarding misleading advertisements would be an end result worth striving for. Changes could be suggested for policy improvements regarding puffery being used as a legal defense for marketers. As marketing continues to evolve and adapt to gain competitive advantage for their respective companies, policy should also adapt to continue to serve not only the public’s interest but also all companies alike.
2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Puffery-Definition/Application of Defense

In the realm of advertising litigation, puffery is a legal defense that is often called upon in deceptive and misleading advertising cases (Hoffman, 2006). The usage of puffery is not only found in the domain of advertising, but can also be applied to several other situations. “Legally the most significant characteristic of ‘puffery’ is that it is a defense to a charge of misleading purchasers of goods, investments, or services, or to a charge that a promisor has made a legally cognizable promise” (Hoffman, 2006, p. 1400). In terms of deceptive and misleading advertising, “puffery” can be defined as the reason that the advertisement in question should not be deemed deceptive as its mere nature is just a “puff” or an obvious exaggeration (i.e., it should be identified as such and not taken as the truth).

In essence, when using the defense of puffery, the company in question is able to remove liability as this defense deems any reasonable consumer should not fully believe the claims being made in the advertisement. In the Deception Statement released by the FTC in 1984, puffery is defined and includes: “1) representations that ordinary consumers do not take literally, 2) expressions of opinion not made as a representation of fact, 3) subjective claims (taste, feel, appearance, smell) and hyperbole that are not capable of objective measurement.” Using this defense can alleviate the charges put forth that accuse the company in question of making a misleading claim. For example, a claim such as “Better than the rest” is a situation where a puffery defense would commonly be used, as the reasonable consumer cannot actually prove if the said product is better than the rest and thus, it is not deemed a factually misleading statement. This is an example of an explicit statement, where there is little room for
interpretation and a reasonable consumer should be able to determine that such a claim is
difficult to measure, thus it would have little chance in court. Depending on the context, a claim
can be *explicit*, similar to the one above, or it can be *implied*, leaving room for interpretation
sometimes resulting in confusion for the consumer. For example, Bayer, a well-known aspirin
compartment made a claim that said “the world’s best aspirin,” which the FTC agreed was mere
puffery. In a different context where the same claim was used, but in conjunction with other
competitors, it made consumers believe that it was better than other options of aspirin because it
contained superior qualities (Sterling Drug, 1983) (see Appendix 1).

Put another way, puffery claims are usually used by the defendant when they have made
claims that state their own product is better than competitors’ products, or if the product claims
to give the user desirable results that ultimately are unattainable. This type of advertising
encourages (bad) consumption and that is why consumers and competitors feel compelled to
complain when the product doesn’t live up to the desirable results, or more specifically the stated
facts. In the context of Bayer aspirin, if a consumer normally bought and consumed a different
brand of aspirin, then based on Bayer’s comparison advertisement the consumer decided to
purchase Bayer instead (believing the product contained some type of added benefit), then this
would be deemed bad/harmful consumption as a result of a misleading advertisement.

Often participants in studies have a hard time believing they are influenced by advertising
claims, especially relating to sensitive topics such as habits and healthy eating. The initial portion
of this thesis includes a semiotic analysis in order to gain a rich interpretation of print
advertisements to achieve a perspective that will complement the findings of consumer research.
The following outlines the basics of semiology and is further explained in the methods chapter.
2.2 Semiotics Background

Semiotics was first introduced by the French linguist, Ferdinand De Saussure (1915), who made reference to the term “semiology,” which is the study of what signs are made of and what commands them. He was most interested in the relationship or the connectedness between the signified (the object: baseball bat) and the signifier, which is the sound image (the spoken word: bat). Just as the word “bat” can have multiple meanings (e.g., baseball equipment or a mammal with webbed wings), advertisements can also prompt multiple interpretations based on context and the cultural knowledge and person histories of the interpreter. “Polysemy” can occur when two different individuals view the same advertisement or message and have different interpretations. Polysemy, applied to advertising, is regarded as “the occurrence of multiple meanings for the same advertising message” (Puntoni, Schroeder, and Ritson, 2010, p. 1). Advertisements can be interpreted differently depending on the audience and the context of the advertisement. It should be noted that polysemy occurs both as a misinterpretation, or an unintended consequence, as well as on purpose through strategic marketing. Marketers can create messages that encourage different interpretations for the following reasons: to convey humour, to appeal to widespread target markets, and to bypass or overcome the pressure of social norms.

Semiotics is founded within the relationship of signs and symbols within a changing environment. The signified is ultimately a creation of the reader’s cultural background, thus words can have different meanings or symbolize something very different depending on one’s culture that surrounds them. An example of this could be the colour, red, as the colour can be a signifier of sex appeal in some cultures, or for other cultures it signifies death. Saussure (1915) wrote about semiotics as a dyadic relationship, having two distinct parts that work together.
C.S. Peirce was a philosopher that came after Saussure and he believed that semiotics consisted of a triadic relationship, having three parts, which were made up of the signifier, the signified, and the interpretant. The interpretant is basically the part that Saussure alluded to, which is the manner in which we decode the sign or symbol into our own understanding (Mick, 1986). Barthes (1964) also wrote a paper dedicated towards further understanding the usages of semiology as well as the mutually exclusive levels that are found within each sign or symbol. Barthes speaks about “first order” and “second order” systems, where the first order system is a signifier of the second. For example, a maple leaf – as a sign – is constructed of both a sound image and a concept in the mind of the reader (i.e., a green or red coloured leaf with several points). The second order system could have several different meanings and that is where the signifier becomes the signified. Here, the maple leaf could represent Canada, a sports team, or patriotism. As noted in the second system, the individual’s cultural knowledge or experience comes into play, as patriotism or Canadian may be obvious for a Canadian student, and may not produce the same interpretation for a student from China. The second order system is reminiscent of what Peirce referred to as the interpretant, where we bring our own knowledge together to form a coherent understanding of the sign.

Barthes introduced two new terms that can be used synonymously with first and second order systems. *Denotation* or denotative level refers to the reader being able to understand basic linguistics. *Connotation* or connotative level refers to a further meaning, where cultural knowledge and background information are used to decipher the sign or symbol. Danesi and Sebeok (2000, p. 9) wrote about similar levels of analysis as Barthes, but they also included a third level, “annotatum,” which is defined as “the interpolation or assignment of a subjective and/or social meaning to a form (sign, text, etc.).” This construction of semiotics closely
resembles Saussure’s notion of a triadic relationship, where the interpretant is comparable to the annotatum.

In addition to signs and symbols interpreted by the reader, Barthes (1964) referred to myths, or the mythological attachments that certain signs or symbols may hold. This is an important part of current advertising and marketing campaigns as several companies either depict this through their advertising creative or even directly in their brand names. Nike stands for the goddess of victory, thus several of their advertising campaigns can be noted to have mythical resemblances that further progress the story of both Nike and the notable athletes that wear or use the brand. Appendix 2 reveals a Nike advertisement featuring Kobe Bryant. On face value, this may appear similar to other advertisements depicting a famous athlete, excelling at their craft. When analyzed further, however, we notice that his back contains a set of wings, similar to the Goddess of Victory, Nike. The advertisement, for a new pair of shoes, emphasizes its ‘supernatural’ performance capabilities, similar to those of a God. Individuals may equate the shoes to giving you the ability to run faster, jump higher, and embody the attributes of a Greek God.

2.2.1 *Semiotics in Practice*

Semiotics is an interpretive approach to analyzing advertisements, and there is a definitive method that should be carried out to obtain a concise analysis when examining the advertisements. Penn (2000) describes advisable measures to undertake before choosing advertisements for analysis, along with the most efficient manner to collect, evaluate, and present the data. The first step is actually choosing the advertisements that will be used for further investigation. Although this may sound like an easy task, careful deliberation must be taken to
choose the appropriate material. Penn notes that some advertisements are too old to be analyzed currently, as well as some pose themselves as overly ‘attractive’ for a semiotic analysis, as in, it is one single advertisement from a campaign that lends itself to several interpretations and is not representative of recurring themes within the campaign itself. Anderson, Dewhirst, and Ling (2006) note that the selected advertisements should be representative of other ads from the given campaigns and found in similar mediums (e.g., magazine advertisements).

The second portion of the methodology includes constructing an inventory of the information gathered on a denotative level. Penn (2000) views this as a crucial element when beginning to analyze the information. This step allows the analyst to become familiar with the material and create an enormous wealth of information related to various aspects of the advertisement including size, colour, location, linguistics, mannerisms, structure of the text, etc. This is where examining the advertisement for a lengthy period of time is not necessarily inappropriate, as parts of the advertisement that are later deemed non-useful will be left out when the next step of critical analysis takes place.

The third step involves analyzing the ad from a connotative level, also referred to as second order system where the initial face value of the advertisements’ signs and symbols are now metaphors and symbols of other cultural identification. During this step, aspects of the advertisement are analyzed and a decision is made in accordance with higher-order interpretations. Depending on the advertisement, there may be several or few facets of the ad that constitute further analysis. The researcher uses their own cultural knowledge of the subject, as well as places themselves as the reader and the typical cultural norms that would be present while they view an ad (Penn, 2000). There are many things to look at and draw connections with at this level of analysis. A thorough search for relationships between colours, ad-copy, and
positioning is conducted in order to find deeper meanings that the advertisement holds. According to Penn, “The cultural knowledge and values that are assumed in the reader may be used to ‘reconstruct’ the ideal reader or identify social indices” (2000, p. 246). When investigating an advertisement, determining the correct lens to view the advertisement through is a particularly important issue.

The final two steps involve stopping the analysis and then presenting the information gathered in a manner suitable for the audience. Analysis may be stopped once the research questions have been answered to reasonable potential as well as a thorough account of relationships recorded. Using a map or a matrix to decipher the relationships between denotative and connotative levels creates an easier and more manageable format for determining whether or not analysis has been sufficiently completed. After analysis, the results must be placed into a presentable format. It is important to show the relationships found and draw the connection on varying levels (i.e., from a denotative and a connotative level). Previous semiotic analyses have been able to uncover deeper meaning and rich interpretations of advertising campaigns that are often difficult to reveal, especially on sensitive topics such as smoking and tobacco use (Anderson, Dewhirst, and Ling, 2006).

The following section highlights previous studies that indicate there is substantial evidence in favour of misleading health claims in the food industry. The purpose of this section is to show the opportunity for parallels to be drawn and tested in the health drink industry.
2.3 Food Studies Involving Deceptive Claims of a Healthy Nature

Several studies have attempted to re-create a life-like purchasing situation to determine the effect that health and nutrition claims have on consumer behaviour. Provencher, Polivy, and Herman (2008) designed a study that had perceived healthiness as the manipulated variable where participants were placed in either control or experimental conditions. Based on previous studies, the authors made several inferences about perceived healthiness of food products and how it would affect the participants’ overall evaluation of other attributes that the product contained (i.e., the “Halo Effect”). Moreover, it has been noted that individuals tend to create stereotypical beliefs related to the name of the product (Oakes, 2006). For this particular study, Oakes was concerned with the manner in which a food product was presented to the participant, either as healthy or unhealthy, and if this would affect their respective overall intake of said product. When a consumer is faced with a product that contains a health or nutritious claim, giving it the perception that it is a healthy product, consumers tend to make underestimations of other ingredients, especially caloric content (Carels et al., 2006, 2007; Chandon and Wansink, 2007). Oakes (2006) pre-screened the participants to determine whether or not they were restrained or unrestrained eaters, or in other words, whether they were health conscious and were concerned with their caloric and nutritional intake on a daily basis. From here, the experimenters placed the participants in either a “healthy snack” condition or an “unhealthy snack” condition. In the healthy condition, the participants were put in a room with a plate of cookies and told they were taste-testing for a new type of cookie, which was made with “high-fibre oatmeal, with soluble fibre and is low in saturated fat and free from trans-fat.” In the “unhealthy snack” condition, participants were told that they were taste-testing a new “gourmet cookie made with fresh butter and old-fashioned brown sugar, it’s a great treat with a pleasant sweet taste”
(Provencher, Polivy, and Herman, 2008). In both conditions, participants were told to rate the taste and determine how healthy the snack is for an individual if they were to consume it regularly.

Participants were instructed to eat as much as they wanted until they were able to get a good grasp of the flavour before returning the next day for a separate taste test. In actuality, when the participants returned the next day, they were informed there was no taste test and that they were to truthfully disclose all nutritional information pertaining to what they ate the day before, with the help of a nutrition expert. Without participants knowing, they were being watched on the previous day in order to calculate the amount of cookies they consumed during their original taste test. Participants who were in the unhealthy condition tended to eat fewer portions of cookies compared to those in the healthy condition. This provides some evidence that when consumers are faced with a healthy product, or a product that reveals a specific health claim, more often than not they will indulge in more consumption (Provencher, Polivy, and Herman, 2008). The authors provide evidence that health claims often deceive the consumer and that perceived healthiness of a product can actually lead to increased consumption. This can be attributed to an effect known as the “Halo Effect,” which occurs when consumers are informed about a single positive attribute, such as low in fat and then in turn attribute this to some other ingredient, such as low salt, when ultimately these are two separate measures. “Categorization of foods as healthy, then, may mean that a particular food will be eaten in greater amounts because it is assumed to induce health” (Ross and Murphy, 1999, p. 4).

As previously mentioned, a major deciding factor which determines how a consumer will perceive a product as being healthy or unhealthy is often based on the name of the product. Oakes and Slotterback (2001) were able to show some evidence for this in their study where
women in colleges made major assumptions about a product’s perceived healthiness or benefits it will provide to the end user based on the name of the product. It was found that women judge the healthfulness of foods differently than men and women’s judgments of food names are often not in agreement with their ratings of the same food’s nutrient descriptions (Oakes and Slotterback, 2001). In other words, they may believe a product to be healthy after reading its name, but when given the description of the actual product, they believe the description to be less healthy than the name would imply. It was also noted that women, more than men, tended to use stereotypes when judging food names. With obesity very prevalent in much of North America, it is no surprise that health foods and health drinks are in high demand (The Food Marketing Institute/Prevention Magazine, 1995). Although overweight individuals can be of any age, the measures those people take in an attempt to cope with their weight loss issues are usually different depending on age (Oakes and Slotterback, 2001). In general, older adults (25+) are more concerned about healthy eating as it relates to function and extending their lives, while young people emphasize health in relation to personal appearance (Oakes and Slotterback, 2001). In their study, the authors wanted to be able to add more external validity to their findings and generalize beyond just women in college between 19 and 25. The study targeted an older demographic of both males and females between 25 and 75. Their findings were fairly similar to their original study that had only female participants.

Oakes and Slotterback (2001) compiled a list of 33 food names with their descriptions and were told to rate how healthy the food name is perceived to be, as well as based on the description, how healthy it is for an individual. In general, if a participant labeled a food name as being healthful, they also believed the description of the food to be healthy as well. When evaluating the descriptions, both men and women indicated that as fat, cholesterol, and sodium
levels increased, they perceived the food to be less healthy and as fiber, vitamin, mineral, and protein content increased they believed the health value to increase.

Overall, the evaluation strategies that individuals use to establish whether a product is healthy or unhealthy are not incorrect and generally would be a good reference point for determining the quality of food. Oakes and Slotterback (2001) had participants receive an unlimited time to read and rate each of the food names and their descriptions, but in a realistic purchasing/consumption situation this is not usually the case where the average consumer will read the depicted nutritional information and make their decision accordingly. Often consumers will use shortcuts, or previously held schemas, in order to make purchase decisions that fit their lifestyle. Oakes and Slotterback (2001) provide some evidence that consumers will simply make inferences based upon the name of the food, which in some cases can be incorrect or biased based on schemas they have built.

Advertising claim types can come in many different forms and in some cases they can be much more influencing than others. Andrews, Netemeyer, and Burton (1998) investigated the impression that various advertising claims had on consumers’ overall evaluation of a product. More specifically, they measured the generalizations that consumers make after being subjected to an advertising claim. The authors looked at two different kinds of ad claims, general versus specific, where the difference was with specific ad claims: a claim is made about a certain ingredient, such as “low in sodium,” versus a general claim of “healthy.” Specific ad claims are generally easier for the consumer to understand versus general ad claims where there is more room for interpretation of the claim. There are also different kinds of ad disclosure information. “Absolute disclosure, which presents information on the absolute quantitative level of a nutrient when such a nutrient level is not mentioned in the advertisement’s headline or copy (i.e.,
‘contains 14 grams of total fat’)’ (Andrews, Netemeyer, and Burton, 1998, p. 64). *Relative disclosure* includes both information about the overall amount of the ingredient, as well as the percentage or daily value recommended. The third type of disclosure is called *evaluative disclosure*, which gives the consumer the per-serving amount of a certain ingredient. The experiment manipulated the different types of ad claims as well as the different types of disclosures by altering advertisements and subjecting participants to advertisements that contained the specific combination of ad claim and disclosure method. Participants were also pre-screened to determine nutrition knowledge as this can have an effect on how individuals will interpret the advertisements.

After viewing the various advertisements, participants were required to fill out a 15-item nutrition questionnaire. In general, it was found that generalizations are made when consumers are faced with health claims. For example, consumers who were faced with either a general or specific health claim rated the product as being more healthy and lower in fat compared to those who simply saw the control advertisement. Disclosure advertisements also prompted the participants to have less favourable evaluations of the dependent measures which were: (1) low/high fat content; (2) healthy/unhealthy; (3) agree/disagree if using the product consistently would lead to health-related diseases; and (4) some types of cancer (Andrews, Netemeyer, and Burton, 1998). The study provides some evidence in favour of the fact that consumers are often misled through health claims and nutrient claims, often leading them to make incorrect inferences or overestimating the actual benefits derived from the product. The authors briefly talk about ways in which to improve the regulatory system or at least make it easier for consumers with little nutritional knowledge to be able to make better judgments about the products they are purchasing. A suggestion is to make most disclosures evaluative, so that
consumers are becoming more knowledgeable and educating themselves about daily percentages. The goal would be to eliminate “exploitative misleadingness” (Russo, Metcalf, and Stephens, 1981, p. 2), which dupes consumers solely due to their lack of knowledge. For example, if something says “low in fat” and still has a high salt content or cholesterol content, then this is abusing the fact that some consumers are uneducated about nutritional guidelines. “Recently the FTC has advocated the use of more ‘evaluative’ triggered disclosures in consent agreements (e.g., ‘this is not a low-fat food’)” (Conopco Inc., 1997, p. 72). The reality is that this format is rarely used, as companies do not want to risk the negative repercussions of labeling their product in an off-putting manner.

