

PROBLEM RESOLUTION APPEALS USED IN TELEVISION ADVERTISING:

A CONTENT ANALYSIS

by

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Housing, Interior Design, and Resource Management

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June, 1985

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(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of this study was to analyze the problem resolution appeals used in television advertisements. Data were collected by videotaping advertisements shown on local affiliates of the three national networks during September 1984, in Blacksburg, Virginia. An instrument developed for the study was used to code problem resolution appeals in a sample of 1380 national commercials.

A majority of the sample was found to have at least one problem. The problem type most frequently found was physical, followed by social, product, ego, and safety. The intensity (magnitude, urgency, and excitement value) of the problems presented was found to be high in a majority of the commercials. The time required for resolution to occur was judged to be immediate (within seconds or minutes) in over three-fourths of the advertisements. Resolutions were presented as definite and certain to occur in over three-fourths of the commercials and were shown to be easy to accomplish.

The findings of this study are useful as a description of the problems and resolutions presented in television advertising. They help to define one technique used by advertisers to sell products and may be instrumental in future studies that will investigate the impact of problem solving portrayals on consumers.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express sincere appreciation to:

Dr. Julia Marlowe for providing leadership, moral support, encouragement, and a sense of optimism during the planning, data collection, and writing phases of this thesis.

Dr. Rebecca Lovingood for her contributions to the clarity and consistency of this research, and for her instruction which has provided a sound research foundation.

Dr. Gary Selnow for sharing his expertise and for providing guidance, particularly in the design of the study and in the use of content analysis.

Elisa Gambino, David Horton, and Connie Mullins for their many hours of coding and analyzing advertisements.

Marilyn Cavell for her patience and invaluable assistance in the analysis of the data.

Tom Moore for technical assistance in the use of video equipment.

Clayton Blosser whose help and continual support made this educational endeavor a reality.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

Life portrayed on television is a constant cycle of problems and their resolutions. Some of the problems are small and insignificant; others are life threatening, and survival depends on their resolution. The characters used in television programming change, but the same problems are reflected over and over again. On television, problems are solved, often miraculously, and within a short period of time. This builds hope in the viewer, because he or she has learned that problems will be easily solved (Greenberg, 1980).

Television advertising also presents problems which are then resolved. A problem is dramatically established and the product or service is shown to be the "only" solution. The conclusion can be drawn by viewers that if they struggle with this particular problem, buying and consuming the product will solve the problem for them. Advertisers may also create dissatisfaction within viewers by showing the product as something necessary and valuable. The mere fact that the consumer does not own the product is presented as a problem.

Consumer socialization theory suggests that one way children learn to function in the marketplace is through the influence of "significant others" (McLeod & O'Keefe, 1972; Brim & Wheeler, 1966). Television has been identified as one of those agents primarily because of the frequency of its

contact with consumers (Moschis & Moore, 1978; Ward & Wackman, 1971; Ward, Wackman & Wartella, 1977).

Television advertising, as a particular segment of the mass media, is of interest, not only because of its high visibility, pervasiveness, and persuasive nature, but also because of the potential it has for shaping beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. During the course of a year, consumers view thousands of televised messages. Do these messages influence their behavior? Researchers have recognized both the widespread use of television and its potential effects. However, no researcher has addressed the specific question of problem resolution appeals portrayed in television advertisements.

Before the effects of television on consumers can be examined fully, measurement must be made of what is being presented on television. Content examinations provide clues as to what television is about and may be most helpful when attempts are made to discover underlying issues and values portrayed repeatedly in various settings and situations (Greenberg, 1980). While the complex question of effects cannot be resolved by examining content alone, content analysis is a useful tool for exploring "potential consequences and for deriving testable hypotheses about possible effects" (Larsen, Gray & Fortis, 1963, p. 180).

Analysis of television commercials must be completed in order to plan for increased education for consumers.

Information concerning problem resolution appeals used in advertising will contribute to awareness of advertising methods and better enable educators to prepare consumers in topics such as problem solving and decision making. Home economics professionals, particularly in the consumer economics, consumer education, and home management areas, along with professionals in the fields of communications and marketing will benefit from the information gained. This study will also provide a foundation for future studies examining the possible effects on consumers of problem/resolution packages presented on television.

#### Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the problem resolution appeals used in a sample of national television advertisements. The specific objectives to achieve in this analysis were:

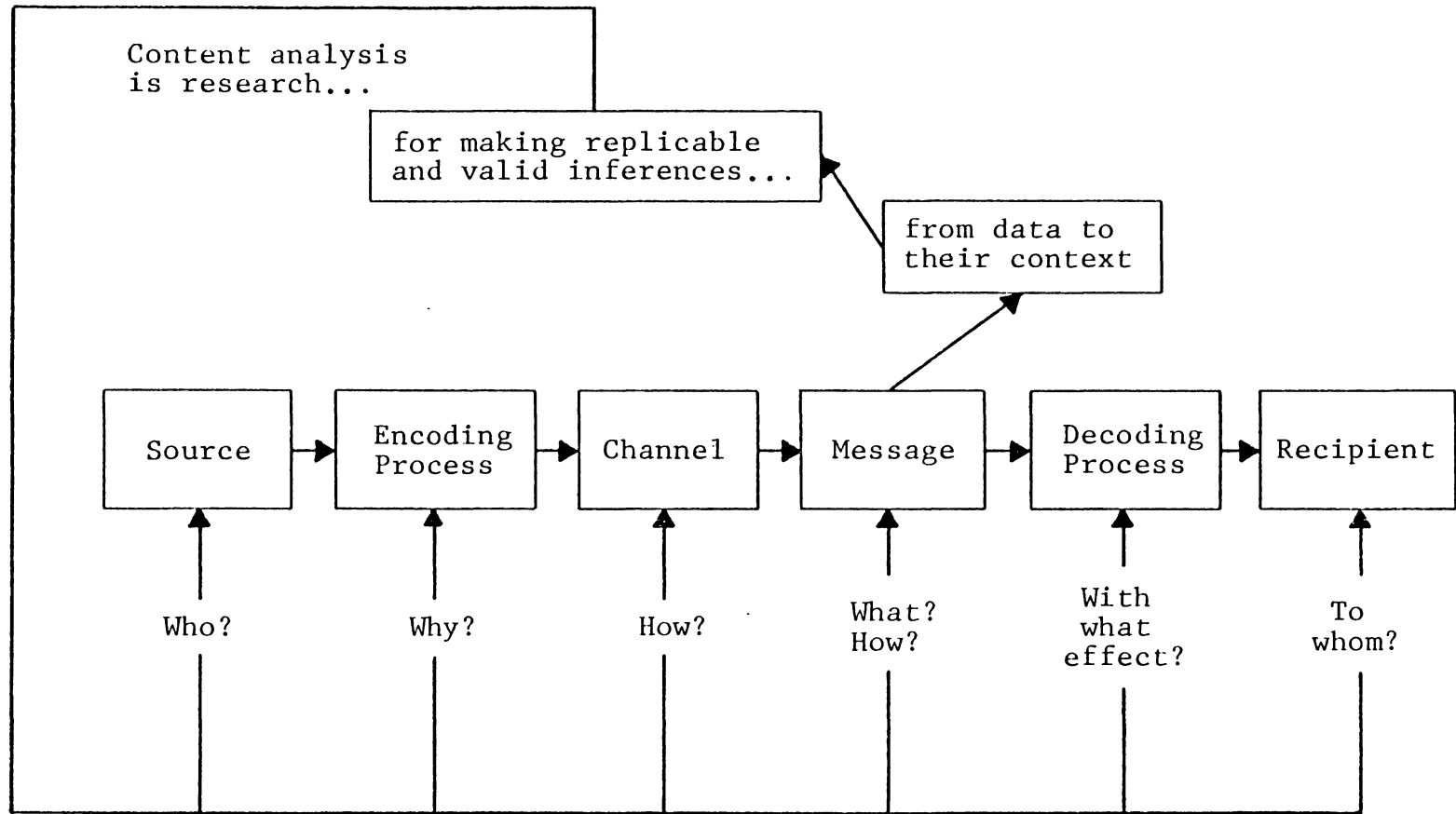
- 1) to identify the types of problems portrayed;
- 2) to determine the intensity of the problems presented;
- 3) to identify the manner in which problems and resolutions are presented;
- 4) to determine the time required for resolution to occur;
- 5) to determine the degree of certainty that the advertised product or service will provide a solution to a problem; and
- 6) to determine the complexity of the resolutions portrayed.

### Theoretical Framework

All communication is composed of six basic elements: a source or sender, an encoding process which results in a message, a channel of transmission, a detector or recipient of the message, and a decoding process. Content analysis is always performed on the message; however, the results of the content analysis may be used to make inferences about all other elements of the communication process (Holsti, 1969).

A schematic representation of the relationship between a definition of content analysis, the communication process, and the questions--who, what, to whom, how, with what effect, and why--can be seen in Figure 1. The content analysis in this thesis focuses on the category describing the attributes of messages, without reference to either the intentions (encoding process) of the sender or the effect of the message upon those to whom it is directed (decoding process). It will address itself to the "what?" question primarily, in analyzing the problem solving appeals used in advertising.

A model presented in Figure 2 indicates the relationships of four sets of attributes related to the message: context, characteristics, problem, and resolution. The context of the message illustrates basic information (channel, time of day, day of week, program category) concerning the placement of the commercial with respect to the sample of advertisements. The context of the message relates directly to the problems portrayed in the message,



(Holsti, 1969, p. 25)

Figure 1  
Content Analysis and the Communication Paradigm

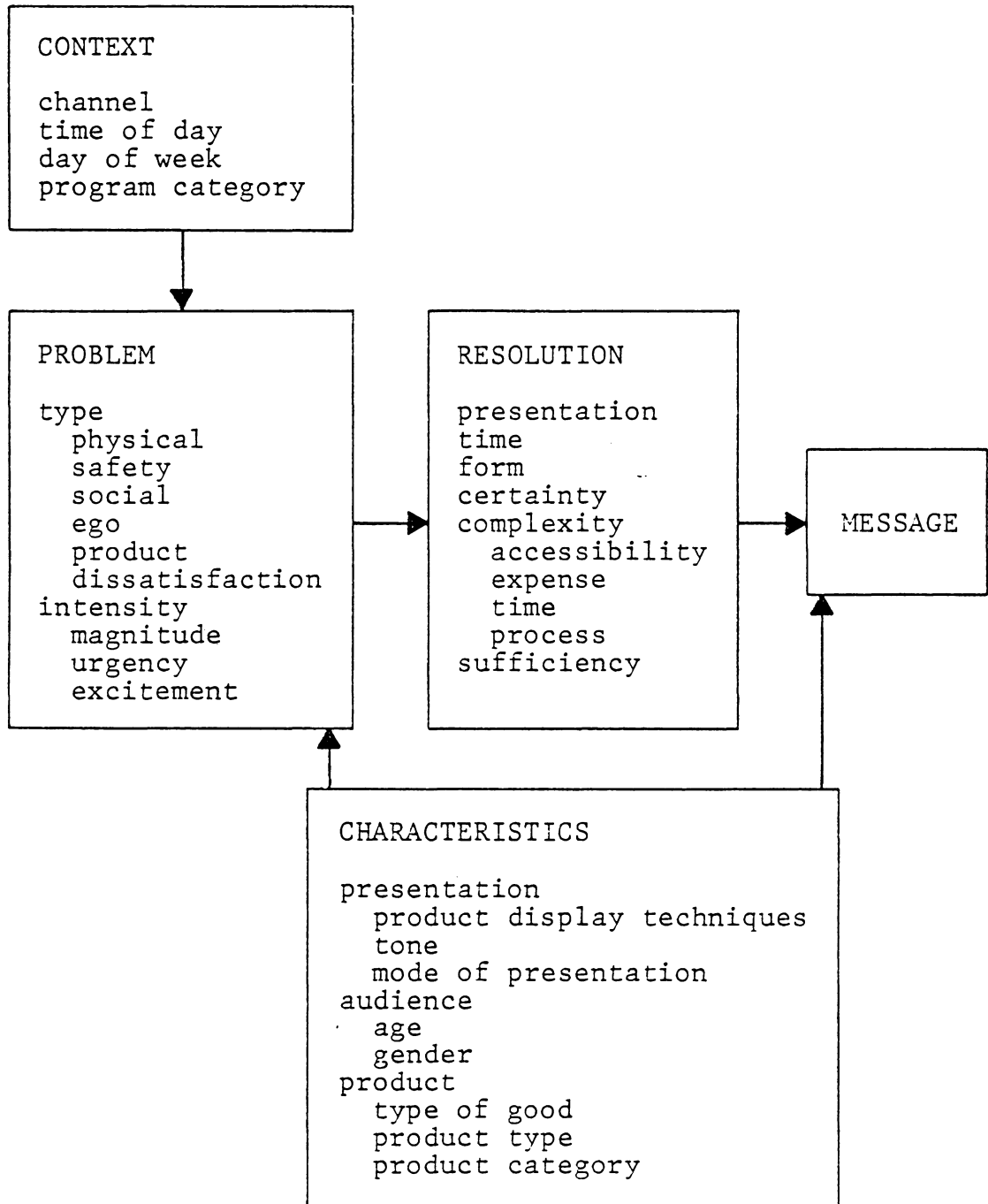


Figure 2  
Attributes of the Message

message, because advertisements are targeted to specific audiences which vary by day, program, time, and channel.

