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Future Directions of Advertising Creative Research

Based upon a review of the literature, this paper presents a framework for understanding advertising creativity, and asks the question: “what future direction should advertising creativity research take?” We divide creativity research into work focused on creative development (CD) and creative effectiveness (CE). In each stream, we provide an overview of the key areas of research interest and identify future research directions. The study argues that research should continue to understand how individual, group, and organizational structural elements influence creative development, as well as the effect of new media. Additional work is also needed to better understand the evaluation processes given the difficulty in judging creative advertisements, as well as a better understanding of expression issues. This study also calls for additional work dealing with the specific challenges facing each stream and a better integration of the two.

When focused on the effect of creative advertising on consumers, researchers tend to treat creativity as yet another executional factor, and by doing so invoke a long tradition of sophisticated methods. Yet advertising creativity (the use of imagination or original ideas within a strategic context to solve a communication problem (El-Murad and West 2004; Kilgour and Koslow 2009; Koslow, Sasser and Riordan 2003; Reid, King and DeLorme 1998)) is at the “beating heart” of the advertising business given the success of advertising campaigns is often attributed to creativity and few industries have the same degree of central focus on creative ideas. As such it is critical to understand how best to develop creative advertisements and how effective this creative advertising is likely to be. In addressing these two key aspects the advertising creativity research field has developed two distinct streams: 1) the stream of *creative effectiveness* (CE), and 2) the stream of *creative development* (CD). This distinction is important as the two subfields of creativity face distinctly contrasting challenges. However, what this approach lacks is a theory of how creative ads should affect consumers. Scholars sometimes give reference to consumer attention or depth of processing, but our processing theories were and are not designed around creativity, nor can the theories be easily retrofitted to include creativity (Sternberg and Lubart 1996). We propose that a theory of creative processing is not supposed to be an “add-on” to existing consumer information processing theories. Instead, what is needed is the development of a wider and more comprehensive theory, such that our more mechanical consumer information processing theories fit as a special case of these new and higher-level theories.

By contrast to creative effectiveness research, the development of creative ideas does not lack a theoretical perspective. Indeed, theories are so plentiful that they frequently overlap and conflict with one another. The problem here is that the general creativity literature has generally been based on convenient student samples rather than the more relevant large, professional samples. Advertising scholars limited empirical work on creativity has primarily

used in-depth interviews or qualitative methods, which often do not need large samples. Some scholars have used questionnaires with large professional samples, but genuine experiments are not only rare, their number of observations per cell is often at the lowest bounds of acceptability. Hence, testing existing theories to see which are valid in an industry setting replete with highly specialist creative professionals, remains unfulfilled.

Studies of how creative advertisements influence consumers usually employ appropriate methods, but lack strong theory. Conversely, the creative development stream is limited by the difficulty of recruiting a powerful sample and subsequently hampered in its ability to provide findings that are relevant to business. We call for additional work dealing with the specific challenges facing each area, and the better integration of the two. However, in order to assess the future direction of the field, it is necessary to first establish its context via an audit of where it currently stands.

STRUCTURED LITERATURE REVIEW

A structured approach was applied to a creative research literature review. Two leading databases were utilized, 1) EBSCO Business Source Complete, a business and management database and 2) WARC, an advertising and marketing database. 50 advertising creativity articles published between 2012 and 2018 were identified from the databases based upon keyword relevance. This time period selected was a matter of judgment with the intent of reflecting the current themes being investigated and to avoid going back too far and losing sight of the importance of recency. No judgments were made as to the quality of the work undertaken. Data were collected on the year of publication, authors, journal, location, method, sample, primary theme and primary research question. Findings are presented in Table 1, and Table 2 provides a summary breakdown of the key variables.

