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Customers' Understanding of Engagement Advertising

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Abstract

Although the construct of engagement has received considerable attention in market research in recent years, it has hardly been researched in the context of advertising. The aim of this exploratory study, therefore, is to undertake a theoretical conceptualization of customer engagement advertising (CEA) and to reach an understanding of how this type of advertising, which strategically embeds its messages into customers' everyday life, is related to customers' cognitive processes. Of particular interest is the question of whether strategically created CEA is related to a different everyday customers' advertising knowledge than non-CEA. To answer this question, we use the brand concept map method, by means of which we are able to create a CEA consensus map (N = 53) and a non-CEA consensus map (N = 56). These present visually the basic persuasion knowledge of the study participants concerning these two types of advertising. Results indicate that, in coping with CEA, customers activate a different advertising knowledge than with non-CEA. CEA knowledge shows a higher association strength and is, in contrast to non-CEA knowledge, more strongly characterized by the two associations creativity and benefit. On the other hand, the association that advertising addresses customer's needs plays a less important role in CEA than in non-CEA.

Keywords: customer engagement, advertising strategy, concept map, service-dominant logic, knowledge, asscosiation

1. Introduction

The great significance that customer engagement (CE) has attained in marketing science and practice in recent years is not in question. This study is intended to further advance research on the CE construct by more closely specifying it within the context of advertising practice. Research on customer engagement advertising (CEA) has until now concentrated on the Advertising Research Foundation (ARF)'s definition of engagement that was presented by ARF Chief Research Officer, Joe Plummer, in 2006: "Engagement is turning on a prospect to a brand idea enhanced by the surrounding context" (Creamer, 2006). According to this view, advertising engagement is understood as a media context effect. The more customers are engaged with a media vehicle, the more responsive they will be to advertising (Calder & Malthouse, 2008; Calder, Malthouse, & Schaedel, 2009; Lloyd & Woodside, 2013; Wang, 2006). The service-dominant logic (S-D logic) approach (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) that is considered to be basic to the theoretical conceptualization of CE (Brodie et al., 2011, 2013; Hollebeek, 2011; van Doorn et al., 2010), has until now not received any attention in CEA research.

This exploratory study aims to help remedy this research deficit. The handful of empirical CEA studies that have existed up to now have generally conceived of engagement in an online/social-media context as a dependent variable which varies above all according to the specifics of advertising content (Lee, Hosanagar, & Nair, 2016; Granfield & McArdle, 2016). Customers' fundamental perspective on CEA has until now been heavily under-researched (Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012). Consequently, in this study, the central focus of interest is on the basic question of what customers generally know about CEA which is strategically created using the S-D logic approach. This leads to the following research question.

RQ: Is strategically created CEA related to different everyday customers' advertising knowledge than non-CEA?

The aim is to understand the specifics of customers' cognitive dimension in processing CEA and thereby to contribute to a preliminary, empirically-supported theoretical conceptualization of CEA.

2. Conceptualization of Customer Engagement Advertising Knowledge

The situation of different conceptualizations of engagement to be found in marketing literature (Brodie et al., 2011) results from diverse theoretical foundations of engagement and its different specifications, for example, as customer, consumer or brand engagement. Alongside S-D logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), theory of information relevancy (Baker & Lutz, 2000), self-schema theory (Markus, 1977) or regulatory engagement theory (Higgins, 2006; Higgins & Scholer, 2009) are to be found. Van Doorn et al. (2010) give a concise overview of the various theoretical approaches.

Notwithstanding this lack of terminological consensus, in the marketing literature there are three central concepts that are used to describe the nature of customer engagement.

2.1 Dimensionality

The criterium of dimensionality is used to conceptualize customer engagement in an unidimensional or multidimensional manner. A not inconsiderable part of the literature conceptualizes engagement unidimensionally, especially regarding the behavioral dimension (e.g. van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef, Reinartz, & Krafft, 2010). Customers exhibit their engagement, for instance, on social media platforms by posting, liking the post, sharing content, or commenting on existing posts. These users' activities are used as proxies for measuring behavioural engagement (Siamagka, Punjaisri, & Antonacci, 2016; Lee, Hosanagar, & Nair, 2016; Granfield & McArdle, 2016).

However, multidimensional conceptualizations, particularly those that integrate cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects, predominate (e.g. Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011). For example, Patterson, Yu, and de Ruyter (2006) propose four specific CE components: absorption (cognitive dimension), dedication (affective dimension), vigor and interaction (behavioral dimension).

In general, from this perspective, CE can be conceived of as a multidimensional concept representing a psychological state characterized by fluctuating engagement intensity levels in the context of one or more interaction processes with an engagement object (Brodie et al., 2013).

Overviews of the various dimensionality conceptualizations of engagement can be found in Brodie et al. (2011) and, most recently, Dessart, Veloutsou, and Morgan-Thomas (2016).

2.2 Contextuality

The identification of specific cognitive, affective or behavioral CE dimensions differs according to the context in which CE is investigated (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011). To illustrate, while Van Doorn et al.'s (2010) customer-to-firm "customer engagement behaviour" includes the dimensions valence, form or modality, scope, nature of impact and customer goals, Algesheimer, Dholakia and Herrmann's (2005) "brand community engagement" is conceptualised as comprising utilitarian, hedonic and social dimensions. Consequently, different forms of CE must be presumed according to context.

2.3 Foci

Recent research findings show that engagement processes are not only constituted of engagement-subject-object interactions, but that different engagement foci are concurrently in operation, depending on context (Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012; Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2016). For example, Dessart, Veloutsou, and Morgan-Thomas (2016) demonstrate that in the context of online brand communities, the two engagement foci brand and community coexist and can be measured. From these findings, we can therefore assume that customers can be engaged with more than one entity in the same consumption-related context.

On the basis of these three central concepts – dimensionality, contextuality and foci – a general definition of CE can be constructed. According to this schema, CE is a psychological state that results from customers' individual dispositions toward context-specific engagement foci and which is characterized by fluctuating intensity levels in affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions (Brodie et al., 2011, 2013; Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2016).

2.4 Customer Engagement Advertising

In the context of theorizing about CE, the S-D logic approach plays a central role. Brodie et al. (2011, p. 260) recognize this in their definition of CE, in that they conceptualize the occurrence of CE as an effect "of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand) in focal service relationships". Co-creation as the central feature of the S-D logic approach (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) has however until now not been used in the conceptualization of CEA.

According to Vargo and Lusch, the goods-dominant logic (G-D logic) is making way for a new S-D logic, which concentrates on exchange processes, relationships and intangibility. Services are defined as "the application of

specialized competences (knowledge and skills) through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself" (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2). Value is perceived and determined by the customer on the basis of value-in-use and in co-creation between customer and company. It follows that a good – and this includes communication products (print ads, websites etc.) – has no value until it is used and is useful for the achievement of customers' personal goals. The customer is therefore no longer conceived of as an operand resource – "The customer is the recipient of goods. Marketers do things to customers; they segment them, penetrate them, distribute to them, and promote to them" (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, p. 7) – but as an active operant resource in the process of creating value, as a co-producer of services, including communication services.

In summary, the S-D logic approach reflects the fact that, from the customers' perspective, the value of advertising rests on the customers' interactive experiences which occur in co-creative environments and which serve to reach personal goals.