2.4 Conceptual Theory Regarding Persuasive Advertising

The main conceptual theory that is core to this thesis is pertaining to puffery in advertisement. As mentioned previously, puffery can be used as a defense by a company that is being tried for deceptive and misleading advertising. Previous cases of puffery have measured puffery by asking participants the believability of a claim that is written and is pertaining to a certain product. Although most empirical studies have shown that many individuals do not believe puffed claims, it remains largely unknown the amount of potential influence a puffed claim could have on an individual’s purchasing behaviour, attitude, etc. Preston (1977) argues that although believability may take away the onus of liability from the marketer, it still may not accurately depict how effective an ad containing puffery can be. This thesis attempts to use previous literature surrounding the legal domain of puffery as well as measures regarding how influential puffed claims may be and the potentially persuasive qualities they may have.
Another possible explanation for individuals reacting differently to advertising messages can be based on previous product knowledge and experience (Bettman and Park, 1980). Individuals with a moderate level of previous knowledge or experience with a product may behave differently than individuals with little or high product knowledge or experience. Bettman and Park (1980) show that individuals with a moderate level of knowledge and experience tend to do more processing with the currently available information and rely on prior knowledge and experience to a lesser extent than individuals with low or high previous knowledge and experience. In addition to this, individuals who are high in product knowledge and experience tend to evaluate their purchasing decisions more around brand related attributes. Russo and Johnson (1980) make sense of this saying that a lot of decisions are made at in-store displays and brand from advertising, thus individuals with high product knowledge and experience may use brand processing more prevalently than other groups. Both of the above conceptual backgrounds are used to help explain moderating effects that will be discussed in the hypotheses and discussions section.

2.5 Deceptive Advertising

Deceptive advertising is supervised and monitored by many regulators, including the FTC, which is the main body that regulates misleading and deceptive advertising in the United States. A deceptive ad is one in which implied or expressed claims contain material representations or omissions, which are likely to “mislead a consumer acting reasonably under the circumstances” (Antitrust and Trade Regulatory Report, 1983, p. 1). Additionally, there is “unfair ads,” which can result in injuries to the consumer (Craswell, 1981), and advertisements, lacking substantiation, which applies when there is no prior, reasonable basis for claims being
made (Antitrust and Trade Regulatory Report, 1984). An example of an unfair ad would be an advertisement that prompts consumption of a product where consumers cannot reasonably avoid injury. Injury applies to both consumers and competitors and does not necessarily mean injury in terms of physical harm from purchasing/consuming the product, but harm in terms of altering normal purchasing behaviour. If deceptive advertising is used and “lures” the customer away from a competitor, it can hurt the competitor as well as the consumer, given they have been diverted to a competing product on illegitimate grounds. If the claim prompts a consumer to act differently in terms of the purchasing decision, then it can cause what is referred to as injury. Injury occurs when a consumer chooses a product based on the claim, thus altering their initial state due to deception. Again, injury does not necessarily mean harm or bodily harm to the consumer, but rather a difference in consumption practices due to an inherently false or deceptive claim. Injuries in essence can harm both consumers and competitors, as a competitor who loses out on sales directly as a result of a deceptive claim made by a competing company ultimately harms them as well.

The need for deceptive advertising to be clearly outlined and policed is not strictly for the purpose of the consumer, but is needed to protect the rights of the advertiser as well. Corporations can face lawsuits, from other competitors as well as consumers, concerning the advertisements they release to the public. Expressing themselves within the guidelines is essential to remain profitable and leave their respective reputations untarnished. As Petty and Andrews (2008) allude to, there are numerous forms that deceptive advertisements can undertake, thus making it very difficult to police. Specifically, masked marketing, a form of covert marketing, is a method used by advertisers to subsequently remove themselves from being perceived as liable for the advertising claim they make. In a sense, it is the way advertising has
evolved to combat and overcome the deception laws that were put in place by the FTC in 1983. Petty and Andrews (2008) reveal that there are several opportunities for advertisers to attempt to bypass the laws put in place by the FTC, including posers, buzz and viral marketing, advertorials, urgent ad-information, and advertainment. “Posers,” for example, are celebrities that are paid to promote a product through their various media interviews. This marketing communication initiative differs from product placement, as the celebrity seemingly uses the product for his or her own benefit and it is not identified as a sponsorship-endorsed deal. Each of these are ways in which marketers can cleverly deliver their advertising to consumers in a manner which at first glance seem to be legitimate advertisements, or not even advertisements at all, but appear to be truthful claims made by credible sources when in reality they are not. As marketers evolve, so too should the law, and with the FTC having not updated its law on deception in over 25 years, it would seem reasonable that they re-evaluate their policy on deception to include some other avenues that advertisers are currently taking advantage of.

2.5.1 The Lanham Act and False Advertising

The Lanham Act is U.S. legislation that serves to enforce deception and false advertising claims. The Lanham Act covers a number of stipulations and business activities, but in the realm of false advertising it adheres to the following:

1) The defendant made a false or misleading statement of fact in a commercial advertisement about a product;

2) The statement either deceived or has the capacity to deceive a substantial segment of potential customers;
3) The deception is material; in that it is likely to influence the consumers’ purchasing decision;

4) The product is in interstate commerce; and

5) The plaintiff has been or is likely to be injured as a result of the statement.


An example of where the Lanham Act has been applied in court is the case of Coca Cola Co. v. Tropicana Products Inc., when Tropicana was accused of false advertising due to advertising where a whole orange was being squished into a juice container (Reichman and Cannady, 2002). Tropicana did in fact lose the case, as the advertisement implied they were delivering freshly squeezed orange juice to the consumer, when in fact it was heated and occasionally frozen prior to consumption.

### 2.5.2 FTC Definition of Deceptive Advertising

For the FTC’s determination of deceptive advertising, it is important to note that there are three general principles that underline each case. “First, there must be a representation, omission or practice that is likely to mislead the consumer” (FTC, 1983, p. 1). In previous cases, this can include deceptive or misleading claims in a variety of different situations such as: false oral or written representations, misleading price claims, sales of hazardous or systematically defective products or services without adequate disclosures, pyramid sales that are not disclosed, bait and switch techniques, products that do not perform their promised services, and issues surrounding warranty obligations (FTC, 1983).

A second main concern that the FTC has is each practice should be examined from the perspective of a consumer acting reasonably in each specific situation or circumstance. This
means that consumers cannot claim they are deceived by every claim made by an advertiser. A reasonable consumer is one that is able to decipher between real claims and claims that are not believable. Basically, a reasonable consumer is the average consumer, and usually does not apply to children, as they do not have the same knowledge to determine real from fake. For example, cigarette advertisements have been scrutinized for indirectly targeting youth as they depict healthy, attractive young people smoking in their advertisements. Many youth are susceptible to this type of advertisement, as they truly believe through smoking they will be healthy, attractive and popular, whereas the ‘reasonable consumer’ should know that smoking potentially leads to much worse health-related issues (Clark, 1999; USDHHS, 1994, 1996).

There are also different exceptions, as certain advertisements are directed to a very specific and narrow market. For example, some products may be offered solely for terminal patients, and it is expected that someone suffering with a terminally ill disease may not be able to comprehend the claims or may be much more susceptible and in a vulnerable state for claims relating to being cured.

A third concern that the FTC reviews rigorously is that the representation, omission, or practice must be a material one (FTC, 1983). Materiality refers to whether or not the claim will likely affect a consumer’s overall decision to choose a product or service. Materiality typically needs to be proven to the FTC to demonstrate the degree of deception as well as to prove that it is actually the claim itself that is creating the confusion and misleading the consumer into believing something that is not true. “The materiality element acknowledges that some deception may be harmless and limits the range of advertising regarded as legally deceptive” (Ford and Calfee, 1986; Jacoby and Hoyer, 1987, pp. 60-62). For the FTC, the terms “injury”
“materiality” can be used synonymously (FTC, 1983). In terms of extrinsic evidence, it is not always necessary to provide this if “materiality” can be found on behalf of the FTC.

2.6 The FTC on Substantiation

“Substantiation” refers to the underlying basis that advertisers have for making authentic claims within an advertisement. The FTC enforces a legal requirement for advertisements that makes each advertiser held responsible for the claims being made to the extent that they must have a “reasonable basis” for making said claims (FTC, 1987). The FTC polices this vigorously, and reviews both implied claims and conveyed claims that contain objective assertions. The FTC also considers substantiation claims to be material claims as well. Like deceptive advertising claims, substantiation claims can cause injury, resulting in a consumer choosing one product or service over another. It is material in the sense that consumers are relying on the specific claim and believe that the advertisers would not openly support this claim unless they had a reasonable basis for doing so. If a firm is unable to provide reasonable basis for making such a claim, or in other words if they have no evidence to support the claim, then they are likely acting in a deceptive manner (FTC, 1987). The materiality aspect of the FTC Deception Act can be convoluted when puffery is introduced, which is further explained in the following section of this thesis. The FTC determines whether or not the issue is one of the public’s concerns, and then continues on with the complaint to determine if the firm or industry as a whole can provide evidence for such claims. In the environmental industry, for example, firms have made specific claims about their products that individuals are likely to take as the truth when, in actuality, they are far from it. “Rhode Island has determined that terms such as ‘environmentally safe’ are inherently inaccurate and misleading to consumers because they are
too general, do not contain sufficient disclosures, are too difficult for the consumer to interpret or, depending on their context, may suggest more far-reaching benefits than the product may actually offer” (Maronick and Andrews, 1991, p. 229). With broad claims such as “environmentally safe,” consumers often make assumptions that are erroneous, and can cause more damage than good because consumers overcompensate and overestimate the true benefits of the products.

2.6.1 Copy-Test Guidelines

Unfortunately, for both corporations and consumers, the Lanham Act and the policies put forth by the FTC are not as clear as they could be. In general, the FTC prefers to see the usage of copy-tests in deceptive advertising cases in the form of consumer survey research for widely distributed ads (FTC, 1984). The difficulty of this is the manner in which the copy-tests are conducted and the way in which participants are gathered to generate a representative sample.

Maronick (1991) gives an outline as to the way researchers can appropriately and efficiently test deceptive advertisements as well as the necessary precautions and steps that need to be followed for the FTC to give substantial consideration to the claims being made. Maronick (1991) identifies nine factors that will aid a researcher or marketing firm in achieving their desired goals: (1) experience and competence count; (2) same method same firm helps the case; (3) interviewers do make a difference; (4) the sample must be representative of the appropriate universe; (5) control groups establish the validity of the results; (6) build a Chinese wall between researcher and attorney; (7) leading to the wrong result; (8) testing implied claims like touching the “tar baby”; and (9) “let’s pretend” is okay. Each guideline is elaborated in turn:
(1) **Experience and Competence:** When presenting the FTC with a deceptive advertising case, it is important to demonstrate the experience of the research team, which can be illustrated by previous involvement in cases involving litigation and deceptive advertising claims.

(2) **Same Method Same Firm:** If firms have previously conducted research pertaining to deceptive advertising cases, continuing to conduct research with the methods used in preceding cases delivers more consistency and significance to the results.

(3) **Interviewers:** Interviewers are relevant when the FTC reviews the process that was taken in terms of developing and implementing interview questions. Not only is the manner in which the questions developed very important, the researcher that conducts the interview must also be able to establish their expertise and skill when administering the questions. The FTC is heavily concerned with potential bias within interviews as it can have a detrimental impact on the quality of answers reported by the participants. Open-ended questions are favoured as they minimize bias from the perspective of the interviewer and show more representative results.

(4) **Representative Sample:** Another measure for minimizing bias is to select a sample of individuals that are representative of the entire universe. This means that, when recruiting participants, individuals must represent people who could be potential consumers of the product.

(5) **Control Groups:** Simply conducting pre-tests or screen tests to determine if participants have previously consumed or purchased the product does not necessarily capture all those who may be affected or subjected to a deceptive advertisement. Also, once chosen, participants should be randomly assigned to the control and test conditions. The control condition allows for the results to be illustrated more strongly and provide more support that those subjected to the advertisement in question have actually been deceived. “The use of non-
exposure control groups in ad meaning tests clearly enhances the validity of the results” (Russo et al., 1981, p. 8).

(6) **Build a Chinese Wall**: If researchers and attorneys maintain a close relationship, then the FTC will view the evidence as less persuasive as the results may be perceived as mutually beneficially and biased.

(7) **Leading Questions**: Further, questions that are conducted by the interviewer must not lead the study participant to the wrong result or to an answer that is not determined on their behalf. This can be one of the biggest conflicts when researchers are conducting copy-tests, as they need to get the respondent to answer their questions in a manner that does not seem like they are attempting to elicit a specific response. “The FTC has identified three types of problems in questionnaire design: 1) Leading questions 2) Questions that were not mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive, and 3) Questions that reveal too much about the nature of the study” (Maronick, 1991, p. 14). For example, in the 1983 Sterling Drug case, the FTC rejected the following question: “What does the advertisement say about Bayer Aspirin as compared to other brands of aspirin?” The issue with this question is that it suggests a comparison being made in the advertisement when the advertisement does not convey this message.

(8) **Testing Implied Claims**: Some questions will inevitably be sensitive to certain participants and it can be difficult to achieve the “true” answer from the consumer when they are posed with a sensitive question. This is where testing implied claims can become very difficult as despite what may seem clear to the researcher, the participants may view them differently, or give a response that is coherent with their own self-identity including not admitting to viewing or being susceptible to the implied claim.
(9) Let’s Pretend: In saying this, it does not always mean that extrinsic evidence that is presented to the FTC will hold true within the court system, and ultimately it comes down to the panel of reviewers at the FTC to decide whether or not the claims being made in an advertisement are regarded as deceptive/misleading. This can be due to the fact that laboratory settings are not always accurate in terms of actual purchase decisions; in-home tests are ideal, but “pretending” is sufficient. With the aforementioned guidelines taken into consideration, the FTC is better situated to review the research conducted and make a judgment based on the evidence that is presented to them.

2.7 Legal Issues

From a legal standpoint, the FTC reviews complaints made concerning advertisements and will then determine whether the advertisement is misleading or deceptive, and further, if it will encourage bad or harmful consumption. Bad/harmful consumption refers to consumers purchasing products primarily on the basis for the reason of the claim, creating a false desire or false hope within the consumer, which ultimately cannot be achieved and is not achieved. Bad consumption can also be applied when competitors are accusing the competition of misleading consumers. In this sense, bad consumption refers to the consumer purchasing the product on the grounds that they believe the product to be better than competitors after being subject to misleading advertisements. The FTC determines whether or not a claim is misleading to a “reasonable consumer” on a case-to-case basis and establishes whether or not a claim is factual or non-factual by addressing the claim’s puffery designation.

An initial assumption about the puffery defense is that the claim is something that cannot actually be measured and thus consumers cannot take this sort of claim seriously. The three
main assumptions of puffery are: (1) false advertising authorities assume that the ability to distinguish between factual and non-factual speech can be done simply through looking at the speech itself; (2) authorities assume that “consumers acting reasonably” are unlikely to be deceived by speech-assertions, which ultimately are incapable of being measured; and (3) authorities assume the claim being made in the advertisement is not meant to deceive or lead to a large scheme that deceives the consumer (Preston, 1997, 1998; Hoffman, 2006). The final assumption basically determines whether or not the FTC believes that corporate actors are purposely duping consumers and exploiting them. This is especially of concern with claims where consumers are not as educated or knowledgeable about certain information. “The Commission considers certain claims or omissions material if they significantly involve health, safety or any other areas where a reasonable consumer would be concerned” (FTC, 1984, p. 174). From a consumer’s perspective, health and safety claims on products presumably come from a credible source, usually a professional with expertise on the subject. Consumers often are more persuaded from these claims because they are less knowledgeable about the information in the claim as well as seemingly more vulnerable to believing such claims due to their assumption that claims should have some substantiation and truth. Due to the complex nature of these claims, and the supposed credibility from the supplier, consumers often have difficulty understanding the actual benefit derived from the product and make incorrect inferences, leading to the “Halo Effect.” In layman’s terms, the “Halo Effect” occurs when consumers read a claim about a product, which conveys itself as superior to others on one attribute and, because of said claim, consumers believe it to be superior on all other levels or attributes the product contains. The “health halo effect” refers to the fact that individuals are more likely to underestimate the caloric content of main dishes and to choose high-caloric side dishes in restaurants claiming to
offer “healthy” food choices (e.g., Subway) than in restaurants that do not have such a reputation (e.g., McDonald’s) (Chandon and Wansink, 2007). Chandon and Wansink (2007) provide a more specific example of the “halo effect,” which pertains to food products and the common misconception that consumers have about products labeled as “healthy.”

When discussing misleading and deceptive advertising, puffery is commonly brought up and often creates a confusing or inconsistent message pertaining to the manner in which the FTC or other governing boards will handle specific claims. “The FTC also has prosecuted advertisements in which factually true explicit comparison claims imply false claims of superiority” (Preston, 1989, p. 11). Even truthful claims can be considered deceptive and false claims can be considered puffs, according to the context of the advertisement, which is rather perplexing and can easily cause confusion for the “reasonable consumer.”

The purpose of reviewing cases that involve puffery is to articulate the differing opinions and varying situations when puffery, as a legal defense, is both tolerable and intolerable. Creating a more definitive understanding of puffery will not only benefit suppliers but consumers as well. Confusion created from advertisements that are simply “puffs” can easily be reduced through evaluating and reconstructing the process whereby puffery is used as a legitimate form of defense. Appendix 3 portrays the spectrum of claims that can be viewed as either “puffs” or misleading, depending on the context of the claim.

2.8 Previous Cases Regarding Misleading Advertising

FTC rulings rely heavily on previous cases and preceding judgments in reaching their decisions for verdicts. In 1991, the FTC versus Kraft was a monumental case where the FTC was challenging apparent misleading or deceptive statements made by Kraft within their
advertisements. Specifically, materiality was at the subject of debate, as it applied to the advertisements that were constructed by Kraft. Materiality, in this case, dealt with whether or not the claims being made had the potential to change a consumer’s purchasing decision or behaviour toward their purchase. This was the first case in which the FTC relied upon a consumer survey based mostly around materiality questions as evidence. Jacoby and Szybillo (1995) reviewed the case and specifically concerned themselves with the surveys implemented, the ‘supposed’ flaws of said surveys, and inappropriate methods that were used by the FTC in contrast to Kraft. It should be acknowledged that Jacoby consulted for Kraft as an expert analyst for the case.

The complaint against Kraft was regarding marketing communication for Kraft Singles, which are individually wrapped cheese slices made from pasteurized processed cheese. The claim in question revolved around the exact content of calcium that was within each individual cheese slice. It may seem trivial, but the manner in which the advertisements were constructed made the claim material, thus giving it potential to alter consumers’ purchasing decisions or behaviours. Kraft developed an aggressive advertising campaign that challenged other competitors on the notion of calcium content. Kraft claimed there are “5 Ounces” of milk per cheese slice, versus imitators who had significantly less. Kraft used this claim to their advantage in many different ways, but especially through guilt appeals as many of their advertisements depicted mothers and children with taglines such as: “Would you skimp out on her?” or “How could I let this slide?” (Kraft, 1987) (Appendix 4). The claim suggests that if you don’t choose Kraft cheese slices, you are not giving your child sufficient nourishment and attention. In fact, Kraft Singles contained no more calcium content than the average competitor, and even worse,
after producing their cheese slices, they lost 30% of the milk put in, leaving them with about 3.5 ounces of milk.