<<PLACE TABLES 1 AND 2 HERE>>

Whilst the results in Table 2 are relatively self-explanatory there are a few key points to note. Most of the articles reviewed were published in 2017 (20%), with least in 2015 (6%) with between 10-18% from other years. Not surprisingly the majority (over 60%) of the articles were published in the *Journal of Advertising* the *Journal of Advertising Research* and the *International Journal of Advertising* with the remainder from other advertising and marketing journals and small percentage from non-marketing business journals (12%). Almost half of the studies featured data from the USA and Western Europe, but there were also eight cross-national studies. The primary method used was experimentation (30%), closely followed by qualitative studies (24%) and surveys (16%). Relatively few researchers applied content analysis (8%), mixed methods (8%) and databases (6%). When it came to the samples employed, advertising creativity researchers proved to be mainly practice-oriented (38%) then the public (24%), followed by students (12%). The primary themes researched were responses to advertising creative (42%) and studies of the use of advertising creativity by advertising agencies (26%). The agency-client relationship was highly featured too (18%), with advertising creativity and media use (10%) and creative awards (4%) bring up the rear. The section below examines the primary streams, and the themes within, in more detail.

PRIMARY STREAMS AND THEMES

Most of the research in the studies in Table 1 may be categorized as being part of either a creative development (CD), or the creative effectiveness (CE) stream. Given that traditionally the majority of large campaigns are developed using advertising agencies, most of the research into creative advertising development is undertaken within this context. Within the agency setting, CD processes have largely been analyzed in relation to the effects of individual and group level processes on creative outputs. On the other hand, the CE stream primarily examines either the effect of creative advertising on consumer response or identifies creative executional elements and their effects.

Advertising Creative Development (CD)

A recent focus of many advertising creativity researchers has been on investigating the range of agency-based factors that influence creative outputs. Scholars have investigated how agency social processes influence creative performance with studies looking at traditional sociological issues like social class (Koppman 2016) or gender (Roca et al. 2016). Other aspects specific to advertising include: the shared mental models of peers (Stuhlfaut and Windels 2015); the agency creative process (Lee and Lau 2018; Turnbull and Wheeler 2017) and the use of creative teams (Lynch and West 2017). The interaction of creatives with digital technology has also been explored in a study of how Google search both helps art directors and copywriters find relevant information, but can also limit their creative ideas as few understand the algorithm employed and how best to use it (Barker 2018).

How management practices within agencies influence CD has also been explored. Results indicate that creatives need to be tempered in their behavior, but that too much formulization stifles them (Heather and Styhre 2017). In addition, a key role for creative directors is to motivate and lead (Mallia, Windels and Broyles 2013), while for account planners it is to provide insight (Parker, Ang and Koslow 2018). Organizational support appears to be helpful rather than central to creative processes, and expertise only plays a minor role (Sasser and Koslow 2012). Finally, agency creativity seems to draw equally from a combination of intuitive and logical/practical thinking processes (Leung and Hui 2014; West, Christodoulides and Bonhomme 2018).

Although the research above suggests that agency processes are complex, the findings suggest a number of insights that agencies can use to improve their creative processes. However, what is surprising with this research is that it appears to move largely independently of more general creativity research. Hennessey and Amabile's (2010) review of the creativity literature identified streams of more general creativity research that can range from individual

level effects regarding creative mental processing, to wider group-oriented and social psychology processes. Although advertising creativity research can also be grouped on a continuum of similar levels of analysis, the correspondence between the general creativity literature and advertising creativity research is limited. Hennessey and Amabile (2010) found that creativity research was increasingly fragmented, with creativity scholars from different disciplines often ignoring each other's work, so advertising is not unique in this respect. In some places we would do better to follow the general literature's lead, but in other areas advertising creativity research has—and needs to—pioneer new areas.

One particular area where there is a lack of application of general theoretical findings is individual creative processes. To date, only a few published empirical works (e.g., Kilgour and Koslow 2009; Johar, Holbrook and Stern 2001) focus on professionals' individual creative processes and with these empirical results being at odds with a meta-analysis on creativity training for general population samples (Scott, Leritz and Mumford 2004). Given the level of creativity expertise that exist in agencies, and not just in the creative department, one would think that understanding individual level creativity processes should be an area where advertising creativity research would lead the creativity field, but research in this area is scant.