However, in our opinion, to deduce that CEA only includes co-creative advertising would be to underestimate it. For it would follow from this that CE as defined by the ARF, which rests on the interaction effect of the two foci medium and form of advertising on the psychological level (Creamer, 2006), would be excluded from the definition. This we find to be inadequate. These considerations lead us to the following definition of CEA:

Customer engagement advertising (CEA) includes all strategic advertising measures that aim to achieve in a specific context a highly positive intensity of customers' psychologically and socially processing of these advertising measures, the advertised brand, the medium, and, in the case of social media contexts, the community.

This definition has important implications. Firstly, customers' advertising engagement takes different forms of processing for different forms of advertising: from consumption through contribution to creation (Schivinski, Christodoulides, & Dabrowski, 2016). While the intensity levels of advertising engagement (AE) are relatively low during consumption, are limited to the psychological level and are principally a result of the interaction between the foci advertising measure (e. g. advert, brand post, placement) and medium (e.g. watching a movie displaying a Harley Davidson motorcycle), AE increases with customers' contribution (e.g. commenting or liking a brand post) up to creation, where, commensurate with the S-D logic approach, strategic communication measures are realized on the social level in co-creation with consumer and advertiser (e.g. a consumer-generated brand spot published on TV).

Secondly, AE is a multidimensional construct to such an extent that processing AE foci is context-specific and involves cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects. To illustrate, Phillips and McQuarrie (2010) identify five different modes of AE in the context of women's fashion ads: to act, identify, feel, transport or immerse.

Finally, AE is a result of processes arising from concurrently acting engagement foci. Customers enter and engage into relationships with different foci simultaneously (Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2016; Brodie et al., 2011). In forming AE outcomes, any one focus – the advertising measure, the medium (Calder, Malthouse, & Schaedel, 2009; Wang, 2006), the brand (Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2016) or the community (Stokburger-Sauer, 2010) – can, depending on the context, fail, predominate or precede another

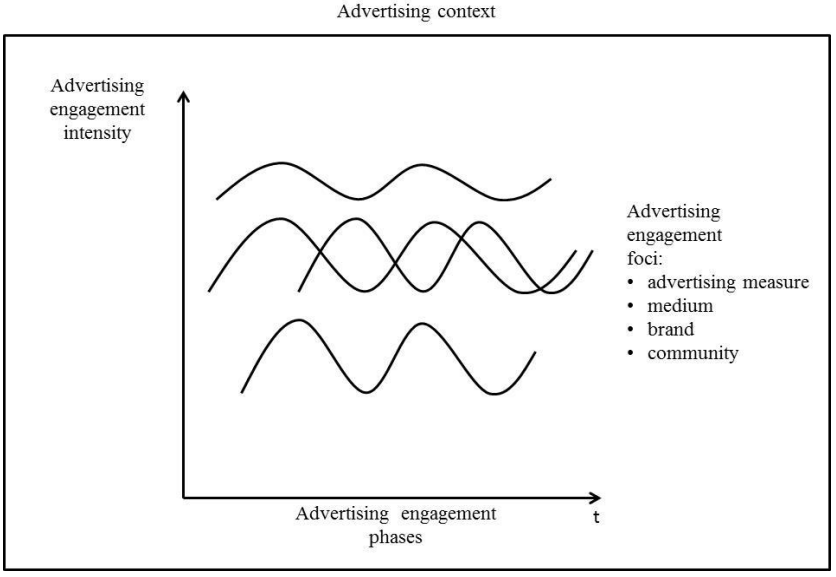

Figure 1. Advertising engagement model

focus (Kim, Kim, and Wachter, 2013) (Figure 1). For example, the medium could play either no or a very small role in an event marketing measure, or the focus community could receive a special significance in a social media context.

2.5 Advertising Knowledge

For the research focus of this study, namely to acquire preliminary findings about customers' everyday basic CEA knowledge, it is especially relevant that lay people possess culture-specific collective advertising knowledge. They share some fundamental beliefs about the psychology of persuasion within the context of advertising (Friestad & Wright, 1994, 1995; Wei, Fisher, & Main, 2008; Kirmani & Zhu, 2007; Yoo, 2009; Ham, 2016). The comparative investigation of the internal structure of collective S-D logic-based CEA knowledge in contrast to that of traditional, collective G-D logic-based advertising knowledge might therefore yield insights about differences in cognitive processing between these two forms of advertising. Hence, we propose that when people process strategically designed S-D logic-based CEA, different lay advertising persuasion knowledge gets activated than in the case of strategically designed G-D logic-based advertising (in the following "non-CEA").

3. Developing CEA and non-CEA Design Strategies

Both the G-D and S-D logic approaches provide their own framework for modes of thinking during the process of developing advertising design strategies; they build the logical platform for the creative execution of advertising measures. Advertising strategies serve as an interface between logic and specific creative communication measures. Along with decision-making guidelines about the object of the advertising, the objectives, the campaign audience, and the media mix, advertising strategy also defines the framework for the design of the advertising message (Hallahan et al., 2007). This is often done by means of formulas and templates (Goldenberg, Mazursky, & Solomon, 1999; Oliver & Ashley, 2012). Thus, for example, the copy strategy format used widely in practice combines benefit with consumption or use of goods, and follows a G-D logic approach (Oliver & Ashley, 2012).

In the context of S-D logic advertising is developing into a media-based service which is useful in the daily life situations and actions of recipients. Underlying S-D logic therefore conceives advertising communication as a co-created service element, and no longer as a selling tool for goods (Grönroos, 2000, Heinonen & Strandvik, 2005, Vargo & Lusch, 2004). The benefit of CEA thus arises from its nature as a service. The idea is that the clash between product benefit on one hand, and the intrusiveness of traditional advertising (Li, Edwards, & Lee, 2002) on the other will be eliminated by S-D logic-informed CEA which aims to be both a service and an advertising message at the same time.

The S-D logic approach has far-reaching consequences for the strategic development of advertising. The goal is to create service propositions which are useful to consumers for achieving the goals which they are pursuing in the situation in which they receive ads. In the S-D logic view, advertising products "serve as appliances for service provision rather than ends in themselves" (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, p. 13). The process of strategic CEA design should therefore be structured by the following steps: (1) identifying situations experienced by customers that relate to the product category relevant to the advertised product, gaining consumer insights regarding these situations, and selecting a situation which is of high relevance for the customer, (2) determining customers' goal in the situation identified, and (3) creating a service proposition which customers can use to achieve their goal in the specific situation (Figure 2).

4. Methodology

To answer the research question of whether strategically created CEA is related to a different everyday customers' advertising knowledge than non-CEA, we used the concept map method. This qualitative method is the method of choice for our exploratory study because it allows investigation and comparison of customers' knowledge structures of CEA and non-CEA. In general terms, a concept map is a visualization technique suitable for representing and investigating knowledge structures and for depicting elaborated knowledge by means of structural interrelationships.

In the application proposed by John et al. (2006) the concept map method has been further developed into the brand concept map method (BCM) in which brand associations and their interdependencies can be visually presented. In contrast to classical concept mapping, BCM allows several individual concept maps to be aggregated to a single consensus map and thus to depict the collective knowledge structure of individuals.

