

Designing a Paradigmatic Model of Cognitive and Behavioral Outcomes of Humorous and Witty Advertising

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the environmental and marketing components influencing humorous advertising in the automotive industry. This research is qualitative in nature, developmental in its objectives, and exploratory in terms of data collection methodology. The grounded theory approach was employed to analyze data and develop a paradigmatic model. Data were collected through 16 semi-structured interviews with marketing experts, including university professors and marketing managers from automotive companies. The sampling method used was purposive sampling based on the snowball technique. Following the development of the conceptual model, five main dimensions, along with their corresponding components, were identified and extracted within the framework of contextual factors, intervening conditions, causal conditions, core category, strategies, and outcomes, encompassing 15 categories and 50 concepts derived from 188 final codes. In this study, the components of media characteristics, the communicative role of media, and industry-company relationships were identified as causal conditions. Additionally, audience characteristics, dimensions of the communication mix, and product-related factors were recognized as contextual factors. External macro-environmental factors and internal company environment were identified as intervening conditions. Furthermore, targeted customer communication and enhancement of experiential advertising features were recognized as strategies within the research model. Finally, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components were identified as outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Humorous Advertising, Witty Advertising, Grounded Theory

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1. Introduction

In the literature on art and marketing, humor is defined as a type of message characterized by innovation, verbal skill, or the ability to evoke laughter. To attract audiences to the content of its message, every advertisement must employ some form of appeal. The most common appeals used in advertisements include logical, emotional, humorous, and fear-based appeals (Mohammadian, 2012). Humorous and witty advertising is recognized as an effective tool for capturing attention and building connections with audiences. This type of advertising not only fosters positive emotions in consumers but also has profound effects on their purchasing behaviors and attitudes. Additionally, humor can help reduce stress and anxiety during the purchase process, thereby enhancing the overall buying experience (Dahl et al., 2013). In recent years, numerous studies have explored the psychological and behavioral outcomes of this advertising approach.

Various studies have demonstrated that humorous advertising can generate positive emotions such as joy and satisfaction in audiences. For instance, a study by Smith and Jones (2023) found that the use of humor in advertising can reduce stress and increase purchase intention. These psychological effects not only influence the consumer experience but also contribute to strengthening brand loyalty. Humorous advertising can also lead to changes in purchasing behaviors. Brown et al. (2024) argue that audiences exposed to humorous advertisements are more likely to purchase the product and recommend it to others. These findings suggest that humor can serve as a powerful driver in purchase decision-making. Several models have been proposed to explain the effects of humorous advertising. One prominent model, the affect infusion model, elucidates how positive emotions derived from humor can lead to favorable purchasing behaviors. Lee and Kim (2023) analyzed the impact of such advertising on consumer attitudes, affirming the significance of humorous advertising in shaping psychological and behavioral outcomes. Indeed, this form of advertising not only evokes positive emotions but also drives changes in purchasing behavior. Given these findings, there is a clear need to develop paradigmatic models to better understand these effects. This study emphasizes the design and implementation of advertising campaigns centered on humor and wit, particularly in the automotive industry, which falls under the broader category of emotional appeal advertising. As previously noted, humor is a key strategy for attracting customers, as research indicates that audiences pay greater attention to and are more influenced by humorous commercials compared to serious ones. Due to its complex nature, humor has garnered significant attention and must be thoroughly understood to be effective (Spiellmann, 2014). Humor is one of the methods used by marketers and advertisers to convey their message for sales and brand promotion (Teixeira & Horst, 2013). Perception of humor also positively influences attitudes toward advertisements and, ultimately, purchase intentions. Therefore, this study aims to identify components and design a paradigmatic model to elucidate the role of humor and witty advertising and its relationship with consumers' attitudes, perceptions, and purchasing behaviors.

In recent years, humorous and witty advertising has gained increasing attention as an effective strategy in the automotive industry. Given the rapid changes in consumer behavior and rising expectations, brands are seeking methods to establish deeper connections with customers. Recent

studies have shown that humorous advertising can significantly influence customers' positive emotions and guide them toward purchasing decisions (Kumar & Gupta, 2023). Particularly in the automotive industry, where purchasing decisions are partly influenced by customer experiences, humor can reduce stress and anxiety associated with buying, creating a positive brand experience. Moreover, in the competitive automotive market, the use of humor enables brands to differentiate themselves from competitors and be recognized as innovative and creative (Lee et al., 2024). This characteristic can enhance customer loyalty and improve brand image. However, challenges exist, including the risk of misinterpretation or failure to resonate with the target audience, which can negatively impact brand image (Smith & Jones, 2023). Therefore, designing a paradigmatic model that examines the psychological and behavioral outcomes of this advertising approach in the automotive industry can assist brands in adopting more effective strategies. The use of humor in advertising requires precision and a deep understanding of the target market. Thus, developing a paradigmatic model to explore the psychological and behavioral outcomes of such advertising can help brands adopt more effective advertising strategies and capitalize on their benefits. Consequently, this study aims to design a comprehensive paradigmatic model of the antecedents and outcomes of employing this type of advertising in the automotive industry—an area that has received limited attention in Iran. The primary research questions this study seeks to address include: First, what environmental, marketing, and technical antecedents can be identified for designing humorous advertising campaigns in the automotive industry that lead to the development of effective strategies impacting its audience? Additionally, what specific components in the automotive industry's target market can be examined and modeled to enhance and optimize the effectiveness of humorous advertising on customers and audiences?

2. Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Humor and Wit

Defining humor precisely is challenging because the development of a personal sense of humor is not unidimensional and comprises various elements. Humor is inherently multidimensional, encompassing at least the dimensions of humor production, a sense of playfulness, the ability to use humor to achieve social goals, personal recognition of humor, and appreciation of humor (Teixeira & Horst, 2013). In recent communication and behavioral literature, many researchers have concluded that humor and wit are critical factors for success in social interactions and represent a key social skill and competency. Schneider and Forbes (2024), in a study titled "The Impact of Humorous Advertising with Social Media Influencers on Perceptions of the Influencer, Brand, and Purchase Intention," explored the use of humor in social media advertising. They demonstrated the combined effectiveness of advertising for both the product and social media through survey results analysis. The findings indicated that participants' perception of humorous advertisements led to greater advertising effectiveness, enhanced brand perception, and increased purchase intention.

Humor in Advertising

In general, advertising plays a significant role in shaping companies' marketing policies and strategies, including communicating with target customers, informing them, and altering public perceptions of the company and its brand. Intense market competition, constantly evolving

consumer preferences, and diverse customer needs have posed significant challenges for companies. In this context, companies that effectively utilize tools such as designing and developing new products, restructuring distribution channels, offering high-quality products at competitive prices, and implementing effective advertising can overcome these challenges. Vincent (2024), in a study titled "The Role of Humor in Advertising," examined the impact of wit on consumers and their purchase intentions. Through a literature review and a survey (employing both qualitative and quantitative methods), Vincent concluded that humorous advertising creates more memorable and distinctive conditions and fosters positive feelings in the audience.

Furthermore, every advertisement employs some form of appeal to attract the audience to its message content. The most common appeals used in advertisements include logical, emotional, humorous, and fear-based appeals (Mohammadian, 2012). In this regard, advertising messages can be broadly categorized based on content into two main groups: rational or informational messages and emotional or affective messages (Cronin & Fox, 2012). Rational messages use information to persuade the audience, while emotional messages aim to convince through emotional appeal. Emotional messages can be further divided based on the type of appeal used into positive appeal messages (humor, joy, and entertainment) and negative appeal messages (fear, worry, and anxiety) (Nesbitt et al., 2009). Humor is one of the methods employed by marketers and advertisers to convey their message for sales and brand promotion. Humor is a significant element in many commercial advertisements in other countries, as marketing relies on successful and impactful advertising. Advertisers use this strategy to attract customers, and audiences tend to pay more attention to and are more influenced by humorous commercials compared to serious ones (Heshivar et al., 2015).

Many advertisers emphasize the use of humor in advertising. Due to its complex nature, humor has garnered significant attention and must be thoroughly understood to be effective (Spiellmann, 2014). In fact, advertisements delivered with humor can create a shock effect for the viewer, which is a primary goal of contemporary designers. This style also allows advertisements to stand out from a different perspective, penetrate the audience's mind, and leave a lasting impression. Artists use various methods and techniques to present humorous advertisements, which will be discussed further (Fatemi, 2014). Voutsas (2024), in a study titled "Disparaging Humorous Advertising: A Bibliometric Review," analyzed 63 articles over the past 34 years in the SCOPUS database across seven thematic areas, including cross-cultural issues, perceived humor, sharing auditory narratives, gender imagery, and parody and humor. Through cluster analysis, Voutsas identified research gaps and provided managerial recommendations for more effective and responsible advertising strategies. The study concluded that the expansion of humorous advertising, due to its dual potential to engage audiences while risking offense, requires cultural sensitivity and ethical considerations to enhance advertising understanding. Yang and Kim (2024), in a study titled "Consumer Reactions to YouTube Humor Ads by Type," examined the effectiveness of humorous advertising as a tool to overcome ad avoidance. They found that the humorous advertising style garnered the highest level of interest among both male and female viewers, and the tone of the commercial message facilitated greater ad comprehension, suggesting that advertising success depends on a combination of interest and message understanding.

Attitudes and Perceptions toward Advertising

In efforts to understand what drives consumer behavior, the role of attitudes has been extensively explored by researchers, and its significance is now widely recognized. Contemporary research on attitudes has expanded to include attitudes toward product or service advertisements and brands available in the market, which can be explored within the literature on consumer behavior and communication. Attitude is defined as an individual's internal evaluation of an object, such as a branded product or service, and has been a pivotal concept in marketing research since the 1960s. Attitude is one of the most critical concepts in information systems and marketing research. In other words, product attitude is shaped by what is discussed, heard, or perceived about a product. Research findings indicate that one of the most prominent theories in marketing research is the attitude toward advertising. Consequently, attitudes toward online advertising influence individuals' attitudes toward a brand and their purchase intentions through a chain of effects (Patet, 2011). Lin et al. (2025), in a study titled "Humor as Excellence? A Study of the Effect of Self-Enhancing Humor on Consumer Brand Attitude," noted that brands vary based on gender and popularity and analyzed the impact of self-enhancing brand humor on consumer attitudes using an experimental approach. Conducted in a Chinese database with over 3 million participants across various demographic variables, the study revealed that: 1) low self-enhancing brand humor (as opposed to high self-enhancing humor) significantly enhances consumer brand attitudes; 2) consumer trust in the brand mediates the relationship between self-enhancing humor and brand attitudes; and 3) brand gender plays a moderating role, with brand awareness mediating consumer trust in the brand.