In contrast to the example above, one prime example of advertising creativity research that has followed a successful independent path is the management of the agency-client relationship. The agency-client relationship features in many investigations of advertising creativity development because the client is the ultimate “consumer” and must agree to the work developed. Managing the processes required to achieve creative advertising requires balancing the requirements of the creative personnel, who develop creative ideas that are difficult to objectively evaluate and who face constant evaluative pressures, and the client, who may have very different views to the creative personnel in relation to what constitutes good creative and is often risk averse.

Given the difficulty in evaluating creative ideas ex-ante, creativity often involves taking a risk (O'Connor et al. 2016; West 1999). Clients need to trust their agencies for a risky idea to be accepted (Bilby, Reid and Brennan 2016; Roca et al. 2017; Wang et al. 2013). Consequently, agencies need to better understand the risk propensities of their clients (Sasser, Koslow and Kilgour 2013). Successful ways of developing creative work with clients include increasing the numbers of creative personnel (O'Connor, Kilgour and Koslow 2018), understanding the basics of marketing science (Kennedy and McColl 2012) and making the brand central to creative execution (Romaniuk 2012).

Although the role of the client has not been studied in the wider creativity literature, there is reason to believe that the role of outsiders in the creative process is more common. For example, part of the definition of creativity is that the ideas are useful to someone. If that someone is not the idea generator, then there needs to be a persuasion process to get others to adopt a creative idea. The division between idea generators and idea adopters is common for other creative professionals. For example, novelists work with agents and publishers; scriptwriters and directors work with producers and studios; and architects work with developers and planning authorities. It is possible that the general creativity literature has provided us with an oversimplified and often naïve picture of the complex phenomenon of creative practice in all its facets. This highlights the potential significant contribution by advertising researchers to this topic.

Overall, advertising scholars are in an arguably unique position to influence creativity research broadly while understanding advertising better. While the general creativity area largely studies how to move slightly below-average creative skilled individuals to slightly above-average creative skill, advertising researchers have access to what might be seen without exaggeration as an amazing resource: advertising professionals, who clearly mark out the upper end of creativity performance. While, collecting a high quality sample of creative professionals

is difficult (Sasser and Koslow 2012), collecting data from agencies is easier than obtaining a sample of other highly creativity individuals, such as published novelists or working scriptwriters. Testing general creativity theories in the context of these advertising professionals has the potential to provide significant theoretical contributions.

Advertising Creative Effectiveness (CE)

The creative effectiveness (CE) stream looks at how consumers react to advertisements that are judged as high in both originality and appropriateness. This stream can in turn be broken into two primary areas. The first measures consumer response to ‘*creative advertisements*’ This includes research of industry based advertising creativity awards as this research provides a set of advertisements that are often used in advertising creativity studies. What is defined as a creative advertisement by researchers is usually either award winning or advertisements that are independently judged as creative by industry experts, such as creative directors. In addition to looking at the consumer response to creative advertising, this area also identifies factors that influence this consumer response, such as consumer and product characteristics.

The other major area of the CE stream involves the identification of creative advertising executions and consumer responses to them. Here researchers have identified creative executions which may involve different types of appeal or novel new means of presenting advertising ideas, such as the creative use of new media, and evaluating consumer responses to these creative executions. What is largely lacking in either area of this stream is a theory and analysis of consumers’ internal mental processing in terms of their responses to creative advertisements versus the non-creative. Instead researchers have drawn from a limited set of existing consumer response measures, which may not capture the full range of mental processes that result from viewing creative advertisements.

Awards: Seeking Measurement Validity and Generalizability

Although little recent research has focused on awards, such research is important because of the implications for measurement. Award winning creative work often features in studies of advertising creativity because an advertisement's ability to win awards lends credibility to the external validity of its creativity. Awards panels effectively act as a type of consensual assessment technique (CAT) (Amabile, 1996). The trouble is that few studies have examined the award shows involved to determine whether this provides a more valid measure than others. For example, it has been cautioned that creative award shows often follow a wide-range of largely unscientific procedures and practices (West, Caruana and Leelapanyalert 2013). Furthermore, award shows are often unable to disentangle the strategies behind the advertising they judge because there simply is not the time, resources, or available data to do so. As a result, novelty in layout, conceptualization and media usage are generally more important than meaningfulness in winning awards (Kübler and Proppe 2012). This would suggest that some creativity awards are not accurate measures of the full range of creative requirements. Indeed, clients have noted that some of these awards may be too focused on originality. However, advertising creativity cannot be "art for art's sake", as it must meet a commercial objective. Hence, ideas must be both original and appropriate, not merely attention-grabbing "eye-candy", but instead matched to given corporate brand strategic objectives. This then leads to a strong focus on the relative importance of each of these two components on the effectiveness of the advertisement, and this is of course what is meant by *effectiveness*.