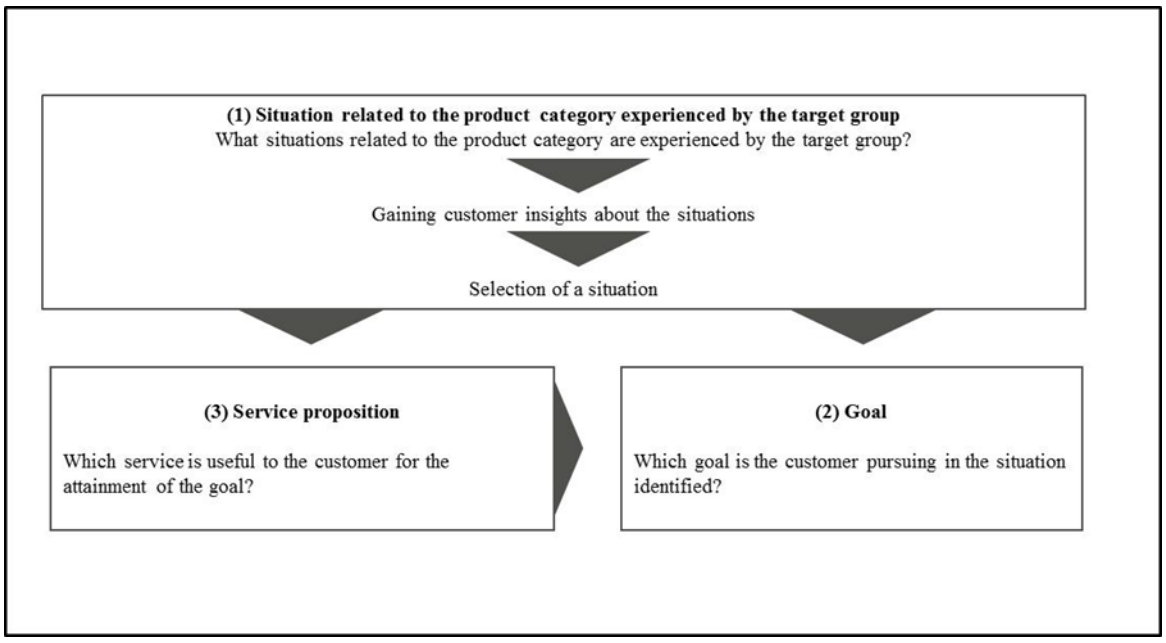

Figure 2. Structure of CEA design strategy map

4.1 Elicitation Stage

In the elicitation stage possible associations are identified. To do this, students at a seminar at the University (N = 9) were asked to write down what for them the central characteristics of advertising are in general terms. Their responses were evaluated using content analysis. 52 characteristics were extracted and listed in order according to the frequency with which they were named. To ensure the comprehensiveness of the list, the terms were compared with the results obtained by Richards and Curran (2002) who identified essential elements in their study that determine whether or not an activity is advertising. The results were additionally compared with the summary of textbook definitions of advertising by Thorson and Rodgers (2012). The two comparisons yielded none further characteristics. Characteristics with similar meanings were coalesced to give 17 central characteristics and their respective descriptions used in the concept map study (curiosity, understandability, conviction, information, needs, attention, image, mirror of society, awareness, relevance, conspicuousness, creativity, benefit, paid communication, identifiability, unpaid communication, motivation to act).

4.2 Stimulus

To rule out any ad familiarity effects, we did not use any real ads that had already been published. However, to obtain high external measurement validity, we decided to produce a CEA und non-CEA advert as realistically as possible and to this end were able to gain the services of an advertising agency. Two teams – each consisting of a strategic planner, a conceptual designer/copywriter and an art director – were briefed separately on the strategic development of a CEA or non-CEA-centred advertisement. The object of the advertising was the car-sharing service provided by the brand Car2Go, which was to be advertised in towns with university campuses. Students were defined as the general target group. The specific task of the two teams was to create the advertising design strategy, and then to develop (up to the layout stage) an advertising measure that would implement the strategy and serve as a stimulus for the concept mapping. For this purpose, the two briefings contained different strategy templates, consisting of set categories. The teams were expected to develop the content of these categories (G-D logic-informed non-CEA copy strategy template: (1) consumer benefit, (2) reason why, (3) tonality), (S-D logic-informed CEA service strategy template: (1) situation related to usage of product group, (2) goals, (3) service proposition) (Appendix 1, 2, 3, and 4).

A pretest with 8 students, to check that the stimulus material could be understood, showed that no changes were necessary.

4.3 Mapping Stage

In the second stage, the mapping stage, the participants created their individual concept map with the help of a PowerPoint template; in this, their knowledge of advertising relevant to the respective advertising example (CEA vs. non-CEA) was to be graphically represented. To do this, for each example, the participants were requested to match the characteristics of advertising in relation to the construct “Advert Car2Go” and to allocate one of three link strengths to

them (low, moderate, high). After completion of the concept map, this was saved and mailed to the e-mail address given.

Table 1. Procedures and aggregation rules to generate a consensus map (John et al. 2006)

Step		Measures	Rules
1	Select core associations	Frequency of mention Number of interconnections	Select associations that are • included on at least 50% of maps. • included on 45%–49% of maps if the number of connections is equal to or higher than the number of connections for core associations we identified previously
2	Select first-order associations	Frequency of first-order mentions Ratio of first-order mentions Type of interconnections	Select core associations that • have a ratio of first-order mentions to total mentions of at least 50% • have more superordinate than subordinate interconnections
3	Select core association links	Frequencies for association links	Select core association links by • finding inflection point on frequency plot • inflection point = target number • including all association links that appear on or above the target number of maps
4	Select non–core association links to identify tertiary associations	Frequencies for association links	Select non–core association links that are • linked to a core association • linked on or above the target number of maps
5	Select number of connecting lines	Mean number of lines used per link	Select single, double, or triple lines for each association link by • determining the mean number of lines used per link • rounding up or down to the next integer number

4.4 Aggregation Stage

In the last phase, the individual concept maps were coded, the data aggregated, the inflection point to determine which association links would be included in the consensus map ascertained, and finally the two consensus maps generated (Table 1).

4.5 Sample

As students were defined as the general target group of the advertisements, a student sample represented the population relevant to the study. In total, 109 students (56% women, 44% men; Mage = 21,5, SD = 2,3) produced a concept map for each group. The participants of the study were randomly assigned to either concept map variant G-D logic-informed non-CEA copy strategy (N = 56) or variant S-D logic-informed CEA service strategy (N = 53).

5. Findings

5.1 Associations

The aggregated data (Tables 2 and 3) show which associations are included in the consensus maps (included in at least 50% of maps), how often an association is directly linked to "Advert Car2Go" across maps ("frequency of first-order mention") and the frequency with which an association is placed above ("superordinate connections") or below ("subordinate connections") other associations across maps. All 17 associations identified in the elicitation stage are included in both consensus maps. Associations which, following the rule (Table 1, Step 2), have a ratio of first-order mentions to total mentions of at least 50% and which have more superordinate than subordinate interconnections are identified as first-order associations on the consensus map (boldface figures in table 2 and 3).

Some additional associations identified by the participants for the individual groups were also included (non-CEA group: conviction, environmental consciousness; CEA group: expressive power, recommendation, innovation, brand interest, modern/young/fresh, for young people). Apart from the term innovation with 3 mentions, all the terms were mentioned by one participant each; this means that, following the step 1 rule (Table 1), they are not included in the consensus maps.