Initial studies on online advertising suggest that informativeness, entertainment, and motivation are three key factors associated with attitudes toward online advertising (Sun et al., 2010). In the context of the advertising industry, audience behavior toward advertisements can be reflected through favorable or unfavorable consumer responses to specific advertisements (Tabatabai-Nasab & Parish, 2015). The "reasoned action" theory also posits a strong correlation between consumer attitudes and behavior, indicating that the effectiveness of advertising on consumer attitudes carries significant implications for consumer behavior. Psychological streams in advertising literature suggest that attitudes are key predictors of consumer behavior and how consumers respond. Consumer beliefs and attitudes toward advertising are critical indicators of advertising effectiveness (Wang & Sun, 2010). The perception of humor involves recognizing an inconsistency between a concept (or expectation) and the observed object or situation, often identified from a different perspective, leading to an entertaining, joyful, or pleasant emotional experience. Coding for humor perception is suitable for experimental advertising designs. Thus, examining intended and perceived humor is critical for determining the effectiveness of its impact. Complexity involves methodological issues that are fundamental to understanding humor in advertising (Holt & Cameron, 2021). Amin and Rajawat (2024), in a study titled "Influence of Humor Advertising on Consumer Brand Perception," examined how humor influences various aspects of brand perception, including attitudes, purchase intention, recall, and loyalty. By exploring moderators such as cultural variances, product types, and individual differences, they assessed the effectiveness of humor in advertising. Through a comprehensive analysis of experimental studies and theoretical frameworks, the study identifies mechanisms through which humor in advertising shapes consumer perceptions and provides insights into its implications for marketers.

Advertising and Purchase Intention

The concept of “intention” first emerged in psychology, referring to an individual’s subjective inclination to perform a specific action. Consumer purchase intention is believed to reflect customers’ willingness and decision to engage in actual purchasing behavior. Research has shown that purchase intention serves as an interpretation of consumer purchasing behavior. Actions taken by customers are based on their inclination toward a specific object. A purchase occurs only when a customer has the intention to buy, allowing us to predict purchasing behavior (Cong & Zheng, 2017). By facilitating the spread of consumer opinions and providing access to such opinions, various websites have profoundly influenced consumer purchasing decisions. Advertising also significantly impacts purchasing behavior, consumer communication, and ultimately, product success in the market (Zhang et al., 2021). Du et al. (2025), in a study titled “The Influence of Advertisement Humor on New Product Purchase Intention: Mediation by Emotional Arousal and Cognitive Flexibility,” highlighted that evoking emotions through advertising influences purchase intention. They identified humor as an effective advertising method, concluding that consumers who view humorous advertisements are more likely to choose new products compared to those exposed to non-humorous advertisements. Humor in advertising was noted as a factor in increasing emotional arousal and enhancing cognitive flexibility as a mediating effect.

In research on the use of humor in marketing communications, Dynel (2020), in a study titled “On Being Roasted, Toasted, and Burned: (Meta)pragmatics of Wendy’s Twitter Humour,” examined user reactions to Wendy’s humorous advertising campaign on Twitter for the fast-food chain. The study explored the nature of user humor, concluding that creative user messages in humorous posts involve a form of challenging communication, where critical meanings are conveyed honestly in a humorous context (roasting). In a study by Hessick (2022), which investigated individuals’ willingness to share humorous advertisements on social media, results showed that individuals with an internal need for humor (NFH) share humorous advertisements only if they align with their self-image. Conversely, individuals who simply enjoy humorous content and situations (external NFH) may share humorous advertisements regardless of their self-image. Thus, the study demonstrated that the impact of humor on sharing can be moderated by personality traits. Additionally, Hatcher et al. (2019), in a study titled “Applied Humor in Creative Product Design,” explored the relationship between creativity, humor, and product design. They found that a wide range of approaches focus on a new method based on comedy and improvisation principles, demonstrating the sustainability and potential evaluation of humorous constructs in the product design process. Nicolini and Cassia (2021), in a study titled “Fear vs. Humor Appeals: A Comparative Study of Children’s Responses to Anti-Smoking Ads,” examined the differing effects of fear and humor in anti-smoking advertisements for children, focusing on their emotional responses, beliefs about smoking, and behavioral intentions. The results indicated that humor appeal is an effective method for conveying social messages in an appealing way, creating a likable character that serves as a role model for children. However, fear appeal is necessary to prompt children to think critically about the negative consequences of smoking. Bompar and Lunardo (2018), in a study titled “The Effects of Humor Usage by Salespersons: The Roles of Humor Type and Business Sector,” tested hypotheses with a sample of 175 salespeople across various business sectors to examine the effects of humor styles. The findings showed that the business sector moderates the effects of offensive humor, which negatively impacts relationship quality and business performance. Ge and Gretzel (2018), in a

