

A cross-sectional, qualitative study describing interpretations of a South African *Arrive Alive* (2015) advertisement: an audience reception analysis

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I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the IIE Bachelor of Arts Honours in Communication degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

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ABSTRACT

With the increased use of technology, such as cell phones among young adults has come dangerous behaviours such as texting while driving. To prevent this act, organisations such as *Arrive Alive* in South Africa have developed advertisements that depict the dangers associated with texting while driving. Using Stuart Hall's Audience Reception Theory (1973), this study focuses on describing how audience members interpret a South African *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement (2015). The aim of this study was to describe whether audience members interpret this advertisement by taking the dominant-hegemonic position, or not, as proposed by Hall. With the use of a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews, this report provides descriptions of how young adults between the ages of 18 and 26 interpret the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement in accordance with the intended meaning of the advertisement. The findings of the study show that audience members interpret the advertisement as intended by the sender, but some will not refrain from texting while driving. This contributes to practice as *Arrive Alive* will be provided with results that will assist them in understanding how audience members have interpreted this 2015 advertisement on texting while driving.

1 INTRODUCTION

This research study focused on describing audience interpretations of the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement to find out whether audiences interpreted this advertisement as encoded. This research study starts off with a rationale and relevance which led to defining the problem statement, purpose statement, the research questions and the objectives thereof. A theoretical foundation encompasses an explanation and a discussion of the theory upon which this research study was based, that is, Stuart Hall's Audience Reception theory (1973). A theoretical literature review presents findings of other studies that were found. The research paradigm and design of the study was then determined. The population and sampling section explain how participants were chosen. Within the data collection method and the data analysis method sections, thematic analysis is explained and applied to the results obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted. This study also ensured trustworthiness. The research report ends off with the presentation and interpretation of the findings and the conclusions thereof. The research study found that participants decoded and interpreted a South African 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement to show an understanding of its message as intended by the sender, thereby taking the dominant-hegemonic position as proposed by Hall (1973) in his Audience Reception theory.

1.2 Background

According to a report by *Reuters* in 2016, the issue of texting and driving has become a major concern around the world (Hesse, 2016). Anton Ossip, the Chief Executive of *Discovery Insure* stated in a 2014 report, that the top three causes of road accidents in South Africa are alcohol, speeding and distracted driving which includes texting while driving (Hesse, 2016). In 2016, *Market and Opinion Firm, Ipsos*, conducted a study which found that 41% of South African drivers are guilty of texting or using social media while driving (Swanepoel, 2016). The Road Safety Annual Report by the International Transport Forum stated that over and above having the one of the highest road accident rates, 25% of accidents are attributed to the use of cell phones while driving (BusinessTech, 2018). In 2016, there was a 9% increase in road fatalities from 2015 (BusinessTech, 2018). Based on this information, there is a need for organisations, such as *Arrive Alive*, to produce advertisements and campaigns that address and bring attention to the dangers of texting while driving.

Arrive Alive has produced advertisements specifically regarding the issue of texting while driving. One such advertisement is their 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive*

(Arrive Alive, 2015) which features a scary-looking driver, in a car, with a phone light shining on his face which is meant to establish the fear appeal that a serial killer would have. This research study exists to uncover more information on how audiences interpret advertisements such as the one by *Arrive Alive*.

2 RATIONALE AND RELEVANCE

With a 9% increase from 2015 to 2016 in road accidents in South Africa (BusinessTech, 2018) due to distracted driving (Swanepoel, 2016), there is a need for young motorists to be more aware of the dangers associated with texting and driving. One way that young motorists can be made aware of the dangers of texting while driving is through using specific advertisements. By interpreting these advertisements, young motorists can understand the dangers associated with this behaviour. The reason that this study was conducted was to describe whether the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement on texting and driving was understood as encoded by *Arrive Alive*. The 2015 *Arrive Alive* advertisement's aim was to bring awareness to the dangers of texting and driving and how drivers who are guilty of texting and driving put their lives and the lives of others at risk (Arrive Alive, 2015). The goal of this research study was to describe, through a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews, whether young adults who view the *Arrive Alive* advertisement interpret the advertisement's intended message as it was encoded.