Table 2. Measures of non-CEA concept maps

Associations	Core Associations			First-Order Associations			
	Frequency of mentions	Ratio of mentions (%)	Number of interconnections	Frequency of first-order mentions	Ratio of first-order mentions (%)	Super-ordinate connections	Sub-ordinate connections
Curiosity	56	100	114	21	37,5	45	41
Understand-ability	56	100	86	22	39,29	35	40
Conviction	56	100	102	11	19,64	25	57
Information	56	100	144	30	**53,57**	87	31
Needs	56	100	118	29	**51,79**	68	29
Attention	56	100	135	15	26,79	55	50
Image	56	100	114	18	32,14	48	42
Mirror of society	55	98,21	71	27	49,09	28	31
Relevance	56	100	106	14	25	25	50
Conspicuousness	56	100	132	28	**50**	74	36
Creativity	56	100	95	12	21,43	21	51
Benefit	56	100	115	27	48,21	65	33
Paid communication	56	100	65	32	57,14	24	28
Identifiability	56	100	90	24	42,86	34	40
Unpaid communication	56	100	77	11	19,64	13	53
Motivation to act	56	100	95	18	32,14	19	47
Awareness	56	100	115	13	23,21	44	50
Conviction	1	1,79	1	0	0	0	1
Environmental consciousness	1	1,79	3	0	0	1	1

Table 3. Measures of CEA concept maps

Associations	Core Associations			First-Order Associations			
	Frequency of mentions	Ratio of mentions (%)	Number of inter-connections	Frequency of first-order mentions	Ratio of first-order mentions (%)	Super-ordinate connections	Sub-ordinate connections
Curiosity	53	100	102	20	37,74	36	38
Understand-ability	51	96,23	83	17	33,33	25	37
Conviction	52	98,11	103	10	19,23	31	52
Information	52	98,11	112	32	**61,54**	63	23
Needs	53	100	105	16	30,19	39	42
Attention	53	100	123	20	37,74	45	42
Image	52	98,11	102	9	17,31	29	57
Mirror of society	50	94,34	64	20	40	23	30
Awareness	52	98,11	112	18	34,62	46	43
Relevance	50	94,34	102	16	32	38	40
Conspicuousness	53	100	123	29	**54,72**	65	28
Creativity	53	100	109	36	**67,92**	60	20
Benefit	53	100	102	33	**62,26**	53	23
Paid communication	45	84,91	43	22	48,89	12	24
Identifiability	52	98,11	92	16	30,77	25	47
Unpaid communication	49	92,45	60	17	34,69	14	37
Motivation to act	52	98,11	110	17	32,69	32	46
Expressive power	1	1,89	1	0	0	0	1
Recommendation	1	1,89	1	0	0	0	1
Innovation	3	5,66	6	2	66,67	0	2
Brand interest	1	1,89	1	0	0	0	1
Modern, young, fresh	1	1,89	1	0	0	0	1
For young people	1	1,89	1	0	0	0	1

5.2 Links Between Associations

The inflection points is ascertained by means of a frequency count and defined as target number. This target number determines how often a link between specific associations has to be shown on the individual concept maps for it to be included in the consensus map. The target number is calculated on the basis of the number of association pairs and the number of interconnections that are graphically represented in a frequency plot (Figures 3 und 4).

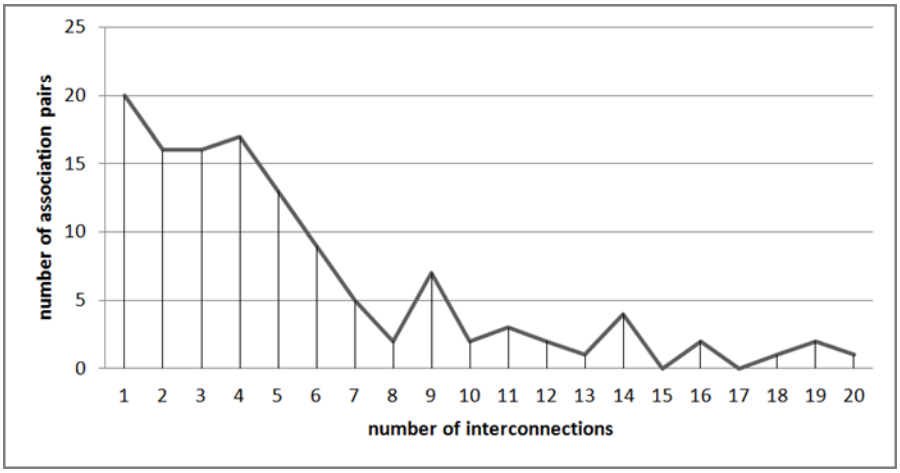

Figure 3. Inflection point diagram, non-CEA

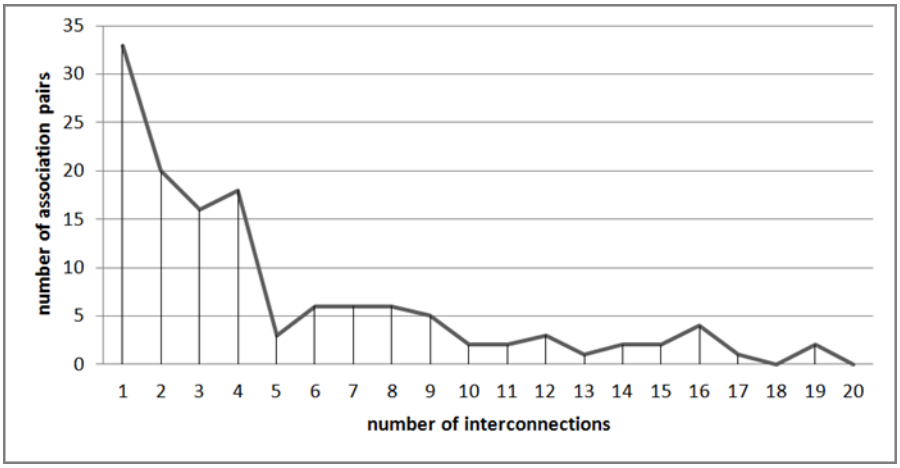

Figure 4. Inflection point diagram, CEA

The number of frequencies is then used to determine the target number by looking for any sharp increase (inflection point) in frequency counts (John et al. 2006). Accordingly, for the non-CEA survey we set the target value at 8 (Figure 3) and for the CEA survey, the target value at 5 (Figure 4). It follows that all the interconnections of associations are included in the consensus maps that meet these criteria: being given on at least 8 of the 56 non-CEA and 5 of the 53 CEA concept maps.

As interconnections between core and non-core associations only appeared rarely no tertiary associations are included in the consensus maps (Table 1, step 4).

5.3 Strength of Links

On the basis of the mean numbers of association link intensities across all concept maps, the strengths of the links between associations for the consensus maps are evaluated. These are shown as follows: 1 shows weak strength (thin connecting line), 2 stands for moderate strength (medium connecting line) and 3 for a strong link (thick connecting line) (Table 4).

Table 4. Frequency of link types between associations

Intensity of connections	**non-CEA**	**CEA**
weak (1)	4	7
moderate (2)	33	48
strong (3)	1	1

5.4 Advertising Knowledge

The central visual result of our exploratory study, based on the aggregated data and defined target numbers, is presented in the form of two consensus maps: the non-CEA consensus map (Figure 5) and the CEA consensus map (Figure 6).