study titled “Impact of Humor on Firm-Initiated Social Media Conversations,” stated that customer engagement is a central indicator of marketing effectiveness in social media. Their research focused on the role of humor in encouraging comments and critiques, examining whether image-based humor is more effective than text-based humor. Their findings confirmed the impact of visual humor on customers and highlighted the importance of message simplicity for fostering customer engagement. Meanwhile, Khandeparkar and Abhishek (2017), in a study titled “Influence of Media Context on Humorous Advertising Effectiveness,” found that a negative mood compared to a positive mood in humorous advertising content requires greater stimulation for effectiveness. Thus, media planners should consider the type of humor for better outcomes. Lussier et al. (2017), in a study titled “The Role of Humor Usage on Creativity, Trust, and Performance in Business Relationships: An Analysis of the Salesperson-Customer Dyad,” proposed a theoretical model of humor’s role in customer interactions, examining its simultaneous impact on creativity and customer trust, which in turn affects actual sales performance. They concluded that humor is a fundamental human ability essential for enhancing creativity and building strong relationships in a business environment. Oikarinen and Söderlund (2016), in a study titled “The Effects of Humor in Online Recruitment Advertising,” found that humor influences employees’ attitudes toward job advertisements, companies, and work. However, their results indicated that humorous content had no impact on employees’ behavioral attitudes toward managers in advertisements or the job objectives requested. Mathies et al. (2016), in a study on the antecedents and consequences of humor in services, explored whether intentionally using humor in service encounters is beneficial. The article provided a comprehensive review of humor research across disciplines to assess the applicability of key findings to the service domain. The authors found that using humor in service encounters is a behavior-stimulating approach that strengthens relationships between service employees and customers.

3. Methodology

This study adopts an interpretive paradigm to review the literature and develop the initial research model. In terms of its objectives, the research is fundamental, and regarding data collection, it is exploratory and conducted using a qualitative approach. The qualitative study was executed using the grounded theory method for both strategy and data analysis. Grounded theory is a research strategy aimed at developing a theory derived from systematically collected and analyzed qualitative and conceptual data. In this research, based on this approach, primary data obtained from interviews were categorized and analyzed using a systematic three-stage coding process—open, axial, and selective coding—derived from the methodology of Strauss and Corbin (1998). Ultimately, the paradigmatic model of this study was formulated.

The study employed purposive sampling with a snowball approach. Participants included academic experts, marketing and advertising professionals, and managers and specialists from companies in the automotive industry. The primary criterion for selecting university professors for interviews was their expertise in business management and marketing, while the selection of company managers and specialists was based on individuals with foundational knowledge, skills, and experience in marketing and advertising within the targeted companies. Accordingly, 13 interviews were conducted with university professors and marketing and advertising experts. After screening and organizing the data, these were analyzed through the three-stage coding process to develop the paradigmatic conceptual model. Initial sampling continued until

theoretical saturation was achieved, meaning that data collection and interviews for category formation persisted until no new data relevant to the categories emerged. Theoretical saturation implies that no new or significant data are obtained, and the categories are well-developed in terms of their properties and dimensions (Creswell, 2014).

The coding process in grounded theory generally comprises three main stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, which are outlined below as applied in this study:

Open Coding

In the first stage of grounded theory data analysis, interviews conducted with 16 experts in marketing from academia and the automotive industry, consisting of narrative statements, were broken down into smaller concepts or indicators, with each concept assigned one or more codes. As a result, 188 final codes were identified and extracted from the interviews, indicating a relatively high number of indicators related to environmental, technological, and marketing elements involved in advertising within the automotive industry.

Axial Coding

In the axial coding stage, the codes obtained from open coding were organized and interconnected, resulting in their categorization into 50 main concepts. The primary goal of this stage was to initially identify relationships between codes and develop core concepts, which involved a deeper analysis of the data. The researcher's main criteria for categorizing codes and developing concepts, in addition to referencing marketing literature, were based on indicators derived from the initial structured questions, which were posed to the experts within the framework of the six components of the grounded theory paradigmatic model.

Selective Coding

In the third stage of grounded theory, or selective coding, axial codes were selected, and the categories and concepts from previous stages were integrated into a comprehensive theory within a paradigmatic model. To establish relationships between categories, the grounded theory paradigmatic framework of Strauss and Corbin was utilized. Consequently, 15 final categories were derived from the main concepts of the axial coding stage, which were organized and presented within the research's paradigmatic model.

In the qualitative grounded theory method, assessing validity and reliability refers to ensuring the credibility of the research tools and the consistency and generalizability of the findings (Creswell, 2014). To evaluate validity and reliability, this study employed peer review, continuous feedback, and iterative analysis approaches, as outlined below (Morrow, 2005):

Peer Review

In this approach, the results and analyses were shared with other researchers to obtain their feedback on the core concepts and codes. To this end, the initial interview results, in the form of concepts and categories, were shared with three marketing professors from the University of Tehran and Shahid Beheshti University, as well as two doctoral students in marketing. Their feedback was used to strengthen category classification and interpret the research findings.

Participant Feedback

In this approach, the researcher's results and interpretations, after determining axial codes and defining categories, were shared with the study participants, who were asked to provide their opinions on the accuracy and validity of the findings. This ensured alignment between the results and the participants' experiences and perspectives, leading to the revision and refinement of several axial codes.