The FTC determined a reasonable consumer would interpret their “Skimp” claim to mean that Kraft contains more calcium than the average competitor. The FTC also determined that the claims were unsubstantiated and would mislead a reasonable consumer. Moreover, the claim was of more concern given it was health-related (FTC vs. Thompson Medical, 1984, pp. 58-59). Stewart (1987) argued that it does not matter if the claim about calcium is material or not, but whether the difference between 5 ounces and (70% less) 3.5 ounces is material enough to make consumers alter their purchasing behaviour. The final verdict was made in favour of the evidence put forth by the FTC and not the extrinsic evidence collected and presented by Kraft researchers. The interesting part about the Kraft case is that the authors show that the FTC can ultimately make a decision based solely on their research alone and disregard the research conducted by the company in question. Another area of concern is the lack of agreement on the decision that was made by the FTC. Jacoby and Szybillo (1995) contended that the consumer survey produced and used by Stewart (1987) had some inherent flaws and yet it was still accepted regardless of the fact that Kraft adhered to the generally accepted scientific practices used in the scientific community. The article sheds light on the fact that there is some miscommunication between researchers and advertising law, in terms of the exact type of evidence that will be deemed admissible and credible in judicial hearings regarding deceptive advertising.
2.8.1 U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Copy-Testing for Health Claims

Consumers can easily be targets of crafty marketing schemes simply because they are not educated enough about the product and what it contains/delivers to the end user. Government intervention can protect most reasonable consumers, but there is still ample room for strategic or covert marketing to take advantage of the untrained consumer. “However, the extent of government involvement and the form of information regulation that is necessary for a particular market to perform in a just and efficient manner is a more difficult point on which to agree” (Roe, Levy, and Derby, 1999, p. 89). Both the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the FTC provide efforts to police deceptive and misleading advertising. Roe, Levy, and Derby (1999) investigated some results from FDA experimental data pertaining to health claims on food products and the copy-test that was used in an experimental situation to provide evidence in court. The study’s purpose was to identify the consumer information processing that occurs when individuals are subjected to health claims. More specifically, if consumers would continue to search for additional nutritional information after viewing a health claim on the front of a product’s packaging. The premise of the study revolved around basic economic theory and marginal benefit, as it would be assumed that consumers will only continue to search for additional information until the marginal benefit of the next item of information equals the marginal cost of gathering that piece of information (Wilde, 1980). Respondents were randomly assigned to three different conditions, where they were subjected to a three-dimensional product, which resembled well-known brand name products, but the actual brand name was not included. There were three different product categories – cereal, lasagna, and yogurt – as well as ten label conditions: a control with no claim, a nutrient claim only, and eight conditions which had both the nutrient and health claim. Interviewers observed the participants as they interacted with the
mock-up products to determine if the respondents looked at: (1) only the package’s front panel; (2) only the packages Nutritional Facts Panel; (3) both the front and Nutrition Facts Panel; and (4) neither panel (Roe, Levy, and Derby, 1999). This was to help analyze the information search each participant went through. Following the interaction with the product stage, participants completed an open-ended/close-ended questionnaire pertaining to health benefits that they believed would occur on behalf of consuming the product. Investigators measured: percentage playback, which occurred when participants mentioned the health claim correctly in their answers; percentage true, which was how much of the information they recalled actually coincided with the product and the health claim; and percentage false, which was when participants recalled health claim information that was not fitting with the product they were shown.

Truncation of search was the main measure that the experiments were concerned with and it was found that health claims were significant predictors of truncation on all measures, whereas nutrient claims only shortened the search for two of four measures. Other findings included: participants who simply viewed the front panel were more likely to have high playback percentages; when a product had a health or nutrition claim versus a control ad, participants were more likely to purchase it; and finally, consumers were more likely to attribute inappropriate health claims in closed-ended questions when a health or nutrient claim is present (Roe, Levy, and Derby, 1999). The evidence provided in this study once again reveals the persuasive power that health claims can have over consumers and the influence it can have on their overall decision-making. Policy implications are made in this study such as: placing nutritional information directly on the front of packaging, as well as moving to a higher amount of strictly
nutrient claim advertisements versus health claims, which would hopefully lead to further information search, with the goal of leading to more informed purchases.

The reviewed studies highlight the idea that nutritional claims in food products often confuse consumers and prompt them to make incorrect inferences (i.e., the halo effect). Not only are nutritional claims rather general, often they contain language that is not in the vocabulary of a reasonable consumer, thus making them more susceptible to make decisions based on invalid inferences. Adding to this complex situation are advertisements, deemed as “puffs,” that should not be taken as literal and viewed simply as exaggerations. This thesis attempts to shed light on disconnects between consumers, legal authorities, and companies regarding deceptive advertising. As the food industry has been under close watch, so too should the health-drink industry, which is why Vitaminwater advertisements have been selected for evaluation in a laboratory setting to determine the deceptiveness of their respective claims as many contain exaggerated or puffed claims.
3.0 HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were designed to test the research questions, gaps, and objectives. The first research question was designed to investigate the persuasiveness of puffery within print advertisements. Although puffed claims are supposed to be unbelievable and not taken as reality from the consumer’s perspective (FTC, 1984) this hypothesis was designed to determine the degree in which a puffed claim can actually be persuasive when, in fact in legal terms, it should not. Shimp (1981) determined that consumers’ attitudes toward an advertisement could in fact influence their purchasing decisions: the more favourable an attitude toward an ad, the more likely an individual may purchase that product. If advertisements containing puffery are in fact more favourable than advertisements without puffery, than this may influence an individual’s attitudes toward the product and influence purchase intentions. The following hypothesis is proposed.
Hypothesis 1: There will be a main effect showing that individuals who are subjected to advertisements containing puffery will be more persuaded than individuals viewing advertisements without puffery and the control group.

Figure (1) Hypothesized main effect showing manipulations of puffery on the dependent variables: perceived nutrition, attitude toward the product, attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, purchase intentions, and source credibility.

The second research question was created to explain possible differences in the way individuals might view and evaluate subsequent advertisements. According to Bettman and Park (1980), individuals may use their previous knowledge or experience to a lesser extent and rely more on the available information, depending on their respective knowledge and previous experience with a product.
**Hypothesis 2a:** There will be a main effect showing that consumer experiences with products will be more positive. It is expected that the more relative experiences individual’s have with a product the more positive they will evaluate the dependent measures.

**Figure (2) Hypothesized main effect showing that consumers with previous experience with a product will evaluate advertisements more positively.**

![Graph showing Hypothesis 2a](image)

**Hypothesis 2b:** There will be an interaction between experience and ad manipulation. It is expected that individuals in the moderate experience group, within the puffery condition, will show the most positive results compared to low and high experience groups. It is expected that individuals in the high experience group, in the without puffery condition, will show the most positive results compared to low and moderate experience groups.
Figure (3) Shows the predicted interaction effect between experience and ad manipulation in the puffery condition. The moderate experience group will show the most positive results.

Figure (4) Shows the predicted interaction effect between experience and ad manipulation in the without puffery condition. The high experience group will show the most positive results.
4.0 METHODOLOGY

This thesis utilizes a mixed methods approach, including a semiotic analysis of advertisements as well as an experimental portion. A key rationale for choosing a mixed methods approach is that it is desirable to have consumer data to complement the researchers’ semiotic analysis. Combining a semiotic analysis with an experiment involving consumer perspectives provides a more representative view of likely interpretations from potential purchasers of the products in question. Semiotics, relative to quantitative approaches, is likely to provide a richer description of the advertisements selected for analysis. Nevertheless, limitations of a semiotic analysis include a lack of “reproducible” results and the consumer’s perspective being largely neglected. Introducing an experimental aspect complements the semiotic analysis and can help counteract these limitations.

The primary goal of this thesis is to shed light on current public policy regulations surrounding the field of deceptive and misleading advertising. The core research question attempts to answer whether or not puffery in advertisements has any influence on the way consumers perceive a product and make subsequent purchase decisions.

A short pre-test was conducted to determine the validity of the manipulations that were used and this will be discussed first, followed by the design, the participants that were gathered and used, the procedure that was administered as well as the various dependent and independent measures that were used to assess the core research question.
4.1.1 Design

The study was designed using two different modes of stimuli, verbal and visual. The independent variables were *ad manipulation*, which had three levels, (puffery, without puffery, and control). Additionally, *experience* was used as a moderating variable, which also had three levels (low, moderate and high). Each participant was assigned to one of three ad manipulation conditions, where they were subsequently subjected to both verbal and visual manipulations. Counterbalancing was used to account for order effects.

4.1.2 Independent Variables

In order to manipulate advertisements for the experimental portion, initially advertisements were chosen from a Vitaminwater campaign that had previously been scrutinized for having deceptive messages within their advertisements. Coca-Cola, representing Vitaminwater, has claimed that many of their advertisements contain puffery and do not contain claims that a reasonable consumer should actually believe. A decision was made to use Vitaminwater advertisements with puffed claims and manipulate them to make them even more exaggerated. The goal was to create an ad with a claim that was clearly untrue but still remain legitimate in the eyes of the participant (i.e., not to appear as a mock or fake advertisement). Two different pre-tests were conducted assessing the perceived *realness* of the manipulated advertisements. Questions pertaining to nutrition, purchase intentions, attitudes, and credibility were asked. At this point, of main concern was the credibility of the marketing communication, in order to determine that individuals perceived this advertisement as legitimate. Questions such as: “I believe the marketing communication of the company marketing the drink is undependable/dependable or untrustworthy/trustworthy or honest/dishonest” were asked and it was determined
that on average between all participants the advertisement was viewed as moderately dependable/trustworthy/honest for both verbal and visual forms of puffery. It was determined not to ask traditional questions pertaining to puffery such as: “Do you believe this ad,” as it was believed this would prime the participant to become skeptical of the advertisement.

The second independent variable that was manipulated was the mode of stimuli, which was either verbal or visual. The logic behind manipulating the mode of stimuli is to investigate the possible differences between visual and verbal puffery in advertisements. Manipulations occurred within the claims that were displayed in the advertisements. A verbal manipulation had a claim written in words, whereas a visual claim had no text copy on the actual advertisements but instead used pictures to imply a claim, which is comparable to literature that shows visual advertisements generally have implied claims versus explicit claims that you would likely see in a verbal advertisement (Phillips and McQuarrie, 2002; Pollay, 1985).

Also, experience was introduced as a fixed factor variable as well to test interaction between ad manipulation (puffery, without puffery, and control) and various levels of experience (low, moderate, and high). Literature has shown that experience may have an effect on individual attitudes and behaviours (Bettman and Park, 1980). Previous experience with a product, or familiarity with a product, can influence how individuals perceive advertisements and use their previous experience when self-reporting attitudes and expected behaviours (Whan and Lessig, 1981).
Table (1) Displays the different levels of independent variables that were used in the experiment. As noted participants could be randomly assigned to one of 3 conditions as shown above. Each participant saw both verbal and visual stimuli.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad Manipulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mode of Stimuli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.3 **Dependent Variables**

Various measures of persuasion were used as dependent variables to gain an understanding as to what measures consumers may or may not report to be influenced by advertisements containing puffery versus other conditions. A multi-item scale was adapted from Kozcup, Breyer, and Burton (2003) that assessed individual’s opinions toward favourable versus unfavourable health claims pertaining to different food products. The questions pertained to nutrition attitude, attitude toward the product, purchase intention and source credibility. It was shown that these variables are correlated and highly reliable and therefore can be reported as separate dependent variables or as one measure of persuasion. For this thesis two additional measures of attitude were added, which were, attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the brand.
4.2 Pre-Tests

As mentioned above, pre-tests were conducted to determine how participants perceived the actually sincerity of the advertisements. It was determined not to ask participants a measure of believability, as a previous study by Haan and Berkey (2002) found that when participants were asked to evaluate puffery claims based on believability nearly all participants found it to be unbelievable, but this could be due to the inherent effect of priming when asking about believability. Instead, measures of credibility were used as well as brief qualitative questions were asked of participants regarding the factual content in the advertisements. According to the FTC (1983) an advertisement can be deemed deceptive if it persuades 25% of the sample population. Therefore, frequency tables were created to determine the relative amount of participants that viewed the puffery advertisements as legitimate and persuasive in comparison to advertisements that did not contain puffery. Control advertisements were not pretested. A summary of the results that were found for the pre-test are displayed below in a basic frequency table.

Table (2) Frequency table showing the average scores on a 1-7 Likert scale, n= 36

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Manipulated Ads</th>
<th>Source Credibility</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Puffery</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without Puffery</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although the differences between the Puffery condition and the Without Puffery condition are not significantly different, it shows that on average the participants show a neutral or higher score for attitude toward the brand as well as credibility. This also shows that, based on average scores, 50% of the population consider an ad with puffery versus an ad without puffery relatively similarly. In a legal sense, this would show that individuals are indeed persuaded virtually equally by advertisements with and without puffery. This pre-test was enough to make the assumption that the advertisements were not viewed as fakes or mock-ups and usable for further analysis with other dependent measures. In order to make the differences between puffery and without puffery more noticeable, a new set of manipulated advertisements were tested to see if they were viewed as more credible and persuasive in comparison to the without puffery ads with nearly the exact same sample. This time it was found that the advertisements containing puffery were viewed as more persuasive: m= 4.8 (attitude to ad) and m= 4.67 (credibility) compared to the without puffery ads, which remained the same at m= 4.3 (attitude to ad) and m= 4.1 (credibility). Although still not significantly different, the trend was noted and was expected to become significant with a larger sample size. As mentioned earlier, a pre-test was not done to analyze the differences between verbal and visual manipulations. Additionally, semiotic analyses were conducted that also shed light on the potential inherent puffed claims that could be found within Vitaminwater advertisements. This was used as a method of pre-testing as well, in order to help decide which advertisements to use for manipulation as well as to identify claims that could be interpreted as puffery.
4.3 Recruitment of Participants

Upon completion of the two pre-tests it was determined that the study was ready to be launched and subjected to a larger sample size. Participants were recruited from the MCS undergraduate research subject pool. There were no previous requirements for individuals to partake in the study. The incentive for them to participate was to gain 3% course credit through writing a short report after participating in the research study. Even though student samples are often harshly criticized for their homogeneity of a very small portion of society, for this particular study it seemed fitting to use students due to the target market coinciding with the main target market of Vitaminwater as well as the availability of Vitaminwater across campus and the prevalence of advertisements. Although external validity is usually compromised using such a homogenous sample, especially in terms of specific demographics such as age and socioeconomic status, internal validity is maintained. This is essential for developing theory regarding puffery, the reasonable consumer, as well as previous knowledge and experience conceptual theories.

4.4 Procedures

4.4.1 Online Notification and Consent

In order to recruit participants, a notification letter was placed on MCS research subject pool D2L Course-link platforms. The notification informed participants that there was an available study to partake in that would allow them to receive their 3% credit upon completion of participation and submitting a short report about the study. A URL was provided that allowed potential participants to click before being assigned to one of six experimental conditions. This was achieved through using a random number generator. Participants believed that they were taking part in a survey that investigated opinions toward advertisements in the healthy beverage
industry. The true purpose of the study was not revealed to participants until they completed the survey and read the debrief where it told them that the advertisements they saw were in fact manipulations of real advertisements and that there was some deception involved in order to remove response bias that may have occurred.

Once participants clicked the URL and were placed in a condition, they all had to read the University of Guelph research ethics form and indicate that they were accepting all of the terms and agreements by clicking “Yes I Agree” on the online survey instrument. If they did not wish to continue after reading the ethics information they had the opportunity to withdraw from the study by clicking “No I Disagree” (Appendix 5). Individuals were also able to withdraw at the end of the study by clicking a button that allowed them to have their data removed and not used for research purposes, otherwise they agreed and the data was collected for analyzing.

4.4.2 Manipulation of Stimulus

The stimuli were chosen from a Vitaminwater campaign that was accessible online and was found around various convenience stores and located in several magazines. The advertisements were chosen after it was found they would be good candidates for a semiotic analysis as well as the history they have with the Centre for Science in Public Interest being labeled as a deceptive and misleading advertisement. When legal authorities came to the defense of Coca-Cola and Vitaminwater, they claimed that the advertisements in question were merely forms of puffery and should not be taken as anything but an exaggeration of the truth. After the two advertisements were chosen, a decision was made to manipulate them in order to make them even more exaggerated and yet still remain believable to a certain segment of participants. At this point alterations were done to two advertisements in three different manners. The
advertisements were professionally altered using Adobe Photoshop to convey the three conditions: puffery, without puffery, and control (See Appendix 6-11). Participants did not choose the advertisement that they viewed but instead were assigned to one of six different conditions using a random number generator. Each advertisement was shown within a short video that was created using Microsoft PowerPoint and subsequently uploaded to YouTube. Each advertisement was placed within the video clip amongst 15 other print advertisements as a method of distracting participants from the true purpose of the study. Each advertisement remained on screen for 5 seconds.

4.4.3 Questionnaire

After viewing the short video clip with the manipulated advertisement mixed in amongst other advertisements, participants were subjected to an online questionnaire that was developed using Fluidsurvey. After the participants viewed the stimulus, they were also subjected to four short math questions before answering the first question, as a method of clearing memory and reducing cognitive load. On the first page with questions measuring dependent variables, the stimulus appeared and participants were asked to answer the following questions in relation to the advertisement they were currently viewing. The first section of the survey asked participants questions that gauged their perceived nutritional value of the product, their attitudes toward the product, ad and brand, their purchase likelihood, and the perceived credibility of the marketing communication. This section was repeated and participants were shown the second stimulus for that condition (either verbal or visual depending on what they saw first). The second section asked participants about their lifestyle, diet, and exercise routines in an attempt to create a health index for each participant. The third section involved questions pertaining to frequency of use as
well as if participants were able to list flavours of Vitaminwater. The goal of this section was to build an experience or knowledge based index for participants in order to group them into different categories to address hypotheses 2a and 2b. The last section was designed to gauge basic demographic factors relating to gender and age. Upon completion of the questionnaire, participants were administered the debriefing letter which informed the individual of the true purpose of the study and that deception was involved (See Appendix 12). Individuals were then given the opportunity to submit their data at this point or choose to withdraw from the study. Confidentiality and anonymity was reiterated to the participants and guaranteed regardless of their decision to withdraw or submit their data.

4.4.4 Dependent Measures

The first section of the survey was designed to measure the overall persuasiveness of the advertisements that were used for manipulation. Measures were taken for perceived nutrition, attitude toward the product, attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, purchase intentions, and source credibility. Perceived nutrition was measured using four different questions, whereas each other dependent measure was developed using three questions. Each question was to be evaluated by the participant using a 7-point Likert Scale using different bipolar anchors (See Appendix 13). Additionally, a persuasion index was also created, which was an aggregate of all six dependent variables. The purpose of this was to show all six dependent variables on average and was used on occasion to report during the results section. The questions used for this section were adapted from Kozcup, Kreyer, and Burton (2003) where they asked individuals relatively similar questions pertaining to food items with health claims. Participants viewed a short video clip, answered the questions mentioned above and then viewed
a second short video clip with a different focal stimulus embedded and answered the same set of questions.