Audience Responses to Creative Advertisements

Early researchers into audience response to creative advertisements identified the importance of advertising that both grabs the attention of the viewer and gets the organization's brand message across (Bogart, Tolley and Orenstein [1970](#); Gibson [1996](#); Jones [1995](#)), yet researchers did not stipulate the advertising components required to achieve this. Subsequent

work have examined this issue. These findings indicate that some type of novelty, unexpectedness or originality component works to attract consumer cognition (Till and Baack 2005). Originality by itself is rarely enough to meet organizational objectives and hence the need to combine with elements that transmit the brand message in a way that is appropriate, useful or meaningful, to the target audience and in line with the clients' objectives (Ang, Lee and Leong 2007; Smith, Chen and Yang 2008). These two components—that is, some type of originality as well as a form of appropriateness fit with the broad definition of what constitutes a creative idea across a range of research disciplines (Amabile 1996; Ford 1996; Kasof 1995; Guilford 1968; Runco and Jaeger 2012; Sternberg and Lubart 1996; Torrance 1974). It is now generally accepted that for an advertisement to be creative it must contain both (El-Murad and West 2004; Kilgour and Koslow 2009; Koslow, Sasser and Riordan 2003; Reid, King and DeLorme 1998). Furthermore, recent research supports the importance of the positive effect of creative advertising on consumer responses (Dahlen, Rosengren and Karsberg 2018). For example, novelty, meaningfulness and connectedness have been found to enhance perceptions of creativity and increase recall and liking (Ang et al. 2014). In relation to attitudes towards the advertisement (A_{ad}), creative advertisements, those with divergence and relevance, resist “wear-out” (declining effectiveness) even at high levels of repetition (Chen, Yang and Smith 2016) and increase both recall and “wearin” (learning) more quickly (Lehnert, Till and Carlson 2013).

Nevertheless, uncertainty continues in relation to the relative importance of these two main constructs, as meaningfulness was found to be less important to advertising creativity than divergence in another study (Lehnert, Till and Ospina 2014). Additionally, in a generalized assessment of sales effective creativity, no specific creative approach has been consistently shown to explain the variance in advertising effectiveness (e.g. humor or product benefits) (Hartnett et al. 2016). This lack of consistency may be due to the way in which

advertising creativity was measured, as well as a range of factors that influence the relative effectiveness of ad components, such as user and product factors (in this context see also the relationship between advertising creativity and children (Angell and Angell, 2013; Han and Kim, 2017)).

Supporting the contention of the effect of such factors, it has been found that users remember a brand's creative work significantly more than non-users (Vaughan, Beal and Romaniuk 2016). Turning to attitudes towards the brand (A_b) creativity has been shown to have a positive effect on brand attitude at a range of prices; particularly at low prices (Modig and Rosengren 2013). In addition, creativity can greatly affect perceptions of a brand and in turn perceptions of a brand's corporate image as an employer (Rosengren and Bondesson 2014).

Identifying Creative Executional Factors and Measuring their Effect

In relation to executional factors a large range of factors have been researched. For example, the use of analogy has been found to be effective (Madrigal and King 2017) and so has metaphor, but irony has been shown to have a negative effect on ad evaluation and little to no effect on persuasiveness (Burgers et al. 2015). Some argue for a focus on products' "key benefit claim" (Althuizen 2017). In addition, it has been found that consumers are able to assess the expense and effort involved in creative work and both are positively correlated to attitudes toward the brand (Modig, Dahlén and Colliander 2014). Consumers also build expectations for new advertisements—and consumers are easily disappointed if these expectations are not met (Chang 2014). Despite these findings, in a generalized assessment of sales effective creativity, no specific creative approach has been consistently proven to explain the variance in advertising effectiveness (e.g. humor or product benefits) (Hartnett et al. 2016).

