
Abstract:
The purpose of this research was to measure and compare the initial and carryover effects of a video advertisement developed by an animal welfare organization, namely Harpseals.org. The ad was designed to educate the public about an egregious act against wildlife (i.e., the Canadian seal hunt), increase opposition to this act, and recruit participation to boycott the industry (i.e., the Canadian seafood industry). After initial opposition to the egregious act had been measured, respondents were exposed to the ad, and subsequently asked again about their opposition to the seal hunt as well as their willingness to join the Canadian Seafood Boycott. About two months later, a follow-up study investigated whether the respondents' opposition to the seal hunt and their participation in the Canadian Seafood Boycott were still affected by the advertisement to which they had been exposed during the first contact. The results show that respondents' level of opposition to the seal hunt—even though it had somewhat leveled off in two months—was still significantly higher (42% higher) than before respondents had been exposed to the advertisement. The results further show that the single exposure to the ad increased boycott participation from 3.1% (as measured in December 2010) to 13.8% (as reported in February/March 2011), an increase of 350%.

Keywords: Advertising, Attitudes, Behavior, Hunt, Seals