Upon completing these successive sections, participants were asked health, lifestyle, and willingness to pay questions. The health index was adapted from Reeves and Rafferty (2005) as well as Devine and Lepisto (2005) where each scale looked at either labeling healthy lifestyle consumers or categorizing individual lifestyles based on an American consensus health index. This gave a perspective from both a marketing and medical lens.

After this section was complete, individuals were asked to answer brief demographic questions, and frequency of use questions. The frequency question asked individuals to determine the amount of times they had consumed Vitaminwater in the past three months.

The design allowed for two separate analyses: one compared verbal advertisements while the other compared visual advertisements. Reliability coefficients (Cronbach’s Alpha) is reported in the results section for both the verbal and visual analysis.

4.6 Analysis

Once data was collected it was determined to analyze what was gathered in two separate analyses and then to make comparisons between the two. Initially, verbal advertisements were analyzed, followed by visual advertisements. MANOVA was used to determine dependent measures that were significant. If significant levels were noted, then individual ANOVAs were run for each respective variable displaying statistically significant results. The design was developed so that each participant was subjected to one of three ad manipulation conditions: puffery, without puffery, and control. Each participant saw both verbal and visual modes of stimuli for the specific ad manipulation condition they were assigned to. Order was accounted
for by counterbalancing advertisements, as some individuals viewed verbal before visual advertisements and vice-versa.

**4.7 Semiotics Procedure**

The four ads selected underwent critical analysis following the recommendations of Penn (2000). The ads were chosen from a Vitaminwater campaign, where the advertisements chosen were determined to be the most representative of the overall message. The ads were reviewed initially from a basic linguistic perspective, detailing the most fundamental interpretations of the advertisement (also known as the denotative level). The second order of analysis includes a more in-depth and intensive review, and includes drawing relationships between culture, text, pictures, symbolism, colour, and usage of space within the advertisement to uncover more intricate understandings. All advertisements were carefully analyzed and the results are reported in the following chapter. Subsequently, a summary of the similarities between the four advertisements is conducted to show the main message or the overall theme that was understood from the campaign. The research sheds light onto the possibility of persuasive qualities that the advertisements may have. The denotative findings are discussed first, which are most fundamental and describe the surface level of the advertisement, without taking into consideration other variables such as cultural understandings, or the more profound meaning of the advertisements. Once this has been reviewed, the analysis goes further and elaborates on possible reasons why marketers may have chosen to use various tactics within their ad such as colouring, font sizes, white space, humour, exaggeration, and patterns that exist between the four advertisements that formulate a theme. The results uncover more than just conventional thinking about advertising, and help decipher possible reasons why ads may have a substantial influence.
over consumers. Four advertisements that were chosen were determined to be very representative of the Vitaminwater campaign. Two advertisements contained celebrity endorsers, a common theme within Vitaminwater campaigns, and two advertisements were without celebrity endorsers and simply contained the Vitaminwater product and either verbal or visually implied claims.
5.0 RESULTS

5.1 Semiotic Analysis

Four Vitaminwater advertisements were selected for the purposes of a semiotic analysis. The advertisements selected for analysis are representative of Vitaminwater’s marketing communications generally, with two of the advertisements depicting a celebrity endorser, and each of the advertisements implying health or nutritional benefits. All of the advertisements were retrieved through online searches, although they have also circulated in other mediums such as magazines.

Vitaminwater Ad, “It doesn’t have to be this complicated” (see Appendix 14)

For the Vitaminwater ad, as seen in Appendix 14, a comparison is seemingly made between a bottle of Vitaminwater and a full glass of vitamins, with respect to nutritional value and ease of consumption. Based on the layout of the advertisement (relative size, contrast, and positioning), the reader’s attention is likely first drawn toward the full glass of vitamins and the tagline, “It doesn’t have to be this complicated.” A bottle of Vitaminwater is also depicted, and with the verbal anchoring provided by the tagline, the preferred meaning is likely that consumption of Vitaminwater is equivalent to consuming a full glass of vitamins, yet a much more convenient way of doing so. The beverage serves as replacement for the vitamin pills, with the beverage, in liquid form, being easily drinkable while it would be inconceivable to consume the pills as depicted. The bottle of Vitaminwater is considerably smaller or less prominent than the full glass of vitamins, which further reinforces the desirable product benefit that vitamins can be consumed more conveniently and enjoyably. The different serving size conveys that each
serving of Vitaminwater has a high concentration of desired vitamins and gives the consumer more ‘bang for their buck’ (vitamins tend to be expensive, which helps justify Vitaminwater’s higher price point relative to many competing beverages, while simultaneously offering a price competitive alternative to acquiring multi-vitamins in pill form). Moreover, the bright orange of the depicted bottled beverage likely brings Vitamin C to mind and the different coloured pills in the clear glass may be seen as vitamins that contribute to energy and balance. Synonyms for ‘energy’ include power, force, vigor, liveliness, get-up-and-go, and oomph, whereas ‘balance’ refers to equilibrium, stability, steadiness, and remaining poised. Whereas the vitamin pills appear dull and pale, the Vitaminwater beverage’s bright and vibrant appearance is similar to the colour of citrus fruit, thus conveying a tasty and flavourful alternative.

The remaining ad copy, in smaller font towards the bottom-left portion of the advertisement, states, “Luckily, you now have an easier way to get the job done. Each vitaminwater is specially formulated with ingredients you need to both energize and balance your day.” The caption once again offers reassurance that there is an easier way to consume necessary dosages of vitamins, and does so in a personalized way by repeatedly referring to “you” and claiming that “each is vitaminwater is specially formulated.” Lower-case letters are used entirely in the brand name, giving the product an approachable and casual essence. The ad copy is informal (e.g., “to get the job done” is reminiscent of a casual conversation), but simultaneously with a scientific or technical basis (e.g., the use of “formulated”). The product label makes reference to “medicinal ingredients” and the “recommended dose.”

Vitaminwater is offered in 12 different flavours that claim to provide various functions. The depicted beverage, appearing bright orange, is regarded as Vitaminwater’s Essential brand variant (also known as “orange-orange”), which possesses vitamins a, b, c, and e. Consistent
with the number of vitamins being listed as ingredients, four different colours of pills appear in the clear glass. The visual depiction suggests that nearly equal quantities are provided for each of the vitamins, yet the product’s label reveals otherwise. For example, one 591 mL bottle of Essential Vitaminwater contains 150 mg of Vitamin C (250% of an individual’s daily recommended intake) and 3.4 mg of Vitamin E (35% of an individual’s daily recommended intake).

White space is also apparent in the advertisement. Consequently, the promoted Vitaminwater product, the full glass of vitamins, and the ad copy using black typeface (the tagline and “vitamin” in the brand name are placed in bold and further pronounced) are particularly noticeable and stand out. Moreover, white space is a creative tactic that is commonly used to “convey elegance, power, leadership, honesty, trustworthiness, a modern nature, and a refined taste associated with the upper social strata” (Pracejus, Olsen, and O’Guinn, 2006, p.146). In their study of white space, Pracejus, Olsen, and O’Guinn (2006) found that advertising designers use this creative device to convey power, prestige, and leadership, as well as being healthful, trustworthy, contemporary, or approachable. The meaning of white space was subsequently agreed upon by participants who viewed corresponding advertisements. The use of white space, as seen in Appendix 14, appears to communicate leadership and prestige, which gives credence to a higher price point and presumed superiority or higher quality. The perception of trustworthiness could serve to limit the counter-argumentation that might occur regarding the accuracy of the advertisement’s claims.

The tagline, “It doesn’t have to be this complicated” draws attention to a dilemma that many people commonly face and can relate to (i.e., the perception that there is a lack of time to accomplish one’s daily chores). Stress can often be attributed to anxiety, which stems from
lacking enough time to deal with different activities throughout the day. People often struggle with eating properly, having sufficient time to prepare healthy and well-balanced meals, and consuming vitamin pills and supplements may be seen as a means to ensure a nutritious and balanced diet. The Vitaminwater advertisement speaks to those who feel that their lives are hectic and may be seeking a quick compromise for maintaining a healthy and balanced diet. Additionally, many people dislike trying to swallow large-sized pills. By displaying a glass that is overflowing with what appear to be large-sized pills, the negative connotations associated with consuming pills orally are reinforced. The advertisement likely captures the attention of those averse to pill-taking and provides the reader with a seemingly better alternative: one that is easy to swallow, does not take much time to consume or purchase, and delivers the benefits expected from consuming large quantities of (multiple) vitamins.

Vitaminwater Ad, “Flu shots are so last year” (see Appendix 15)

The second Vitaminwater advertisement, as seen in Appendix 15, displays three different flavours of Vitaminwater with the tagline, “flu shots are so last year.” The ad seemingly implies that consuming Vitaminwater, during the cold and flu season, can serve as a way of avoiding the hassle of taking flu shots. The preferred meaning is reinforced as each respective bottle contains a message underneath that reads “more vitamin C,” “more immunity,” and “less snotty tissues.” The viewer would likely read this tagline and interpret the verbal claims and implied comparison as, ‘why worry about taking flu shots, or worry about the cold season in general, when you can keep your body strong and full of vitamins that will battle flu symptoms by drinking this bottled beverage, Vitaminwater.’ The reader would likely initially view the main tagline “Flu shots are so last year,” followed by reading the captions beneath the
three bottles, which may further emphasize the comparison between the capabilities and convenience of Vitaminwater versus flu shots.

The colour scheme would likely be noticed as it brings attention to the flavours that are being offered and also helps accentuate the captions that may reinforce the preferred meaning of the advertisement. Each of the first two captions state the word “more,” in bold letters, whereas the final caption states “less” is bold. The use of bold typeface draws attention to the captions, which may prompt the reader to become even more aware of the comparison being made between flu shots and Vitaminwater (i.e., highlighting the negative aspects of flu shots and the ease of consuming the beverage with comparable benefits). The logo of Vitaminwater has a consistent pattern with bold typeface. For the brand name, “vitamin” is placed in substantively darker bold letters: with “vitamin” being emphasized rather than “water,” the implication is that vitamins are what apparently differentiate the promoted product from others, and that vitamins are an integral part of the ingredient makeup. Flavour names have been created that would appear to imply various meanings about the ingredients as well as plausible health-related benefits that may be acquired through consumption. Similar to the previous analysis, the Vitaminwater flavours once again appear vibrant, inviting and resemble citrus fruits, which are known to help revitalize the body and provide it with a natural source of vitamins.

Stated underneath the bottle labeled, “essential” is “more vitamin C.” Vitamin C, commonly regarded as a supplement, can help the body build up immunity as well as assist in fighting off cold viruses. Notably, the flavour name suggests that the contents are something that the body cannot do without. Synonyms for ‘essential’ are imperative, necessary, and crucial. Indeed, Vitamin C is in fact an essential nutrient, but placing the word on the label of the product suggests that the consumption of Vitamin C is vital in such a form (or preferable relative to
consuming orange fruit, for example), or prompt the viewer to potentially believe that they are not consuming enough of Vitamin C, or could use more.

The center bottle is labeled “defense” and the caption below reads “more immunity.” This particular claim may be more ambiguous for a typical consumer, but it is nonetheless captivating and likely attention-grabbing. “More immunity” could imply several different things, but in the context of Vitaminwater and given the general tagline of “flu shots are so last year,” it is reasonable to assume that the desired meaning is that the beverage will provide immunity from flu viruses. Congruent with the caption underneath the bottle is the flavour name, “defense,” which would seemingly imply that it defends the body from various harmful germs and bacteria that could put one’s health in jeopardy. The ambiguity lies in the fact that there is no disclosure as to what specifically the body is gaining from the depicted drink that protects the consumer from typical flu ailments, as no claims are explicitly visible regarding the vitamins or ingredients included. Moreover, it is difficult to ascertain whether “more immunity” results from consuming the beverage – as opposed to consuming nothing – or if the product provides more immunity than competitors or taking flu shots.

The bottle on the right side of the ad is labeled “multi-v” and the caption underneath reads “less snotty tissues.” Multi-v likely refers to multivitamins, once again attempting to reassure the consumer that they are potentially receiving added benefits from the beverage just like they would receive from taking a multi-vitamin. The notion of “less snotty tissues” delivers a consistent message, but does so in a more humourous, less factual manner. It likely prompts the reader to remember the times when they had been sick, using endless amounts of tissue, helplessly trying to deal with a runny nose.
Although the caption of “less snotty tissues” is less factual, it still preserves a consistent impression and refers back to the preferred meaning being communicated. It would appear that Vitaminwater is cleverly positioned as a product that delivers ‘more for less’. This may be interpreted as more for less in the sense of pricing, but also in the realm of convenience and ease of use. Building upon the first analysis, it appears that Vitaminwater is positioned as an appealing and favourable alternative to traditional methods of maintaining health. For the advertisement seen in Appendix 15, there is seemingly an attempt to devalue the idea of taking a flu shot by making the action seem inconvenient and virtually unnecessary when there is a viable option that gets the job done much less painfully. Many people dislike going to the doctor and fear being administered needles, and without blatantly saying so, Vitaminwater has likely captured the attention of those consumers by illustrating similar desired effects or outcomes that could be derived from drinking Vitaminwater (without any pain or discomfort commonly associated with receiving a flu shot). Whether it is taking a handful of vitamins or going to the doctor to get a flu shot, the marketing communication has likely suggested to the consumer that alternative methods of illness prevention are less ‘cool’ and more complicated than drinking a flavourful, colourful beverage that maintains a similar level of health.

**Vitaminwater Ad, “All You Need,” Depicting 50 Cent (See Appendix 16)**

The third Vitaminwater advertisement reviewed, as seen in Appendix 16, depicts the rapper, 50 Cent, who is endorsing the Vitaminwater flavour called “formula 50.” Initially the viewer is likely drawn to the rapper, 50 Cent, who is shown from two different angles. The picture depicts 50 Cent, in a muscle shirt, reaching into his refrigerator, which is filled exclusively with Vitaminwater. The physical definition and muscular physique of 50 Cent
appears heavily pronounced. After viewers have processed the pictures with 50 Cent, it is likely they will then draw their attention to the ad copy to help justify why 50 Cent has been chosen as the celebrity endorser for this advertisement. Nutrition, health, and exercise commonly appear together, and using 50 Cent as the endorser helps reinforce the notion that Vitaminwater may help towards obtaining a premium physical figure. Using a side profile of 50 Cent accentuates his muscular arms, and the choice of a tight tank top reveals his powerful, rugged build. The tagline “all you need” is found within the refrigerator that 50 Cent is reaching into, suggesting that 50 Cent is able to survive entirely from consumption of Vitaminwater.

The flavour is called “formula 50” and can be seen in the upper right portion of the advertisement. “Formula 50” can imply multiple meanings, and as such exemplifies polysemy in advertising. One possible interpretation is that when individuals are sick, and need to recuperate, physicians will prescribe medication, occasionally known as formulas. A lack of vital nutrients suppresses the immune system and is often cited as one of the reasons for illness. Consistent with the previous two advertisements reviewed is the underlying notion that sickness can be avoided through the consumption of Vitaminwater products, by helping boost the immune system with their winning ‘formula’. A second possible meaning of ‘formula 50’ is ‘formula for success’, which is an often-used phrase to denote a specific formula or guideline that one should follow in order to establish themselves and live a rewarding life. Despite his past gangster lifestyle, 50 Cent has been able to create a marketable brand with a prevailing positive image of a profitable, successful businessman. Using a well-known rapper/actor/ business investor is an interesting strategy and has the potential to reach a relatively broad audience.

The ad copy seen in the upper left portion of the advertisement reads, “no mixers. no ice. just 50.” This particular ad copy seemingly implies that Vitaminwater is all you need – it
works for 50 Cent. Moreover, the ad copy suggests that the beverage should be consumed as bottled, without any additional complements. Consistent with previous advertisements, the brand name, Vitaminwater is depicted in white and black, with the word ‘vitamin’ in white and ‘water’ in black. Underneath the ad copy that reads “formula 50,” in considerably smaller letters, is text that reads, “grape (50% daily dose).” This claim is highly ambiguous and also appears to contradict the notion that the featured product is ‘all you need’. Using the word “dose” or dosage typically brings to mind medical/nutritional terminology, potentially leading consumers to believe that physicians or nutritionists would approve of the message. Dosage tends to imply expert opinions, and despite a vague claim such as “50% daily dose,” without specifying the nutrients in question, the reader is likely to interpret that consumption of the featured product promotes health or wellness. Additionally, grape flavours typically imply purple shades of colouring, which is heavily used throughout the advertisement.

The focus of the colour scheme is faded light purple, coupled with black and white splashes, which is different from the previous two advertisements where bright and flashy colours were commonplace. Instead of engaging the minds of would-be consumers through brilliant colours, visuals, and blatant, sometimes humourous claims, this advertisement displays a colour tone that is comparably bland, yet still engages the consumer with implied claims through visual and verbal ad copy. Using white on darker colours helps exaggerate the ad copy, while the frequent use of bold lettering helps capture the viewer’s attention. Bold words are usually those pertaining to the flavour description, the tagline or theme (e.g., “all you need”), and within many advertisements “vitamin” and “water” are separately bolded, with different colours, to imply the basic message: the product merely contains vitamins and water.
It would appear that the preferred meaning for the advertisement, as seen in Appendix 16, is to draw a connection between the physical stature of 50 Cent and his diet, which is seemingly comprised exclusively of Vitaminwater. This advertisement presents an obvious example of puffery, as presumably no reasonable consumer would believe that 50 Cent survives on a diet that solely consists of Vitaminwater. Nevertheless, this marketing communication appears to have considerable potential for being persuasive, encouraging consumers to choose Vitaminwater over other alternatives by providing the body with superior nutritional value while bypassing the time or inconvenience of traditional healthful measures. The preferred meaning communicated remains fairly consistent with the theme of several Vitaminwater advertisements that appear in magazines, online and directly on vending machines: the notion of health, nutrition, and physical aptitude.

It is also important to consider the meaning that 50 Cent brings to the advertisement as a celebrity endorser. It is widely known that 50 Cent is a rapper, and his past would arguably be a close representation of the negative stereotypes that are commonly associated with rappers. He comes from a poverty-stricken neighbourhood and he has spent time in jail. It is also common knowledge (likely more so among young adults/teenagers) that 50 Cent has been shot over seven times and managed to live through the ordeal. Not only does this paint a picture of a rough, rugged man – a survivor – but also suggests that he has overcome considerable adversity in building an empire that includes a record label, clothing company, and ownership of a stake in Vitaminwater. Given that the target market of Vitaminwater products tends to be teenagers and young adults, it could be assumed that a celebrity such as 50 Cent is highly recognizable, and response to him could range from those who may relate to him, to others who may literally idolize him. This notion is supported by the source attractiveness model that suggests, based on
similarities between the source’s appearance and behaviour with the receiver appearance and behaviour, the message may be transferred with more desirable results (Hovland, 1952). 50 Cent’s physical stature alone would make many people envious and invite individuals to believe that Vitaminwater may have played an important role in developing his muscular body.