Another major consideration that influences the effectiveness of creative advertising campaigns is the medium or media of communication of that message (Kover 2016). Given the rapid change in social media and evolution in consumer use patterns, we would expect that the

relative effect of the two creativity constructs will also change. For example, the increasing multimedia use environment may further reduce already low levels of both the ability and motivation of consumers to process advertisements, increasing the need for originality, which is a most promising potential area of research.

In dealing with low motivation to process, a recurring theme in creative advertising research is how new media technology might be used in novel, appropriate ways. New technologies such as animated advertisements have been shown to have significantly higher carryover effects and longer duration than static ones (Bruce, Murthi and Rao 2017), and the inclusion of hashtags has been shown to lead to enhanced consumers' engagement with the brand (Stathopoulou et al. 2017). However, somewhat counterintuitively, technology-related products are less likely to incorporate experimental technologies such as gyroscopes than non-technology products (Qiao and Griffin 2016), indicating that technology firms are surprisingly limited when it comes to innovation when it comes to their communications. However, in a totally different sector, it has been suggested that luxury brands should limit their communications to creative bloggers and demonstrate their creativity with behind the scenes videos, as too wide an exposure has a negative effect (Pentina, Guilloux and Micu 2018).

In summary, these studies are helpful in determining audience response to the two generally accepted components of advertising creativity and assist in identifying potentially useful creative executional elements, and where they are most applicable. However, they all rely on existing measures of consumer response to advertising. While providing a sound theoretical measurement base. These measures were not developed to specifically capture the effects of creative advertisements and better insight into consumer cognitive responses to creative advertisements is, therefore, needed.

A FRAMEWORK OF THE ADVERTISING CREATIVITY PROCESS

In order to identify important areas for further research the next step requires integration of the studies into a framework that attempts to capture the current state of research into advertising creativity. The above discussion is placed within the Advertising Creativity Process (ACP) framework presented in Figure 1. The left-hand side of the ACP framework shows the development process, which starts with the stages of advertising development (Tevi and Koslow 2018). The five stages begin with the formation of message strategy and are followed by the generation of what are known in the advertising business as creative “big ideas”. These are then “packaged” in a specific advertisement or other executions and set in a medium. Finally, tactics (production) brings these strategic ideas into a physical form. In the middle of the ACP framework, key outcomes are identified that are integral to both development and response processes. Extensive early work in the field identified the importance of originality and appropriateness as core outcomes. All advertisements contain some degree of these two elements, but the extent to which each needs to be present to make an advertisement creative is a key issue. In addition, given that creativity cannot be isolated from persuasion (Csikszentmihalyi 1999), the various groups that evaluate the advertising idea are also an important component of not just idea development processes, but also responses to them.

<<Insert Figure 1 here>>

Furthermore, a number of thematic gaps may be identified in the context of the ACP framework combined with the review of the literature. As noted in the analysis of the two streams (CD and CE), despite the notable challenges of the general creativity literature, there does not seem sufficient justification to eschew these general theories outright and we advocate for a better integration of traditional theories with creative advertising practice. There are the twin limitations in understanding consumers’ responses to creative advertising research. Firstly, the use of existing advertising response measures may not fully capture the full range

of mental processes that occurs when consumers view creative advertisements. Secondly, given that judgements of creativity are highly dependent upon the individual, the use of advertisements judged as creative by people other than the study respondent may be unreliable. Ultimately measures of creativity are specific to individuals, as what is viewed as original, but more importantly appropriate, is clearly dependent upon the judgment of the very individual viewing the advertisement. While measures of originality do show some consistency, at least across groups of judges with similar backgrounds, those of appropriateness are less certain (Amabile 1996; Koslow Sasser and Riordan 2003; Runco and Charles 1992; White and Smith 2001). Thus, research indicates that judgements of appropriateness vary even between practitioners (Young 2000). It may be that instead of pre-determining what constitutes an original and appropriate, researchers need to identify consumers' responses to creative advertising by exposing them to a range of advertisements and identifying the mental processes that occur when they encounter what they consider to be creative. From this, researchers would then be able to determine whether the existing advertising response models fully encapsulate consumer mental processing responses and identify if there are ways to characterize types of consumers by their responses. From here advertisements deemed to be creative that contain the correct balance between originality and appropriateness can be developed.