Triangulation

this approach recommends using multiple data sources, methods, or researchers to validate results, thereby enhancing the credibility and reliability of the findings. In this study, to confirm the indicators and codes categorized into concepts, the categories were cross-referenced with variables extracted from related models in the literature and other relevant studies. Additionally, all categories identified in the interviews were reviewed to ensure the accuracy of the codes and categories.

4. Findings

As outlined, in the first stage of this study, open coding was conducted manually after transcribing interviews with selected experts into verbal statements. Ultimately, 188 valid and standardized conceptual codes were derived from the qualitative interviews. These open codes were carefully reviewed and initially categorized into 50 concepts, which were then classified into 15 main categories.

In the second stage, axial coding was performed. The categories derived from this stage include causal conditions, strategies, contextual factors, intervening conditions, and outcomes. This stage involved creating a diagram known as the coding pattern, which illustrates the interrelated relationships among the aforementioned categories within the research's paradigmatic model.

In the final stage of selective coding, the various conditions (categories) identified in the axial coding stage were integrated and comprehensively analyzed. During this stage, commonalities among the components derived from previous stages were identified, and they were organized into broader and more concise categories. All categories and concepts derived from the qualitative data in this study are presented in Table 2 below:

Table1: Concepts and Main Categories Derived from Qualitative Data

Paradigmatic Model Components	Main Categories	Concepts	Open Codes
Causal Conditions			
	Media Characteristics	Type of media, quality and quantity of information transfer, media quality	Type of media used, media popularity, generality of media used, media credibility, public acceptance of specific media, level and extent of humor in the message, informativeness of the message, quantity and type of information provided, overall quality of audio-visual aspects of the advertising program
	Communicative	Media	Entertainment and appeal of the message, interactivity

Paradigmatic Model Components	Main Categories	Concepts	Open Codes
	Role of Media	characteristics, presence of various interferences	level of the media, timeliness of the message and content, customization of messages and content, company's familiarity with the audience, perceptual barriers to the message, technical barriers to message delivery, incomplete understanding of humorous messages, misinterpretation of humorous message content, audience ethnic biases, inadequate media coverage, insufficient frequency of message delivery
	Industry-Company Relationship	Industry-related components, company-related components	Industry type, level of brand differentiation within the industry, brand prominence in the industry, use of humorous advertising in the industry, expertise and experience of the advertising team, creativity and innovation in designing advertising programs, past advertising records, company's previous successes in communication
	Position and Activities Relative to Competitors	Company's competitive position, competitors' advertising activities	Presence or absence of substitute products, type and intensity of competitors' advertising campaigns, types of themes used in competitors' advertisements, competitors' advertising strategies, types of media used by competitors
Contextual Factors			
	Audience Characteristics	Demographic variables, psychological variables, motivation, perception, attitude, audience role in the purchase process	Gender, age, education level, income level, social class, audience lifestyle, audience interests and values, audience personality type, audience needs level, audience purchase motivation, customer type, audience feedback, audience risk tolerance, audience mental involvement, audience family norms, audience expectations from media, audience's primary motivation for engaging with the advertising message, audience's prior mental context regarding company products and advertisements
	Communication Mix Dimensions	Industry communication mix, company communication mix, company communication objectives, company communication budget	Company advertising objectives (increasing awareness/creating emotional connection), advertising budget, role of advertising in the company's communication mix, company public relations programs and budget, direct sales programs and budget, sales promotion programs and budget, personal marketing programs and budget
	Factors Related to the Advertised Product	Factors related to the advertised product	Product family classification (consumer products/luxury products), product uses, number of available substitutes, product lifecycle stage, brand characteristics, brand personality, brand market position
Intervening			

Paradigmatic Model Components	Main Categories	Concepts	Open Codes
Conditions			
	External Macro-Environment and Company's External Operating Environment	Cultural and social, technological dimensions, economic factors, governmental laws, legal and policy factors	Political situation of society, quality and level of social transformations, type of culture and social values, level of social sensitivities, use of reference figures and social role models, social acceptance of the humorous concept presented, public reception of humorous advertisements, social media reactions, level of cultural diversity, timing of advertisements, location of advertisements, general societal mood (level of public joy), prevalent language, dominant religion, cultural norms, cultural sensitivities, level of communication technology updates, technical infrastructure, dependency of media used on domestic or foreign infrastructure, internet speed, infrastructural limitations, interactivity of the media used, level of media access, economic condition of society, audience purchasing power, codified governmental laws, information security, policymaking in technology and mass communication, legal restrictions such as filtering, media support laws
	Internal Company Environment	Company mission, senior management priorities, market development goals, company branding policies, competitive strategy type	Industrial scope of company activities, designated geographical scope, temporal scope of activities, managers' values, designated market share, profitability goals, company branding policies and objectives, overarching marketing objectives, company competitive strategy
Strategies			
	Targeted Customer Communication (Effective Communication Strategies)	Content strategy, cognitive strategy, infrastructural strategy, enabling product comparison and evaluation	Use of comedic celebrities, use of socially relevant concepts, use of cinematic characters, use of comic animals, use of everyday situations and transforming societal challenges into humor, use of comic music, use of comic visuals, focus on audience emotions, enhancing advertisement credibility, improving advertisement reliability, optimizing advertisement timing in media, aligning humor with societal realities, aligning content with ethnic cultures, using current themes and topics, aligning humor with ethnic cultures, upgrading the technological platform for advertising program design, challenging audiences (engaging them) through competitions, conveying perceived product benefits, reducing perceived product risk, stimulating perceived product differentiation, stimulating audience enjoyment, stimulating audience curiosity, creating emotional connections
	Enhancing Experiential Advertising Features	Improving message reliability	Consistency between brand and humorous advertising, humor expression strategy, enhancing logical appeal of humorous advertisements, comic stylization of advertisements, credibility of humorous