Further, for some people, 50 Cent exemplifies the ability to beat the odds, and overcoming the impossible to live a successful life. For others, there could be a physical appeal related to his stature and demeanor. Additionally, some might also relate to his tainted past and thuggish lifestyle that he once embraced. Regardless of the interpretation or how consumers relate to the rapper, it is obvious that he would have some appeal to a wide variety of audiences. Further, depending on the manner in which individuals may view 50 Cent, the product may take on that allure, and personify the qualities that they may admire about him. The meaning transfer model would suggest that individuals would attribute the qualities that the endorser possesses to the product; based on differing cultural understandings, individuals may transfer qualities of toughness, success, superiority, and masculine or muscular physique to the product, Vitaminwater (McCracken, 1989). It is likely that the desired meaning is to prompt viewers to believe that the flavour, formula 50 has similar qualities to 50 Cent, such as ruggedness, physical superiority, and success.

**Vitaminwater Ad, “Most Valuable Power,” Depicting Kobe Bryant (See Appendix 17)**

The final Vitaminwater advertisement being analyzed is entitled “most valuable power,” as seen in Appendix 17. The advertisement depicts a focused and fierce-looking Kobe Bryant, mid-dribble on an outdoor basketball court, elbowing past a life-size bottle of Vitaminwater.
The depicted Vitaminwater flavour is called “power-c,” being echoed the way Kobe is depicted in the advertisement (i.e., powering his way past a would-be defender, the Vitaminwater bottle).

Kobe Bryant is a 6’6 star shooting guard of the Los Angeles Lakers in the National Basketball Association (NBA). The basketball star’s bulging muscles in both his arms and legs make his body appear very well built and defined, thus insinuating power. An association is seemingly made between Kobe Bryant’s raw power, and the power that can be achieved from consuming Vitaminwater. The main caption that appears first and foremost is the phrase, “most valuable power.” In the realm of sports, MVP is a title offered to the league’s most valuable player, and Kobe Bryant was the recipient of such recognition from the NBA in 2008, when the ad circulated. The Vitaminwater ad plays on the MVP acronym, but substitutes “power” for ‘player’ to emphasize the Vitaminwater flavour, “power-c.” Power, in the basic sense, could imply strength and physical ability, which is communicated in this advertisement with Kobe Bryant’s physique and his intense facial focus. As a health drink, it would appear that Vitaminwater is positioned as offering added benefits and boosts of power in particular. A second meaning that could be derived from the word ‘power’ relates to status. The Hollywood sign in the background, coupled with the bright lights, signifies stardom and reflects a specific social status (e.g., Vitaminwater is the Hollywood of drinks, superior to other alternatives).

At the bottom of the advertisement there are three separate check-marked boxes highlighting Kobe’s statistics: “3 championships… and counting,” “1,845 bottles of Vitaminwater… and chugging,” and “1 MVP award… and long overdue.” Each of the statements beside the check-marked boxes implies that Kobe still has more to accomplish. It is also likely that many may draw the comparison between Kobe’s achievements and drinking copious amounts of Vitaminwater. Realistically, Kobe has achieved some of those
achievements, specifically his championships, long before the era of Vitaminwater. Kobe won three championships, as a member of the Los Angeles Lakers, from 2000-2002, long before his endorsement deal with Vitaminwater, which began in 2008 (CNBC.com, 2008). The basketball statistics may have legitimate truth behind them, but the staggering amount of Vitaminwater bottles he has apparently drank, and that he plans to ‘chug’ more could be considered an exaggeration, even humourous for some. Regardless of the accuracy behind the numbers, one would presumably draw the connection between Kobe Bryant being one of the best basketball players ever, good enough to win an MVP and the amount of Vitaminwater that he has apparently consumed helping to propel him to undeniable success.

Beneath the checked boxes is Vitaminwater’s logo as well as a tagline reading, “try it…it works for kobe.” This tagline appears to be a subtle challenge to those reading the advertisement. Moreover, although Kobe Bryant may be a basketball player, he has certainly attained celebrity status in doing so, as he has accomplished a tremendous amount in his career and is the face of several different Nike campaigns, as well as many other product endorsement campaigns. Kobe Bryant appears on Forbes Top 100 Celebrities list, at number 27, and is estimated to receive payment from endorsements and the Los Angeles Lakers of approximately $50 million in 2012 alone (Forbes, 2012). Additionally, Kobe Bryant has reached stardom due to the geographic location where he plays basketball. He has played for the Los Angeles Lakers for his entire professional career, in a city known for its celebrities and the movie industry. This is reinforced with the famous “Hollywood” sign visible in the background of the advertisement.

Similarities can be drawn between Kobe Bryant’s success on the basketball court, and the tremendous success he has had as the celebrity spokesperson for numerous ad campaigns for a variety of products. The marketers who hire Kobe Bryant want to attract potential consumers
who idolize Kobe for his phenomenal skills on the basketball court and attribute them to the 
product he is endorsing. McCracken (1989) illustrates how the meaning transfer model works, 
and essentially, the desired effect for this particular advertisement would be for individuals to 
believe that Kobe’s superior skills and the raw power that he displays on the basketball court can 
be found, achieved, and even acquired through the purchase and consumption of Vitaminwater 
products. Potentially, the theme of wealth and success communicated in the advertisement could 
also reflect a higher price point, as Vitaminwater tends to be priced higher than other 
alternatives. Vitaminwater flavours are typically named to reflect ingredients and desirable 
benefits: the two main ingredients of “power” are vitamin c and taurine, although neither is 
obviously communicated in the advertisement.

Continuing with the layout of the background, there is more to be said about the choice of 
the city and the portrayal of the landscape. Kobe plays and lives in Los Angeles, which is well 
known for its wealth, celebrities, and extravagant lifestyles. The lives of the rich and famous 
‘stars’ of Los Angeles are very much a part of our popular culture and may infer the superior 
qualities that the product may hold.

In general, the message of power and athletic prowess would appear to be the preferred 
meaning of this advertisement. With Kobe Bryant as the endorser, his fame primarily comes 
from his basketball skills and the achievements he has accrued because of his skill. The timing 
of his selection as MVP also supports the preferred meaning that power leads to success; without 
his power on the basketball court, Kobe would presumably not accomplish the goal of being 
named MVP. Moreover, the statistics conveyed in the bottom portion of the ad are used as a 
selling point to emphasize the achievements he has amassed. It becomes apparent that power 
likely has several meanings potentially implying a certain lifestyle, or at least may make one
entertain the idea of obtaining a lifestyle similar to Kobe Bryant’s. This leads back to the meaning transfer model, which informs that individuals assume the qualities and behaviour of the source with the product (McCracken, 1989). Vitaminwater effectively established a position of superiority that prompts the audience to believe that, through consumption, the possibilities of success and physical power is attainable and these attributes can be found within bottles of Vitaminwater.

5.1.2 Semiotic Summary

The reviewed advertisements seem to contain similarities in the way their messages may be interpreted. Each advertisement potentially relays to the viewer that Vitaminwater is both a convenient and easy alternative to revitalize your body with essential vitamins. In the first two advertisements, the communication counters more traditional methods of obtaining vitamins, through humour and exaggerated comparison. Although this may seem trivial, it does have a deeper meaning, as both advertisements have an underlying notion of getting things done faster, better, and relatively stress-free, a common goal for many in a fast-paced world. A suitable comparison might be weight loss/exercise programs that are often seen on television infomercials late at night: they offer an alternative to exercising that supposedly gets similar results, in half the time, with little effort.

Vitaminwater provides a parallel example by implying that the beverage can provide essential vitamins through a convenient vessel, unlike other time-consuming or complicated methods. The marketing communication has managed to juxtapose established techniques of keeping the body healthy (e.g., with a balanced diet, consuming vitamins and nutrients in pill forms, or preventative measures such as flu shots) with a far easier, pleasant, and more
convenient option: Vitaminwater. The juxtaposition is generally exaggerated, but not to the point of being completely unbelievable, and could influence consumers about the potential value one can accrue from drinking Vitaminwater, while not having to worry about the hassle of other methods. Many Vitaminwater advertisements make the conventionally available alternative appear outdated while making the new proposed product or service (Vitaminwater) appear superior, while achieving the same effect in a nonchalant manner.

Whereas marketing communication for beverages often tends to emphasize “thirst quenching,” “taste,” or “refreshing” qualities, Vitaminwater focuses largely on the functionality of the drink. Further, each flavour name gives little acknowledgement to the taste one would expect when consuming the product; instead, it focuses on the utility that can be gained. A common theme is to convey a product that provides the consumer with added benefits, whether nutrients or vitamins that would be difficult or less convenient to obtain through alternative methods. The comparisons suggested in the advertisements, whether direct or implied, are quite possibly transferred to the viewer and likely play some role when evaluating their current method of obtaining vitamins. The implied comparisons with Vitaminwater tend to offer consumers the opportunity to consider an easy, convenient and even more ‘hip’ way of accomplishing the task.

Further, through the use of celebrity endorsers, Vitaminwater advertising highlights the demeanor, attitude, and behaviour of those individuals and transfers these qualities to the product being endorsed. Vitaminwater has not been afraid to use celebrities that may have a tarnished reputation. As mentioned earlier, 50 Cent was notorious for his gangster upbringing and ‘get rich or die trying’ attitude (also the name of one of his CDs and early movies). Kobe Bryant was tried and acquitted on rape charges, and lost several sponsorship deals. Interestingly, Glaceau was one of the sponsors who dropped Kobe, which later endorsed him again in 2008, once they
became a subsidiary of Coca-Cola. For Vitaminwater, the common storyline appears be attaining success, and overcoming insurmountable odds in doing so.

Although puffery is a common theme in all four analyzed advertisements for Vitaminwater, they may nevertheless have persuasive capabilities. Two advertisements from the semiotics analysis, as seen in Appendix 14 and Appendix 15, were manipulated in the experimental portion of the thesis to examine the potentially persuasive qualities that advertisements containing puffed claims may have. The decision was made to use advertisements without the depiction of celebrities to avoid introducing extraneous variables that were not tested or accounted for in the original design. The results from the experiment are now presented in turn.

5.2 Sample

Data was collected from a total of 437 participants. Following data cleaning and formatting a total of 191 sets were deleted due to incomplete questionnaires as well as questionnaires that had repetitive responses, leaving a total remaining amount of 246 participants. Incomplete questionnaires were established through analyzing the data set and determining there was a lack of responses from the individual that was not attributed to simply skipping questions. Another method for deleting data sets was based on response times. This was done by calculating an average response time and then deleting participants who were done extremely quickly and obviously had not partaken in the full questionnaire- i.e. to watch all of the videos it would take at minimum three minutes, thus those below three minutes were deleted. The final data set that was used for analysis consisted of 246 participants.

The sample size for the study should be 168 or more participants. With an estimated
moderate effect size at 0.25, a power level at 0.80, two different independent variables to be manipulated and a 5% probability level, 42 individuals per cell will be sufficient. Therefore, getting at least 168 participants will achieve the desirable outlined criteria as defined by Cohen (1988). Additional participants will be gladly accepted adding further validity to the test.

5.2.1 Sample Characteristics

Participants were recruited from the Marketing and Consumer Studies undergraduate research pool from the University of Guelph, including students from MCS 1000, MCS 2020, and MCS 2600 core marketing classes: Introduction to Marketing, Information Management, and Fundamentals of Consumer Behaviour, respectively. The characteristics of the study include 178 males (72%) and 66 females (28%). Demographic questions such as annual income, marital status, and education level were not asked due to the recruitment of the sample being only from the University of Guelph undergrad research pool. The average age of individuals who participated was 19 years old, and ranged from 17-22 years old.

5.3 Analysis

The design of the study yielded three different conditions of ad manipulation (puffery, without puffery, and control) and within each condition participants were subjected to two different modes of stimuli: verbal and visual. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions through use of a random number generator. The puffery condition was created through manipulating either verbal claims or visual copy within the print advertisements chosen for the experiment. The puffery condition was designed to have either exaggerated verbal claims
or exaggerated, overstated visual depictions. The without puffery condition was once again a manipulation of the same two original advertisements but instead of using exaggerations, claims were much more realistic and portrayed either verbal claims or visual depictions without exaggeration. The control condition, once again, was a manipulation of the original two advertisements, but simply showed the product, Vitaminwater and the brand logo (all other verbal or visual copy was removed). The original advertisements were taken from a Vitaminwater campaign and were found using online searches, but commonly found in other mediums such as magazines. One advertisement featured an overflowing cup of vitamins and made a comparison to the ease of obtaining those vitamins and drinking a bottle of Vitaminwater. The tagline read, “it doesn’t have to be this complicated.” The second advertisement featured three different flavours of Vitaminwater with the tagline “flu shots are so last year.” Each bottle had a caption underneath that read, “more immunity,” “more vitamin C” and “less snotty tissues.” An apparent comparison is being made between the vitamins and defense from cold symptoms you can receive through drinking Vitaminwater in comparison to getting a flu shot.

The mode of stimuli, either visual or verbal, was a within subject variable which meant that each participant was subjected to both modes of stimuli when randomly assigned to a condition. The table below summarizes the dispersion of participants across the three different conditions.
Table (3) Displays the dispersion of participants. Note. Total participants are 246 using the stimuli mode as within subject variable resulting in 492 total responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manipulations</th>
<th>Puffery</th>
<th>Without Puffery</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Of responses</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses all conditions</td>
<td>492</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total participants</td>
<td>246</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 Dependent Measures Employed

The core dependent variables that were investigated were six different measures, which included: perceived nutrition, attitude toward the product, ad and brand, purchase intentions, and source credibility. Each of these were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, and all measures contained three items other than nutrition which contained four items (See Appendix 13). Cronbach’s alpha tests were applied to determine reliability of each individual scale. A summary chart displaying the alpha levels for each scale, the number of items and scale is shown below.
Table (4) Displays the dependent measures, followed by the total amount of items in the scale followed by a Cronbach’s $\alpha$ level showing the reliability of the scales used. The Cronbach’s $\alpha$ level’s ranged from .83 to .95, showing that each dependent variable scale is reliable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceived Nutrition</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attitude toward Product</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Attitude toward Brand</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Attitude to Ad</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Purchase Intentions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Source Credibility</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.1 Correlations for Dependent Measures

Additionally a Bivariate correlation was conducted to determine the Pearson Correlation between all of the dependent measures that were used. As shown in the table below, it is noted that all six different dependent measures are positively correlated and are statistically significant at $p = .01$ level.
Table (5) Showing the Correlation Coefficients for Verbal dependent measures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceived Nutrition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.60*</td>
<td>.52*</td>
<td>.52*</td>
<td>.59*</td>
<td>.65*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attitude to Product</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.55*</td>
<td>.82*</td>
<td>.79*</td>
<td>.58*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Attitude to Ad</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.56*</td>
<td>.50*</td>
<td>.52*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Attitude to Brand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.73*</td>
<td>.62*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Purchase Intentions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.50*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Source Credibility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ** = p < .001

5.5 **Hypothesis Testing - Verbal Analysis**

Before running individual ANOVAs for each of the dependent variables, a MANOVA was run in order to report significance levels. Each hypothesis was tested initially using a MANOVA and then subsequently ANOVAs were run where significance was found. Main effects, as well as simple effects, interaction and moderating effects are reported.
**Hypothesis 1:** There will be a main effect showing that individuals who are subjected to advertisement’s containing puffery will be more positive on all dependent measures than individuals viewing advertisements containing without puffery and the control group.

As noted, output for MANOVA shows significant levels were not reached for the grouped dependent variables. All four multivariate tests were not statistically significant for the main effect of puffery. MANOVA was not statistically significant $F (12, 480) = .850, p = .599$.

Without significant levels reached using MANOVA permission to conduct individual ANOVA’s is declined. All mean scores for the three conditions of puffery, without puffery and control can be found in the appendix (See Appendix 18 for $F$ and $p$ values- See Appendix 19- 25 for mean scores).

After testing hypothesis 1, hypothesis 2 was analyzed. The purpose of hypothesis 2 was to determine whether consumer experiences with a product may vary their evaluations of advertisements. It should be noted that experience was calculated through using a measure of frequency, which was then split into three separate groups. Individuals who had drank 1 or less Vitaminwater in the past three months were categorized as low, individuals who drank 2, 3, or 4 Vitaminwater in the past three months were categorized as moderate and individuals who drank 5 or more Vitaminwater were categorized as high. This is adapted from the categorization that was used by Bettman and Park (1980).
**Hypothesis 2a:** There will be a main effect showing that consumer experiences with products will be more positive. It is expected that the more relative experiences individual’s have with a product the more positive they will evaluate the dependent measures.

A MANOVA was run first to make sure further investigation of each dependent variable using ANOVA was allowed. The MANOVA was run with all dependent measures, using a 3 (Advertisement Manipulation: puffery, without puffery, and control) X 3 (Experience: Low, Moderate, and High) design.

The MANOVA report found no significant results for the independent variable ad manipulation (puffery, without puffery, and control conditions).

Using MANOVA, the independent variable experience was significant ($p < .01$) for each of the four multivariate tests. The MANOVA reported significant results, $F (12, 464) = 9.50, p < .001$. Individual ANOVAs were subsequently performed and judged as the appropriate next-step since the MANOVA results yield significant effects (Stevens, 1986, p.179)

Perceived nutrition was significant, $F (2, 242) = 8.08, p < .001$ (Perceived Nutrition $M = 4.97, SD = .20$ for high experience group versus $M = 4.58, SD = .11$ for the moderate experience group and $M = 4.14, SD = .10$ for the low experience group).

The comparison for perceived nutrition between the moderate and high experience groups was not statistically significant, $t (242) = -1.65, p = .103$. The comparison between low and moderate experience groups was significant, $t (242) = -2.83, p = .005$. The comparison between low and high experience groups was significant, $t (244) = 3.78 p < .001$.

Attitude toward the product was significant, $F (2,242)= 47.64, p < .001$ (Attitude toward product $M = 5.52, SD = .18$ for high experience group versus $M = 5.05, SD= .10$ for the
moderate experience group and $M = 3.91, SD = .11$ for the low experience group).

The comparison for attitude toward the product between the moderate and high experience group was not statistically significant, $t (242) = -2.48, p = .015$. The comparison between low and moderate experience groups was significant, $t (242) = -7.72, p < .001$. The comparison between low and high experience groups was significant, $t (242) = 8.94 p < .001$.

Attitude toward ad was significant, $F (2,242) = 5.44, p = .005$ (Attitude to ad $M = 4.79, SD = .22$ for high experience group versus $M = 4.46, SD = .13$ for the moderate experience group and $M = 4.02, SD = 0.11$ for the low experience group).

The comparison for attitude toward the ad between the moderate and high experience groups was not statistically significant, $t (242) = -.926, p = .347$. The comparison between low and moderate experience groups was significant at $t (242) = -2.55, p = .011$. The comparison between low and high experience groups was significant at $t (242) = 2.78 p = .007$.