Hence, we posit that advertising creative research scholars would benefit from a theoretical base of how creativity influences consumer decision making, and it beholds us to suggest a direction. One useful one may be the theory of "executive functions" (Diamond 2013). This framework refers to a family of top-down mental processes that occur when you have to pay attention and concentrate. Often our mental processing can be likened to "autopilot", but executive functions are when we take "manual control" of our thinking. One of these functions (Diamond 2013) is called cognitive flexibility, mental flexibility or mental set shifting and is highly associated with creativity. Cognitive flexibility is displayed when we

try to view things from a different perspective or solve problems in a new way, which is a commonly described way that creative advertising is supposed to work. The point is that some advertisements viewed as creative might often produce a reaction of cognitive flexibility, but they will not work the same way on everyone. Likewise, some advertisements that are seen by professionals as only mildly creative might well produce a cognitive flexibility reaction on some consumers. Adding to the body of theory about cognitive flexibility will certainly provide a different kind of route to understanding creativity than a route that seeks to identify creative ads with a high degree of consensus, and then empirically tests them to identify how they operate on consumers.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the future direction of advertising creative research and presented a framework within which to contextualize the work. It comes as no surprise to suggest that, in terms of the location of data, research is likely to continue to be dominated by studies from the USA and Western Europe. However, Asia (particularly China) will likely provide an increasing number of studies. Samples featuring practitioners will continue to form a basis for much of the investigative work, but given the importance of the consumer in determining advertising effectiveness, those featuring the public are likely to increase, as will research related to the ever changing media environment. Thematically, in terms of the two main themes discussed (CD and CE), work on agencies creative development processes, as well as the agency-client relationship, is set to continue along with the fascination with responses to creative versus non-creative advertising.

Within the creative advertising development process there are a range of key factors that influence the creative output. Many of these factors have re-emerged as important areas of analysis after the earlier seminal work by Kover (1970), such as the importance of agency structures and processes. Other areas have seen a shift in focus, such as in relation to agency

personnel, which has moved beyond those generating creative ideas to include those with support and gatekeeping roles.

The effect of audience characteristics on consumer responses, as well as how client objectives influence creative development processes has also begun to attract research interest, and there is significant room for additional studies. Given the importance of the client in the process, one such area is the need to further our understanding of the antecedents of client objectives. Another area that will continue to interest researchers is the effect of an ever-changing media landscape, both in respect to its implications for ad development, but also how we measure and understand consumer responses. For example, as noted above, the effect of the multimedia environment is likely to reduce the processing capacity consumers allocate to advertisements, increasing the relative importance of originality. This also means that laboratory settings that use forced exposure of advertisements may become even less externally valid, and the availability of the means to conduct large scale field experiments will mean research methods evolve.

Two alternative influences, focusing on the importance of the expression and evaluation processes for creative ideas have also begun to be explored. These are hardly new concepts, but given the difficulties in evaluating creative ideas, idea expression and idea evaluation processes are under-researched areas. Creative advertising executions are subject to consumer responses in terms of psychological measures and mechanisms. Many of these have been studied routinely, like applying our understand of perceptions and memory to creative advertisements. Yet there are other mechanisms that have escaped closer inspection. Over two decades ago, Kover (1995) examined copywriters' implicit theories of how advertising executions work on consumers, nevertheless there has been little follow up formalizing the wisdom of agency professionals when evaluating advertising effectiveness. Kover's work suggests several worthwhile directions for research including reader-response theory and

breakthrough-and-dialogue framework. Although the term *engagement* was not widely used in the mid-1990, Kover's (1995) discussion suggests this as a possible perspective by which researchers should consider how advertising influences consumers.