Characteristics of the message deal with general aspects of its presentation, with the target audience, and with particular aspects of the product or service being presented. The presentation of the message encompasses the display techniques used, the tone, and the mode of presentation. The targeted audience is classified according to gender and age. The type of good, the product type, and category define the product or service presented. The characteristics of the message directly relate to the problem by influencing the way in which it is portrayed. The message is dependent on the presentation, audience, and product because the type of message presented is dictated by these characteristics.

Problem and resolution categories represent the factors within the advertisement that directly relate to the objectives of this study. Within the problem category, the following types of problems are portrayed: physical, safety, social, ego, product and dissatisfaction. These are based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs plus two additional categories (Maslow, 1954). The intensity with which they are presented involves the magnitude of the problem, its urgency, and the excitement value portrayed. Intensity is important because it is a measure of the strength or urgency of advertisements as addressed to consumers. Resolutions vary



according to their presentation, the time involved, form, certainty, complexity, and sufficiency. The problems presented directly impact on the resolutions portrayed because resolutions must relate to the problem presented. Together they influence the message by serving as the focal point for the analysis.

These attributes form the basis on which to answer the "what" question with regards to what the situation is or to what is being presented in television advertisements using problem resolution appeals. An examination of these attributes and their relationships to the message serves to fulfill the objectives of this study.

#### Delimitations

Due to money and time constraints, certain boundaries were established. These boundaries include:

1. television programming taped between the dates of September 15-30, 1984; the sample is delimited to the advertisements shown during that period.

2. the use of content analysis methodology to examine the message, and to describe "what is", without making inferences about intentions or effects.

3. the design of the coding instruments which focused on four basic attributes of the message: context, characteristics, problems, and resolutions.

### Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they were used in this study:

#### Content Analysis

A research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 21).

#### Problem

A gap between where a person is and where he/she wishes to be. A problem can be a state of disequilibrium where something needs to be done to reach equilibrium.

#### Problem Resolution Appeal

A product or service presented as the solution for a problem in a commercial.

#### Product

A physical good which can be purchased.

#### Service

A flow of benefits over a period of time, either from physical goods or from human activities.

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

As far as could be determined, content analysis has not previously been used to examine problem resolution appeals in television commercials. Related areas include a brief profile of research on problem solving, cognitive development, consumer socialization, effects of television on viewers, and studies which have used content analysis. Research studies dealing with problem solving form a background, and provide insight into the process of solving a problem. Researchers concerned with the cognitive development process demonstrate the steps of learning a person must accomplish before he or she is capable of solving a problem. Consumer socialization research illustrates the process through which persons learn how to function in the marketplace and the potential of television in the socialization process of young consumers. Research findings which demonstrate that television affects viewers' perceptions of reality are important to this study because they form the underpinning for the research and support the concern that problem resolution appeals in advertising may influence consumers' perceptions. Finally, content analytic studies offer illustrations of methodology and examples for development of the instrument.

### Problem Solving

In his classical study on problem solving, Karl Duncker (1945) states, "A problem arises when a living creature has a goal but does not know how this goal is to be reached" (p. 1). Whenever it is not possible to go from a given situation to a desired situation simply by action, then thinking has to occur. The purpose of such thinking is to create a plan of action which will close the gap between the existing situation and the desired one. Duncker suggests that the "solution" of a practical problem must fulfill two demands: it must bring about the goal situation and one must be able to arrive at it simply through action.

Many researchers have attempted to provide a generalized scheme that would describe the typical event of solving a problem. John Dewey, as early as 1910, outlined five logical steps to problem solution: felt difficulty, its location and definition, suggestion of possible solutions, consideration of consequences, and testing of the solution. Wallas (1926, as cited by Feldhusen, Joutz & Ringenbach, 1972), in defining what he called "creative production", proposed somewhat broader stages: information-gathering, incubation, illumination, and verification. Polya (1948, as cited by Merrifield, Guilford, Christensen & Frick, 1962), listed four steps in solving a problem: understanding the problem; working out connections between the known and unknown, thus deriving a plan of solution; carrying out the plan and examining the

solution. Johnson (1955) used the three steps--preparation, production, and judgment--as a basis for a systematic presentation of the facts concerning problem solving. Merrifield, Guilford, Christensen, and Frick (1962) expanded on previous models by adding a stage called reapplication, recognizing that the problem solver often goes back to a previous point in the process until a satisfactory solution is reached.

Various researchers have approached the challenge of describing the problem solving process in different ways at different times. Rimoldi (1960) devised a procedure to study the kind and sequence of questions that a subject asks in order to solve a problem. Duncan (1959) examined the relationship between group and individual problem solving. Merrifield et al. (1962) analyzed the role of intellectual factors in problem solving. In their examination of vertical and horizontal processes in problem solving, Kendler and Kendler (1962) suggest that "problem solving can best be conceptualized not as a basic psychological process, but instead as one that reflects the basic interaction of more fundamental processes (e.g. learning, perception, and motivation)" (p. 2). Newell and Simon (1972) examined the general organization of the problem solver.

In his review of research and theory in human problem solving, Davis (1966), discussed the interpretation of problem solving as either covert or overt trial and error

behavior. John (1957) tested university students and staff using the Problem Solving and Information Apparatus, a technique which objectively measures the acquisition, organization, and application of information phases an individual goes through in reaching a solution to abstract problems. Mondell and Tyler (1981) studied the relationship of parental psychosocial competence to parent interaction behaviors in a joint problem solving/play session with children. Lewis (1981) looked at how adolescents approach decisions and how their approach changes from grades seven to twelve.

#### Problem Solving/Television

Several researchers have examined the relationship between television portrayals of problem solving and their potential effects on viewers. Greenberg, Neuendorf, Buerkel-Rothfuss & Henderson (1982) analyzed soap opera content and surveyed viewers to determine whether or not television portrayals influenced their perceptions of reality. Three expectations relating to problem resolution were held by the researchers: 1) soap opera viewers believe soap opera characters and their problems are realistic, 2) viewers use information from the "soaps" to cope with their own problems, or extend advice to others with parallel problems, and 3) viewers' perceptions of the world and its problems are different because they watch soap operas. It was not found,

however, that watching the soaps makes viewers believe they are more capable of advising someone who comes to them with a problem which parallels major problems depicted on the soaps; nor that soap opera viewers believe that the problems of health, marriage, and romance are more severe in this country because of watching soap operas.

In analyzing verbal language in Saturday morning children's programs, McCorkle (1982) found that the conflict resolution offered in these programs was generally not a result of working through the problem or a function of communication skills, but frequently involved a shift in the plot or a dramatic resolution (e.g. superhero intervenes to save a human character). Because characters on television do not demonstrate control over their environment or use communication to work through problems, individual physical and communicative actions are minimally significant. McCorkle posed the question of whether this trend adequately represents how problems are solved in everyday life.

In an attempt to provide a description of problem solving methods in television programs most often watched by children (6 - 11 years old), Dominick, Richman, & Wurtzel (1979) found that assertion and helping solutions were more frequently found than aggression during the prime time programs analyzed. During Saturday morning programs, however, aggressive problem solving methods were found more than three times as often as during the prime time programs

sampled. It was also found that the rate of aggression was much higher in Saturday programs (calculated by dividing the number of attempts in a particular category by the number of half-hour segments in the sample). In both Saturday morning and prime time programs, males were more likely to use aggressive solutions than females were. Program types were related to problem solving attempts during prime time shows. Ninety-one percent of all aggressive attempts occurred during action/adventure programs, while situation comedies and general drama accounted for 72 percent of all assertive attempts. During Saturday morning, aggressive solutions were the most probable attempt in both cartoon and non-cartoon program types. Most problem solving attempts were found to be successful regardless of the time period. Forty-seven percent of the Saturday morning solution attempts used magical or supernatural powers, while only four percent of the attempts were judged to be unrealistic during prime time programs. In analyzing problem types and the mode of solution, the researchers found that aggressive attempts were more likely if the problem threatened life or physical well-being. Assertive methods were used more often in dealing with less serious problems.

Budd, Craig, and Steinman (1983) analyzed a Fantasy Island episode as well as the commercials played during the program. They found that the commercials related and responded to the problems, desires, and fantasies shown in



the program's narrative by promising gratification through products. The analysis showed every commercial moving from problem to solution in one easy step, whereas the program moved through three stages: defining the problem, making the solution visible, and closing unsettled accounts. The researchers summarized with the statement:

On this episode of Fantasy Island, as the narrative moves from problem to solution, from disequilibrium to equilibrium, from search to discovery, the product is there at every step, showing the way, providing therapy for what ails the characters in the commercials, and, less obviously, in the program as well (p. 75).

#### Problem Solving/Commercials

That advertisers use problem resolution as an appeal can not be disputed. Baldwin (1982) in his book Creating Effective TV Commercials, suggested ways copywriters can turn ideas into effective advertisements. He stated that hard product facts must be translated into appealing consumer benefits. The creative idea of the advertisement may be to state existing problems in a fresh, memorable way. The product then is shown as the "only" solution.

"Slice-of-life" portrayals, another common production mode of commercials, are composed of three parts:

1. A problem dramatically established,
2. Introduction of the product to solve the problem,
3. Solution of the problem with the purchase and use of the product

(White, 1981, p. 21).

Consumers' acceptance of the exaggerated make-believe of these portrayals has been proven time and time again, with traceable increases in sales. This type of selling is particularly effective for large manufacturers of detergents and other packaged goods (White, 1981).

Mapes and Ross, a research firm, analyzed the effectiveness of commercials and included a rating for a commercials' ability to change brand preference. Problem resolution was listed as one of the techniques scoring above average in their research report (Ogilvy and Raphaelson, 1982).

In discussing the basic appeals used in advertising, Fowles (1982) suggested that a commercial communicates by making use of a specially selected image. The objective of this image is to stimulate "subrational impulses and desires" even when the viewer is not aware of them. If the viewer of the commercial actually has the desire, and if the appeal is sufficiently well-designed to prompt it, then the person can be "hooked". The product in the advertisement may then appear to be capable of fulfilling the stimulated desire. Many advertisements seem to be saying, "If you have this need, then this product will help satisfy it". Fowles summarized by stating that even though it is a primitive equation, it is an effective one for selling.

While no researcher has used content analysis to examine problem resolution appeals in television commercials, several

researchers have examined the problems shown in commercials and their effect on viewers. In analyzing the effects of drug commercials on young viewers, Atkin (1978) suggested that exposure to commercials may influence perceptions. Commercials demonstrating quick relief and recovery from sickness may teach viewers that physical problems can be quickly resolved. This point may be generalized to affect expectations about other types of problem solving and the inference may be drawn that life's difficulties can be resolved rapidly.

Atkin surveyed 256 students in fifth, sixth, and seventh grades using an instrument that dealt with intensity of attention to each advertisement, frequency of viewing, perceptions, beliefs, concerns, attitudes, and usage patterns. He found that as students watched more television advertising, they tended to believe that colds and stomach aches can be effectively combatted with medicine. Thirteen percent of the light viewers (watching less than two hours per day) believed drugs to be "very" helpful whereas 20 percent of the heavy viewers (watching more than four hours per day) did.

Another pair of items examined beliefs concerning how much time it takes for cold and stomach ache medicine to bring relief. A modest positive relationship was found ( $p < .05$ ). The possible carry-over effect on expectations regarding the quickness of general problem solving was

measured with an item asking, "When people have a problem that bothers them, how long does it usually take for them to solve it?" The correlation with viewing medicine advertisements was found to be slightly positive. A small difference was also found between heavy and light viewers, where 35 percent of the heavy viewers estimated from "a few minutes" to "one hour" compared to 29 percent of the light viewers.

### Cognitive Development

While there are several distinct theories of cognitive development, most are anchored in concepts advanced by Jean Piaget. Piaget, a psychologist interested in trying to understand how we come to "know" about the world, studied mental growth processes in children. The assumption of developmental theory is that children, as they develop, change in the way they organize and use information. Piaget's theory specifies the cognitive structures which make up the "stages of development" and also attempts to explain how cognitive development occurs. Piaget has theorized that there are four main stages of cognitive growth which roughly correlate with chronological age: sensorimotor (birth to two years), pre-operational (two to seven years), concrete operational (seven to eleven years) and formal operational (eleven through adulthood) (Piaget, 1966).

A brief description of each of the four stages identified by Piaget will further explain the qualitative changes

in thought which occur as children grow older. In the sensorimotor stage, the infant's behavior is primarily motor. It is not brought about by thought, as such, but by set behavior patterns. The preoperational stage is characterized by the development of language. During this period the child is increasingly able to represent events internally (to "think") while becoming less dependent on motor activities. In the concrete operations stage the child develops logical and rational thought processes which can be applied to concrete (actual or real) objects or experiences. Finally, in the formal operational stage, he develops adult-like thought patterns, including abstract thought.

It is during adolescence that a person achieves formal operations and can conduct serious mental operations about abstract concepts and ideas. Adolescents enter into a new pattern of thinking which leads to a systematic approach to problem solving. By the end of the adolescent years, the individual can analyze an issue or problem from a variety of perspectives (Avery, 1974).

### Consumer Socialization

Consumer socialization is the process by which people acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills relevant to their function in the marketplace (Ward, 1974). McLeod and O'Keefe (1972) maintain that a complete socialization theory must deal with five types of variables: 1) learning proper-

ties (cognitions and behaviors), 2) sources of influence, 3) learning processes, 4) social environment, and 5) age or life cycle stage of the person.

The focus of socialization research is on the learning properties necessary for the performance of a given social role and how they are developed. These learning properties include specific behavioral acts as well as cognitive aspects such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Moschis & Moore, 1978).