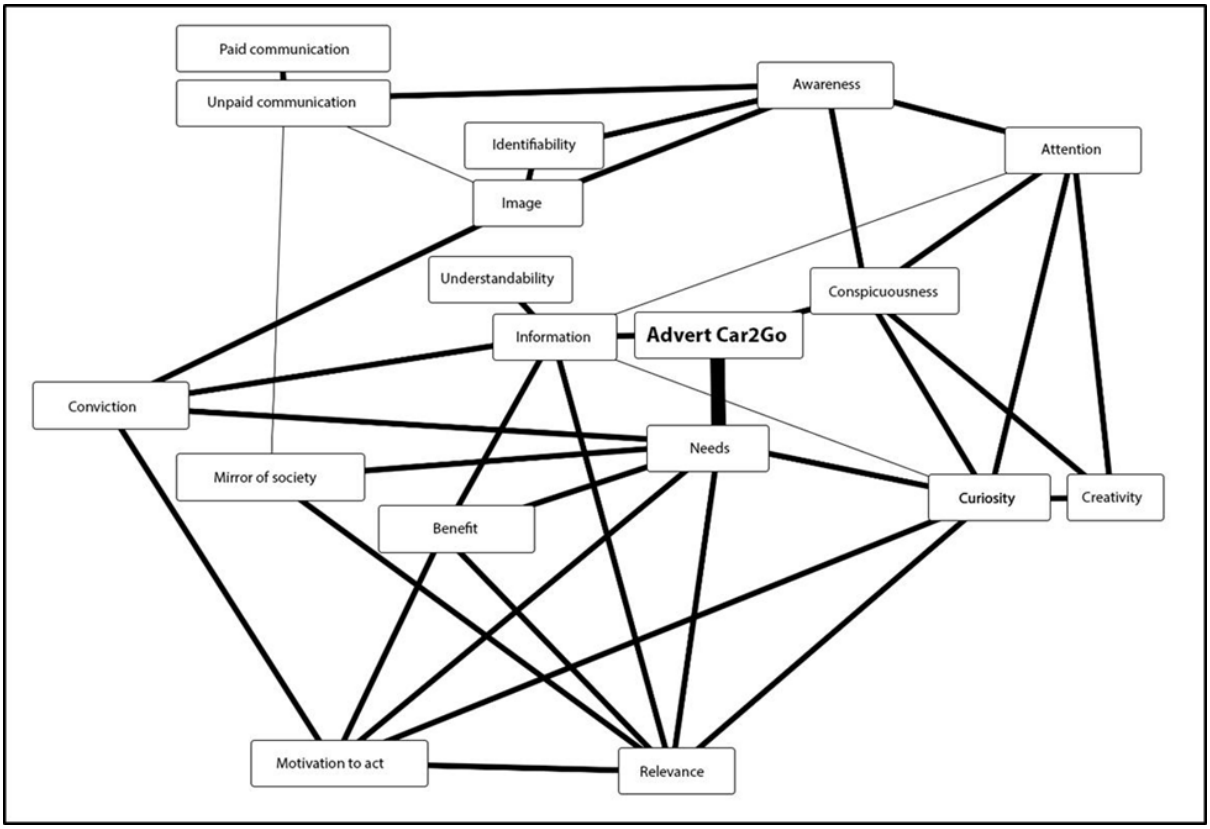

Figure 5. non-CEA consensus map (target number = 8, N = 56)

Both maps present visually the collective advertising knowledge of the study participants concerning non-CEA and CEA respectively.

The first-order associations (i.e. those that are directly connected to the central construct Advert Car2Go) have the highest relevance in a map and, consequently, also possess the greatest significance for the comparison of advertising knowledge of consumers about CEA and traditional non-CEA. They are the advertising associations that directly influence the cognitive evaluation of non-CEA and CEA. In the example, in the non-CEA condition, three first-order associations could be identified: information, needs and conspicuousness; they were placed as first-order in the maps by the study participants at a rate of 50% or higher. The intensity of the link between the association needs and the central construct Advert Car2Go is here the only link in the entire knowledge network possessing strong intensity (3). Moreover, it is noticeable that there is no direct link between these three associations.

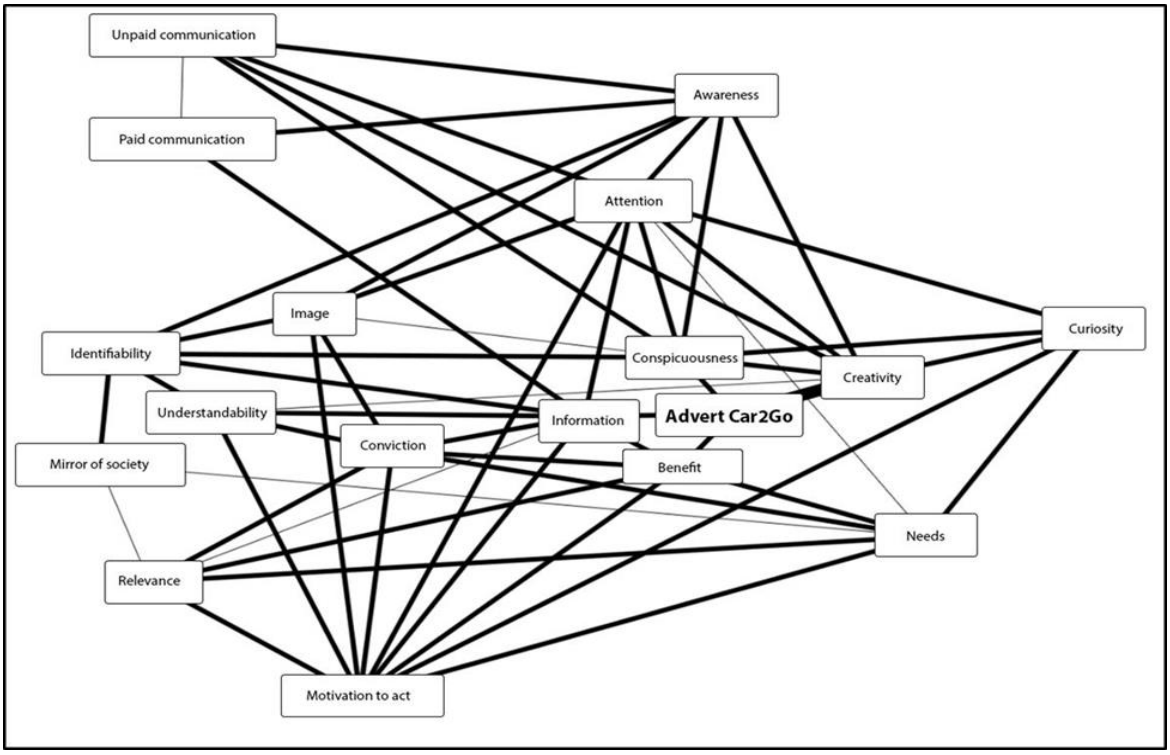

Figure 6. CEA consensus map (target number = 5, N = 53)

A different picture can be seen in the CEA consensus map. Here, the first-order advertising associations are information, conspicuousness, creativity and benefit; creativity and conspicuousness, as well as benefit and information are connected. While information and conspicuousness also possess first-order importance in the non-CEA consensus map, creativity and benefit only receive high relevance in the CEA condition. In contrast to non-CEA, needs do not receive a primary association. The frequency with which these associations were given first-order status by the study participants in their maps is markedly higher than the frequency of first-order non-CEA associations (Tables 2 and 3). At a rate of 68%, creativity achieved the highest value across all concept maps of the study and is, like the association needs in the non-CEA condition, the only association in the entire knowledge network that has strong intensity (3).