Overall, despite the lineage of advertising creative research, a number of questions remain within the field of advertising creativity. The key point to make from this review is that advertising creative research needs to be framed within the context of advertising creative development and advertising creative effectiveness. The field of advertising creative is in robust health and we look forward to the work of future researchers in the field.

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Table 1
Main Findings of Selected Studies Investigating Advertising Creativity 2012-2018

Year	Authors	Location	Method	Sample	Primary Theme	Primary Research Question
2012	Kennedy & McColl	China, Russia & USA	Database	Market Data (Mars Inc)	Agency-client	Creativity & marketing science
2012	Kübler & Proppe	Western Europe, USA	Content Analysis	Media	Awards	Factors in winning creative awards
2012	Romaniuk	USA	Content Analysis	Media	Agency-client	Branding & creativity
2012	Sasser & Koslow	USA	Survey	Practitioners	Agency	Developing ad agency creativity
2012	Steinhart	Israel	Experiment	Public	Response	Motor activity in response to an ad & advertising creativity
2013	Angell & Angell	UK	Qualitative	Public	Response	Advertising creative research and children
2013	Lehnert, Till & Carlson	USA	Experiment	Students	Response	Role & function of Creative Directors
2013	Mallia, Windels & Broyles	USA	Qualitative	Practitioners	Agency	Advertising creativity & price
2013	Modig and Rosengren	Sweden	Survey	Public	Response	Wider effects of ad creativity on the public
2013	Rosengren, Dahlen & Modig	Sweden	Experiment	Public	Response	Creativity & risk taking
2013	Sasser, Koslow & Kilgour	USA	Survey	Practitioners	Agency-client	Creative risk taking by clients & agencies
2013	Wang, Dou, Li & Zhou	China	Survey	Practitioners	Agency-client	Criteria applied by leading award shows
2013	West, Caruana & Leelapanyalert	Europe, USA	Qualitative	Practitioners	Awards	Novelty & creative impact
2014	Ang, Leong, Lee & Lou	Singapore	Experiment	Students	Response	Effectiveness of ad & prior advertising performance of the same brand
2014	Chang	China	Experiment	Students/ Public	Response	Advertising creativity: divergence, meaningfulness & relevance
2014	Lehnert, Till & Ospina	Columbia, USA	Experiment	Students / Practitioners	Response	Perceptions of creativity in a collective culture
2014	Leung & Hui	HK	Qualitative	Practitioners	Agency	Effect of production values of creative ads
2014	Modig, Dahlén & Colliander	Sweden	Survey	Public	Response	Advertising creativity & stakeholders
2014	Rosengren & Bondesson	Sweden	Experiment	Students	Response	Metaphors & a creative communications framework
2014	Stuhlfaut & Vanden Bergh	USA	Experiment	Students	Agency	Impact of conventional tropes on advertising persuasiveness
2015	Burgers, Konijn, Steen & Iepsema	Netherlands	Experiment	Public	Response	Use of defensive mobile technology & appearance of advertisements
2015	Gatti, Guerini, Stock & Strapparava	NA	Conceptual	Media	Media	Impact of conventional tropes on advertising persuasiveness