Socialization can be defined as a process through which norms, attitudes, motivations and behaviors are transferred to the learner from specific sources, known as "socialization agents" (Brim & Wheeler, 1966). A socialization agent may be a person or an organization involved in socialization because of frequent contact, authority, and control over rewards and punishments given to the individual. Parents, schools, churches, siblings, and peers have been identified as such agents, as well as the mass media.

Learning processes used in socialization theory can be divided into three general types: modeling, reinforcement and social interaction. Modeling involves imitation of the agent's behavior (McLeod and O'Keefe, 1972). In the reinforcement process, the person learns to repeat past behaviors that have been rewarded and avoid those for which punishment was received. The social interaction mechanism implies that a person's interactions with other significant

persons can shape attitudes, values, and behavior.

An individual's social environment can have a direct as well as an indirect effect on socialization. Social environment includes variables such as social class, socioeconomic status, sex, and order of birth (McLeod & O'Keefe, 1972).

The age or life cycle stage of a person is important in socialization theory because people learn continuously and because they learn different things at different times from different agents. A different cluster of variables tends to dominate each stage of the life cycle; any generalizations made are dependent on the particular phase an individual is in (McLeod & O'Keefe, (1972).

Ward, Wackman, and Wartella (1977) have explained consumer socialization in terms of an "information processing" framework. They suggest that children develop abilities to select, evaluate, and use information relevant to purchasing and that children actively participate in communication processes--attending to some messages and ignoring others, selecting some information in one advertisement to compare with information gained through experience and so on. Their framework allows for variation in the quantity of information processed and the quality of information processing and for the differences in children's environments.

Moschis and Moore (1978) examined the influences of

television, family, school, and peers on the development of specific consumer skills. The amount of television viewing related significantly only to the consumer roles conception measure, suggesting that adolescents learn socially desirable consumer behaviors and cognitions from television. Also, their findings suggest that the adolescent's awareness of brands and products may increase as exposure to commercials increases.

Ward and Wackman (1971) examined the relative influence of parents and media on four aspects of "consumer learning": recall of television commercial slogans, attitudes toward commercials, materialistic attitudes, and self-reported effects of advertising on specific purchases. They report that the learning of advertising slogans is a function of intelligence, rather than of television exposure time. The attitude toward commercials and a materialism orientation seem to be a function of the reasons for viewing commercials. Communication with parents seems to be an important variable influencing the balance between exposure to advertising and the purchase of consumer goods. Ward and Wackman conclude that the process by which adolescents acquire skills and attitudes relating to the consumption of goods and services is a social learning process, not simply an individual stimulus response phenomenon. They suggest it may be appropriate to think of media advertising as "shaping the content and form of interpersonal perception and communication,



rather than considering the media as dispensers of product information" (p. 425).

### Television as Reality

All television programs present a reality--a televised reality. Television provides definitions of reality which are not necessarily right or wrong, but which must be interpreted against the viewer's own experience and perception of reality.

It is clear from the available evidence on cultivation analyses that "television reality" can influence and, in some cases, override the individual realities constructed by the viewer. Media influence is maximized when the viewer has little personal experience which might provide a counterbalancing force against the televised view. Viewers with related personal experience seem to be able to negotiate a compromise between the televised and personal reality constructions more easily (Murray, 1980).

In studying school children in grades three through six, Greenberg and Reeves (1976) found that television usage is positively related to perceptions of reality. Heavy viewers were much more likely to see television portrayals in entertainment programs as real; these results were strongest for the youngest and least bright children.

Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, and Wills (1977) analyzed television commercials with regard to racism. They

suggest that the influence of television on interpersonal actions is without limits. Television presents to people of all races, backgrounds, gender, ages, and economic status what our society is, what it can be, and what it ought to be. They summarize by stating that for many people, particularly lower-income people, minorities, and children, "the relatively passive acceptance of television fare defines what is typical, what is desirable, what is probable, and what is possible" (p. 63).

In a series of studies, Gerbner and his associates, have contrasted the perceptions of the world among heavy (watching four or more hours of television each day) and light (watching less than two hours of television each day) viewers of television. They have found that an exaggerated impression of the actual numbers of law enforcement workers seems to be a consequence of viewing television, that living in the world of television seems to strengthen the conclusion that people cannot be trusted, and that heavy television viewers overestimate their chances of being involved in violence in any given week. They also found that adults under 30 (a group who likely grew up with television in their homes) show consistently higher levels of "TV responses," regardless of the fact that they tend to be more highly educated than the "over 30" respondents. Young people, persons with lower levels of education, women, and heavy viewers within all these groups sense greater danger than

light viewers in the same groups (Gerbner & Gross, 1976).

The attention in Gerbner's research is given to the role of the mass media as "cultivator" of audience perceptions of social reality. The crucial question is not so much how the media affect specific attitudes or behaviors but how they affect audience conceptions of social reality, or perceptions about the facts, norms, and values of society through selective presentations and by emphasizing certain themes.

The typical research paradigm in media cultivation studies is first to map out a system of media content. The Message System Analysis is a tool used to gather orderly, reliable, and cumulative observations of what is offered on television. These observations are then compared with other observations from direct and independent sources, such as U.S. census figures. The second step in media cultivation studies is to determine whether or not exposure to "television reality" cultivates in viewers a television-portrayed perception of social reality. Survey designs are then used to determine the effects of media exposure on viewers. The dependence on survey designs is partly based on the assumption that cultivation effects generally develop over time, and would not be easily picked up in a single exposure experimental design (Gerbner, 1973).

In attempting to answer the question, "Does television affect social reality?", Hawkins and Pingree (1981) completed an extensive review of the literature. They concluded that

most studies show evidence of a relationship between exposure to television and beliefs, regardless of the kind of social reality studied. The studies they reviewed cover a diverse range of ideas including prevalence of violence, family structures, interpersonal mistrust, fear of victimization, traditional sex roles, family values, images of older people, attitudes about doctors, and concern about racial problems. The question not easily answered, however, is that even though there does seem to be a link, is it real, or is it because of some third variable?

Television can and does act as a socialization agent. But whose reality is presented on television and what is the result? The 1980 report by Gerbner and his associates begins to illustrate how television influences perceptions of reality which may not correspond to the reality of the world the viewer actually lives in. These results confirm earlier findings which have consistently indicated that persons who watch a lot of television are more fearful of the risks of crime and suspicious of others than those who watch less television. The authors argue that this "mean world syndrome" is a result of the heavy viewer's exposure to the pervasive violence portrayed on the American television screen.

Another way television can influence the viewer's conception of reality is through selective overemphasis on a restricted range of topics or issues. The media set the

agenda and select particular issues that are considered "important" for public attention (Murray, 1980).

### Content Analysis

There appear to be very few systematic content studies of television advertisements. Of those published, a large percentage are content analyses of commercials directed toward children.

Barcus (1971, as cited by Atkin & Heald, 1977) monitored four Saturday mornings, examining 311 advertisements from one independent station and three networks. He found that the most frequently presented product categories were for cereals (23%), toys (23%), other foods and snacks (23%), and candies and sweets (21%).

Winick, Williamson, Chuzmir, and Winick (1973), analyzed 236 commercials representing 42 advertisers and 127 products. The purpose of the study was to determine the content parameters of television commercials addressed to children. The study dealt primarily with food ads: snacks and desserts (22%), cereals (20%), candy (16%), drinks (16%), and other food and restaurants (15%). The researchers found that animation was used in almost half of the ads, slogans were employed in three-fifths of the commercials, premium offers were featured in one-tenth of the commercials, and the product was associated with fun in two-fifths of the cases. Many food advertisements referred to sweetness, fewer

discussed nutrition, and advertisements almost never suggested that the child ask the parent to buy the product.

Pre-Christmas Saturday morning advertisements on a pair of comparable days in 1972 and 1973 were taped and then subjected to a systematic content analysis in a study done by Atkin and Heald (1977). Message strategies and presentational techniques were examined. The findings of this study detail many aspects of children's advertising.

Doolittle and Pepper (1975) analyzed network children's advertising on a Saturday morning. In a category describing the rationale for buying a product, they found that 40 percent of the advertisements demonstrated product enjoyment, 25 percent promoted product superiority, 20 percent included promotions, 20 percent suggested pleasing product association, and one percent showed personal advancement.

Welch, Huston-Stein, Wright, & Plehal (1979) compared toy commercials directed to boys, to girls, and to both boys and girls, for differences in formal features as well as violent content and the gender of narration. The four features examined were: 1)the level of action or activity, 2)pace (rate of change in scenes and characters), 3)visual or camera techniques, and 4)auditory techniques. They found that commercials directed at boys contained highly active toys, varied scenes, high rates of camera cuts, and high levels of sound effects and loud music.

Content Analysis/Adults

Television advertising's portrayal of men and women was examined by McArthur and Resko (1975). The sample of commercials coded was drawn from the weekday broadcasts of the three major television networks in the Spring of 1971. A total of 199 advertisements were coded. The results of this study indicate that commercials present men and women to the viewing audience in different ways. More men than women are presented--57 percent of the central figures were men. Both in their credentials and in their behavior, women were shown as less knowledgeable than men. Social and career advancement was more likely for male product users than for female product users. Less than half of the female models had their own independent identity and proportionately fewer women than men were depicted in an occupational setting.

Scott (1978) analyzed the relationship between the information content and the level of stereotypic sex-role characterization used in advertisements. She found that more sex-role stereotypic characterization and low information content were associated with experience good\* advertisements whereas the reverse was true for search good\*\* advertisements. The levels of information content and sex-role characterization were found to be consistent across time segments.

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\* goods which possess qualities that can only be evaluated after purchase

\*\* goods which possess qualities that can be assessed prior to purchase

Dominick and Rauch (1972) examined network television commercials to discover the image of women portrayed. They concluded that women are most often seen as decorative (sex objects) or useful (housewives and mother), but hardly ever as professionals or working wives.

Pierce et al. (1977) analyzed the interracial behavior demonstrated in television advertisements. Based on the data, the researchers concluded that there are numerous and excessive negative representations of blacks in television commercials. They also suggest that most of these representations are not justified and unnecessary and could be changed without interfering with the creativity of artists or the profit of the sponsors.

#### Summary

As can be seen, previous studies have not dealt directly with problem resolution appeals in advertising messages; insights, however, have been gained through the examination of related areas. Problem solving research has shown that the process of problem solving is a complex one. Studies relating problem solving and television viewing demonstrate that television does have an impact on viewers. Research studies using content analytic methodology have contributed to instrument development. The aim of this study is to build on previous research by interrelating these areas to explore problem resolution appeals used in television advertising.



## Chapter III

### Methodology

A sample of advertisements was obtained by videotaping the local outlets for three national television networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) between the dates of September 15-30, 1984. Early fall was chosen in order to obtain the most typical programming possible within the time frame for thesis completion. The commercials were taped in September in order to minimize special programming and advertisements related to the national election in November and to avoid the peculiarities of the Christmas season. Taping was done in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Commercials were edited from weekend programming (Saturday and Sunday, 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.), two weekdays (Monday and Wednesday, 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.), and prime access (7:00 to 8:00 p.m.) and prime time (8:00 to 11:00 p.m.) for the remaining days (Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday). These times were selected in order to obtain a sampling from all programming types and times of day. Prime access and prime time programming were taped every day because of variances in programming based on the day of the week. Weekday morning, daytime, and afternoon programming was restricted to two days due to the similarity of programming. Weekend days were taped in their entirety (7:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m.) because of variances in programming at different times during the day. A diagram of the taping schedule can

be seen in Appendix C.

During the editing process, each commercial was recorded only once onto a 1/2" videotape. Information concerning the channel, time of day, program type, and day of the week was gathered each time an advertisement was repeated on television (see Editing Instrument in Appendix A).

A content analysis was used to code national advertisements; local advertisements were not analyzed because of the variance in research and expertise used in their development. In the editing process, advertisements were judged as local if they stated a particular locality or were clearly available only in one region (i.e. the state of Virginia). Political commercials (national or local) were not included in the sample.

#### Operational Definitions

Four variables--context, characteristics, problems, and resolutions--influence the messages presented in television advertisements. In this study, these variables were defined as follows:

##### Context

The context of the message refers to the location of the advertisement within the taping schedule. Each time an advertisement was presented, information concerning the channel, time of day, day of week, and program category was recorded.

### Characteristics

Characteristics of the message were measured by examining the way in which the message was presented, the audience targeted by the message, and particular characteristics of the product. The presentation of the message was measured by the display techniques used, the tone of the message, and the form used to present the product. The characteristics of the audience include measures of the age group and the gender targeted. Aspects pertaining to the product include whether the good is a search, experience, or credence good, the involvement level of the product, and the basic category into which the product falls.

### Problem

The problem refers to the disequilibrium or need portrayed in the advertisement. Problems were measured according to their type and the intensity with which they were presented.

### Resolution

Resolutions represent the answers or solutions portrayed in the advertisement related to the problems presented. They were measured by the following criteria: presentation, time, form, certainty, complexity, and sufficiency.

### The Instrument

The instrument included two separate parts: the editing instrument and the coding instrument (see Appendix A and B).

The editing instrument served to identify the context of the advertisement within the overall scheme of programming and consisted of the following categories: time of day, day of the week, channel, and program type.