According to Hesse (2016), on the *Discovery Insure Driver Challenge* application, a 2014 report by Chief Executive, Anton Ossip, indicated that the use of cellphones by young adults while driving is one of the top three causes of distracted driving. This issue is not only a concern in South Africa, but worldwide (Hesse, 2016). Advertisements by organisations such as *Arrive Alive* are to make drivers aware of the dangers of texting and driving. By being exposed to these advertisements, it is hoped that young drivers interpret and understand the message of texting while driving is a dangerous behaviour. This study is significant as it describes whether *Arrive Alive's* advertisement concerning texting and driving was successfully interpreted by motorists between the ages of 18 and 26.

This study is relevant to the field of communication as it focused on the audience's interpretations of a mass media advertisement which essentially determined whether the sender, in this case *Arrive Alive*, was successful or not in conveying a message such as texting while driving is dangerous and puts lives at risk. This was determined by analysing participants' interpretations of the advertisement. This study is, therefore, also relevant to

the transport industry as it provides evidence of how the audience of their 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement interpreted this advertisement to assist *Arrive Alive* in constructing more effective advertisements in future. Other organisations that also target motorists will benefit from the contribution that this research study has provided.

3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In South Africa, one of the main causes of driver distraction is the use of cell phones which increases the probability of causing an accident (Swanepoel, 2016). As road safety is a major concern, South African drivers need to be exposed to advertisements that show the dangers of cell phone use while driving to, hopefully, prevent the act of texting and driving. *Arrive Alive* has developed several advertisements of which their 2015 texting and driving advertisement, *You're a killer if you text and drive*, informed this research study. The aim of producing this advertisement was to show drivers that by texting and driving, the lives of the driver as well as other drivers are at risk (*Arrive Alive*, 2015). The problem was to find out if the audience decoded the advertisement on texting and driving as it was intended by the encoder, by conducting semi-structured interviews in which participants were shown the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement and asked questions based on the advertisement. A problem would have arisen if audience members did not understand and interpret the message as encoded by *Arrive Alive*. This would have indicated that the advertisement did not fulfil its intention of communicating to audience members that texting while driving puts drivers' and others' lives at risk. The problem needed to be resolved to ensure that advertising organisations produce advertisements that their audiences interpret as intended to ensure successful message and meaning interpretation.

4 PURPOSE STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The goal of this research study was to describe the interpretations of a South African *Arrive Alive* advertisement based on Stuart Hall's (1973) Audience Reception theory to describe whether the audience interprets the advertisement in the way *Arrive Alive* has encoded it. Conducting such research was important to determine audience understanding of these types of advertisements because compliance might be dependent on whether the audience understands the intended message. The purpose of this research study, therefore, was to describe the audience's interpretations of a 2015 South African *Arrive Alive* advertisement on texting and driving. This research study focused on licensed motorists between the ages

of 18 and 26. The research method used were semi-structured interviews. The data gathered from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed and analysed through a thematic analysis. Stuart Hall's Audience Reception theory was used, and the central concepts of this theory are audience reception and interpretation.

Research questions:

- 1) How do licensed motorists between the ages of 18 and 26 interpret a 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement?
- 2) What behaviour does the interpretations of the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement motivate?

This research questions addressed the research problem because both were focused on young motorists between the ages of 18 and 26 which is the age group that the issue of texting and driving mostly concerned with (Hesse, 2016).

5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To describe the interpretations of a South African 2015 *Arrive Alive* advertisement, *You're a killer if you text and drive*, by a thematic analysis of the responses obtained through semi-structured interviews and by using Stuart Hall's Audience Reception theory (1973).
- 2) To describe the behaviour that the interpretations of the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement motivates.

These objectives contributed to investigating the research problem as they guided how the semi-structured interview questions were designed to ensure that the researcher obtained relevant information from participants.

6 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

In his article, *Encoding and decoding in the television discourse* written in 1973, Stuart Hall discusses the moments of encoding and decoding which occur in the process of communication (Hall, 1973). Although his seminal work focuses on encoding and decoding within the televisual discourse, his theory can be applied to other forms of mass media messages, such as print advertisements, that audiences are exposed to and therefore interpret in their own ways. This is present in studies that have been conducted and is discussed in the literature review section of this report.