2015	Burgers, Konijn, Steen & Iepsema	Netherlands	Experiment	Public	Response	Examination of the value, role, & future of advertising creativity in China
2016	Bilby, Reid & Brennan	China	Qualitative	Practitioners	Agency client	Effects of repeated exposures on a range of dependent variables
2016	Chen, Jiemiao, Xiaojing Yang & Smith	USA	Experiment	Public	Response	Generalized effect of sales effective creativity
2016	Hartnett, Kennedy, Sharp & Greenacre	Australia, France, Germany, UK & US	Content Analysis	Media	Response	Class background & employment amongst ad agency creatives
2016	Koppman	USA	Mixed Method	Practitioners	Agency	Link between creativity & new media
2016	Kover	NA	Conceptual	NA	Media	The role of clients in developing creative work
2016	O'Connor, Koslow, Kilgour & Sasser	Australasia	Survey	Public	Agency-client	Creative Strategies & Experimental Technologies
2016	Qiao & Griffin	USA	Content Analysis	Media	Media	Gender bias in choice of creative ideas by creative directors
2016	Roca, Tena, Lazaro & Gonzalez	Spain	Experiment	Practitioners	Agency	The role of user memory bias on creative design & branding
2016	Vaughan, Beal & Romaniuk	10 countries	Database	Market Data	Response	Performance of digital ads & influence of creative
2017	Althuizen	France	Mixed Method	Students	Response	Practices of creativity in Columbia
2017	Åström, Sanz, Hagström, Bagué & Estima	Sweden, Spain a& Portugal	Qualitative	Practitioners	Agency	How national ad agencies use creativity to compete with global agencies
2017	Bruce, Murthi & Rao	USA	Database	Public	Media	Advertising creativity & elementary school students
2017	Han & Kim	South Korea	Experiment	Students	Response	Challenges involved in managing creative staff
2017	Heather & Styhre	Australia	Qualitative	Practitioners	Agency	Role of teams & creative work
2017	Lynch & West	NA	Conceptual	NA	Agency	Use of analogy to communicate to consumers
2017	Madrigal & King	USA	Experiment	Students/Public	Response	Key elements of the associative nature of creative communications
2017	Roca, Wilson, Barrios & Munoz-Sánchez	Columbia	Qualitative	Practitioners	Agency-client	Creativity & consumer branded hashtag engagement of TV advertising
2017	Stathopoulou, Borel, Christodoulides & West	UK	Mixed Method	Public	Media	Creative Development Process

2017	Turnbull & Wheeler	UK	Qualitative	Practitioners	Agency	Use of Google search by art directors & copywriters
2018	Barker	Australia	Qualitative	Practitioners	Agency	Creative B2B advertisements create more favorable buyer impressions
2018	Dahlen, Rosengren & Karsberg	Sweden	Experiment	Practitioners	Response	Creatives, in the age of social media, have become more strategic & technological
2018	Lee & Lau	Hong Kong	Qualitative	Practitioners	Agency-client	Surface level structural change & creative output
2018	O'Connor, Kilgour & Koslow	Australasia	Survey	Practitioners	Agency-client	Surface level structural change & creative output
2018	Parker, Ang & Koslow	Australia	Qualitative	Practitioners	Agency	Account Planners role in the Developing Creative Insight
2018	Pentina, Guilloux & Micu	France	Mixed Method	Public	Response	Characteristics of social media engagement with luxury brands
2018	Tevi & Koslow	NA	Conceptual	NA	Response	The role of rhetoric in advertising creativity
2018	West, Christodoulides, & Bonhomme	Global	Survey	Practitioners	Agency	Process of choice of creative ideas to show clients

TABLE 2**Key Variables of Selected Studies Investigating Advertising Creativity, 2012-18**

	N	%
Year of Publication		
2012	5	10
2013	8	16
2014	7	14
2015	3	6
2016	9	18
2017	10	20
2018	8	16
Total	50	100
Journal with 2+ cited articles		
<i>Journal of Advertising Research</i>	14	28
<i>Journal of Advertising</i>	9	18
<i>International Journal of Advertising</i>	9	18
<i>Journal of Marketing Communications</i>	3	6
<i>Journal of Interactive Advertising</i>	2	4
<i>Psychology & Marketing</i>	2	4
Marketing journals cited once	4	8
Non-marketing journals cited once	6	12
Total	50	100
Data Location		
USA	11	22
W. Europe	13	26
Asia	7	14
Australasia	5	10
Mideast	1	2
S. America	1	2
Cross National	8	16
NA	4	8
Total	50	100
Method		
Experiment	15	30
Qualitative	12	24
Survey	8	16
Conceptual	4	8

Content Analysis	4	8
Mixed Method	4	8
Database	3	6
Total	50	100
<hr/>		
Sample		
Practitioners	19	38
Public	12	24
Students	6	12
Media	5	10
Market Data	2	4
Students/Public	2	4
Students/Practitioners	1	2
NA	3	6
Total	50	100
<hr/>		
Primary Theme		
Response	21	42
Agency	13	26
Agency-client	9	18
Media	5	10
Awards	2	4
Total	50	100

Note: NA – not applicable.

FIGURE 1.
The Advertising Creativity Process