5.5 Structural Density (Ds)

In order to make more exact comparisons between the structure of CEA and non-CEA knowledge, we calculate the structural density (Ds) of both consensus maps (French and Smith, 2013). Structural density reflects a central assumption in the consensus map approach, namely that terms in a knowledge structure-network that are more directly linked to the central construct are assumed to be activated earlier and are thus more present; hence, they characterize the knowledge construct more strongly and influence decision-making. The different types of links are shown in Tables 5 and 6 in order of decreasing importance. Therefore, the structural density of a consensus map is based on the hierarchical level of the associations (first-order etc.) as well as on the links between them. In these calculations, the weights of each link are taken into account – hence the multiplier of 3 for the maximum number of links of each type – and the ratio between the weights of the actual links and the maximum number of links is evaluated for each link type. These individual ratios are then merged to give the normalized value for structural density between 0 and 1 (French and Smith, 2013). In order to be able to completely include all the hierarchical levels of both consensus maps in our study in the formula, we have extended the original formula of French and Smith (2013):

$$Ds = \frac{1\left(\frac{L_{CF}}{3F}\right)+\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{L_{FF}}{\frac{3}{2}F(F-1)}\right)+\frac{1}{3}\left(\frac{L_{FS}}{3FS}\right)+\frac{1}{4}\left(\frac{L_{FT}}{3FT}\right)+\frac{1}{4}\left(\frac{L_{SS}}{\frac{3}{2}S(S-1)}\right)+\frac{1}{5}\left(\frac{L_{STh}}{3STh}\right)+\frac{1}{6}\left(\frac{L_{ST}}{3ST}\right)+\frac{1}{6}\left(\frac{L_{ThTh}}{\frac{3}{2}Th(Th-1)}\right)+\frac{1}{7}\left(\frac{L_{ThFo}}{3ThFo}\right)+\frac{1}{8}\left(\frac{L_{ThT}}{3ThT}\right)+\frac{1}{8}\left(\frac{L_{FoFo}}{\frac{3}{2}Fo(Fo-1)}\right)+\frac{1}{10}\left(\frac{L_{FoT}}{3FoT}\right)+\frac{1}{10}\left(\frac{L_{TT}}{\frac{3}{2}T(T-1)}\right)}{1+\frac{1}{2}+\frac{1}{3}+\frac{1}{4}+\frac{1}{4}+\frac{1}{5}+\frac{1}{6}+\frac{1}{6}+\frac{1}{7}+\frac{1}{8}+\frac{1}{8}+\frac{1}{10}+\frac{1}{10}}$$

Note: For maps where S=0, S=1, Th=0, Th=1, Fo=0, Fo=1, T=0, T=1 the associated parts of the above definition are omitted from the numerator and denominator.

Key:

frequency of first-order associations = F, frequency of second-order associations = S, frequency of third-order associations = Th, frequency of fourth-order associations = Fo, frequency of tertiary-order associations = T, number of weighted links central construct to first-order = LCF, number of weighted links first order to first-order = LFF, number of weighted links first-order to second-order = LFS, number of weighted links first-order to tertiary = LFT, number of weighted links second-order to second-order = LSS, number of weighted links second-order to third-order = LSTh, number of weighted links second-order to tertiary = LST, number of weighted links third-order to third-order= LThTh, number of weighted links third-order to fourth-order = LThFo, number of weighted links third-order to tertiary = LThT, number of weighted links fourth-order to fourth-order = LFoFo, number of weighted links fourth-order to tertiary= LFoT, number of weighted links tertiary to tertiary= LTT.

For the two consensus maps the following values are obtained.

Ds non-CEA (Figure 5):

F = 3, S = 10, Th = 3, Fo = 1, T = 0, LCF = 7, LFF = 0, LFS = 30, LFT = 0, LSS = 22, LSTh = 9, LST = 0, LThTh = 3, LThFo = 2, LThT = 0, LFoFo = 0, LFoT = 0, LTT = 0.

$$Ds = \frac{1\left(\frac{7}{3x3}\right) + \frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{0}{\frac{3}{2}x3x2}\right) + \frac{1}{3}\left(\frac{30}{3x3x10}\right) + \frac{1}{4}\left(\frac{22}{\frac{3}{2}x10x9}\right) + \frac{1}{5}\left(\frac{9}{3x10x3}\right) + \frac{1}{6}\left(\frac{3}{\frac{3}{2}x3x2}\right) + \frac{1}{7}\left(\frac{2}{3x3x1}\right)}{1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{5} + \frac{1}{6} + \frac{1}{7}} = 0.40$$

Table 5. Link types for structural density measurement: non-CEA

non-CEA				
Rank	Type	Maximum number	Actual number	Weighting
1	Central construct to first-order	3F	L_{CF}	1,00
2	First-order to first-order	3.1/2F(F-1)	L_{FF}	0,50
3	First-order to second-order	3F.S	L_{FS}	0,33
4	First-order to tertiary	3F.T	L_{FT}	0,25
4	Second-order to second-order	3.1/2S(S-1)	L_{SS}	0,25
5	Second-order to third-order	3S.Th	L_{STh}	0,20
6	Second-order to tertiary	3S.T	L_{ST}	0,17
6	Third-order to third-order	3.1/2Th(Th-1)	L_{ThTh}	0,17
7	Third-order to fourth-order	3Th.Fo	L_{ThFo}	0,14
8	Third-order to tertiary	3Th.T	L_{ThT}	0,13
8	Fourth-order to fourth-order	3.1/2Fo(Fo-1)	L_{FoFo}	0,13
9	Fourth-order to tertiary	3Fo.T	L_{FoT}	0,10
9	Tertiary to tertiary	3.1/2T(T-1)	L_{TT}	0,10

Note: tertiary associations are non-core associations that are linked on or above the target number of maps (Table 1, Step 4)

Ds CEA (Figure 6)

F = 4, S = 12, Th = 1, Fo = 0, T = 0, LCF = 9, LFF = 4, LFS = 41, LFT = 0, LSS = 48, LSTh = 4, LST = 0, LThTh = 0, LThT = 0, LTT = 0.

$$Ds = \frac{1\left(\frac{9}{3x4}\right) + \frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{4}{\frac{3}{2}x4x3}\right) + \frac{1}{3}\left(\frac{41}{3x4x12}\right) + \frac{1}{4}\left(\frac{48}{\frac{3}{2}x12x11}\right) + \frac{1}{5}\left(\frac{4}{3x12x1}\right)}{1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{5}} = 0.45$$

Table 6. Link types for structural density measurement: CEA

CEA				
Rank	Type	Maximum number	Actual number	Weighting
1	Central construct to first-order	3F	L_{CF}	1,00
2	First-order to first-order	3.1/2F(F-1)	L_{FF}	0,50
3	First-order to second-order	3F.S	L_{FS}	0,33
4	First-order to tertiary	3F.T	L_{FT}	0,25
4	Second-order to second-order	3.1/2S(S-1)	L_{SS}	0,25
5	Second-order to third-order	3S.Th	L_{STh}	0,20
6	Second-order to tertiary	3S.T	L_{ST}	0,17
6	Third-order to third-order	3.1/2Th(Th-1)	L_{ThTh}	0,17
7	Third-order to tertiary	3Th.T	L_{ThT}	0,13
7	Tertiary to tertiary	3.1/2T(T-1)	L_{TT}	0,13

Note: tertiary associations are non-core associations that are linked on or above the target number of maps (Table 1, Step 4)

5.6 Association Strength (AS)

In order to measure the strength of a consensus map, it is also necessary to consider the number of associations (n) as well as structural density (Ds); this is because Ds only refers to the types of associations and how they are linked together.

