

Valence and Arousal in Context: How Emotionally Charged Social-Media Posts Shape Responses to a Subsequent Advertisement

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Abstract

In two online experiments with simulated social-media feeds, we tested whether happiness, anger, and sadness induced by social-media posts influence responses to a subsequent, unrelated advertisement. In Study 1 (N = 442) participants exposed to a happiness-inducing feed evaluated a subsequent advertised brand more favorably than those exposed to anger- and sadness-inducing feeds. Moreover, both happiness and anger, but not sadness, positively predicted eWOM intention. Based on this, Study 2 (N = 286) examined the underlying mechanisms and found separable valence and arousal pathways: valence primarily mediated the effect of happiness on brand attitude, whereas arousal and valence mediated the effect of anger on eWOM intention. Together, these results reveal interacting processes through which discrete emotions shape advertising effectiveness. Marketers and platforms should incorporate both emotional valence and arousal into contextual targeting and brand-safety strategies.

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