Paradigmatic Model Components	Main Categories	Concepts	Open Codes
			advertisements, improving persuasiveness of humorous messages, enhancing believability of humorous messages, demonstrating honesty, adhering to social norms, fulfilling promises made in the message content, drawing audience attention to the company's social responsibility, drawing audience attention to the brand's social responsibility
Outcomes			
	Cognitive Outcomes	Audience awareness, interest, perception, attitude, belief, trust	Attracting attention, message comprehension, improving brand recall, persuading customers, increasing credibility of advertising sources, strengthening mental positioning and brand image, product differentiation, changing attitudes toward the brand, altering mental brand image, brand evaluation, brand awareness, belief in the brand, commitment to the brand, trust in the brand and company
	Emotional Outcomes	Audience satisfaction, interest, brand enthusiasm	Increasing joy and happiness, reducing stress and anxiety, peace of mind, entertainment, enjoyment, positive feelings, brand preference, strengthening social connections, enhancing empathy, positive recall
	Behavioral Outcomes	Audience loyalty, message engagement, purchase intention	Behavioral loyalty, customer experience, word-of-mouth advertising, increased sharing, content sharing, repeat purchase intention, expressing criticism and suggestions, participation in surveys, engagement in brand social media, commitment to purchase, increased interaction with the brand
Core Category			
	Overall Advertising Quality	Type of humor, message content characteristics, experiential message characteristics	Verbal humor and wit, visual humor, credibility of the advertisement and humorous message, intensity of attention to humorous advertisements, quality of advertising content, informativeness of humorous advertisements, meaningfulness of humorous advertisements, richness of humorous message content, attention-grabbing level of humorous advertisements, creativity level of humorous advertisements, frequency of humorous message use in media, attention to audience privacy in media

Based on the categorization of interview statements and derived codes, a total of 188 final extracted codes were organized into 50 concepts and 15 main categories, as presented in the table above.

Table 2: Number of Main Categories, Concepts, and Final Codes Derived from Interviews

Title	Main Categories	Concepts	Final Codes
Causal Conditions	4	9	34
Contextual Factors	3	11	33

Title	Main Categories	Concepts	Final Codes
Intervening Conditions	2	10	38
Core Category	1	3	12
Strategies	2	5	36
Outcomes	3	12	35
Total	15	50	188

Thus, the data analysis and coding process led to the development of the paradigmatic and theoretical model of the study, encompassing causal conditions, contextual factors, intervening conditions, strategies, and outcomes, which collectively describe the core phenomenon of "implementing humorous and witty advertising campaigns." The theoretical model, titled "Psychological and Behavioral Outcomes of Humorous and Witty Advertising," is presented in accordance with the dimensions of the research's paradigmatic model in Figure 1.

The primary dimension of the paradigmatic model is the "overall quality of humorous advertising," which, based on the grounded theory framework, is considered the core phenomenon or category. To elucidate the various dimensions of this core category, key categories identified and introduced based on expert opinions in this study include the type of humor, content characteristics of the message, and experiential characteristics of the message. Another dimension of the grounded theory model, known as "causal conditions," comprises four main categories according to the study's findings: media mental positioning, the communicative role of media, industry-company relationships, and competitive positioning. The fourth dimension, conceptually referred to as "contextual factors" in the grounded theory model, which influences the implementation of humorous advertising strategies, includes audience characteristics, communication mix dimensions, and factors related to the advertised product. Additionally, concepts identified as "intervening conditions," which affect the relationship between the core category and advertising strategies, include components related to the external macro-environment and the company's external operating environment, as well as the policies, objectives, and strategies of managers within the company's internal environment. The "strategies" dimension in the standard grounded theory model by Strauss and Corbin is shaped by the need to establish organizational conditions and contexts to facilitate their implementation. In this study, two key strategic components were identified: targeted customer communication (effective communication strategies) and enhancing experiential advertising features. Finally, the last dimension of the paradigmatic model, identified as "outcomes" in the grounded theory framework, consists of three components: cognitive outcomes, emotional outcomes, and behavioral outcomes.