The coding instrument included three basic sections: characteristics of the advertised message, problems presented, and resolutions offered. Eleven categories defined the general characteristics of the advertisement including aspects of the presentation of the advertisement, the target audience, and a description of the product or service being advertised. The categories representing the problem consist of identifying the problem type and a measure of its intensity. Problem types were based on the hierarchy of needs identified by Maslow (1954) along with two additional categories. Intensity is measured by three ordinal scales based on the magnitude of the problem, its urgency, and the excitement value presented. Resolutions were analyzed by examining presentation, the time involved, form, certainty, complexity, and sufficiency. Presentation, resolution time, form, and the certainty of resolution were measured by nominal scales. The complexity of the resolution was examined by looking at four characteristics: accessibility, expense, time needed to obtain the product or service, and the process or steps involved. Sufficiency of resolution was measured by examining the adequacy of the resolution on an ordinal scale.

In the event that a commercial offered an alternative if the product or service did not resolve the problem, a category was included to code alternative solutions. A final category encompassing general underlying rules or themes by which decisions are made was included to define the rationale behind the resolution.

Definition of Coding Instrument Categories

Accessibility: ease with which a product may be obtained

Age group targeted: age group to which the commercial is appealing

Alternative: alternatives offered if the product does not resolve the problem

Certainty: the certainty that this product/service will resolve this problem

Commercial length: actual amount of time the commercial runs in seconds

Complexity of resolution: composed of four categories--accessibility, expense, time to obtain product, and process

Ego problem type: product/service shown as special, having high quality, prestigious; purchase of the product promises to make you above the regular crowd, unique

Excitement value of problem: emotional tones of the advertisement

Expense: the amount of money necessary to obtain the product

Gender targeted: the gender to which the commercial is appealing

Intensity of the problem: composed of three categories--magnitude, urgency, and excitement value

Magnitude of the problem: size of the problem portrayed

- Mode of presentation: represented by one of the following classifications--animated, dramatization, testimonial, demonstration, electronic production, or other
- Physical problem type: product/service shown as enhancing the body in some way; helping with a problem pertaining to the body; meeting basic physical needs
- Presentation of resolution: the way in which the resolution is portrayed in the advertisement (explicit or subtle)
- Problem resolution rules: underlying themes on which decisions are made
- Product display techniques: represented by one of the following classifications--actual product, picture or drawing, not displayed, or other
- Product problem type: problem is within the product itself
- Product/service category: represented by 23 categories of products
- Product/service type: involvement level of product (high or low)
- Resolution form: represented by the following classifications--fact certain, fact uncertain, opinion certain, opinion uncertain, or indeterminate
- Resolution process: number of steps involved in resolving the problem
- Resolution time: amount of time suggested or implied for resolution to occur after purchase or consumption of the product/service
- Safety problem type: product/service presented as providing protection or security, as promoting a feeling of stability
- Social problem type: product/service shown as enhancing friendship, affection, and acceptance
- Sufficiency of resolution: adequacy of resolution

Time needed to obtain: actual amount of time necessary in order to gain access to the product

Tone of the message: composed of three categories--humor, seriousness, and importance

Type of good: classified as either a search, experience, or credence good

Urgency of problem: how pressing the problem is portrayed to be

### Training Session

A training session was conducted to ensure that coders were relying on the same information in their coding decisions. The training session included a thorough discussion of the instrument, and focused on the ways in which the categories could be applied to the data. Several advertisements were analyzed during the training session to further acquaint coders with the instrument and with the recording equipment. Coders then analyzed several commercials individually and problems and/or questions were discussed.

### Pilot Test

A pilot test was conducted prior to the actual study in order to gain a better understanding of the procedure and the problems that might be encountered. The coders analyzed 20 commercials using the coding instrument. The commercials used for the pretest were selected to include various types of problems and to provide coders with variations in types of advertisements. None of the advertisements used in the pilot

test were part of the sample for the study.

A composite reliability coefficient was computed using the following formula:

$$\text{composite reliability} = \frac{N (\text{average interjudge agreement})}{1+(N-1)(\text{average interjudge agreement})}$$

where N refers to the number of judges (Holsti, 1969, p. 137). Percentage of agreement within every pair of judges was computed to find the average inter-judge agreement. A composite reliability coefficient of at least 0.80 was desired. The interjudge composite reliability coefficient found from the pilot test was 0.88. Clarifications and minor revisions were made on the coding instrument as a result of the pilot test.

#### Coding Procedures

The advertisements were analyzed by three trained assistants using the coding instrument specifically developed for the study. The sample was divided into segments one hour in length. These tapes were randomly divided among the three coders. Each coder worked individually and was advised to stop the tape as often as necessary to record the data accurately.

Inter-coder reliability was monitored throughout the study. Twelve percent of the sample (165 commercials) were randomly selected by using the Table of Random Digits (Neter & Wasserman, 1961, p. 436). These commercials were copied



onto additional tapes which were coded by all three coders at various times throughout the coding process. Comparison of coding sheets resulted in a composite reliability coefficient of 0.89.

The three coders and the researcher met, as a group, at least once a week during the coding process to clarify points and discuss issues related to the study. The training sessions, pilot test, and coding were conducted during the time period between January 28 and March 18, 1985.

### Hypotheses

Based on the literature review the following hypotheses were developed and examined:

H1: Ego and social problem types are targeted more frequently than any other problem types.

In developed economies, most consumers' physical and safety needs have been met (Assael, 1984). Few people, however, satisfy their social and ego needs. Therefore, the most important motivating forces in purchase behavior are social and ego needs (Assael, 1984).

H2: Problems with high intensity values are presented more frequently than problems with low intensity values.

Advertisers seeking to arouse needs within the consumer will portray problems as being dominant, urgent, and emotional. These high intensity values are used to prompt consumers into action.

H3: The time required for resolutions to occur is portrayed as within days or several weeks in a majority of advertisements.

The mood of American society today is one of instant gratification. Advertisers capitalize on this mood by portraying products and services as providing quick solutions.

H4: Resolutions are portrayed as certain to occur in a majority of commercials.

Advertisers seeking to sell products and services will attempt to be as convincing as possible that this product will indeed resolve the particular problem presented. Resolutions will be portrayed as definite, leaving little doubt that the problem will be solved.

H5: Resolutions are portrayed as simple to accomplish in a majority of advertisements.

The primary purpose of advertising is to sell products. This being the case, advertisers will demonstrate the ease with which products may be obtained, and will create an impression that the role of the consumer in resolving problems is not difficult.

## Chapter IV

### Findings and Discussion

Problem resolution appeals used in national television advertisements were analyzed in this study. Using content analytic methodology, trained coders examined each commercial using the instrument designed for this study.

In this chapter, the sample is described by discussing the findings for each attribute of the message. The hypotheses are then addressed individually. A discussion of the findings concludes the chapter.

#### Description of the Sample

A total of 1380 different national advertisements were included in the sample. Many of these were shown more than once during the weeks of taping. The total number of national advertisements shown during the taping schedule, including repeated advertisements, was 3662.

#### Context

A description of the time, day, channel, and program can be seen in Tables 1 and 2. The time segment having the highest number of national commercials per hour was between 3:01 and 4:00 p.m. During this hour an average of 23 national advertisements were shown on each channel. The lowest number of national commercials per hour, 12 on each channel, was shown from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. The average frequency per hour over the total sample was 48 (16 on each channel per hour).

Table 1

Frequency of National Television Advertisements:  
Time of Day and Day of the Week

(N=3662)

Context	Frequency Per Hour	Per Hour Percent of Total
<b>Time*</b>		
7:00-8:00 a.m.	37.25	1.02
8:01-9:00 a.m.	39.75	1.09
9:01-10:00 a.m.	41.25	1.13
10:01-11:00 a.m.	44.75	1.22
11:01-12:00 a.m.	56.50	1.54
12:01-1:00 p.m.	48.75	1.33
1:01-2:00 p.m.	52.25	1.43
2:01-3:00 p.m.	56.25	1.54
3:01-4:00 p.m.	65.00	1.77
4:01-5:00 p.m.	43.25	1.18
5:01-6:00 p.m.	51.50	1.41
6:01-7:00 p.m.	48.75	1.33
7:01-8:00 p.m.	53.29	1.46
8:01-9:00 p.m.	44.14	1.21
9:01-10:00 p.m.	50.43	1.38
10:01-11:00 p.m.	40.86	1.12
<b>Day of Week**</b>		
Monday	56.44	1.54
Tuesday	47.25	1.29
Wednesday	56.69	1.55
Thursday	47.25	1.29
Friday	44.75	1.22
Saturday	45.19	1.23
Sunday	35.75	0.98

\*Frequency per hour = total frequency ÷ number of days taped;

7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. 4 days

7:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. 7 days

\*\*Frequency per hour = total frequency ÷ hours taped per day;

16 hours of taping on Monday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday

4 hours of taping on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday

Note: Frequencies are a total of three channels.

Table 2

Context of the Message as Portrayed in National  
Television Advertisements

(N=3662)

Context	Frequency	Percent*
Channel		
ABC	1203	32.85
CBS	1221	33.34
NBC	1238	33.81
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	3662	100.00
Program		
Soap opera	666	18.19
News-information	633	17.29
Sports	472	12.89
Children's	351	09.59
Movies	349	09.53
Quiz-game	336	09.18
Situation comedy	336	09.18
Drama series	304	08.30
Variety	199	05.43
Religious	16	00.44
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	3662	100.02

\*Totals may not add to 100.00 due to rounding.

Within the sample, Monday and Wednesday were found to have the highest frequency of national advertisements per hour, both with 19 on each channel per hour. On Sunday the lowest number of national advertisements (12 per channel per hour) were presented [Table 1].

The sample was fairly evenly divided among the three national networks. Nearly 33 percent (32.85%) of the advertisements were presented on ABC, 33.34 percent were displayed on CBS, and 33.81 percent were presented on NBC.

The program category within the sample that contained the highest overall frequency of national commercials was the soap opera (666), followed by the news-information category (633) [Table 2]. The program category with the fewest national commercials was the religious program category (16).

#### Presentation Characteristics

In over four-fifths (88.62%) of the sample, the advertisement was 30 seconds in length [Table 3]. The product display technique most frequently used was the showing of the actual product (85.15%).

Over half of the advertisements (53.41%) were presented in the live-action/dramatization mode where actors or actresses presented the product/service in the form of skits or acted out and dramatized scenarios. Testimonials were the mode of presentation in 21.74 percent of the advertisements.

The tone of the advertising message was evaluated by

Table 3  
 Presentation Characteristics of the Message as Portrayed in  
 National Television Advertisements  
 (N=1380)

Presentation	Frequency	Percent*
<b>Commercial Length</b>		
30 seconds	1223	88.62
60 seconds	60	04.35
other	<u>97</u>	<u>07.03</u>
TOTAL	1380	100.00
<b>Product Display Techniques</b>		
actual product	1175	85.15
product not displayed	152	11.01
picture or drawing	27	01.96
other	<u>26</u>	<u>01.88</u>
TOTAL	1380	100.00
<b>Mode of Presentation</b>		
live-action/dramatization	737	53.41
live-action/testimonial	300	21.74
demonstration	87	06.30
animated	43	03.12
electronic production	23	01.67
other, combination	<u>190</u>	<u>13.77</u>
TOTAL	1380	100.01
<b>Tone of the Message</b>		
seriousness		
extremely	17	01.23
very	169	12.25
moderately	579	41.96
slightly	453	32.83
not at all	<u>162</u>	<u>11.74</u>
TOTAL	1380	100.01
importance/significance		
extremely	21	01.52
very	315	22.83
moderately	739	53.55
slightly	282	20.44
not at all	<u>23</u>	<u>01.67</u>
TOTAL	1380	100.01
humor		
extremely	3	00.22
very	157	11.38
moderately	475	34.42
slightly	618	44.78
not at all	<u>127</u>	<u>09.20</u>
TOTAL	1380	100.00

\*Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

examining the level of seriousness, importance, and humor within the advertisement. The tone of the message was judged to be moderate in most cases; the message was at the extremes ("not at all" or "extremely") in less than 12 percent of the advertisements.

#### Audience Characteristics

Most of the advertisements (74.13%) were targeted to adults [Table 4]. Advertisements specifically targeted to children comprised nearly ten percent (9.57%) of the sample while those targeted toward teenagers and the elderly constituted 2.17 and 0.22 percent respectively. Nearly 13 percent of the advertisements were targeted to more than one age group.

Female audiences were targeted slightly more frequently than male audiences (22.61% vs. 19.71%). Advertisements appealing to both males and females occurred in 57.68 percent of the sample [Table 4].

#### Product Characteristics

As shown in Table 5, a majority (71.23%) of the advertisements were found to be for experience goods (goods possessing qualities that can be evaluated only after purchase). Search goods (possessing qualities that can be assessed prior to purchase) were found in 20.44 percent of the sample.