Association strength is calculated by multiplying structural density (Ds) by the number of associations (French and Smith, 2013):

$$AS = n.Ds$$

AS provides information about the degree of how pronounced and interconnected the knowledge concerning an object of investigation is.

Both consensus maps in this study show the same number of associations (N = 18, including the central construct) resulting in AS = 7.2 for the non-CEA map and AS = 8.1 for the CEA map.

6. Reliability and Validity

We calculated the reliability of the concept map method using the split-half-reliability test (John et al., 2006). The associations and the links in the split-half maps are coded with 1 (present) or 0 (not present) (Table 7).

To summarize, given the significant moderate to high correlation values, good reliability can be assumed.

With respect to validity, it should be mentioned again that the CEA and non-CEA stimuli, which formed the basis for the generation of the concept maps, were produced by an advertising agency, so that high external validity can be assumed. Furthermore, since the development of the concept map method in psychology to understand mental representations of knowledge by revealing part of an individual's thinking process, this method has been tried and tested in scientific studies in a wide variety of scientific fields (Hui et al., 2008). The aim is always to present links between associations and terms; this also testifies to a certain degree of validity. The in total 109 concept maps generated by the study participants show that this method is highly suitable to represent associations concerning CEA and non-CEA. As both the consensus maps visually present the aggregated data obtained from the individual concept maps, they provide a summary of the information that they are intended to measure.

To sum up, it is highly probable that the findings of the study are both reliable and valid.

Table 7. Reliabilities

	Non-CEA maps			**CEA maps**		
	Φ	*p*	N	*Φ*	*p*	N
Reliability of core associations	1.00	0.001	19	1.00	0.001	23
Reliability of first-order associations	0.80	0.05	19	0.85	0.001	23
Reliability of links	0.71	0.001	171	0.66	0.001	253
Reliability of core association links:						
Split-half map 1 – split half map 2	0.73	0.001	153	0.70	0.001	153
Split-half map 1- consensus map	1.0	0.001	153	1.0	0.001	153
Split-half map 2- consensus map	0.63	0.001	153	0.68	0.001	153

7. Discussion

From the starting point of conceptualizing the construct customer engagement advertising, this exploratory study is intended to discover empirical evidence of customers' fundamental knowledge of this form of advertising. In so doing, the intention is to make a contribution to an initial understanding how advertising which is created according to the S-D

logic approach is cognitively processed by customers.

The main research question of this study, whether strategically created CEA is related to a different everyday customers' advertising knowledge than non-CEA – based on a conception of CEA using the S-D logic approach – can be confirmed by the study findings. Thus, we can assume that, depending on the basic logic of the advertising that informs the development of advertising design strategies – goods or service-dominant logic – the resulting different types of advertising produce different cognitive processing in customers. It can consequently be stated that, in dealing with CEA, customers activate different advertising persuasion knowledge than in non-CEA.

The differences in CEA knowledge can be seen in the following points: the first point to mention is that CEA and non-CEA knowledge have overlaps in both the first-order associations information and conspicuousness; these are obviously centrally associated as fundamental characteristics of both forms of advertising. This finding appears plausible, as it reflects the basic task of advertising in customers' everyday advertising knowledge, namely to inform consumers about offers and to do this in a conspicuous way so as to attract attention. Accordingly, in both consensus maps, attention is a second-order association, linked to conspicuousness, among others. Independent of the basic differences between CEA and non-CEA knowledge, it can be inferred that information and conspicuousness are primary associations of advertising, irrespective of advertising form.

Alongside this shared feature, there are clear differences in the first-order associations. Non-CEA knowledge is characterized by the additional central association needs, whereas, on the CEA consensus map, creativity and benefit could be identified as additional first-order associations. This, too, appears plausible, given that in non-CEA, the context and situational relevance of the advertising to the customer are not strategically the primary focus; instead, the aim is rather to address the goods-related need of the customer through offering a consumer benefit, independently of the concrete situation in which the advertising is received. In contrast, in CEA, the context and the concrete situation in which the advertising contact takes place play an important role. As the theoretical conception of customer engagement advertising makes clear, here the advert has the strategic aim of offering a specific benefit exactly in the given situation and thereby to provide a service. This is also perceived to be the case by the study participants in the form of their first-order association benefit which, in the study, is defined as advertising that is useful to the consumer and has a service function. Thus, the theoretically developed strategic aim of CEA appear to correspond to customers' processing of CEA.

In conformity with the advertising knowledge of the study participants, the creativity of the brand management and advertising agency in CEA also has a central role alongside benefit. It follows that, in CEA, from the customer perspective, the creative generation of a relevant service moves to the strategic center of advertising, displacing orientation towards goods-related needs. The importance of the role of creativity that apparently occurs in CEA is underlined by the fact that it achieves a rate of 68% of first-order occurrences – the highest value across all concept maps of the study – and analogously with the association needs in non-CEA, is the only link in the CEA knowledge network with strong intensity (3). Future studies should therefore ascertain whether the concept of creative services has the potential to provide research on advertising skepticism and reactance with new impetus. In concrete terms, future research should be sensitized to the question of to what extent the salience of the advertiser's manipulative intent can be decreased or increased through particular message cues in the CEA context. This point is significant because message cues are likely to vary in terms of the salience of manipulative intent (e.g. biased source: manipulative intent becomes highly salient, independent source: manipulative intent is less salient), and cues that increase the salience of advertiser's manipulative intent or ulterior motives are likely to activate persuasion knowledge (Campbell & Kirmani, 2000; Kirmani & Zhu, 2007). Does an S-D logic approach orientation in CEA lead to a reduction in the salience of advertisers' manipulative intent? The answer to this question could deliver indications, whether the focus on content relevance that can be observed in advertising practice and which is manifested in the benefit and service orientation sketched above could be a successful path for future advertising.

As a result of our findings, it is also to be recommended that the catalog of well-known psychological events that people frequently reference in describing beliefs about advertising effects, identified by Friestad and Wright (1995), should be reviewed in persuasion knowledge research with a view to considering whether the psychological event of engagement should be added to it.

The fact that the CEA map has a higher association strength (8.1) than the non-CEA map (7.2), although the number of association remains the same – a fact that is also visually noticeable – is not surprising. The CEA consensus map (Figure 6) is more strongly interconnected. It not only has one first-order association more than the non-CEA map (Figure 5), but also has higher general structural density than the non-CEA-map (Ds = 45% vs. 40%). In considering these findings, however, the different target numbers on which the two consensus maps are based must be taken into account. The higher target number of the non-CEA map (8) necessarily leads to a lower structural density because only

links between two associations that appeared on at least eight concept maps are included (CEA target number = 5). The higher structural density of the CEA map could therefore be interpreted as the result of the participants' not yet structurally unified knowledge; this is likely to be due to the relative novelty of this type of advertising.