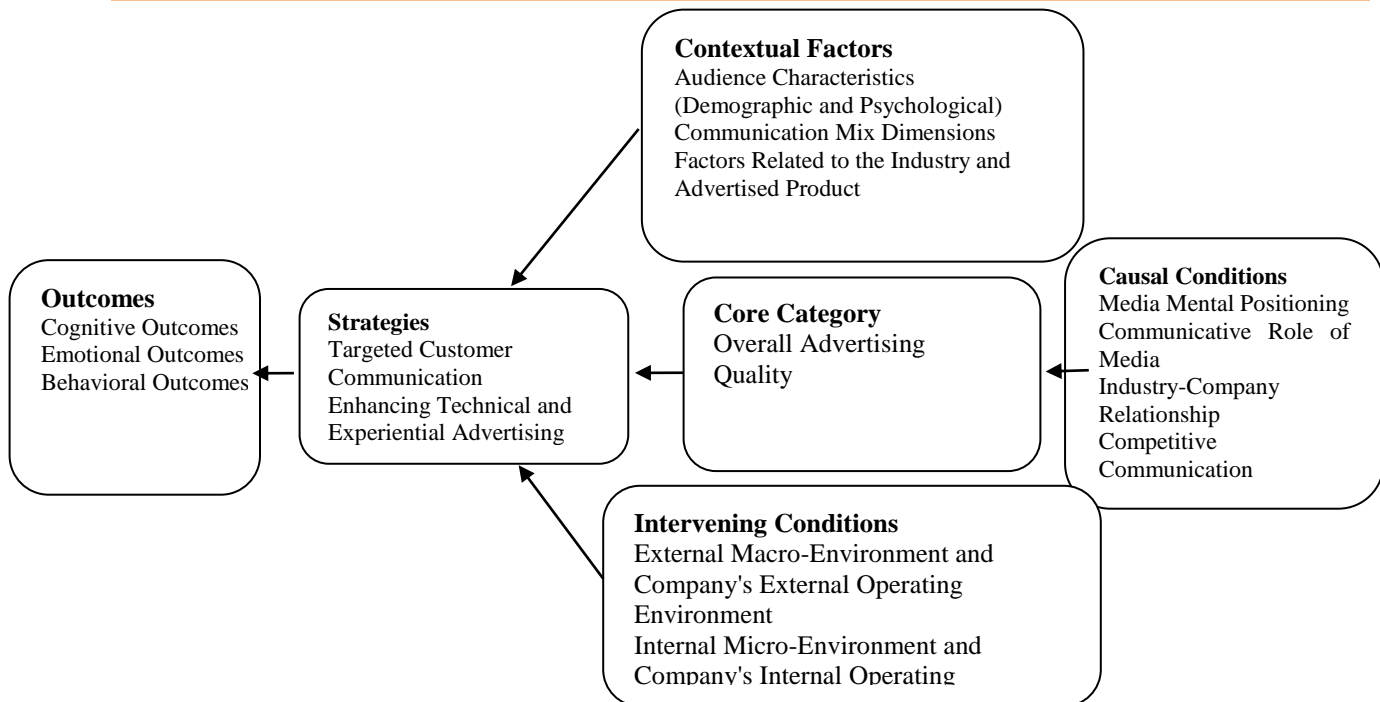


Figure 1: Research Paradigmatic Model

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The utilization of humorous advertising to attract audiences and customers in the automotive industry requires attention to numerous infrastructural, technical, economic, and human variables, which form the theoretical foundation of this study. The main categories and components identified as contextual factors in the paradigmatic model of this research include audience characteristics, communication mix dimensions, and factors related to the industry and advertised product. Regarding the psychological and demographic characteristics of the audience relevant to humorous advertising, studies by Miller et al. (2016) have shown that individuals' responses to humorous advertisements are influenced by factors such as age, gender, personality, and cultural background, aligning with the findings of this study. Similarly, in line with the contextual factors of this research, Gulas and Weinberger (2021) found that men tend to exhibit greater acceptance and positive responses to humorous advertisements, while women may prefer more serious or emotionally driven content. Additionally, consistent with this study's results, Kumar and Gupta (2022) demonstrated that individuals with higher education and income levels typically show more positive reactions to humorous content, likely due to their greater ability to understand and analyze complex humor. Concerning product characteristics, brands offering innovative and unconventional products can more effectively use humor to attract attention and create market differentiation, a finding consistent with Holt and Cameron (2021). Furthermore, brand identity significantly influences the use of humor in advertising. Brands perceived as youthful, dynamic, and creative often employ humor as an effective tool to connect with audiences.

Therefore, it is recommended that automotive companies maximize the use of media capabilities to design and implement emotion-driven advertising strategies, aligning their communication and advertising strategies more closely with the emotional characteristics of their audiences. Special attention should also be given to the role of humorous advertising within the communication mix,

as in the automotive industry—where products involve high involvement—the advertising component often plays a more prominent role compared to other elements of the communication mix. Particularly, the informational aspect of advertising, even when approached humorously, significantly influences audiences' rational intentions and decisions, thereby impacting their cognitive attitudes and, ultimately, their purchasing behavior.