Hall (1973) asserts that in order for a message to have any effect, satisfy a need or be put to a certain use, it must first be perceived as a meaningful discourse and then be decoded, meaningfully, by its receivers. Although the effects of advertisements on the audience members was not the aim of this research study, however, the way in which a message is decoded determines its ability to have an effect, or to entertain or persuade the audience members who decode messages with complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological and behavioural frames of reference (Hall, 2006).

Hall identifies that a sender's encoded message and a receiver's decoded message may not be perfectly symmetrical because the sender and receiver of the message might have different frames of references and this increases the possibility of misunderstandings (Hall, 1973). In other words, senders encode messages according to their own ideals and views as receivers decode messages based on their own ideals and views which may be different and lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication (Martin, 2007). The relevance of this understanding to the current research study lies in the possibility that *Arrive Alive* may have encoded a message that the audience might have interpreted differently than intended and this will cause misinterpretation by audience members thereby deeming the advertisement unsuccessful and ineffective.

Audience members' decodings of cultural texts can be constructed from three hypothetical positions according to Hall (2006): the dominant-hegemonic position, the negotiated position and the oppositional position (Chandler, 2017).

The first position is the dominant-hegemonic position in which the audience member decodes the message the same way it was encoded (Hall, 1973), thereby operating within the dominant point of view (Martin, 2007). When an audience member decodes a message from this position, there are similarities between the receiver's and sender's assumptions and cultural biases, therefore decreasing the chances of misunderstanding and miscommunication (Martin, 2007). The dominant-hegemonic position can also be seen as "preferred readings" as the messages are constructed based on institutional, political and ideological beliefs of social structures in everyday life (Hall, 2006). This means that the dominant ideologies will be encoded through media messages to influence the audience to support these ideologies and beliefs and therefore have a high probability of being influential. This informed the research study as the *Arrive Alive* advertisement aimed to convey the message of the dangers of texting and driving to influence young motorists to refrain from texting and driving.

The second position is the negotiated position in which an audience member is capable of decoding the message within the context of the dominant cultural and societal views (Martin, 2007) but also interprets the message in a way that reflects their own interests and experiences (Chandler, 2017). This position can be seen to operate with exceptions to the rule, that is, the dominant-hegemonic position (Hall, 2006). For example, when viewing the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement, an audience member may interpret that the advertisement is depicting texting and driving as risky and dangerous when viewing elements of the advertisement such as the use of dark colours and text reading, 'You're a killer if you text and drive'.

The last position is the oppositional position. An audience member who takes this position when decoding a message, decodes the message as encoded, but because they are influenced by their societal beliefs, they produce an unintended meaning within the message which is opposite to that of the intended, preferred meaning as encoded (Martin, 2007). Because of their social situation, the audience member does not share the beliefs of the intended text and therefore rejects the encoded message and brings about an alternative frame of reference (Chandler, 2017). For example, an audience member will decode the meaning of the advertisement that texting and driving is dangerous, but may still believe that they are not a danger to themselves and to others if they text and drive and will likely to continue doing so.

Based on Hall's three positions that audience members can take when decoding or interpreting a media message, the way in which participants interpreted a 2015 *Arrive Alive* advertisement on texting and driving determined whether the advertisement was understood in the way the sender intended. By determining which position audience members take, the success of the advertisement's message was described. This research study used this theory as it is best suited to describing how, in terms of the three positions stipulated by Hall (1973), audience members interpreted the South African *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* (2015) advertisement. By describing audience members' interpretations of this advertisement, the researcher identified that audience members interpreted the advertisement by *Arrive Alive* as it was intended by the producer of the message. That is, interpreting that texting while driving is dangerous and puts the lives of the driver and others at risk (Arrive Alive, 2015).

A strength of Stuart Hall's Audience Reception theory is that it identifies three positions that an audience member can take when decoding a media message. This is a strength as it allows for predictions to be made on how audience members will interpret a media message.

By predicting these positions, the campaign effectiveness in terms of how audience members decode and interpret advertisements can be determined.

However, a limitation of this theory is that it only provides three positions, whereas some audience members may take positions outside of the three mentioned in Hall's theory such as the dominant-hegemonic position, the negotiated position and the oppositional position. This theory was originally developed based on positions that audience members could take when receiving media messages from television, thereby limiting the use of the theory to other mediums. Recent contributions, such as those by Reid and Van Niekerk (2016), to the theory allow for the theory to be applied to other forms of media messages, for example, an advertisement such as the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement.