Attitude toward brand was significant, $F (2,242) = 33.38, p < .001$ (Attitude toward brand $M = 5.50, SD = .20$ for high experience group versus $M = 5.13, SD = .12$ for the moderate experience group and $M = 4.03, SD = .10$ for the low experience group).

The comparison for attitude toward the brand between the moderate and high experience groups was not statistically significant, $t (242) = -1.51, p = .136$. The comparison between low and moderate experience groups was significant, $t (242) = -6.90, p < .001$. The comparison between low and high was significant, $t (242) = 6.35 p < .001$.

Purchase intentions was significant, $F (2,242) = 65.01, p < .001$ (Purchase Intentions $M=5.58, S.D.= .24$ for high experience group versus $M= 4.76, SD = .14$ for the moderate experience group and $M = 3.03, SD = .13$ for the low experience group).

The comparison for purchase intentions between the moderate and high experience groups
was significant, \( t(242) = -3.41, p = .001 \). The comparison between low and moderate experience groups was significant at \( t(242) = -8.76, p < .001 \). The comparison between low and high experience groups was significant, \( t(242) = 11.00, p < .001 \).

Source Credibility was significant, \( F(2,242) = 10.52, p < .001 \) (Source Credibility \( M = 5.07, SD = .21 \) for high experience group versus \( M = 4.64, SD = .12 \) for the moderate experience group and \( M = 4.15, SD = .11 \) for the low experience group).

The comparison for source credibility between the moderate and high experience groups was significant, \( t(242) = -2.26, p = .027 \). The comparison between low and moderate experience groups was significant, \( t(242) = -2.86, p = .005 \). The comparison between low and high experience groups was significant, \( t(242) = 4.59, p < .001 \).

The statistics above show that all six dependent variables show significant results when looking at the main effect of experience.

After testing hypothesis 2a, hypothesis 2b was tested. Hypothesis 2b was designed to test the interaction effect between experience and ad manipulation to determine if when in certain conditions different levels of experience may illicit more positive evaluations. Predictions were made regarding the puffery and without puffery groups. It was expected that the control condition would show no differences in mean scores, therefore was not included in the hypothesis but will still be reported. (See Appendix 26-32 for \( F \) and \( p \) values; See Appendix 33-38 for mean scores).
**Hypothesis 2b:** There will be an interaction between experience and ad manipulation. It is expected that individuals in the moderate experience group within the puffery condition will show the most positive results compared to low and high experience groups. It is expected that individuals in the high experience group in the without puffery condition will show the most positive results compared to low and moderate experience groups.

MANOVA results for interaction between experience and ad manipulation only return significant levels for one multivariate test. The MANOVA showed significant results, $F(2, 234) = 2.68, p = .016$. Individual ANOVAs were subsequently performed and judged as the appropriate next-step since the MANOVA results yield significant effects (Stevens, 1986, p.179).

It was found that out of the six dependent variables, only one had significant levels displaying an interaction effect.

For the puffery condition, attitude toward the brand was significant, $F(2, 74) = 5.41, p = .05$ (Attitude toward the brand $M=5.50$, $SD = .32$ for high experience group versus $M = 4.77$, $SD = .21$ for the moderate experience group and $M = 3.94$, $SD = .21$ for the low experience group).

In the puffery condition for the dependent variable attitude toward the brand, the comparison between the moderate and high experience was not statistically significant at $t(74) = -.95, p = .353$. The comparison between low and moderate was significant at $t(74) = -2.56, p = .014$. The comparison between low and high was significant, $t(74) = 2.97 p = .006$. Although statistically significant results were reported, as noted from the mean scores, the moderate group was not the most positive and therefore did not follow the direction that was hypothesized.

For the without puffery condition, attitude toward the brand was significant, $F(2, 67) = 25.35, p < .001$ (Attitude toward the brand $M = 5.44$, $SD = .48$ for high experience group versus
\( M = 5.00, SD = .24 \) for the moderate experience group, and \( M = 3.85, SD = 0.19 \) for the low experience group).

In the without puffery condition, for the dependent variable attitude toward the brand, the comparison between the moderate and high experience was not statistically significant, \( t (74) = -1.71, p = .109 \). The comparison between low and moderate was significant, \( t (74) = -6.84, p < .001 \). The comparison between low and high was found to be significant, \( t (74) = 8.07, p < .001 \).

For the control condition, attitude toward the brand was significant, \( F (2, 99) = 8.88, p < .001 \). (Attitude toward the brand \( M = 5.18, SD = .27 \) for high experience group versus \( M = 4.80, SD = .17 \) for the moderate experience group and \( M = 4.10, SD = .16 \) for the low experience group).

In the control condition, for the dependent variable attitude toward the brand, the comparison between the moderate and high experience was not statistically significant, \( t (99) = -1.07, p = .293 \). The comparison between low and moderate was significant, \( t (99) = -3.34, p = .001 \). The comparison between low and high was found to be significant, \( t (99) = 3.15, p = .005 \). (See Appendix 39-44 for mean scores).
Figure (5) Shows the results for interaction effect between ad manipulation and experience for the dependent variable attitude toward the brand.

Statistically significant results were found, and mean scores show that those in the high experience group reported the most positive results for attitude toward the brand.

**Low vs. Moderate vs. High Experience**

Individual ANOVAs were run to determine if there were any significant differences amongst the three levels of ad manipulation (puffery, without puffery, and control) when isolating for individual levels of experiences. The persuasion index was used to report the following ANOVAs. The persuasion index is a composite of all six dependent variables, and was used to report as an average instead of reporting all six dependent variables. The low experience group was not statistically significant $F (2, 111) = 1.997, p = .141$ (Low Experience
$M= 4.07, SD= .67$ for the puffery condition, $M= 3.64, SD= 1.03$ for the without puffery condition and $M= 3.92, SD=.67$, for the control condition).

The moderate experience group was marginally significant $F (2, 91) = 2.477, p = .090$ (Moderate Experience $M= 4.49, SD= .94$ for the puffery condition, $M= 5.06, SD= .76$ for the without puffery condition and $M= 4.55, SD= .90$, for the control condition).

The high experience group was not statistically significant $F (2, 34) = 1.388, p = .263$ (High Experience $M= 5.30, SD= .73$ for the puffery condition, $M= 5.50, SD= .55$ for the without puffery condition and $M= 4.91, SD= 1.04$, for the control condition). Therefore contrasts were not run between the three levels of ad manipulation because statistically significant results were not found.

Overall hypothesis 2b is not supported as not all six dependent variables showed statistically significant interaction effects of puffery and experience. However, for the dependent variable attitude toward the brand, it is partially supported.

5.5.1 Hypothesis Testing - Visual Analysis

Correlations for Dependent Measures

Additionally a Bivariate correlation was conducted with all visual results to determine the Pearson Correlation between all of the dependent measures that were used. As shown in the table below, it is noted that all six different dependent measures are positively correlated and are statistically significant.
Table (6) Showing the Correlation Coefficients for visual dependent measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>1</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceived Nutrition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.65**</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.62**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attitude to Product</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.81**</td>
<td>.75**</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Attitude to Ad</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Attitude to Brand</td>
<td></td>
<td>.68**</td>
<td>.62**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Purchase Intentions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Source Credibility</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: **= p<.001

**Hypothesis 1:** There will be a main effect showing that individuals who are subjected to
advertisements containing puffery will be more positive on all dependent measures than
individuals viewing advertisements containing without puffery and the control group

Using MANOVA significant levels were reached for the grouped dependent variables. Ad
manipulation (puffery, without puffery, and control) was significant $F (12,476)= 1.81, p = .057$
Individual ANOVAs were subsequently performed and judged as the appropriate next-step since
the MANOVA results yield significant effects (Stevens, 1986, p.179).

When looking at individual ANOVAs from the output it was noted that none of the six
dependent variables reached significance. One dependent variable, attitude toward the ad, was approaching significance $F(2, 244) = 2.85, p = .06$. This result could suggest that when testing the dependent measures as a group they are significantly different, but when looking at dependent measures on an individual basis there is no significant differences to be noted (See Appendix 45 for $F$ and $p$ values).

**Hypothesis 2:** There will be a main effect showing that consumer experiences with products will be more positive. It is expected that the more relative experiences individual’s have with a product the more positive they will evaluate the dependent measures.

A MANOVA was run first to make sure further investigation of each dependent variable using ANOVA was allowed. The MANOVA was run with all dependent measures, including the persuasion index (aggregate of all dependent measures) using a 3 (Ad Manipulation: With puffery, without puffery, and control) X 3 (Experience: low, moderate, and high) design. The ad manipulation variable did not reach significance in MANOVA. However, when looking at the experience variable, on all four multivariate tests, significance levels were found. MANOVA reported significance, $F(12, 460) = 8.68, p < .001$. Significance levels found in MANOVA give permission to use individual ANOVAs for the dependent measures.

Perceived nutrition was significant, $F(2,242) = 5.02, p = .007$ (Perceived Nutrition $M = 4.96, SD = .21$ for the high experience group versus $M= 4.56, SD = .12$ for the moderate experience group and $M = 4.23, SD = .11$ for the low experience group).

The comparison for perceived nutrition between the moderate and high experience groups was not statistically significant, $t(242) = -1.56, p = .130$. The comparison between low and
moderate groups was found to be approaching significance, \( t(242) = 1.92, p = .056 \). The comparison between low and high experience groups was found to be significant, \( t(242) = 2.94, p = .005 \).

Attitude toward the product was significant, \( F(2,242) = 36.046, p < .001 \) (Attitude toward product \( M = 5.60, SD = .21 \) for the high experience group versus \( M = 4.92, SD = .12 \) for the moderate experience group and \( M = 3.91, SD = .11 \) for the low experience group).

The comparison for attitude toward product the between the moderate and high experience groups was significant, \( t(242) = -3.28, p = .002 \). The comparison between low and moderate was found to be significant at \( t(242) = 6.04, p < .001 \). The comparison between low and high was found to be significant at \( t(242) = 8.09, p < .001 \).

Attitude toward the ad was significant, \( F(2,242) = 2.87, p = .058 \) (Attitude to the ad \( M = 4.65, SD = .24 \) for the high experience group versus \( M = 4.13, SD = .14 \) for the moderate experience group and \( M = 3.86, SD = .11 \) for the low experience group).

The comparison for attitude toward the ad between the moderate and high experience groups was not statistically significant, \( t(242) = -1.43, p = .158 \). The comparison between low and moderate experience groups was not statistically significant, \( t(242) = 1.164, p = .246 \). The comparison between low and high experience groups was significant, \( t(242) = 2.29, p = .025 \).

Attitude toward the brand was significant, \( F(2,242) = 23.352, p < .001 \) (Attitude toward brand \( M = 5.44, SD = .21 \) for the high experience group versus \( M = 4.78, SD = .13 \) for the moderate experience group and \( M = 4.00, SD = .11 \) for the low experience group).

The comparison for attitude toward the brand between the moderate and high experience was significant, \( t(242) = -3.04, p = .003 \). The comparison between low and moderate experience
groups was significant, \( t(242) = 4.47, p < .001 \). The comparison between low and high experience groups was significant, \( t(242) = 6.44, p < .001 \).

Purchase intentions was significant, \( F(2,242) = 64.99, p < .001 \) (Purchase Intentions \( M = 5.52, SD = .24 \) for the high experience group versus \( M = 4.67, SD = .14 \) for the moderate experience group and \( M = 3.01, SD = .13 \) for the low experience group).

The comparison for purchase intentions between the moderate and high experience groups was significant, \( t(242) = -3.56, p = .001 \). The comparison between low and moderate experience groups was significant, \( t(242) = 8.65, p < .001 \). The comparison between low and high experience groups was significant, \( t(242) = 10.94, p < .001 \).

Source credibility was found to be significant, \( F(2,242) = 10.419, p < .001 \) (Source Credibility \( M = 4.99, SD = .23 \) for the high experience group versus \( M = 4.56, SD = .13 \) for the moderate experience group and \( M = 3.93, SD = .12 \) for the low experience group).

The comparison for source credibility between the moderate and high experience groups was significant, \( t(242) = -1.95, p = .054 \). The comparison between low and moderate was significant, \( t(242) = 3.18, p = .002 \). The comparison between low and high was found to be significant, \( t(242) = 4.51, p < .001 \).

Although not all comparisons were significantly different, it can be said that hypothesis 2a is supported. The overall main effect of experience was found. (See Appendix 46-52 for \( F \) and \( p \) values).
Hypothesis 2b: There will be an interaction between experience and ad manipulation. It is expected that individuals in the moderate experience group within the puffery condition will show the most positive results compared to low and high experience groups. It is expected that individuals in the high experience group in the without puffery condition will show the most positive results compared to low and moderate experience groups.

MANOVA results for interaction between experience and ad manipulation only return significant levels for one multivariate test. MANOVA reported significant results, $F (2, 234) = 2.48, p = .24$. Individual ANOVA’s were run to determine where significant levels were achieved.

It was found that out of the six dependent variables, only one dependent variable reached significant levels displaying an interaction effect.

For the puffery condition, attitude toward the ad was significant, $F (2, 74)= 3.23, p = .045$ (Attitude toward the ad $M = 5.19, SD = .35$, for high experience group versus $M= 4.29, SD = .24$, for the moderate experience group and $M = 3.94, SD = 0.23$ for the low experience group).

In the puffery condition, attitude toward the ad, the comparison between the moderate and high experience, was approaching significance, $t (74) = -1.99, p = .055$. The comparison between low and moderate experience groups was not significantly significant, $t (74)= -.88, p = .382$. The comparison between low and high experience groups was significant, $t (74) = 2.89 p = .05$.

For the without puffery condition, attitude toward the ad was significant, $F (2, 67) = 5.06, p = .009$ (Attitude toward the ad $M = 5.11, SD = .53$ for high experience group versus $M = 4.34, SD = .27$ for the moderate experience group and $M = 3.66, SD = 0.21$ for the low experience group).
In the without puffery condition, attitude toward the ad the comparison between the moderate and high experience groups was not statistically significant, $t(67) = -1.85, p = .100$. The comparison between low and moderate experience groups was significant, $t(67) = -2.31, p = .024$. The comparison between low and high experience groups was significant, $t(67) = 3.42, p = .007$.

For the control condition, attitude toward the ad was not statistically significant, $F(2, 99) = .691, p = .503$. (Attitude toward the ad $M = 3.64, SD = .32$, for high experience group versus $M = 3.74, SD = .22$, for the moderate experience group and $M = 3.99, SD = 0.2$ for the low experience group). (See Appendix 53-58 for mean scores).

**Figure (6) Shows the interaction between ad manipulation and experience for the dependent variable attitude to ad.**

The results above show that the only statistically significant means are between low and high experience groups. The mean scores for moderate and high experience groups was approaching significance, but as noted from the means above, not in the direction that was
hypothesized as the high experience group shows the most positive results.

**Low vs. Moderate vs. High Experience**

Individual ANOVAs were also run to determine if there were any significant differences amongst the three levels of ad manipulation (puffery, without puffery, and control) for the mean scores while isolating for each individual group of experience.

When looking at the persuasion index, it was found that the low experience group was not statistically significant $F (2, 111) = .767, p = .467$ (Low Experience $M= 3.81, SD= 1.14$ for the puffery condition, $M= 3.70, SD= 1.11$ for the without puffery condition and $M= 3.97, SD= .77$, for the control condition).

The moderate group was also found to be not statistically significant $F (2, 91)= .975, p = .381$ (Moderate Experience $M= 4.58, SD= 1.15$ for the puffery condition, $M= 4.79, SD= .75$ for the without puffery condition and $M= 4.44, SD= .88$, for the control condition).

The high group was marginally significant $F (2, 34)= 2.588, p = .090$ (High Experience $M= 5.47, SD= .86$ for the puffery condition, $M= 5.33, SD= .57$ for the without puffery condition and $M= 34.78, SD= .95$, for the control condition).

Therefore contrasts were not run, as statistically significant results were not found for the three levels of ad manipulation (puffery, without puffery, and control).
5.6 Summary of Analysis

As noted from the above hypothesis testing, hypothesis 1 for both the verbal and visual analysis was not supported. Hypothesis 2a was supported for both visual and verbal analysis. Hypothesis 2b was not supported when looking at the six individual dependent variables, but was partially supported for one dependent variable respectively. The verbal analysis revealed that attitude toward the brand showed an interaction effect but not in the hypothesized direction for the puffery condition. However, it was in the predicted direction for the without puffery condition. The visual analysis showed an interaction effect for attitude toward the ad, but not in the hypothesized direction for the puffery condition. However, it was in the predicted direction for the without puffery condition.
6.0 DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

6.1 Discussion

The goal of this thesis was to investigate the literature surrounding deceptive and misleading advertising, specifically in the realm of puffery and to assess whether or not puffery is actually persuasive or if it has any influence on consumer decision-making. Further, due to minimal research regarding visual puffery, an investigation was made to examine both verbal and visual forms of puffery and the potential persuasive qualities they may have on consumers. Additionally, policies that are currently in place were evaluated to determine if suggestions for revisions or amendments would be appropriate.

Initially, a semiotic analysis was performed, and revealed the inherent puffery that was consistent amongst four different Vitaminwater advertisements. Common themes that arose from this analysis were comparisons between nutrition and traditional measures of sustaining good health and consuming Vitaminwater. Humour and exaggerated claims were often implied to convey a message that may influence consumers to believe that Vitaminwater helps revitalize, maintain health, and even provide benefits that seemingly cannot be achieved through alternative approaches. Additionally, two of the four advertisements analyzed contained celebrities endorsing the product. Within these advertisements, it was noted that a particular type of celebrity had been chosen. Both advertisements convey celebrities who have, in some way, beaten the odds, or overcome adversity to achieve success in life. Both Kobe Bryant and 50 Cent have checkered pasts, but are currently perceived as successful stars, even beyond their primary talents of basketball and rap, respectively. Further, this is found in other Vitaminwater advertisements that were not analyzed or reviewed within this thesis. Ellen Degeneres and Tom Brady are two additional endorsers depicted within several Vitaminwater ads. Both of these
celebrities appear to encapsulate the same type of theme. Ellen is a gay comedian, who came out publicly while she had a hit TV show, and some would credit this as an incredibly daring and difficult feat to overcome. Tom Brady was minimally scouted, yet as a professional athlete he became a star quarterback for the New England Patriots of the National Football League, leading them to several championships. Overall, Vitaminwater has consistently communicated in their advertisements that their product seemingly provides benefits and nutritional value that is incomparable to other alternatives. When celebrity endorsers are included, this message is likely reinforced with the added notion of overcoming adversity to become a living success story.

Following the semiotic analysis, an experiment was conducted to include the perspective of consumers. All participants were shown both verbal and visual stimuli in an attempt to draw insight about both modes presented. Previous literature would suggest that verbal forms of puffery are unbelievable and that the puffed claims do not hold believable qualities (Haan and Berkley, 2003). Although this was tested empirically, there has been no research to my knowledge that went past the notion of believability, and examines additional measures such as attitude and purchase intentions. The results that were found through this thesis research, although often insignificant, show strong trends in the hypothesized direction, which lends to a rich discussion of implications, especially pertaining to public policies and ethics.