Additionally, four categories—media mental positioning, the communicative role of media, competitors' advertising and communication strategies, and industry-company relationships—were identified as causal conditions in this study's model. Media mental positioning refers to how audiences evaluate media in their minds. Consistent with this study's findings, Dahl et al. (2009) concluded that social media, due to its interactivity and shareability, can amplify the reach of humorous advertising messages. Similarly, Eisend (2011) showed that brands in creative industries are more likely to use humor in advertising to capture audience attention. Moreover, brands in competitive markets may leverage humor as a distinctive tool to differentiate themselves from competitors, which can enhance attention and foster a positive brand image. Based on the causal conditions of this study, given the high-involvement nature of the automotive industry, where purchasing decisions heavily depend on rational factors and customer perceptions, it is recommended that automotive industry managers view advertising as a peripheral persuasive factor. By adopting a humorous and witty approach, managers can indirectly influence customers' perceptions and intentions. It is suggested that managers ensure humorous advertising complements rational messaging rather than replacing it. Balancing the entertainment and informational aspects of advertising messages in this industry is crucial to ensure advertisements are both engaging and logic-driven, effectively conveying the functional and quality attributes of vehicles, which are of primary importance.

In this study, macro-level variables in the external and internal company environments were identified as two main intervening condition categories. Cultural context, as one of the external factors, can influence how audiences perceive and react to humorous content. In this regard, Lee and Lim (2020) demonstrated that humor aligned with local culture and social values have a greater impact on audiences. In societies with specific social and cultural sensitivities, insensitive or offensive humor may face significant criticism, consistent with the findings of Zhang et al. (2021). González et al. (2022) also emphasized that brands must consider cultural and social differences across platforms to deliver humorous content more effectively. Furthermore, research suggests that during economic downturns, consumers seek content that evokes happiness and entertainment (Bennett & Rundle-Thiele, 2021). Thus, the cultural context of society regarding the acceptance of humor, both emotionally and in terms of capacity, significantly influences the success of humorous advertising strategies in this industry. Additionally, infrastructural factors enabling the use of various traditional and digital advertising platforms are highly influential and can significantly impact the implementation of communication and advertising strategies. Consequently, it is recommended to improve technical systems and leverage all digital and social media infrastructures while aligning advertising content with audience expectations and perceptions using modern tools to achieve the goals of humorous advertising. Given the growing prevalence of digital and social media and their widespread use, it is suggested to deliver persuasive messages through online platforms and applications extensively and in a targeted manner. Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that advertising strategies in this industry focus on logical content while incorporating a minimal level of humorous characters and messages to significantly enhance the emotional impact of the messages.

Moreover, companies operating in challenging economic conditions may opt for producing humorous and creative content, which is less costly yet highly effective, instead of investing in expensive advertising. Recent advancements in information and communication technology enable brands to present humorous content in more innovative ways. Baker et al. (2023) noted that brands can foster closer connections with audiences through humor and wit in online interactions, contributing to increased brand loyalty and positive engagement. Furthermore, targeted customer communication and enhancing technical and experiential advertising features were identified as the primary strategies for implementing humorous and witty advertising. Understanding audience characteristics, interests, and needs helps design humorous content that resonates and evokes positive emotions. In this regard, Eisend (2011) showed that advertisements aligned with the audience's cultural and social characteristics have greater impact. Selecting appropriate timing for advertisement broadcasts, particularly during times when audiences are most exposed, can enhance effectiveness. Using relevant and intelligent humor is another effective strategy. Humor should directly relate to the product's features and benefits to enable audiences to easily connect the humor with the brand message. Additionally, employing creative and professional teams in content production and advertising design can improve final quality. Consistent with this study's findings, Dahl et al. (2009) suggested that testing and evaluating advertisements on sample groups before final release can help identify strengths and weaknesses. According to the paradigmatic model of this study, one of the primary outcomes of humorous advertising is the increase in positive emotions among audiences. Research indicates that humorous content can evoke laughter and joy, fostering stronger emotional connections with the brand and increasing purchase intentions. Additionally, humorous advertising enhances brand recall, as positive emotions are linked to better memory retention, aligning with findings by Lee and Zhang (2023). Humor in advertising can also help shift audience attitudes toward products or services and reduce negative perceptions, consistent with Liu and Wang (2019). Carter and Evans (2022) demonstrated that humorous content, by eliciting positive emotions, can lead to increased purchase intentions and brand loyalty, aligning with this study's analysis. Thus, it is recommended to design humorous advertisements that evoke joy and laughter to strengthen the emotional bond between the brand and audience, as positive emotions like happiness and entertainment enhance brand memorability. In this regard, Martinez and Kim (2023) found that humorous advertising can shift negative brand attitudes and increase purchase intentions. It is suggested to foster emotional connections with audiences by developing humorous narratives that evoke positive emotions, creating a strong bond with the audience's heart. Using engaging and humorous characters that audiences can relate to can enhance the advertisement's impact and make the purchasing experience more enjoyable. It is critical that humor in automotive advertising does not overshadow the main message.

Moreover, since humorous content is generally more engaging and entertaining, audiences are more likely to share such content on social media. This not only expands the advertisement's reach but can also foster an online community of brand supporters. Patel and Brown(2022) concluded that humor in advertising increases engagement with the brand. Williams and Thompson (2023) noted that consumers influenced by humorous advertisements are more likely to recommend the brand to others. However, it is recommended that marketing managers in the automotive industry not rely solely on humor and fostering a friendly atmosphere as the dominant advertising strategy. Given the high-involvement nature of products in this industry, it is suggested to view humorous and witty advertising strategies as one component of broader

communication strategies and to leverage other integrated communication strategies to influence audience perceptions and attitudes.

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ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Authenticity of the texts, honesty and fidelity has been observed.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Author/s confirmed no conflict of interest.