Hall's Audience Reception theory was more relevant to researching this topic than the theory of Symbolic Interactionism as it focuses on how audience members decode a mass media message whereas the theory of Symbolic Interactionism focuses on the symbolic meanings that individuals develop during the process of social interaction (Crossman, 2018). This research study aimed to describe audience interpretations and not the subjective meanings individuals assign to objects, behaviours and events based on their social interactions with other individuals (Crossman, 2018). Therefore, Hall's Audience Reception theory (1973) was more suitable to this research study.

7 LITERATURE REVIEW

The research topic looks at how audience members interpret a 2015 South African *Arrive Alive* advertisement on texting while driving. The advertisement, *You're a killer if you text and drive* (2015), which participants will be exposed to was produced in 2015. The aim of this advertisement is to show how, by texting while driving, drivers put their own lives and others' lives at risk (Arrive Alive, 2015). As this literature review focuses on the findings of other studies in journal articles, it is a theoretical literature review (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014).

Texting and driving, which causes distracted driving, is one of the biggest causes of road accidents in South Africa (Hesse, 2016), which is why the 2015 *Arrive Alive* advertisement was chosen. With texting while driving being a concern, the need for advertisements depicting the dangers of this act and having the audience interpret it as encoded is necessary. By understanding how audience members interpret the *Arrive Alive*

advertisement, the success of the advertisement in conveying the dangers of texting while driving can be determined, based on Stuart Hall's Audience Reception theory (Hall, 1973) and the positions, such as dominant-hegemonic, negotiated and oppositional, that audience members can take when decoding media messages.

The journal articles which will be discussed were selected based on the ability of the findings to provide more information and show evidence of the issue of texting while driving in terms of how audiences interpret advertisements and to identify any gaps that might require future research.

As this research study used Stuart Hall's Audience Reception theory (Hall, 1973), articles and research studies that applied this model to their research were selected and analysed. During this process, some of the theory's strengths and limitations are identified in some studies. This is important to the research study as the researcher can use the strengths of other studies to build their research and attempt to overcome any limitations identified in journal articles.

Focusing on texting while driving, empirical studies, such as *A Meta-Analytic Comparison of the Effects of Text Messaging to Substance-Induced Impairment on Driving Performance* (Pascual-Ferrá, Liu & Beatty, 2012), show the effects and impacts of texting while driving, even when compared to other forms of distractions while driving. How public service announcements (PSAs), or advertisements, are interpreted by audience members based on various factors has also been reported.

Stuart Hall's Audience Reception theory arose from his 1973 article, *Encoding and decoding in the television discourse*. The main concept of this theory is that when exposed to media messages or cultural texts, an audience member will assume one of three positions when decoding the message (Martin, 2007): the dominant-hegemonic position, the negotiated position and the oppositional position (Hall, 2006). This literature review aims to discuss Stuart Hall's Audience Reception theory in its seminal form, more recent and current contributions to the theory and then focus on various research studies that apply Hall's theory. Studies that might fall outside the Audience Reception theory, such as *The Influence of Safe Driving Public Service Announcements on Young Adults' Risk Evaluation Depending on their Sensation Seeking Level* (Frolova & Dimdins, 2012), will be included in the literature review as they are relevant to the research problem. This literature review aims to discuss the themes found in applicable studies with regards to advertisements addressing the issue

of texting while driving, audience reception to advertisements as well as strengths and limitations of the Hall's Audience Reception theory.

7.1 Encoding and decoding

Hall's Audience Reception Theory looks at how audience members will decode media messages that they are exposed to by taking either one of three positions. In an *International Communication Association* conference proceedings paper, Hall's encoding/decoding model is revisited. Although this article was published in 2011, it is still relevant due to its proposal of some of the issues of the theory as well as solutions to its shortcomings. This theory emphasises the meaning of media messages – first, when they are encoded by a sender and second, when they are decoded by the receiver (Association, 2011). The moments of encoding and decoding are seen as independent of each other (Association, 2011). Hall created this model as an alternative to the original transmission model of sender-message-receiver as he saw the importance of meaning production which is guided by semiotic concepts (Association, 2011).