The stimuli that were used to elicit responses paint an interesting story about how puffery is commonly perceived by individuals. Previous literature has asked participants whether or not they believe the advertisements they were viewing. Put simply, this seems to be mere confirmation that an advertisement does in fact contain puffery, but measures little else. For my thesis research, an alternative approach was taken. The FTC (1983) would suggest that puffery is not to be believed by a reasonable consumer and that the claims being made are not taken
seriously. The approach taken for this thesis was not to simply ask participants, “do you believe this print advertisement?” but instead to ask different measures that show how persuasive an advertisement containing puffery could potentially be, as ultimately puffery is a legal defense for deceptive and misleading advertising.

When testing the hypotheses, it was found that the main effect of puffery was not statistically significant for both verbal and visual stimuli. Although not significant, a lot can be said about the directional trend of the results. In all cases, whether verbal or visual stimuli, puffery had the highest mean scores when looking at the six different dependent variables. The mean scores were not notably different, and as previously indicated, did not reach significance levels. Although statistically there were no overly convincing results, from a public policy standpoint, this is still a point of concern. According to the FTC (1983), puffery should not be believed by any reasonable consumer as well as the claims made should not be taken in their literal sense. Although believability was not asked directly, various measures that show persuasion and behaviour stemming from viewing an advertisement were measured. It is easy for someone to say they don’t believe an advertisement, and often individuals are skeptical of advertising in general. Whether or not individuals believe something may in fact be the core issue regarding policy relating to puffery. Regardless of beliefs, attitudes may be changed, thus leading to a heightened feeling towards a product, and ultimately influencing a purchase decision. It would seem that this is typically the ultimate goal of marketing communication. Although puffery is not meant to be believable and is in fact a legal defense, it begs the question, how do we define believability and is this the appropriate assessment to qualify if something is deceptive/misleading, or truly puffery?
Interestingly, puffery seems to have a persuasive connotation attached with it, regardless of the measure of believability. From a policy standpoint, this may be an inefficient method in terms of deeming something deceptive or misleading. According to the FTC (1983, p. 2), deceptive or misleading advertising has to be a representation that would mislead a consumer, the consumer that is misled must be a reasonable consumer, and finally, the omission or practice must be that of a material one. Materiality refers to the representation or practice that causes an individual to change their purchasing decisions. When analyzing the data from a different perspective, using frequency tables, we can compare how much individuals are choosing a rating on a 7 Point Likert scale, which highlights the differences in evaluation by participants when they saw advertisements containing puffery versus without puffery.

Although not showing statistically significant results, this can still say a lot about the current measures and regulations regarding puffery in advertising. It seems there is a disconnect between what believability in advertising means with regards to puffery, and what actually leads to a change in behaviour resulting in either a different purchasing decision or a newly formed attitude that may influence behaviour at a later date.

Possible reasons for not reaching significant levels could be related to the strength of the manipulation. This is difficult to measure, as puffery lies in the realm of deceptive and misleading advertising, thus the goal is to show that some people are misled and would possibly make different purchasing decisions after viewing an advertisement containing puffery. Successfully manipulating the advertisements differently enough, across conditions, may have been a factor in not reaching significant levels. That being said, the control condition produced results that were not predicted. As noted from the mean scores, often the control condition was at least as high as the without puffery condition, if not higher. Two different control stimuli
were used (i.e., verbal or visual). It may have been more efficient to use one control that was completely irrelevant to the topic. The controls used were still manipulations of the original advertisements chosen, but merely depicted Vitaminwater bottles with the logo visible. Based on the reviewed literature, Oakes and Slotterhill (2001) were able to show that individuals often make incorrect inferences pertaining to the ingredient make-up of a product simply based on the logo or brand name. As the control condition still depicted the brand logo and brand name, it is possible that individuals perceived something called “Vitaminwater” as healthy, even without a health claim complementing this, which could explain some of the abnormality amongst mean scores for the control condition. Additionally, the logo Vitaminwater is heavily emphasized in advertisements, consistently in block typeface and white and black colouring. Glaceau is the corporate producer of Vitaminwater, and the name is placed directly above the logo. Glaceau could also influence participants by referring to the word “glacier,” thus prompting them to possibly think of glacier springs, health, purity and refreshing or rejuvenating qualities.

Looking at the second hypotheses regarding experience, significant levels were found for the effect of experience, but not always in the direction that was hypothesized. Bettman and Park (1980) showed that individuals with moderate experience would consider more processing of the currently available information in comparison to those with low or high experience. The result was found that indeed the moderate experience group was statistically different from the low experience group, but the high experience group usually had similar mean scores as the moderate experience group and was not statistically different from each other. In order to group individuals into different categories, a measure calculating frequency of use was determined. Potentially, those with the highest frequency, thus highest experience, are also those that have the most appeal for the product, once again showing the most favourable scores on the various
dependent measures. Additional measures were taken such as a health index, which was initially intended to be used in collaboration with the frequency measure, but it was found they were uncorrelated at .093. The decision was made to disregard the health index, as questions were sensitive, and it is possible individuals were not completely truthful when answering, as mean scores were very high on average, possibly indicating a self-report bias.

When analyzing the results it is quite possible that those who were subsequently grouped into the high experience group were in fact simply the biggest advocates of Vitaminwater and thus had higher mean scores in each condition versus the other experience groups, which quite possibly could be explained by loyalty. Also, individuals who are the most frequent users of Vitaminwater may actually want to believe the advertisements they are seeing, as a sense of reassurance for the investment they have made into the product. This could also be a possible reason why individuals with high experience (high usage) tended to show the most favourable responses, regardless of condition.

6.1.1 Policy Implications

This thesis reveals several public policy implications regarding puffery claims and what is classified as deceptive and misleading advertising. After reviewing the literature, conducting both a semiotic analysis and consumer research, there is some evidence to suggest that looking at puffery from a believability standpoint favours the marketer as it gives them the freedom to claim their advertisements should not be taken literally despite still remaining persuasive. Policies regarding deceptive and misleading advertising, as well as puffery, should have to follow the same format when deciding if they are in fact misleading the consumer. Consistent with Preston (1977), even if a material claim is not made directly in the advertisement, the result
of a consumer viewing an advertisement with puffery could possibly end up with a material outcome, as consumers may ultimately alter their attitudes and subsequent purchase decisions. It would seem that the current definition and respective FTC (1983) law regarding puffery does not coordinate, and that materiality is most certainly a plausible outcome when looking at the influence that it may have over individuals after viewing an advertisement containing puffery. A recommendation, stemming from my thesis research, is to separate the terms “believable” and “not taken as a representation of fact” from current legislation regarding puffery. Asking an individual their preference toward an advertisement is far from measuring their subsequent actions and behaviour that results from viewing an advertisement. Although admissions of belief seem like a plausible way to patrol and deem advertisements as puffery or not, it is very conceivable that this is simply overlooking the inherent deception in advertisements that contain puffery. In order to more accurately police deceptive and misleading advertising and to actually apply puffery as a legal defense in appropriate situations would mean changing or altering the law to include implied claims that result in materiality. This is different from the current FTC (1983) definition, which states that puffed claims do not contain direct claims of materiality. Certain advertising campaigns have managed to develop advertisements that are highly persuasive, and yet legally defendable if deemed as puffery. As advertisements become more and more implied, it only seems reasonable that the definition regarding puffery, in a legal sense, should also include implied claims, both visual and verbal, as they too can create an action that results in one of materiality even if an obvious direct material claim does not appear in the advertisement.
6.1.2 Marketing Implications

My thesis research shows that puffery may have a positive influence on consumer perception of a product, as well as influence purchase intentions. Although puffery may provide an opportunity for marketers to exaggerate the benefits and attributes one may receive from consumption of a said product, it does also pose an interesting ethical question: “Is this simply a deceptive practice masked behind a legal defense?” It is difficult to tell without further research how much individuals are truly persuaded by puffery, but based on this thesis research it can be concluded that generally individuals are more influenced by ads containing puffery than those that do not. Another recurring issue is, “How much is too much?” Can marketers continue to push the envelope and make exaggerated claims about their products/services and still maintain trust and loyalty from their consumers? Although Vitaminwater does contain a portion of the vitamins they claim to have, the reality is, a substantial portion of the vitamins advertised are already easily consumed by simply eating fresh fruit and vegetables widely available to most individuals living in North America. Basically, the advertising of the vitamins is a gimmick, and in reality there are much more sustainable measures to consume said vitamins without having to take 31 g of sugar per serving with it.

Moral and ethical issues have long been an area of concern when it comes to marketing. This research sheds light on the fact that there is a continuous battle between policy, advertising standards, and current marketing strategies. It would seem, however, that policy is currently insufficient in the battle pertaining to puffery and what is regarded as deceptive and misleading advertising. It seems to be a question of whether marketers choose the option of puffery and possibly deceive consumers, or maintain their transparent image with consumers and convey accurate, truthful messages in their marketing communications. If the law remains in the favour
of marketers with their permissible use of puffery, as this research would suggest, than it is difficult to say they are acting inappropriately, but the ethics of such practice remains open for debate.

### 6.2 Limitations

With any research there are inherent limitations in the design, especially when research is being conducted in an understudied area, such as (visual) puffery. A main limitation of this thesis research was the usage of an online forum to conduct the experiment. Participants were able to complete the survey using an online instrument, which ultimately can compromise response accountability or honesty that may be made more apparent in a lab situation. This appeared to be an issue for this study, and was clearly apparent by the number of incomplete questionnaires, and the extent that data had to be removed for various reasons after collection. It was also not controlled whether or not participants viewed the entire video containing the advertisements that was supposed to be used as a distraction. If this had been the case, then it would have been much easier to understand the true hypotheses of the study, which were not supposed to be revealed until afterwards.

Another limitation was the pre-test. Ideally the pre-test would be done with a group of participants who did not know the true purpose of the study, and to ask them in either focus groups or depth interviews their opinions of various advertising manipulations. Puffery could even be defined to the participants and then subsequently ask those participants if they believe an ad fits the definition of puffery. The challenge is that puffery is highly subjective. Although Vitaminwater is a good start as a focal product for this study, it also provides some limitations as the brand has a relatively good reputation, especially amongst young adults who were the
majority of the sample. Adding different products and brands to the study would be informative. Although similar findings were apparent for both verbal and visual puffery, it is very possible that with different stimuli, and different focal products, alternative results could be produced, thus providing researchers with further insight into the persuasiveness of a certain mode of stimuli.

6.3 Contributions

A major contribution from this body of research is regarding puffery in advertising and the recommendation for policy amendments pertaining to puffery and how this relates to what is classified as deceptive or misleading advertising. Although this study did not produce statistically significant results, it still provides sufficient insight to suggest that policy makers should reevaluate the current situation and address verbal and visual puffery within advertisements. Little empirical research has been done in the field of puffery, especially with regards to visual puffery, thus measuring both visual and verbal puffed claims on different measures of persuasion serves as an important contribution. Both public policy representatives as well as marketing managers can benefit from the findings of this study, as it poses both legal and ethical issues for those involved in this field. Additionally, consumer experience was investigated and showed interesting results. Although the moderate experience group was hypothesized to have the most positive results, it was the high experience group that characteristically demonstrated such responses; it is possible that high experience often means high usage and thus high favourability toward a product.
6.4 Future Research

Future research, conducted in this field, should attempt to administer the survey instrument in a laboratory setting. Not only could this help control for some extraneous variables that may influence results, participants could also then be used immediately afterward for either focus groups or depth interviews. This could be a viable option for further understanding the paradigm between believing something and actually having a favourable attitude and purchasing a product, regardless of said belief. As aforementioned in the limitations section, future research could look to investigate different product categories known for commonly using puffery such as Axe body spray, Reebok, or Red Bull. This would help gain more validity and external generalization towards more fully understanding the concept of puffery.

Instead of using ANOVA and MANOVA to analyze results, it may be beneficial for future research to investigate the opportunity that lies within using structural equation modeling. Path modeling and path analysis may prove to have more significant results, as they can account for mediators, moderators, and different variables that may influence purchasing decisions directly or indirectly. Models could be created to test whether or not various other dimensions, such as the healthy lifestyle index and experience, are influential on how individuals make their purchasing decisions.
7.0 REFERENCES


Conocpo Inc. (1997) FTC Docket C-3706. January 23 (Consent Agreement)


AMAZING NEW DISCOVERY is made by doctors who looked inside a living person’s stomach to determine why

BAYER BRINGS FASTEST RELIEF
the fastest, most gentle to the stomach relief you can get from pain!

“I use it for HEADACHE!”
“I use it for ACHING MUSCLES!”
“I use it for pain and fever of Colds!”

Doctors found Bayer Aspirin has

Instant Flaking Action
so you get relief without delay

The medically designed glass beaker above represents the area from your mouth to your stomach. It illustrates what doctors saw in the stomach of a living person: that Bayer has an astonishing instant flaking action. Therefore, a Bayer tablet enters the stomach—not whole—but in soft, tiny flakes. As a result, there’s no waiting for relief until the tablet disintegrates. Bayer Aspirin is ready to go to work instantly—without delay—to make you feel better fast.

BAYER
ASPIRIN
Fast Pain Reliever

Men who know medicine recommend Bayer Aspirin!

in medical journals, eminent doctors consistently acclaim aspirin for its great and ever-growing values.
in newspapers, public health officials have repeatedly recommended aspirin as the one thing for headache, muscular pains, fever of a cold.
in personal interviews, hundreds and hundreds of doctors said they recommend aspirin. So buy the best aspirin the world has ever known—Bayer Aspirin!
APPENDIX 2- KOBE BRYANT SEMIOTIC EXAMPLE
• *Best,* as in “The best tires in the world” (Goodyear) or “Nestlé’s makes the very best chocolate.”

• *Best possible,* as in “Nothing cleans stains better than Clorox bleach” or “Visa—it’s everywhere you want to be.” Whereas *best* means better than any other, *best possible* allows some competitors to be as good, though none is better. Essentially, it means several are tied for first place, which is so often true for competing brands.

• *Better,* as in “Advil just works better.”

• *Specially good,* as in “great hair” (Pert Plus) or “extraordinary elegance” (Coty). These imply being very high on the scale but do not claim explicitly to be the best or better than competitors.

• *Good,* as in “M’m M’rn good” (Campbell Soup). These are not explicitly called high on the scale; they are just plain good.

• *Subjective qualities,* as in “There’s a smile in every Hershey bar” or “sexiest European.” The latter, hypothetically applied by the FTC to a car (*Bristol-Myers* 1983, p. 321), is Peeler’s (1996) favorite example of puffery.
How could I let down my guard?

Kraft Singles are made from five ounces of milk per 3/4 oz. slice, so I know I'm giving him my best shot. Kraft Singles give him calcium to help his bones grow up strong.


Kraft Singles. More milk makes 'em good.

*Milk amounts based on their natural fat content. They can be even higher if you don't slice them. Only a 2/3 ounce slice has 10% of the calcium of four ounces of milk. For more information on Kraft Singles, call 1-800-222-0700 ext. 0161.
APPENDIX 5- CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The persuasiveness of puffery in advertisements. An examination of how persuasive puffed claims can be, and how this may influence participant purchase intentions, claim credibility, perceived healthiness and attitude.

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by:

Josh D’Alvise (M.Sc candidate, Marketing & Consumer Studies)
Dr. Timothy Dewhirst (Associate Professor, Marketing & Consumer Studies)
Dr. Vinay Kanetkar (Professor, Marketing & Consumer Studies) and
Dr. Wonkyong Lee (Assistant Professor, Management and Organizational Studies)
Lianne Foti (Assistant Professor, Marketing and Consumer Studies)
Dr Dewhirst, Dr. Kanetkar and Ms. Lianne Foti are at the University of Guelph. Dr. Lee is at Western University. The results of this study will be used towards the Master’s thesis of the first researcher.

This study is scheduled to take place online, made available through course-link to all students eligible for MCS research pool participation.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Dr. Timothy Dewhirst, Professor – Marketing & Consumer Studies at 519-824-4120 Ext. 53328 or dewhirst@uoguelph.ca.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine how people are influenced by health claims in the health beverage industry and how this affects their perceived healthiness of a product.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:
1) View advertisements online for one minute at a time. After viewing the advertisements, we ask that you fill out a self report survey pertaining to some of the advertisements you just saw. Questions will ask about purchase intentions, perceived healthiness, claim credibility and attitude toward the brand. You will also be asked to compute simple mathematical questions or to remember a string of numbers. These are basic questions are used simply to monitor attention and cognitive load.

This part of the survey will take about 25 minutes.

2) For the next portion of the study we will ask some demographic questions about yourself, as well as some basic product related questions that allow us to know whether or not you have any previous experience with the product.

This part of the survey will take about 5 minutes.

Your participation is expected to take about 35 minutes total. All tasks will be done individually online and you will not be contacted after the study in order to ensure privacy.

As mentioned, this study is being done for the researcher’s Master’s thesis. The results of the study can be found once the thesis is completed and published by Library and Archives Canada, or by contacting the researcher at jdalvise@uoguelph.ca

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no foreseeable risks, discomforts or inconveniences that might be caused by participating in this study.
POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Your participation in this study will further researchers' understanding of how individuals are persuaded by advertising, especially relating the drink industry. Due to the difference in advertisements, we believe some people will be Influence in different ways which can further research regarding persuasiveness of health claims in advertising.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

If you are participating in this study for course credit through the Marketing and Consumer Studies Research Subject Pool then you will not receive any payment for participating. Participants are eligible for 3% course credit through completing the research project.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of any identifying information that is obtained in connection with this study. All data will be kept on a password protected computer for up to two years. All data will be subjected to US privacy laws.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. Should you choose to withdraw during the study, your data will not be saved and there will be no record of it. However, once you have completed the study it will not be possible to withdraw your data as it will be saved without any identifying information, making it impossible to link an individual with any set of data. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. If you are participating through the Marketing and Consumer Studies Research Subject Pool and you choose to withdraw you will still be eligible to receive course credit by submitting the written report for a different study.

If it is found out that you are not completing the experiment individually and risking the privacy of other participants there is potential for termination from the study.
RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact:

Research Ethics Coordinator
Telephone: (519) 824-4120, ext. 56606
University of Guelph
E-mail: sauld@uoguelph.ca
437 University Centre
Fax: (519) 821-5236
Guelph, ON N1G 2W1

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I have read the information provided for the study “The persuasiveness of puffery within advertisements” as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have read a version of this online, please click the “I AGREE” button to continue or “DISAGREE” to remove yourself from the study.
Never take vitamins again. Get all you need in one drink.

more vitamin c  
more immunity  
less snotty tissues
APPENDIX 7- ADVERTISEMENTS FOR SURVEY- VERBAL WITHOUT PUFFEERY

vitamin water
Contains vitamins.

vitamin c  potassium  zinc
APPENDIX 8 - ADVERTISEMENTS FOR SURVEY - VERBAL CONTROL
APPENDIX 9- ADVERTISEMENTS FOR SURVEY - VISUAL PUFFERY
APPENDIX 10- ADVERTISEMENTS FOR SURVEY- VISUAL WITHOUT PUFFERY
Debrief of Advertising Study

Thank you for participating in the study. The information that we have gathered from you will help the researchers gain further knowledge of how consumers react to and are persuaded by health claims in the beverage industry. They will be able to better determine how consumers are potentially persuaded by advertisements that contain verbal and visual puffery. The Vitaminwater advertisements that you saw were manipulations of real advertisements that are available currently.