It is in the nature of exploratory studies that the generalizability of their results is limited, even when, as in our study, an empirical, quantitative design is used, but which underlies inevitably statistical constrictions.

A limiting factor is, that the influence of the brand familiarity of Car2Go is not controlled for. As Wei et al. (2008) found, in the case of high-familiarity brands, activated persuasion knowledge can even elicit positive effects because it makes use of prior understanding; this makes it less likely that opposing arguments and unfavorable evaluations come into play. Accordingly, it would be interesting to investigate how brand familiarity affects the activation of CEA knowledge and how knowledge structures vary with different degrees of brand familiarity.

It has to be pointed out that in this study only one focus of advertising engagement is taken into account, namely the advertising measure. As theoretical accounts of customer engagement advertising make clear, advertising engagement is rather the result of processes arising from concurrently operating engagement foci, including the advertising measure, the medium, the brand and – in the case of social media – the community (Figure 1). We believe, however, that to answer the research question, which is to clarify customers' everyday CEA knowledge, concentrating on the advertising measure that activates this knowledge ought to be an adequate approach. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that attention should also be paid to engagement foci acting in parallel, at least when measuring AE, for example in the form of a yet to be developed AE scale.

The results of the study are arguably limited by the fact that the study participants are undergraduate students; it is unclear whether the findings obtained with this population would be generalizable to the CEA knowledge of younger and older consumers with comparable education. Similarly, in this study it was not possible to clarify whether the two types of people – promotion und prevention-focused – identified by Higgins et al. (1994) in regulatory focus theory activate different types of CEA knowledge. It would be interesting for future research to clarify whether the findings of Kirmani and Zhu (2007) are relevant to CEA, namely, that these two types of consumers process persuasion knowledge differently. Is it true that prevention-focused respondents are more sensitive to being unduly manipulated than promotion-focused respondents in the CEA context, too?

Finally, a further interesting research avenue could be an intertemporal comparison of results. Ultimately, we can assume that CEA is a dynamic construct, strongly dependent on media, consumption and socio-cultural developments. To what extent, then, will CEA persuasion knowledge have changed in 3-5 years?

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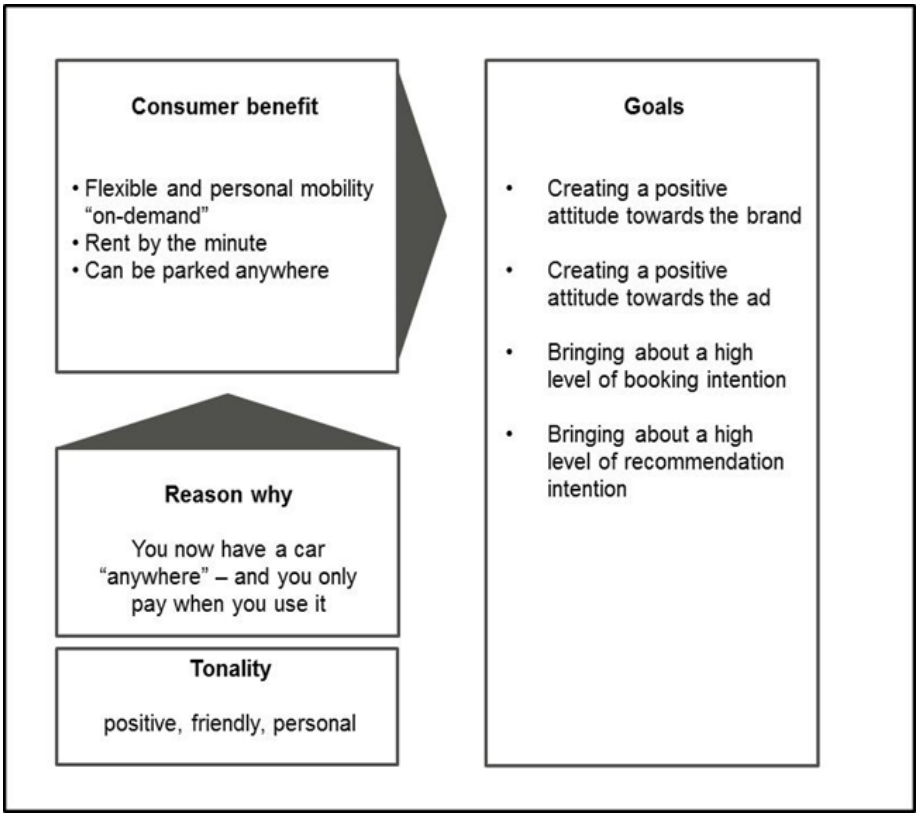
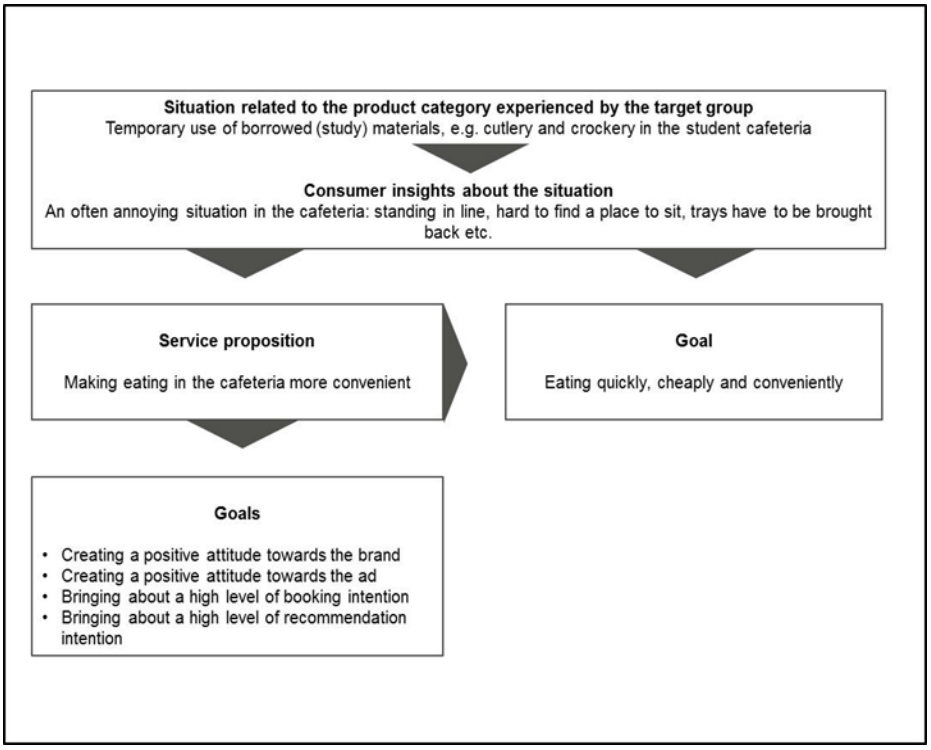
Appendix 1:

Car2Go G-D logic-informed non-CEA copy strategy



Appendix 2:

Car2Go S-D logic-informed CEA service strategy



Appendix 3:

Advertisement variant G-D logic-informed non-CEA copy strategy

Advert Car2Go

Appendix 4:

Advertisement variant S-D logic-informed CEA service strategy