A study by Reid and van Niekerk (2016), *Decoding audience interpretations of awareness campaign messages*, is most relevant to the current research study as the study's main focus is on the audience's interpretation of campaign messages, similar to the current study's focus being on audience's interpretation of the *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement, thereby informing the current research study. Despite the study, by Reid and van Niekerk (2016), focusing on the educational influence of the cybersecurity awareness campaign on the audience, it still focuses on how the audience interprets a campaign which is the main focus of this research study. The study also looks at whether the campaign's educational objectives were met which is similar to this research study where the researcher describes how participants interpret the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement in relation to its objective of making audience members aware that texting while driving puts the driver's and others lives at risk (Reid & van Niekerk, 2016) (Arrive Alive, 2015). This study uses the Active Audience theory (AAT) to analyse the audience's interpretation of campaign messages and the researchers – Reid and van Niekerk – propose that this theory should be used as a foundation upon which more inventions should be designed to allow for more rigorous analyses of how audiences interpret campaign messages (Reid & van Niekerk, 2016).

In a qualitative study by Mada in 2013, *Interpreting humorous adverts in online media*, the researcher focuses on the linguistic structure of messages to convey wit, humour and ironic

meanings in advertisements. Although this study focuses on the use of wit, humour and irony in advertisements, it is relevant to the current research study as it is also a qualitative study and speaks to linguistic structures and the process of encoding a message to convey specific meanings. While this study looks at humorous advertisements in two national newspapers, one from the United Kingdom and the other from Romania, the current research study looks at an *Arrive Alive* advertisement, *You're a killer if you text and drive* (2015), in South Africa that uses fear appeals (Mada, 2013). Both studies look at the interpretation of advertisements by audience members as well as the process of encoding. The study, *Interpreting humorous adverts in online media* (Mada, 2013), provides a benefit to the proposed study as it assists in the understanding that by using certain linguistic structures and strategies, a sender can encode a message to convey a specific meaning which audience members will decode and interpret in the same way the sender has intended (Mada, 2013). However, a limitation of this study to the proposed study is that it focuses on linguistic structures and strategies that pertain to wit, humour and irony, not fear appeals which might include elements additional to linguistic structures.

7.2 Audience reception

Hall's Audience Reception theory was applied to a study in 2014, *Audience Reception Analysis of Moroccan Public Service Broadcasting* by Zaid (2014), which looked at analysing the audience's reception of public service broadcasting in Morocco by use of focus groups and exposing participants to two public service television stations. Zaid (2014) mentions that one of the strengths of Hall's theory is that it provides rich analytical tools that are powerful in helping researchers understand the relationship between how messages are encoded by television producers and then decoded by viewers (Zaid, 2014). However, this study reveals that Hall's theory does not account for an application to non-Western audiences in the sense that his theory focuses on audiences being able to decode television content with regards to hegemonic messages (Zaid, 2014). This means that when applied the Audience Reception theory is applied to the current research study, it will only provide an explanation for audience members who decode the *Arrive Alive* (2015) advertisement according to Western ideologies. This means that the use of Hall's theory as a theoretical framework will provide an explanation of how audience members will decode the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement's meaning and issue from a Western perspective, with dominant, Western views on texting and driving. This provides a possible barrier to this research study as the audience will be viewing the advertisement which was encoded from a Western perspective that might not be understood by participants.

The study shows how the audience members are active interpreters of media messages and Hall's theory incorporates the Uses and Gratifications theory in terms of an active audience (Zaid, 2014). As audience members are active interpreters of media messages, television texts are polysemic, thereby allowing for alternative interpretations of the text (Zaid, 2014). This applies to the research study as it researches the different interpretations individual audience members have of the *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* (2015) advertisement. Although this research study does not involve a media message from television, the artefact that will be presented to the participants is an advertisement which is also a media message that will be interpreted by the audience.

7.3 Advertisements on safe driving

As this research study will be looking at the *Arrive Alive* advertisement (2015) on the dangers of texting while driving, the article *The Influence of Safe Driving Public Service Announcements on Young Adults' Risk Evaluation Depending on their Sensation Seeking Level* published in 2012 regarding the influence of safe driving public service announcements on young adults' risk evaluation depending on their sensation seeking level is relevant (Frolova & Dimdins, 2012). This study was conducted by Frolova and Dimdins from the University of Latvia and is relevant because the research study looks at audience interpretations of an advertisement that addresses the dangers and risks associated with texting and driving, which is similar to the influence of a safe driving PSA as both focus on audience interpretations and responses to a message.