There has been deception involved in this study for the sake of deterring you, the participant from understanding the true hypothesis. The deception was that some of the advertisements you saw were manipulated or fake advertisements, disguised as real Vitaminwater advertisements. There were three different conditions. You were randomly assigned to one of three conditions, each containing three manipulated advertisements, with the remaining ads being real. We apologize for using deception, but it was necessary in order for the true hypothesis to remain unnoticed and to obtain the most valid results.

The true purpose of this study was to determine the differing degrees of persuasiveness as it applies to puffed claims in advertisements. The objective was to determine how participants responded to manipulated Vitaminwater advertisements that were embedded within each
condition of the study. At this point you have been made aware of the deception inherent in the study, as well as the true purpose of the study and you may now wish to withdraw your data if you feel it necessary to do so. Otherwise your data will help the investigator contribute to literature pertaining to marketing policy dealing with deceptive and misleading advertising, especially in the realm of puffery. Participants will be able to access the results to this study once the thesis is complete and has been published. It will be located in the U of G library archives. If a participant has an inquiry about the results or the rest of the study they may contact the primary investigator for further clarification.

This will help shed light on public policy that is in place regarding deceptive and misleading advertisements. The research will help protect consumers and competitors from misleading advertising, as well as provide stricter guidelines for marketers to follow when creating advertisements.

The information that we have gathered will be used towards the researcher’s Master’s Thesis. Please feel free to contact Josh D’Alvise (jdalvise@uoguelph.ca) if you have any questions.

After reading this debrief you have to opportunity to withdraw from the study. If you wish to withdraw please click “No” which will remove your data from the study, otherwise click “Yes” which will allow your data to be used for academic research.

Primary Investigator: Josh D’Alvise  jdalvise@uoguelph.ca  905-317-0513

Faculty Investigator: Dr. Timothy Dewhirst  dewhirst@uoguelph.ca

519-824-4120 ext. 53328

DIRECTOR, RESEARCH ETHICS

OFFICE OF RESEARCH UC437

SAULD@UOGUELPH.CA; x 56606
APPENDIX 13 – SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Advertising Study

Please watch this short video containing print advertisements before continuing. Each print ad will remain on screen for 5 seconds. Please full screen the video.

Please Calculate the Following Math Questions:

8 ÷ 5 =
22 - 15 =
14 - 3 =
12 + 7 =
15 - 2 =
Section 1: Basic Product Related Information- Rate each of the following questions on a 1-7 scale.

1. I think the nutrition level of this product is: (poor / good)

2. How important would this product be as part of a healthy diet? (Not important at all / very important)

3. This product is... (bad for your overall health / good for your overall health)

4. Overall how would you rate the level of nutritiousness based on the information provided? (not nutritious / very nutritious)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. What is your overall attitude toward the product? (unfavourable/ favourable)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What is your overall attitude toward the product? (bad/ good)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What is your overall attitude toward the product? (negative/ positive)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What is your overall attitude toward the advertisement? (unfavourable/ favourable)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. What is your overall attitude toward the advertisement? (bad/ good)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What is your overall attitude toward the advertisement? (negative/ positive)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. What is your overall attitude toward the brand? (unfavourable/ favourable)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. What is your overall attitude toward the brand? (bad/ good)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. What is your overall attitude toward the brand? (negative/ positive)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Advertising Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. How likely would you be to purchase this product? (not likely/very likely)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Assuming you were looking to buy a refreshing drink, would you be more or less likely to buy this product? (not likely/very likely)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. How probable is it that you would purchase this product, given you were looking to purchase a refreshing drink? (improbable/very probable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I believe the company marketing this drink is: (undependable/dependable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I believe the company marketing this drink is: (untrustworthy/trustworthy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I believe the company marketing this drink is: (dishonest/honest)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Click to navigate back or next]
Advertising Study

Please watch this short video containing print advertisements before continuing. Each print ad will remain on screen for 5 seconds. Please full screen the video.

Please Calculate the Following Math Questions:

8 + 5 =  
22 - 15 =  
14 - 3 =  
12 + 7 =  
15 - 2 =  

Back  Next
Section 1: Basic Product Related Information - Rate each of the following questions on a 1-7 scale.

1. I think the nutrition level of this product is: (poor / good)
   
2. How important would this product be as part of a healthy diet? (Not important at all / very important)
   
3. This product is... (bad for your overall health/good for your overall health)
   
4. Overall how would you rate the level of nutritiousness based on the information provided? (not nutritious / very nutritious)
# Advertising Study

5. What is your overall attitude toward the product? (unfavourable/ favourable)
   
6. What is your overall attitude toward the product? (bad / good)
   
7. What is your overall attitude toward the product? (negative/ positive)
   
8. What is your overall attitude toward the advertisement? (unfavourable/ favourable)
   
9. What is your overall attitude toward the advertisement? (bad / good)
   
10. What is your overall attitude toward the advertisement? (negative/ positive)
    
11. What is your overall attitude toward the brand? (unfavourable/ favourable)
    
12. What is your overall attitude toward the brand? (bad / good)
    
13. What is your overall attitude toward the brand? (negative/ positive)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>14. How likely would you be to purchase this product? (not likely/ very likely)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Assuming you were looking to buy a refreshing drink, would you be more or less likely to buy this product? (not likely/ very likely)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. How probable is it that you would purchase this product, given you were looking to purchase a refreshing drink? (improbable/ very probable)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I believe the company marketing this drink is: (undependable/ dependable)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I believe the company marketing this drink is: (untrustworthy/ trustworthy)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I believe the company marketing this drink is: (dishonest/ honest)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advertising Study

1) How important is exercise in your daily routine?
   
2) Do you consider health labels prior to consuming/ purchasing food?

3) Do you refer to nutritional information prior to consuming/ purchasing food?

4) How often do you eat meals cooked at home?

5) How often do you eat meals that are pre-made or from restaurants?

6) How often do you eat organic food?

7) Are you aware of the amount of vitamin intake you consume daily?

8) How often do you consume vegetables on a daily basis?

9) How often do you consume fruit on a daily basis?

10) Do you ever substitute eating natural healthy foods for supplements or other replacement products?

11) Do you pass on opportunities to indulge in foods that may not be healthy in order to maintain a certain nutritional level?

12) How often do you smoke cigarettes?
### Advertising Study

**Section 2: Product Familiarity/ Prior Experience and Knowledge/ Lifestyle Questions**

1) Have you ever consumed Vitaminwater before?

2) How many times have you consumed Vitaminwater in the past 1 month?

3) List any flavours of Vitaminwater you can think of.

4) List any bottled water products you have consumed before.

**Which beverage would you choose given the prices below?**

- Coke $1.50
- Orange Juice $2.00
- Vitaminwater $2.50
- Bottled Water $3.00
- None

**Which beverage would you choose given the prices below?**

- Coke $2.00
- Orange Juice $1.50
- Vitaminwater $3.00
- Bottled Water $2.50
- None

**Which beverage would you choose given the prices below?**

- Coke $2.50
- Orange Juice $3.00
- Vitaminwater $1.50
- Bottled Water $2.00
- None

**Which beverage would you choose given the prices below?**

- Coke $3.00
- Orange Juice $2.50
- Vitaminwater $2.00
- Bottled Water $1.50
- None
Advertising Study

Section 3: Basic Demographic Questions

1) Gender: Are you Male or Female?
   - Male
   - Female

2) What is your age?
   __________

You have now completed the study! Thank you for participating!

Click "Yes" if you wish to have your data used for academic purposes. Click "No" if you wish to withdraw your data from the survey.

- Yes
- No

[Back] [Next]
It doesn’t have to be this complicated.

Luckily, you now have an easier way to get the job done. Each vitaminwater is specially formulated with ingredients you need to both energize and balance your day.
APPENDIX 15 – VITAMINWATER AD “FLU SHOTS ARE SO LAST YEAR”
APPENDIX 16- VITAMINWATER AD, “ALL YOU NEED…FORMULA 50”
APPENDIX 18- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SIX DV’S- VERBAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERBAL</th>
<th>Df.</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Nutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.040</td>
<td>.355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>(1.227)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to Product</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.820</td>
<td>.441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>(1.452)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to Ad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>.473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>(1.510)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to Brand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.005</td>
<td>.137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>(1.574)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intentions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>.162</td>
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<td>Error</td>
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<td>(2.777)</td>
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<td>Source Credibility</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.278</td>
<td>.757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>(1.404)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion Index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.366</td>
<td>.257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>(1.085)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 19- MEAN SCORES (AD MANIPULATION)- PERCEIVED NUTRITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Stimuli</th>
<th>Puffery</th>
<th>Without Puffery</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL</td>
<td>4.526 (.125)</td>
<td>4.261 (.134)</td>
<td>4.413 (.110)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
<td>4.583 (.133)</td>
<td>4.360 (.142)</td>
<td>4.442 (.118)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 20- MEAN SCORES (AD MANIPULATION)- ATTITUDE TO PRODUCT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude to Product</th>
<th>Ad Manipulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Puffery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode of Stimuli</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL</td>
<td>4.675 (.136)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
<td>4.688 (.147)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of Stimuli</td>
<td>Puffery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL</td>
<td>4.393 (.139)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
<td>4.303 (.153)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 22- MEAN SCORES (AD MANIPULATION)- ATTITUDE TO BRAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Stimuli</th>
<th>Puffery</th>
<th>Without Puffery</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL</td>
<td>4.855 (1.42)</td>
<td>4.483 (.152)</td>
<td>4.535 (.125)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
<td>4.551 (.146)</td>
<td>4.397 (.156)</td>
<td>4.529 (.130)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of Stimuli</td>
<td>Puffery</td>
<td>Without Puffery</td>
<td>Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL</td>
<td>4.286 (.189)</td>
<td>4.029 (.202)</td>
<td>3.805 (.166)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
<td>4.184 (.188)</td>
<td>3.917 (.201)</td>
<td>3.872 (.167)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 24- MEAN SCORES (AD MANIPULATION)- SOURCE CREDIBILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Stimuli</th>
<th>Puffery</th>
<th>Without Puffery</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL</td>
<td>4.538 (.134)</td>
<td>4.392 (.144)</td>
<td>4.462 (.118)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
<td>4.192 (.149)</td>
<td>4.319 (.160)</td>
<td>4.448 (.132)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 25- MEAN SCORES (AD MANIPULATION)- PERSUASION AGGREGATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persuasion Aggregate</th>
<th>Ad Manipulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mode of Stimuli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VERBAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VISUAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 26- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION-

PERCEIVED NUTRITION: VERBAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCEIVED NUTRITION</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.80</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience x Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>.137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>(1.16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 27- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION-

ATTITUDE TO PRODUCT: VERBAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDE TO PRODUCT</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>48.93</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience x Ad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>(1.03)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 28 - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE - EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION -

ATTITUDE TO AD: VERBAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDE TO AD</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>.199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience x Ad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td>236</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.42)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 29- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION-

**ATTITUDE TO BRAND: VERBAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDE TO BRAND</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35.51</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience x Ad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>(1.20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 30- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION-

**PURCHASE INTENTIONS: VERBAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURCHASE INTENTIONS</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>64.57</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience x Ad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>(1.80)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 31- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION-

SOURCE CREDIBILITY: VERBAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE CREDIBILITY</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.65</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience x Ad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>.362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>(1.29)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 32- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION-

PERSUASION INDEX: VERBAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSUASION INDEX</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39.94</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience x Ad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>(.81)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 33- MEAN SCORES FOR EXPERIENCE - PERCEIVED NUTRITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Nutrition</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mode of Stimuli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VERBAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VISUAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 34 - MEAN SCORES FOR EXPERIENCE- ATTITUDE TO PRODUCT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Stimuli</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL</td>
<td>3.88 (.134)</td>
<td>5.05 (.10)</td>
<td>5.52 (.18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
<td>3.91 (.11)</td>
<td>4.92 (.12)</td>
<td>5.60 (.21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
APPENDIX 35- MEAN SCORES FOR EXPERIENCE- ATTITUDE TO AD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude to Ad</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of Stimuli</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL</td>
<td>4.02 (.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
<td>3.86 (.11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 36- MEAN SCORES FOR EXPERIENCE- ATTITUDE TO BRAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Stimuli</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL</td>
<td>4.03 (.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
<td>4.00 (.11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 37- MEAN SCORES FOR EXPERIENCE- PURCHASE INTENTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Stimuli</th>
<th>Purchase Intentions</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL</td>
<td>3.03 (.13)</td>
<td>4.76 (.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
<td>3.01 (.13)</td>
<td>4.67 (.14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 38- MEAN SCORES FOR EXPERIENCE- SOURCE CREDIBILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Credibility</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of Stimuli</td>
<td>4.15 (.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL</td>
<td>3.93 (.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 39- EXP X AD MANIPULATION- PERCEIVED NUTRITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Nutrition</th>
<th>AD MANIPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>Puffery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.32 (.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4.53 (.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5.00 (.29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 40- MEAN SCORES- EXP X AD MANIPULATION- ATTITUDE TO PRODUCT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>ATTITUDE TO PRODUCT</th>
<th>VERBAL</th>
<th>AD MANIPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Puffery</td>
<td>Without Puffery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.00 (.18)</td>
<td>3.67 (.16)</td>
<td>3.99 (.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>5.03 (.18)</td>
<td>5.33 (.21)</td>
<td>4.77 (.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5.48 (.27)</td>
<td>5.81 (.41)</td>
<td>5.28 (.25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 41: MEAN SCORES- EXP X AD MANIPULATION- ATTITUDE TO AD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>Puffery</th>
<th>Without Puffery</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.29 (.21)</td>
<td>3.74 (.19)</td>
<td>4.02 (.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4.26 (.21)</td>
<td>4.78 (.24)</td>
<td>4.35 (.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.88 (.32)</td>
<td>5.22 (.49)</td>
<td>4.25 (.29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 42- MEAN SCORES- EXP X AD MANIPULATION- ATTITUDE TO BRAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>Puffery</th>
<th>Without Puffery</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.35 (.19)</td>
<td>3.65 (.18)</td>
<td>4.10 (.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>5.12 (.19)</td>
<td>5.46 (.22)</td>
<td>4.80 (.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5.45 (.29)</td>
<td>5.86 (.45)</td>
<td>5.18 (.27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 43- MEAN SCORES- EXP X AD MANIPULATION- PURCHASE INTENTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>VERBAL</th>
<th>AD MANIPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Puffery</td>
<td>Without Puffery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.28 (.24)</td>
<td>3.00 (.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4.69 (.24)</td>
<td>5.18 (.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5.64 (.36)</td>
<td>5.94 (.55)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 44- MEAN SCORES- EXP X AD MANIPULATION- SOURCE CREDIBILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>AD MANIPULATION</th>
<th>VERBAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Puffery</td>
<td>Without Puffery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.17 (.20)</td>
<td>4.00 (.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4.51 (.20)</td>
<td>4.88 (.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5.36 (.30)</td>
<td>4.94 (.46)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX 45- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SIX DV’S- VISUAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISUAL</th>
<th>Df.</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Nutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.728</td>
<td>0.484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>(1.376)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to Product</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.281</td>
<td>0.280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>(1.688)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to Ad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.846</td>
<td>0.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>(1.817)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to Brand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.303</td>
<td>0.739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>(1.661)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intentions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.846</td>
<td>0.431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>(2.756)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source Credibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.826</td>
<td>0.439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>(1.732)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion Index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.639</td>
<td>0.529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>(1.175)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 46 - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE - EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION -

#### PERCEIVED NUTRITION: VISUAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCEIVED NUTRITION</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>.333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience x Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>(1.33)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 47- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION-

**ATTITUDE TO PRODUCT: VISUAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDE TO PRODUCT</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34.05</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience x Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>(1.32)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# APPENDIX 48- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION-

## ATTITUDE TO AD: VISUAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDE TO AD</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34.05</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience x Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>(1.73)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 49- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION-

ATTITUDE TO BRAND: VISUAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDE TO BRAND</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience x Ad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>(1.39)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 50- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION-

PURCHASE INTENTIONS: VISUAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURCHASE INTENTIONS</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>.275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>61.04</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience x Ad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.422</td>
<td>.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>(1.81)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 51 - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE - EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION -

SOURCE CREDIBILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE CREDIBILITY</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.255</td>
<td>.775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.34</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience x Ad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>(1.57)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 52- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION- PERSUASION INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSUASION INDEX</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Manipulation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>.333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30.92</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience x Ad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>(.93)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 53- MEAN SCORES- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION- PERCEIVED NUTRITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Nutrition</th>
<th>AD MANIPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VISUAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>Puffery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.31 (.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4.48 (.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5.34 (.31)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 54 - MEAN SCORES - EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION - ATTITUDE TO PRODUCT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude to Product</th>
<th>Visual</th>
<th>AD MANIPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>Puffery</td>
<td>Without Puffery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4.02 (.20)</td>
<td>3.68 (.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4.94 (.21)</td>
<td>5.07 (.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5.71 (.31)</td>
<td>5.67 (.47)</td>
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</table>
## APPENDIX 55- MEAN SCORES- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION- ATTITUDE TO AD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Puffery</th>
<th>Without Puffery</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.94 (.23)</td>
<td>3.66 (.21)</td>
<td>3.99 (.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4.29 (.24)</td>
<td>4.34 (.27)</td>
<td>3.74 (.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5.19 (.35)</td>
<td>5.11 (.53)</td>
<td>3.64 (.32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 56- MEAN SCORES- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION- ATTITUDE TO BRAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>AD MANIPULATION</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Puffery</td>
<td>Without Puffery</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.94 (.21)</td>
<td>3.85 (.19)</td>
<td>4.22 (.17)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4.77 (.21)</td>
<td>5.00 (.24)</td>
<td>4.58 (.19)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5.50 (.32)</td>
<td>5.44 (.48)</td>
<td>5.37 (.29)</td>
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</table>
## APPENDIX 57- MEAN SCORES- EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION- PURCHASE INTENTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purchase Intentions</th>
<th>AD MANIPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
<td>Puffery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIENCE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.12 (.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4.57 (.24)</td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5.79 (.36)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 58 - MEAN SCORES - EXPERIENCE X AD MANIPULATION - SOURCE CREDIBILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Credibility</th>
<th>EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>AD MANIPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VISUAL</td>
<td>Puffery</td>
<td>Without Puffery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.52 (.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4.40 (.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>5.28 (.33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>