Products portrayed in the advertisements were categorized according to the level of involvement of the



Table 4

Targeted Audience Characteristics of the Message as Portrayed  
in National Television Advertisements

(N=1380)

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Audience Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
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## Age Group Targeted

children (1-12)	132	09.57
teenagers (13-19)	30	02.17
adults (20-59)	1023	74.13
elderly (60+)	3	00.22
no specific age, combination	179	12.97
all ages included	13	00.94
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	1380	100.00

## Gender Targeted

female	312	22.61
male	272	19.71
both female and male	796	57.68
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	1380	100.00

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Table 5  
Product Characteristics as Portrayed in  
National Television Advertisements  
(N=1380)

Product Characteristics	Frequency	Percent*
<b>Type of Good</b>		
experience good	983	71.23
search good	282	20.44
credence good	63	04.57
indeterminate	<u>52</u>	<u>03.77</u>
TOTAL	1380	100.01
<b>Product/Service Type</b>		
low involvement	998	72.32
high involvement	298	21.59
indeterminate	<u>84</u>	<u>06.09</u>
TOTAL	1380	100.00
<b>Product/Service Category</b>		
food and beverage/grocery stores	382	27.68
automobiles and related products	114	08.26
personal hygiene products	111	08.04
health products, drugs, medicine	109	07.90
cleaning products	84	06.09
children's toys	69	05.00
public service announcement	66	04.78
other, miscellaneous	54	03.91
food and beverage/restaurants	53	03.84
female cosmetics	42	03.04
communication services	36	02.61
home appliances	36	02.61
computers, copiers, cameras	29	02.10
clothing	28	02.03
insurance	25	01.81
banks and bank services	25	01.81
household repairs	24	01.74
entertainment	22	01.59
stores	19	01.38
pet foods and supplies	18	01.30
travel	15	01.09
tools	11	00.80
male cosmetics	<u>8</u>	<u>00.58</u>
TOTAL	1380	99.99

\*Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

consumer. Low involvement product types (products which are less important to consumers) were found in 72.32 percent of the sample [Table 5]. High involvement product types (products which are related to the consumer's self-identity and may involve some risk) comprised 21.59 percent of the sample. In 84 cases (6.09%) it was not possible to determine the involvement level of the product.

Products and services were divided into 23 categories for coding. The product/service category most frequently found was that of food and beverages (those which can be purchased at the grocery store). Nearly 28 percent of the commercials fell into this category [Table 5]. Other categories with five percent or more of the sample were automobiles and related products (8.26%), personal hygiene products (8.04%), health products and medicines (7.90%), cleaning products (6.09%), and children's toys (5.00%).

#### Problem

Most of the advertisements within the sample (72.78%) contained a problem of some type. Six percent of the sample, 82 commercials, contained more than one problem. Of the total number of problems presented (1064), physical problems were the type most frequently found (37.97%), followed by social (22.18%), product (20.58%), ego (13.91%), and safety (5.36%) [Table 6].

Twenty-seven percent of the advertisements in the sample (398 commercials) did not contain a problem of any type.

Table 6

Problem Types as Portrayed in National  
Television Advertisements

(N=1064)

Types	Frequency	Percent
Problems		
physical	404	37.97
social	236	22.18
product	219	20.58
ego	148	13.91
safety	57	05.36
	<u>1064</u>	<u>100.00</u>

Note: Number (N) includes commercials containing more than one problem.

These commercials were classified as either "dissatisfaction" (19.08%) or "other" (8.14%). Within the dissatisfaction category, a problem was portrayed by suggesting that if the viewer did not own or use the product or service advertised, he or she had a problem. If there was no problem or the problem shown did not fit into any of the problem types, the advertisement was categorized as "other".

Physical problems were defined as those advertisements in which the product or service was shown as enhancing the body in some way. Physical problems were found to be shown most frequently on Monday (7 per hour per channel). On Sunday physical problems were portrayed the least often per hour (3 per channel) [Table 7]. In relation to the time of day, the highest number of physical problems (six per channel per hour), were shown during evening hours (7:01-11:00 p.m.), followed by five per hour on each channel during daytime programming (9:01 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.). The program categories in which the largest frequency of physical problems were shown were soap operas (23.08%), followed by news-information programs (16.78%), and movies (12.95%) [Table 8]. Over three-fourths (76.24%) of the physical problem types fell into three product categories--food and beverages purchased in the grocery store, health products, and personal hygiene products [Table 9]. Nearly 91 percent of the advertisements showing physical problems were found to be experience goods. Low involvement product types were most frequently found

Table 7

Physical Problem Types by Day and Time as Portrayed in  
National Television Advertisements

(N=1174)

Context	Frequency Per Hour*	Per Hour Percent of Total
Day of Week		
Monday	21.00	1.79
Tuesday	17.75	1.51
Wednesday	19.94	1.69
Thursday	12.00	1.02
Friday	16.75	1.43
Saturday	12.50	1.06
Sunday	8.31	0.71
Time of Day**		
Morning	13.25	1.13
Daytime	15.79	1.34
Afternoon	13.08	1.11
Evening	16.75	1.43

\*Frequency per hour = total frequency ÷ hours taped per day;  
16 hours of taping on Monday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday  
4 hours of taping on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday

\*\*Morning (7:00-9:00 a.m.), Daytime (9:01-4:00 p.m.),  
Afternoon (4:01-7:00 p.m.), Evening (7:01-11:00 p.m.)

Notes: Number (N) includes repeated advertisements.  
Frequencies are a total of three channels.

Table 8

Physical Problem Types by Program Category as Portrayed in  
National Television Advertisements

(N=1174)

Context	Frequency	Percent
Program		
Soap opera	271	23.08
News-information	197	16.78
Movies	152	12.95
Drama series	111	09.45
Situation Comedy	109	09.28
Quiz-game	108	09.20
Childrens	86	07.33
Variety	71	06.05
Sports	68	05.79
Religious	1	00.09
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	1174	100.00

Note: Number (N) includes repeated advertisements.

Table 9

Physical Problem Types by Product Category, Type of Good,  
and Type of Product as Portrayed in National  
Television Advertisements

(N=404)

Product Characteristics	Frequency	Percent*
<b>Product Category</b>		
Food and beverage/grocery store	135	33.42
Health products, medicine	88	21.78
Personal hygiene	85	21.04
Female cosmetics	27	06.68
Food and beverage/restaurant	18	04.46
Pet foods and supplies	10	02.48
Public service announcements	10	02.48
Miscellaneous	9	02.23
Male cosmetics	6	01.49
Cleaning products	6	01.49
Clothing	5	01.24
Insurance	3	00.74
Home appliances	1	00.25
Cars	1	00.25
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	404	100.03
<b>Type of Good</b>		
Experience	366	90.60
Credence	17	04.21
Search	12	02.97
Indeterminate	9	02.23
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	404	100.01
<b>Product/Service Type</b>		
Low involvement	363	89.85
High involvement	30	07.43
Indeterminate	11	02.72
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	404	100.00

\*Totals may not add to 100.00 due to rounding.



(89.85%) for advertisements presenting physical problems.

Social problem types (product/service shown as enhancing friendship, affection, and acceptance) were presented least often on Sunday (two per hour per channel) and during the afternoon hours (two per hour per channel) [Table 10]. The type of program on which social problem types were most frequently found was the soap opera (17.80%), followed by sports (15.60%), children's (14.68), and news-information (13.03) [Table 11]. Social problems were found most often in advertisements for food and beverages which can be purchased in the grocery store (38.98%) [Table 12]. They also tended to be experience goods (83.05%) and low involvement products (81.78%).

Product problem types were commercials in which the problem was presented as within the product or service itself (generally the problem was displayed in another company's product). Product problems were shown most often on Monday and Wednesday (3 per channel per hour), during daytime and afternoon hours (3 per channel per hour) [Table 13], and on sports programs (19.52%) and soap operas (19.02%) [Table 14]. Three product categories--food and beverages purchased in the grocery store, automobiles and related products, and cleaning products--made up nearly half (49.32%) of the advertisements depicting product problems [Table 15]. Most of these were experience goods (68.95%) and low involvement products (68.04%).

Table 10

Social Problem Types by Day and Time as Portrayed in  
National Television Advertisements

(N=545)

Context	Frequency Per Hour*	Per Hour Percent of Total
<b>Day of Week</b>		
Monday	7.88	1.45
Tuesday	6.00	1.10
Wednesday	7.69	1.41
Thursday	6.00	1.10
Friday	8.00	1.47
Saturday	8.00	1.47
Sunday	5.50	1.01
<b>Time of Day**</b>		
Morning	6.63	1.22
Daytime	7.79	1.43
Afternoon	5.50	1.01
Evening	7.43	1.36

\*Frequency per hour = total frequency ÷ hours taped per day;  
16 hours of taping on Monday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday  
4 hours of taping on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday

\*\*Morning (7:00-9:00 a.m.), Daytime (9:01-4:00 p.m.),  
Afternoon (4:01-7:00 p.m.), Evening (7:01-11:00 p.m.)

Notes: Number (N) includes repeated advertisements.  
Frequencies are of total of three channels.

Table 11

Social Problem Types by Program Category as Portrayed in  
National Television Advertisements

(N=545)

Context	Frequency	Percent*
Program		
Soap opera	97	17.80
Sports	85	15.60
Childrens	80	14.68
News-information	71	13.03
Movies	62	11.38
Quiz-game	46	08.44
Situation comedy	42	07.71
Variety	30	05.50
Drama series	30	05.50
Religious	2	00.37
	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u>
TOTAL	545	100.01

\*Total may not add to 100.00 due to rounding.

Note: Number (N) includes repeated advertisements.

Table 12  
Social Problem Types by Product Category, Type of Good,  
and Type of Product as Portrayed in National  
Television Advertisements  
(N=236)

Product Characteristics	Frequency	Percent*
<b>Product Category</b>		
Food and beverage/grocery store	92	38.98
Childrens toys	24	10.17
Personal hygiene	16	06.68
Female cosmetics	15	06.36
Food and beverage/restaurant	15	06.36
Automobiles and related products	12	05.08
Public service announcements	11	04.66
Cleaning products	10	04.24
Communication services	7	02.97
Entertainment	7	02.97
Clothing	6	02.54
Miscellaneous	6	02.54
Male Cosmetics	3	01.27
Home appliances	2	00.85
Tools	2	00.85
Banks and bank services	2	00.85
Travel	2	00.85
Computers, copiers, cameras	2	00.85
Health products	1	00.42
Home appliances	1	00.42
TOTAL	236	99.91
<b>Type of Good</b>		
Experience	196	83.05
Search	25	10.59
Credence	4	01.69
Indeterminate	11	04.66
TOTAL	236	99.99
<b>Product/Service Type</b>		
Low involvement	193	81.78
High involvement	34	14.41
Indeterminate	9	03.81
TOTAL	236	100.00

\*Totals may not add to 100.00 due to rounding.

Table 13

Product Problem Types by Day and Time as Portrayed in  
National Television Advertisements

(N=589)

Context	Frequency Per Hour*	Per Hour Percent of Total
Day of Week		
Monday	9.19	1.56
Tuesday	8.25	1.40
Wednesday	9.88	1.68
Thursday	7.25	1.23
Friday	6.25	1.06
Saturday	5.38	0.91
Sunday	6.94	1.18
Time of Day**		
Morning	4.75	0.81
Daytime	8.75	1.49
Afternoon	8.83	1.50
Evening	7.14	1.21

\*Frequency per hour = total frequency ÷ hours taped per day;  
16 hours of taping on Monday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday  
4 hours of taping on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday

\*\*Morning (7:00-9:00 a.m.), Daytime (9:01-4:00 p.m.),  
Afternoon (4:01-7:00 p.m.), Evening (7:01-11:00 p.m.)

Notes: Number (N) includes repeated advertisements.  
Frequencies are a total of three channels.

Table 14

Product Problem Types by Program Category as Portrayed in  
National Television Advertisements

(N=589)

Context	Frequency	Percent
Program		
Sports	115	19.52
Soap opera	112	19.02
News-information	101	17.15
Quiz-game	70	11.88
Drama series	57	09.68
Movies	48	08.15
Situation comedy	42	07.13
Variety	31	05.26
Childrens	12	02.04
Religious	1	00.17
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
TOTAL	589	100.00

Note: Number (N) includes repeated advertisements.

Table 15  
 Product Problem Types by Product Category, Type of Good,  
 and Type of Product as Portrayed in National  
 Television Advertisements  
 (N=219)

Product Characteristics	Frequency	Percent*
<b>Product Category</b>		
Food and beverage/grocery store	42	19.18
Automobiles and related products	34	15.53
Cleaning products	32	14.61
Home appliances	18	08.22
Personal hygiene products	14	06.39
Miscellaneous	13	05.94
Health products	11	05.02
Computers, cameras, copiers	10	04.57
Communications services	10	04.57
Repairs	10	04.57
Food and beverage/restaurant	9	04.11
Entertainment	3	01.37
Travel	3	01.37
Tools	3	01.37
Clothing	2	00.91
Female cosmetics	2	00.91
Insurance	1	00.46
Pet foods and supplies	1	00.46
Banks and bank services	<u>1</u>	<u>00.46</u>
TOTAL	219	100.02
<b>Type of Good</b>		
Experience	151	68.95
Search	61	27.85
Credence	6	02.74
Indeterminate	<u>1</u>	<u>00.46</u>
TOTAL	219	100.00
<b>Product/Service Type</b>		
Low involvement	149	68.04
High involvement	57	26.03
Indeterminate	<u>13</u>	<u>05.94</u>
TOTAL	219	100.01

\*Totals may not add to 100.00 due to rounding.

A commercial in which the product or service was portrayed as something special, or as promising to make the purchaser unique, "above the rest", was defined as an ego problem type advertisement. Ego problem types ranged from one to two per hour per channel in relation to day of the week, and were most often presented during the afternoon (4:01-7:00 p.m.) [Table 16]. Sports and news-information programs were found to show the highest number of ego problems [Table 17].

The two types of products in which ego problems were most frequently found were automobiles and related products (20.95%) and food and beverages which can be bought in the grocery store (20.27%) [Table 18]. Ego problems were fairly evenly divided between search (48.65%) and experience (45.95%) goods and between low (45.95%) and high (45.95%) involvement products.

Safety problem types were identified as those in which the product or service was presented as providing protection or security. There was little difference in the frequency of safety problems with regards to the day of the week and the time of day [Table 19]. The frequency per hour in every case was more than one but less than two over the three channels. Most safety problems were presented on news-information and sports programs (51.88%) [Table 20]. Twenty-eight percent of the advertisements demonstrating safety problems fell into the insurance product category [Table 21]. Slightly over a



Table 16

Ego Problem Types by Day and Time as Portrayed in  
National Television Advertisements

(N=376)

Context	Frequency Per Hour*	Per Hour Percent of Total
Day of Week		
Monday	5.25	1.40
Tuesday	3.25	0.86
Wednesday	4.38	1.16
Thursday	5.00	1.33
Friday	5.00	1.33
Saturday	5.38	1.43
Sunday	5.75	1.53
Time of Day**		
Morning	3.38	0.90
Daytime	4.93	1.31
Afternoon	6.17	1.64
Evening	4.89	1.30

\*Frequency per hour = total frequency ÷ hours taped per day;  
16 hours of taping on Monday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday  
4 hours of taping on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday

\*\*Morning (7:00-9:00 a.m.), Daytime (9:01-4:00 p.m.),  
Afternoon (4:01-7:00 p.m.), Evening (7:01-11:00 p.m.)

Notes: Number (N) includes repeated advertisements.  
Frequencies are a total of three channels.

Table 17

Ego Problem Types by Program Category as Portrayed in  
National Television Advertisements

(N=376)

Context	Frequency	Percent
Program		
Sports	86	22.87
News-information	80	21.28
Soap opera	45	11.97
Quiz-game	33	08.78
Movies	32	08.51
Drama series	31	08.24
Situation comedy	27	07.18
Variety	22	05.85
Childrens	18	04.79
Religious	2	00.53
TOTAL	376	100.00

Note: Number (N) includes repeated advertisements.

Table 18  
Ego Problem Types by Product Category, Type of Good,  
and Type of Product as Portrayed in National  
Television Advertisements  
(N=148)

Product Characteristics	Frequency	Percent*
<b>Product Category</b>		
Automobiles and related products	31	20.95
Food and beverage/grocery store	30	20.27
Public service announcements	11	07.43
Computers, cameras, copiers	9	06.08
Clothing	9	06.08
Banks and banking services	9	06.08
Miscellaneous	8	05.41
Personal Hygiene	7	04.73
Entertainment	5	03.38
Travel	4	02.70
Cleaning	4	02.70
Tools	4	02.70
Home appliances	3	02.02
Food and beverage/restaurant	3	02.02
Female cosmetics	3	02.02
Male cosmetics	2	01.35
Insurance	2	01.35
Toys	1	00.68
Repairs	1	00.68
Health products	1	00.68
Communication services	1	00.68
TOTAL	148	100.02
<b>Type of Good</b>		
Search	72	48.65
Experience	68	45.95
Credence	6	04.05
Indeterminate	2	01.35
TOTAL	148	100.00
<b>Product/Service Type</b>		
Low involvement	68	45.95
High involvement	68	45.95
Indeterminate	12	08.11
TOTAL	148	100.01

\*Totals may not add to 100.00 due to rounding.

Table 19

Safety Problem Types by Day and Time as Portrayed in  
National Television Advertisements

(N=106)

Context	Frequency Per Hour*	Per Hour Percent of Total
Day of Week		
Monday	1.25	1.18
Tuesday	1.25	1.18
Wednesday	1.19	1.12
Thursday	1.75	1.65
Friday	1.25	1.18
Saturday	1.69	1.59
Sunday	1.44	1.36
Time of Day**		
Morning	1.13	1.07
Daytime	1.50	1.41
Afternoon	1.83	1.73
Evening	1.18	1.11

\*Frequency per hour = total frequency ÷ hours taped per day;  
16 hours of taping on Monday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday  
4 hours of taping on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

\*\*Morning (7:00-9:00 a.m.), Daytime (9:01-4:00 p.m.),  
Afternoon (4:01-7:00 p.m.), Evening (7:01-11:00 p.m.)

Notes: Number (N) includes repeated advertisements.  
Frequencies are a total of three channels.

Table 20

Safety Problem Types by Program Category as Portrayed in  
National Television Advertisements

(N=106)

Context	Frequency	Percent*
Program		
News-information	30	28.30
Sports	25	23.58
Soap opera	14	13.21
Situation Comedy	9	08.49
Drama	8	07.55
Movies	8	07.55
Religious	4	03.77
Quiz-game	4	03.77
Variety	3	02.83
Childrens	1	00.94
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	106	99.99

\*Total may not add to 100.00 due to rounding.

Note: Number (N) includes repeated advertisements.

Table 21

Safety Problem Types by Product Category, Type of Good,  
and Type of Product as Portrayed in National  
Television Advertisements

(N=57)

Product Characteristics	Frequency	Percent*
<b>Product Category</b>		
Insurance	16	28.07
Health products, medicine	12	21.05
Public service announcements	9	15.79
Banks	6	10.53
Miscellaneous	3	05.26
Personal hygiene	2	03.51
Automobiles and related products	2	03.51
Stores	2	03.51
Food and beverage/grocery store	1	01.75
Clothing	1	01.75
Household repairs	1	01.75
Children's toys	1	01.75
Travel	1	01.75
TOTAL	57	99.98
<b>Type of Good</b>		
Search	21	36.84
Experience	21	36.84
Credence	12	21.05
Indeterminate	3	05.26
TOTAL	57	99.99
<b>Product/Service Type</b>		
High involvement	38	66.67
Low involvement	13	22.80
Indeterminate	6	10.53
TOTAL	57	100.00

\*Totals may not add to 100.00 due to rounding.

third (36.84%) of the safety problem types were search goods. Another third (36.84%) were experience goods. Twenty-one percent of the safety problem types (66.67%) were judged to be credence goods. Most of the safety problem types were high involvement products [Table 21].

No problem was found in 27.22 percent of the sample. Nineteen percent of these were judged to fall into the dissatisfaction category where the purpose of the commercial was to create dissatisfaction within the viewer. Purchase of the product was shown to make life more enjoyable, worthwhile, fulfilling and/or easier. The remaining eight percent showed no problem within the advertisement.

The magnitude, urgency, and excitement value of the problem compose a measure of intensity. The magnitude of the problem was judged to be large to extremely large and overwhelming in 53.76 percent of the sample [Table 22]. This finding suggests that more than half of the advertisements portray problems as being larger than an average, "every day", common problem.

The urgency of the problem refers to how pressing the problem is portrayed to be. A majority (55.07%) of the commercials presented problems as either needing resolution immediately or that resolution should take place as soon as possible.

The emotional value of the problems presented were most frequently (63.35%) within the moderate range where some

Table 22

Problem Intensity as Portrayed in National  
Television Advertisements

(N=1064)

Intensity	Frequency	Percent*
Magnitude of the problem		
extremely large, overwhelming	111	10.43
large, overwhelming	461	43.33
not large, overwhelming	492	46.24
TOTAL	1064	100.00
Urgency of the problem		
extremely urgent	98	09.21
urgent	488	45.86
not very urgent	478	44.92
TOTAL	1064	99.99
Excitement value of the problem		
emotionally packed	90	08.46
some emotions present	674	63.35
basically unemotional	300	28.20
TOTAL	1064	100.01

\*Totals may not add to 100.00 due to rounding.



emotions were present. Twenty-eight percent of the commercials were found to be basically unemotional. Eight percent of the problems were judged as emotionally packed.

### Resolution

In each advertisement in which a problem was portrayed a resolution was also provided. The resolutions presented to meet the problems depicted in national advertisements were found to have the following characteristics: fact certain or opinion certain (96.64%), resolution occurring within seconds or minutes (81.58%), definite resolution (76.13%), explicit statement or clear demonstration of resolution (69.92%), and completely sufficient, lacking nothing (69.45%).

The resolution complexity was examined by looking at four categories: accessibility, expense, time needed to obtain the product or service, and process [Table 23]. In 66.19 percent of the advertisements which contained problems, the product or service was presented as easily accessible. Most of the products (74.75%) were relatively inexpensive expenditures. The time needed to obtain the product or service was found to be within seconds or minutes in 77.80 percent of the sample. In 76.78 percent of the commercials, the process of resolution was one step.

In less than one percent of the sample, alternatives were offered for cases where the product did not totally resolve the problem. In three commercials (0.30%) it was specifically stated that the consumer could receive his or

Table 23

Resolution Characteristics as Portrayed by National  
Television Advertisements

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Accessibility of Product/Service (N=982)*		
easily accessible	650	66.19
accessible	278	28.31
not accessible	<u>54</u>	<u>05.50</u>
TOTAL	982	100.00
Expense (N=982)*		
relatively inexpensive	734	74.75
moderately expensive	116	11.81
expensive	<u>132</u>	<u>13.44</u>
TOTAL	982	100.00
Time Needed to Obtain Product/Service (N=982)*		
within seconds or minutes	764	77.80
within hours or days	179	18.23
within weeks or months	<u>39</u>	<u>03.97</u>
TOTAL	982	100.00
Resolution Process (N=982)*		
one simple step	754	76.78
two or three steps	150	15.28
more than three steps	<u>78</u>	<u>07.94</u>
TOTAL	982	100.00
Resolution Time (N=1064)**		
within seconds or minutes	868	81.58
within hours	58	05.45
within days or weeks	66	06.20
within months or years	22	02.07
time not specified or implied	<u>50</u>	<u>04.70</u>
TOTAL	1064	100.00
Certainty of Resolution (N=1064)**		
resolution is definite	810	76.13
resolution is probable	<u>254</u>	<u>23.87</u>
TOTAL	1064	100.00

\* Number of commercials containing one or two problems.

\*\*N exceeds 982 because some advertisements presented more than one problem.

her money back and in one advertisement (0.10%) a new or replaced product was offered.

### Discussion of Findings

In this study national advertisements were examined to discover the kinds of problems presented. Resolutions offered within the advertisements to meet those problems were also analyzed.

The basic premise that advertisements present problems and resolutions was confirmed. The majority of advertisements did portray at least one problem. Problems were defined as a state of disequilibrium where something needed to be done to reach equilibrium. In many cases this disequilibrium was subtle rather than overt. In every advertisement where a problem was presented, a resolution was also provided. These resolutions, generally a product or service which can be purchased, were presented as taking little time, requiring little effort or thought, and having general availability.

### Hypotheses Testing

H1: Ego and social problem types are targeted more frequently than any other problem types.

Physical problems, the most frequent problem type, were found in 404 advertisements, 37.97 percent of the total sample. Social and/or ego problems were found in 384 advertisements (36.09%) [Table 6]. This finding did not support

the hypothesis that social and ego problems would be the most frequently found.

The finding that physical problem types were more frequent than any other type may be explained by the fact that advertisements for food and beverages (which can be purchased in the grocery store) were shown far more often than any other product category. Food and beverages may lend themselves to physical problems by meeting basic physical needs such as hunger and thirst, as well as being able to enhance the nutritional and energy needs of the physical body. It has been noted that the 1980's are a period in which the value placed on health is high (Merrell, 1985). This phenomenon may also explain the number of physical problem types presented.

H2: Problems with high intensity values are presented more frequently than problems with low intensity values.

The intensity of the problem was examined by looking at three categories: magnitude, urgency, and excitement value [Table 22]. In each of these categories a majority (54%, 55%, and 72% respectively) of the commercials was found to be in the middle or high ranges. These findings support the hypothesis that problems with high intensity values are presented more frequently than problems with low intensity values.

H3: The time required for resolutions to occur is portrayed as within days or several weeks in a majority of advertisements.

The time required for resolution to occur was found to be immediate (within seconds or minutes) in over three-fourths of the cases (81.58%) [Table 23]. This time refers to the amount of time required for resolution after purchase and/or consumption of the product or service. Resolution time was presented as taking longer than days or weeks in only 22 advertisements (02.07%). These findings strongly support the hypothesis that resolutions are portrayed as occurring within days or several weeks.

H4: Resolutions are portrayed as certain to occur in a majority of commercials.

Resolutions were presented as definite in over three-fourths of the advertisements (76.13%) [Table 23]. This is consistent with the hypothesis that advertisers will attempt to convince viewers by portraying the product as a certain resolution to the particular problem presented.

H5: Resolutions are portrayed as simple to accomplish in a majority of advertisements.

The complexity of the resolution was examined by looking at four categories: accessibility, expense, time needed to obtain the product, and the resolution process. In each of these categories, more than half of the sample was found in the least complex segment of the scale [Table 23]. Resolutions to problems presented in the commercials were shown to be easy to accomplish. These findings support the hypothesis that resolutions will be portrayed as simple to accomplish in most advertisements.

The findings support four of the five hypotheses of this thesis. The hypothesis related to problem type was not supported. Physical problems were found to have a higher frequency than social and/or ego problem types. All of the other hypotheses were supported; in a majority of the advertisements in the sample, problems were presented with high intensity, and resolutions were portrayed as immediate, certain to occur, and simple to accomplish.

#### Limitations

The findings are limited by the sampling procedures used for this thesis. Because prime access (7:00-8:00 p.m.) and prime time (8:00-11:00 p.m.) hours were taped seven days, while morning (7:00-9:00 a.m.), daytime (9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.), and afternoon hours (4:00-7:00 p.m.) were taped four days, the frequencies in several categories are influenced. The sampling procedure limits, but does not preclude, the generalizability of the study.

#### Findings Related to Other Research

The findings of this study support research previously conducted relating television and problem solving. Budd, Craig, and Steinman (1983), in analyzing the commercials presented during a particular Fantasy Island episode, found that the advertisements moved from problem to solution in one easy step. In this study as well, the resolution process was found to be one simple step in most of the advertisements.

In his suggestions for creating effective television

commercials, Baldwin (1982) states that the creative idea of an advertisement may be to state problems in a new way and then show the product as the "only" solution. This idea was examined by looking at how definite the resolution was, its sufficiency, and by alternatives offered in the event the product or service did not resolve the problem. In each of these categories, it was found that the product is the "only" solution to the product presented. Resolutions were definite and certain in over three-fourths of the advertisements. In 70 percent of the sample they completely satisfied the problem in every respect, and alternatives were offered in less than one percent of the sample.

#### Findings Related to the Model

The findings suggest a relationship among the four attributes of the message: context, characteristics, problem, and resolution. Problem types varied by the time of day, day of week, and the program category. The problems portrayed differed according to presentation, audience, and product characteristics. Resolution characteristics varied according to the problem type and the intensity with which it was presented.

These attributes helped to define the message and to answer the "what" question with regards to what the situation is or to what is being presented on television advertisements using problem resolution appeals.

## Chapter V

### Summary, Implications, and Recommendations

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to analyze problem resolution appeals used in national television advertisements. Specifically, it was hypothesized that:

- 1) Ego and social problem types would be targeted more frequently than any other problem types.
- 2) Problems with high intensity values would be presented more frequently than problems with low intensity values.
- 3) The time required for resolutions to occur would be portrayed as within days or several weeks in a majority of advertisements.
- 4) Resolutions would be portrayed as certain to occur in a majority of commercials.
- 5) Resolutions would be portrayed as simple to accomplish in a majority of advertisements.

The data were collected by videotaping advertisements shown on local affiliates of the three national networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) during September, 1984 in Blacksburg, Virginia. An editing instrument including categories such as channel, time of day, day of week, and program category was used to define the context of the message. A coding instrument specifically developed for this study was used to analyze each commercial. The instrument consisted of three



basic sections: characteristics of the message, the problem, and the resolution. The data were processed by the SAS computer program using descriptive statistics.

The editing process resulted in a sample of 1380 different national advertisements. Many of these were repeated during the taping schedule; the total number of national commercials, including repeated presentations, was 3662.

The sample was evenly divided among the three national networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) in regards to the number of national commercials presented. The time of the day during which the highest number of national advertisements were shown was between 3:01 and 4:00 p.m. More national advertisements were presented per hour on Monday and Wednesday than on the other days of the week. The soap opera program category was the one in which the highest number of national commercials was found.

Over three-fourths of the advertisements were 30 seconds in length. The product display technique most frequently used was the showing of the actual product. The tone of the message (seriousness, importance, humor) was judged to be moderate in most advertisements.

Most of the commercials were targeted to adults. Slightly more advertisements were targeted to female than to male audiences. Advertisements appealing to both males and females occurred in over half of the sample.

A majority of the advertisements were found to be for experience goods. Nearly three-fourths of the commercials within the sample were low involvement product types. The product/service category most frequently found was that of food and beverages.

A majority of commercials were found to have at least one problem. The problem type most frequently found was physical, followed by social, product, ego, and safety. Twenty-seven percent of the advertisements did not contain a problem of any type.

The intensity of the problems presented was found to be high in a majority of the commercials. The time required for resolution to occur was judged to be immediate (within seconds or minutes) in over three-fourths of the advertisements. Resolutions were presented as definite and certain to occur in over three-fourths of the commercials and were shown to be easy to accomplish.

### Implications

The findings of this study are useful as a description of problem resolution appeals used in television advertising. They help to define one technique used by advertisers to sell products and may be instrumental in future studies that will investigate the impact of problem solving portrayals on consumers.

In order to teach consumer skills effectively and prepare

individuals to function successfully in the marketplace, awareness of advertising methods is necessary. Elementary and secondary school teachers can incorporate these findings into consumer education curriculums to help students recognize the problems typically presented and realize that resolutions presented often differ from reality.

It is not entirely clear from research what the process is by which persons learn to solve problems. According to cognitive development theory, a child cannot conduct the mental operations needed to solve problems until he/she reaches the formal-operational stage (Piaget, 1966; Avery, 1979). Socialization theory, however, proposes that children learn through three processes--modeling, reinforcement and social interaction (McLeod & O'Keefe, 1972). It has been suggested that television is a socialization agent and that children are modeling their behavior after what they see on the television (Brim & Wheeler, 1966). If this is true, then careful attention to content is warranted. Although the findings of this study cannot be used to predict behavior or to make judgements about effects on viewers, they can be used to illustrate the types of problems being presented and to describe the resolutions provided.

Gerbner and his associates (Gerbner, 1973; Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980) have examined the "reality" presented on television and then contrasted it with observations from the real world. They

have suggested that "television reality" can influence an individual's personal reality to the point where the individual may "report perceptions of social reality which can be traced to (or are congruent with) television's most persistent representations of life and society" (Gerbner et al., 1980, p. 14). The findings of this study describe the television reality of problems and their resolutions within national advertisements. Whether or not these accurately portray the problems and resolutions found in the real world is not documented in this research. This thesis, however, raises several questions for further research. What are the possible consequences of regular and continuous watching of life presented in salable packages? Might the repeated portrayal of instant solutions to problems affect viewers by influencing their expectations of problem solving? Could they come to the conclusion that life's difficulties can be resolved rapidly?

Many kinds of values, ideas, and lifestyles are being communicated on television. Attitudes that originate in the early years of life may be influenced by a medium that presents a simplified and unreal view of the world. More research must be done to address these concerns.

#### Recommendations

It has been noted that, to date, few other studies have systematically examined problems and solutions portrayed in

the mass media. There is a great need for more research in this area. Further research is needed to apply the information gained and to examine the impact on viewers of problem solving behaviors modeled on television. It may be most useful to apply content analysis in combination with other methodologies.

Content analysis appears to have a great deal to offer researchers interested in the socialization of consumers. It represents a way of further clarifying the nature and influence of recognized agents of consumer socialization and thus better accounting for them in consumer education programming. Future research might include examining specific consumer marketplace skills in relationship to problem types. Useful information could also be gained by exploring the relationship between the content of advertising and the content of programs.

Another recommendation for further study would be to narrow the focus of these data and explore a particular type of product or a particular time period with relation to the problems presented. Other weeks in the year could also be sampled to discover whether or not this sample is consistent with other time periods.

A multitude of studies could be done using the large data base of advertisements collected for this research study. Particular characteristics of products shown could be analyzed in relation to attribute needs as expressed by

consumers. The amount of information offered in commercials in conjunction with types of products could be explored. The advertisements for a specific type of product could be analyzed (home appliances, automobiles, beer, etc.). These types of studies would benefit consumers by increasing awareness of advertising methods.

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Appendix A  
Editing Instrument

## Editing Instrument

Code number:  
 Manufacturer:  
 Product name:  
 Brief description of commercial:

1-4 Code number: \_\_\_\_\_

5 Card number: \_\_\_\_\_

6 Channel: (1) \_\_\_\_\_ABC  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_CBS  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_NBC

7-8 Time of Day:

(01) _____7:00-7:30 a.m.,	(02) _____7:31-8:00 a.m.,
(03) _____8:01-8:30 a.m.,	(04) _____8:31-9:00 a.m.,
(05) _____9:01-9:30 a.m.,	(06) _____9:31-10:00 a.m.,
(07) _____10:01-10:30 a.m.,	(08) _____10:31-11:00 a.m.,
(09) _____11:01-11:30 a.m.,	(10) _____11:31-12:00 a.m.,
(11) _____12:01-12:30 p.m.,	(12) _____12:31-1:00 p.m.,
(13) _____1:01-1:30 p.m.,	(14) _____1:31-2:00 p.m.,
(15) _____2:01-2:30 p.m.,	(16) _____2:31-3:00 p.m.,
(17) _____3:01-3:30 p.m.,	(18) _____3:31-4:00 p.m.,
(19) _____4:01-4:30 p.m.,	(20) _____4:31-5:00 p.m.,
(21) _____5:01-5:30 p.m.,	(22) _____5:31-6:00 p.m.,
(23) _____6:01-6:30 p.m.,	(24) _____6:31-7:00 p.m.,
(25) _____7:01-7:30 p.m.,	(26) _____7:31-8:00 p.m.,
(27) _____8:01-8:30 p.m.,	(28) _____8:31-9:00 p.m.,
(29) _____9:01-9:30 p.m.,	(30) _____9:31-10:00 p.m.,
(31) _____10:01-10:30 p.m.,	(32) _____10:31-11:00 p.m.,

9 Program Category: (1) \_\_\_\_\_news-information  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_quiz-game  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_children's  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_soap opera  
 (5) \_\_\_\_\_situation comedy  
 (6) \_\_\_\_\_drama series  
 (7) \_\_\_\_\_variety  
 (8) \_\_\_\_\_movies  
 (9) \_\_\_\_\_sports  
 (0) \_\_\_\_\_religious

10 Day of Week: (1) \_\_\_\_\_Monday  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_Tuesday  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_Wednesday  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_Thursday  
 (5) \_\_\_\_\_Friday  
 (6) \_\_\_\_\_Saturday  
 (7) \_\_\_\_\_Sunday

## Description of Categories (Editing Instrument)

- 1-4 Code Number: Commercials are identified by a four-digit identification number.
- 5 Card Number: Refers to card for computer use.
- 6 Channel: Refers to the three national networks  
 ABC: American Broadcasting Company  
 CBS: Columbia Broadcasting System  
 NBC: National Broadcasting Company
- 7-8 Time of Day: Recording times are divided into half-hour segments from 7:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m.
- 9 Program Category:
- News-  
 Information: News programs, documentaries, interview programs that emphasize current events, politics, and information, rather than "show business"; and educational programs except those intended strictly for children.
- Quiz-Game: Audience-participation contests and games involving celebrities.
- Childrens: Programs designed primarily for children.
- Soap Opera: Daytime dramatic serials and evening serialized melodramatic programs.
- Situation Comedy: Series involving regular characters in predominately comic situations.
- Drama Series: Series involving regular characters in predominately dramatic, dangerous or adventurous situations.
- Variety: Specials and regularly scheduled programs involving some combination of music, comedy skits or routines, and interviews, predominately "show business" personalities.
- Movies: Theater-release movies, made-for-TV movies, and plays not associated with an ongoing series.
- Sports: Individual sports events and regularly scheduled sports programs.
- Religious: Religious specials and programs with a religious theme. [Cantor, 1976, pp. 504-505]
- 10 Day of Week: Each day of the week is categorized separately.

Appendix B  
Coding Instrument

## Coding Instrument

Product Name:

1-4 Code Number: \_\_\_\_\_

5 Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

6 Commercial Length: (1) \_\_\_\_\_30 seconds  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_60 seconds  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_other

7 Product Display Techniques:

(1) \_\_\_\_\_actual product  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_picture or drawing  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_product not displayed  
                   verbal description given  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_other

8 Mode of Presentation: (1) \_\_\_\_\_animated  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_live-action/dramatization  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_live-action/testimonial  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_demonstration  
 (5) \_\_\_\_\_electronic production  
 (6) \_\_\_\_\_other, combination

9 Age Group Targeted: (1) \_\_\_\_\_children (1-12)  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_teenagers (13-19)  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_adults (20-59)  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_elderly (60+)  
 (5) \_\_\_\_\_no specific age, combination  
 (6) \_\_\_\_\_all ages included

10 Gender Targeted: (1) \_\_\_\_\_female  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_male  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_both female and male

General Tone of Message:

11 (1) \_\_\_\_\_extremely austere, severe, stern, serious  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_very austere, severe, stern, serious  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_moderately austere, severe, stern, serious  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_slightly austere, severe, stern, serious  
 (5) \_\_\_\_\_not at all austere, severe, stern, serious

12 (1) \_\_\_\_\_extremely important, significant  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_very important, significant  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_moderately important, significant  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_slightly important, significant  
 (5) \_\_\_\_\_not at all important, significant

- 13 (1) \_\_\_\_\_extremely humorous, light, frivolous  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_very humorous, light, frivolous  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_moderately humorous, light, frivolous  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_slightly humorous, light, frivolous  
 (5) \_\_\_\_\_not at all humorous, light, frivolous

- 14 Type of Good: (1) \_\_\_\_\_search good  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_experience good  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_credence good  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_indeterminate

- 15 Product/Service Type: (1) \_\_\_\_\_low involvement  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_high involvement  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_indeterminate

16-17 Product/Service Category:

- (01) \_\_\_\_\_female cosmetics  
 (02) \_\_\_\_\_male cosmetics  
 (03) \_\_\_\_\_personal hygiene products  
 (04) \_\_\_\_\_health products, drugs, medicine  
 (05) \_\_\_\_\_food and beverage/grocery stores  
 (06) \_\_\_\_\_food and beverage/restaurants  
 (07) \_\_\_\_\_clothing  
 (08) \_\_\_\_\_home appliances  
 (09) \_\_\_\_\_cleaning products  
 (10) \_\_\_\_\_household repairs  
 (11) \_\_\_\_\_tools  
 (12) \_\_\_\_\_children's toys  
 (13) \_\_\_\_\_pet foods and supplies  
 (14) \_\_\_\_\_automobiles and related products  
 (15) \_\_\_\_\_insurance  
 (16) \_\_\_\_\_banks and bank services  
 (17) \_\_\_\_\_communication services (telephone, mail)  
 (18) \_\_\_\_\_travel (vacation trips, airlines, agencies)  
 (19) \_\_\_\_\_entertainment (sports events, records)  
 (20) \_\_\_\_\_other  
 (21) \_\_\_\_\_computers, copiers, cameras  
 (22) \_\_\_\_\_public service announcement  
 (23) \_\_\_\_\_stores

- 18 Problem Type (#1): (1) \_\_\_\_\_physical  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_safety  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_social  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_ego  
 (5) \_\_\_\_\_product  
 (6) \_\_\_\_\_dissatisfaction  
 (7) \_\_\_\_\_other

- 19 Problem Type (#2): (1) \_\_\_\_\_physical  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_safety  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_social  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_ego  
 (5) \_\_\_\_\_product



## 20 Magnitude of Problem (#1):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_extremely large, overwhelming, dominant
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_large, overwhelming, dominant
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_not large, overwhelming, dominant

## 21 Urgency of Problem (#1):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_extremely urgent
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_urgent
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_not very urgent

## 22 Excitement Value of Problem (#1):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_problem is emotionally packed
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_some emotions present in problem
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_problem is basically unemotional

## 23 Presentation of Resolution (#1):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_explicitly stated, clearly demonstrated
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_implied, subtle
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_no resolution presented

## 24 Resolution Time (#1):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_resolution immediate, resolved within seconds or minutes
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_short delay, resolution within hours
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_resolution delayed, takes place within days or weeks
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_long delay, takes place within months or years
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_resolution time not specified or implied

## 25 Resolution Form (#1):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_fact certain
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_fact uncertain
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_opinion certain
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_opinion uncertain
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_indeterminate

## 26 Certainty of Resolution (#1):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_resolution is definite,  
no doubt that problem will be solved
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_resolution is probable

## 27 Magnitude of Problem (#2):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_extremely large, overwhelming, dominant
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_large, overwhelming, dominant
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_not large, overwhelming, dominant

## 28 Urgency of Problem (#2):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_extremely urgent
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_urgent
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_not very urgent

## 29 Excitement Value of Problem (#2):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_problem is emotionally packed
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_some emotions present in problem
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_problem is basically unemotional

## 30 Presentation of Resolution (#2):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_explicitly stated, clearly demonstrated
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_implied, subtle
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_no resolution presented

## 31 Resolution Time (#2):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_resolution immediate, resolved within seconds or minutes
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_short delay, resolution within hours
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_resolution delayed, takes place within days or weeks
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_long delay, takes place within months or years
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_resolution time not specified or implied

## 32 Resolution Form (#2):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_fact certain
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_fact uncertain
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_opinion certain
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_opinion uncertain
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_indeterminate

## 33 Certainty of Resolution (#2):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_resolution is definite, no doubt that problem will be solved
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_resolution is probable

## 34 Accessibility of Product/Service:

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_easily accessible
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_accessible
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_not accessible

## 35 Expense of Product/Service:

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_relatively inexpensive
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_moderately expensive
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_expensive

## 36 Time Needed to Obtain Product/Service:

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_product/service can be obtained within seconds or minutes
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_product/service can be obtained within hours or days
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_product/service can be obtained within weeks or months

## 37 Resolution Process:

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_one simple step
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_process involves two or three steps
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_more than three steps are involved in the resolution process

## 38 Sufficiency of Resolution:

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_resolution completely satisfies problem, in every respect, nothing else is needed
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_resolution adequately satisfies problem
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_resolution partially satisfies problem, something more is needed
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_resolution leaves problem unsatisfied, much more is needed

## 39 Alternative (if product/service does not resolve):

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_money back
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_new product, replaced product
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_none specified

## 40 Problem Resolution Rules:

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_"you've worked hard, you deserve it"
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_high quality justifies high price,  
"it costs a little more, but its worth it"
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_"you're the best, so you own the best"
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_"you're conscientious and thrifty so you make the best use of your money by buying the least expensive/best deal"
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_no problem resolution rule used
- (6) \_\_\_\_\_other \*\*please write in other rule used

## 41 Coder number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Description of Categories (Coding Instrument)

- 1-4 Code Number: Commercials are identified by a four-digit identification number.
- 5 Card Number: Refers to card for computer use.
- 6 Commercial Length: Refers to the actual amount of time the commercial runs in seconds.
- 7 Product Display Techniques:
- actual product: commercial portrays the product in its real form
  - picture or drawing: commercial portrays the product by displaying a drawing or picture of it
  - product not displayed, verbal description given: the product itself is not shown (in some cases, i.e. services, it can not be shown) but is described verbally
  - other: use of a display technique other than those listed, or could include combinations of the above categories
- 8 Mode of Presentation:
- animated: product/service is presented in animated or cartoon form
  - live-action/dramatization: product/service is presented by actors or actresses in the form of skits or acting out and dramatizing scenerios
  - live-action/testimonial: a person is presenting the product/service by expressing their own use of and experience with it. This also could involve use of celebrities to endorse product/service.
  - demonstration: product/service is presented by demonstrating its use. This type of presentation may or may not include the use of actors and actresses.
  - electronic production: product/service is presented through the use of electronic techniques. Could involve the use of surrealism, fantasy or distortion.
  - other: product/service is presented in a way other than those listed, or could be a combination of two or more of the above listed.

9 Age Group Targeted: refers to the age group the ad is appealing to. If the product is one used primarily by a certain age group it may be assumed that it is appealing to that group. However, the age of the actors/actresses, the tone of the message (setting, music, activity) and the context of the message may also be indicators of the age group targeted.

10 Gender Targeted:

female: appeals primarily to a female audience  
 male: appeals primarily to a male audience  
 both: appeals to both sexes

11-13 General Tone of the Message:

Tone is represented by three 5-point scales (ranging from "extremely" to "not at all") measuring the level of severity, importance and humor presented in the commercial. Seriousness deals with the matter of factness of the presentation as opposed to treating a subject lightly. Importance examines the weight of the presentation, the earnestness portrayed, the significance given the message. Humor represents the amount of laughter or lightheartness portrayed in the commercial. An advertisement would fall into the extremely humorous category if it prompts a viewer to laugh. On the other extreme, an advertisement would be "not at all" humorous if no smiles or hint of humor is presented, and if the subject is not treated as a laughing matter.

14 Type of Good:

search good: product/service possesses qualities that can be assessed prior to purchase (i.e. car, household equipment)  
 experience good: product/service possesses qualities that can be evaluated only after purchase (i.e. coffee, restaurant)  
 credence good: product/service possesses qualities that can not be evaluated even after purchase (i.e. medical and legal services, car repairs) [Swagler, 1979]  
 indeterminate: it was not possible to determine the type of good

## 15 Product/Service Type:

- low involvement: less important to consumer, identity with the product is low. It may not be worth the consumer's time and effort to search for information about brands and to consider a wide range of alternatives (i.e. milk, soap, canned vegetables, paper towels)
- high involvement: more important to consumer, related to the consumer's self-identity, and involve some risk--financial risk (highly priced items), social risk (products important to the peer group), or psychological risk (the wrong decision might cause some concern and anxiety). It is worth the consumer's time and energy to consider product alternatives carefully [Assael, 1984]
- indeterminate: it was not possible to determine the level of involvement

16-17 Product/Service Category: listing is self explanatory

- 18-19 Problem Type: Problems may be presented in an overt, obvious way ("I have a problem, I have a headache") or in more subtle, implied ways. The following categories, based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs plus two additional types, represent the types of problems (overt or subtle) presented in commercials. Another way in which to approach this category is to ask the question: In what way is this product promising to enhance life? Two categories are included for commercials in which more than one problem is presented.
- (#1, #2)
- physical: product/service shown as enhancing the body in some way, i.e. beautification, good nutrition, sex appeal. Product shown as helping with a problem pertaining to the body, i.e. dandruff, headache, overweight. Product shown as meeting basic body needs such as hunger and thirst (medicines, Gatorade, milk, Burger King)
- safety: product/service is presented as providing protection or security, as promoting a feeling of stability. Situation where the promises are soothing and where viewer is told he/she does not need to worry. (Midas, insurance)

social: scene shows a lot of people having a good time being together. Friends enjoying each others' company. Couples in love, affectionate poses, romantic appeals. Product/service is shown as enhancing friendship, affection, acceptance.  
(Miller time, Pepsi, AT&T)

ego: product/service is shown as something special, having high quality, prestigious. Purchase of the product promises to make you above the regular crowd, unique. Product/service is shown as providing opportunities for self-advancement. Product/service contributes to the user's power and dominance. Product/service promises success or to make you the best or give you the best. Products shown as enhancing self-esteem. (wines, IBM computer)

product: problem is within the product itself. Advertisements will present the problems of other products and demonstrate how their product is superior (other products wear out faster, are not as safe, have lower quality, etc.).

dissatisfaction: problem created within the advertisement is simply that if you don't have this product/service you should have it. Purchase is shown to make life more enjoyable, worthwhile, fulfilling, easier, etc. Within our materialistic society, the mere fact that something is available and you don't have it is a problem. (toys)

other: there is no problem or the problem shown does not fit into any of these categories

\*\*if problem type is "dissatisfaction" or "other" coding stops at this point.

Intensity of the Problem--magnitude, urgency, excitement value

20,27 Magnitude of Problem: refers to the size of the problem portrayed. "extremely large" suggests a problem presented as totally taking over, of life threatening proportions, "large" refers to a problem shown as fairly dominant, larger than the size of those which happen every day, "not large" suggests an average, every day, common problem.

21,28 Urgency of Problem: refers to how pressing the problem is portrayed to be; "extremely urgent" would suggest that something must be done immediately, the situation is a life or death one, "urgent" suggests that something should be done as soon as possible, "not

very urgent" suggests a problem is present but it can be dealt with at a later time

- 22,29 Excitement Value of Problem: refers to the emotional tones of the advertisement. A commercial that almost brings tears to the eyes (Hallmark, AT&T) would be classified as emotionally packed. Generally, emotionally packed ads prompt an emotional reaction within the viewer. "Some emotions present" refers to the situation where several emotions are displayed within the ad. A commercial which does not play on the viewers' emotions and does not use emotions in the ad would be classified as "basically unemotional".
- 23,30 Presentation of Resolution:
- explicitly stated, resolution is portrayed on the screen in a clear, definite way.
- clearly demonstrated: The resolution is easily seen, recognized, and understood
- implied, subtle: resolution is presented in a way which may be difficult to comprehend or distinguish initially, it may be an underlying concept, or merely alluded to within the commercial
- 24,31 Resolution Time: refers to the amount of time suggested or implied for resolution to occur after purchase or consumption of the product/service
- 25,32 Resolution Form:
- fact certain: resolution is presented as fact
- fact uncertain: resolution is presented as true in most cases
- opinion certain: believed by speaker to be definite
- opinion uncertain: believed by speaker to work in most cases
- indeterminate: it was not possible to determine the resolution form
- 26,33 Certainty of Resolution: answers the question, "How convinced are you that this will work?"
- resolution is definite: commercial shows that product/service will, without a doubt solve the problem



resolution is probable: product/service is shown as solving the problem in most cases

Complexity of Resolution-accessibility, expense, time, process

34 Accessibility of Product/Service:

easily accessible: may be obtained at various stores, an 800 number phone call

accessible: may need to go to a special place or store to obtain

not accessible: product/service may be somewhat difficult to obtain, may need to send off for, some delay expected

35 Expense of Product/Service:

relatively inexpensive: cents or dollars, casual, "off the cuff" decision involved, type of item that could be tossed into the grocery cart

moderately expensive: average family may need to do some thinking before deciding to purchase (radio)

expensive: thought, research, planning necessary in making this type of purchase (car, TV, refrigerator)

36 Time Needed to Obtain Product/Service: refers to the actual amount of time necessary in order to gain access to the product/service

37 Resolution Process: refers to the number of steps or items involved in resolving the problem

38 Sufficiency of Resolution: refers to the adequacy of the resolution

39 Alternative (if product does not resolve):

money back: commercial specifically states that consumer can receive his/her money back if product does not resolve problem

new product, replaced product: commercial specifically states that consumer can receive a replacement of product if it does not solve the problem

none specified: commercial does not address the alternatives

- 40 Problem Resolution Rules: underlying themes or rules on which decisions are made  
Commercial presents rules as justification for purchase of product/service.
- 41 Coder Number: each coder has a number (1, 2 or 3) by which he/she is identified

Appendix C  
Taping Schedule

TAPING SCHEDULE

	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	7:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Sept. 29	7:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Sept 23	7:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Sept. 24		7:00 a.m.- 11:30 a.m. Sept. 26		
ABC (13)	1:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. Sept. 15	1:00 p.m.- 6:50 p.m. Sept 23	1:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. Sept. 24		11:30 a.m.- 5:30 p.m. Sept. 26		
	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 22	6:50 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 23	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 24	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 25	5:30 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 26	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 27	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 28
	7:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Sept. 15	7:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Sept. 16	7:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Sept. 24		7:00 a.m.- 11:30 a.m. Sept. 26		
CBS (7)	1:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. Sept. 15	1:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. Sept. 30	1:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. Sept. 24		11:30 a.m.- 5:30 p.m. Sept. 26		
	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 15	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 30	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 24	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 25	5:30 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 26	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 20	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 28
	7:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Sept. 22	7:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Sept. 30	7:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Sept. 17		7:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Sept. 19		
NBC (10)	1:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. Sept. 15	1:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. Sept. 16	1:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. Sept. 17		1:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m. Sept. 26		
	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 15	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 16	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 17	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 18	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 19	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 20	7:00 p.m.- 11:00 p.m. Sept. 21

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