When looking at the issue of texting while driving, public service announcements (PSAs) are released with the intention of preventing acts such as dangerous driving, that could lead to loss of life. The importance of this study is that it looks at PSAs with different levels of message sensation value as well as if any changes of risk evaluation occurs from high sensation seekers (Frolova & Dimdins, 2012). The willingness to take physical, such as putting oneself in situations that may potentially cause harm, and social risks for the sake of experiences such as novel sensations and experiences is known as sensation seeking (Frolova & Dimdins, 2012), therefore, a high sensation seeker is an individual who is more willing to take physical and social risks to experience novel sensations. It was hypothesised that risk evaluation would be greater after high sensation seekers watched PSAs with high message sensation value (Frolova & Dimdins, 2012). However, the results proved that PSAs on safe driving do not have the desired impact on high sensation seekers. In other words, high sensation seekers do not perceive dangerous situations shown in PSAs as riskier (Frolova & Dimdins, 2012).

Based on this study, Frolova and Dimdins (2012) have shown that there is a need for more complex and novel messages – or messages with a high message sensation value – to grab the attention of high sensation seekers. This result is applicable to the current research study as it brings attention to a group of individuals within the audience that need to be considered when looking at advertisements' messages and audiences' decoding of these advertisements thereof. A limitation of this study is that it looks at the sub-genre of PSAs and not advertisements, which the proposed study focuses on, which may influence how the PSA is encoded in comparison to how an advertisement such as the *Arrive Alive* one is encoded. Therefore, it limits the contribution of the current research study to the one by Frolova and Dimdins as it focuses on an advertisement and not a PSA.

In addition to this study, is another study conducted in 2014 by Kareklas and Muehling – *Addressing the Texting and Driving Epidemic: Mortality Salience Priming Effects on Attitudes and Behavioral Intentions*. The study examines the issue in a social marketing context and consists of two empirical findings (Kareklas & Muehling, 2014). The first empirical study being drivers' perceptions of texting while driving, and the second empirical study being the effectiveness of mortality salience (MS) in PSAs. The relevance of this study lies in its focus on using persuasive communication techniques that aim to alter the perceptions and prevent the act of texting while driving (Kareklas & Muehling, 2014). Persuasive communication techniques have been used in the *Arrive Alive* advertisement on texting while driving to attempt to persuade the audience against texting while driving. A limitation, however, is that this study focuses on PSAs, and not advertisements like the current research study does, which might have a different message to those of an advertisement which will, therefore, yield different results.

The study also pays attention to how fear-based advertising (such as the 2015 advertisement by *Arrive Alive*) alters audiences' attitudes and behaviours as they are instilled with fear of their own deaths as well as being culpable for the deaths of others when engaging in texting while driving (Kareklas & Muehling, 2014). In this study, those participants who were exposed to PSAs depicting texting while driving generally reported reduced intentions of texting while driving in the future (Kareklas & Muehling, 2014). PSAs that used death symbols, such as a skull-and-crossbones, were more successful in preventing participants from texting while driving in comparison to PSAs that only contained verbal MS cues (Kareklas & Muehling, 2014). This study reveals how advertisements or campaigns that feature strong emotional references to death can be used as an effective persuasive technique (Kareklas & Muehling, 2014). It therefore contributes to the current

research study as the *Arrive Alive* advertisement (2015) uses the image of a scary male to bring attention to the dangers of texting and driving as well as persuade them to prevent that behaviour.

Although the study, *Personality Traits and Fear Response to Print Advertisements: Theory and an Empirical Study*, was published in 2004, it is relevant as Mowen, Harris and Bone address the notion of fear appeals in advertising and how it impacts on audience members based on their personalities. This article is also still relevant as it identifies the issue of cell phone use while driving causing accidents as well as discusses fear appeals and responses to print advertisements which links directly to the chosen 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement on texting while driving. This advertisement uses fear appeals to convey the dangers of texting and driving. Although this is an empirical study, it addresses fear appeals in advertisements which relates to the 2015 *Arrive Alive* advertisement.

The results of the study, *Personality Traits and Fear Response to Print Advertisements: Theory and an Empirical Study* (Mowen, Harris & Bone, 2004), show that, from an encoder's perspective, self-esteem is negatively related to the level of fear aroused and that perceived vulnerability is an important factor when assessing the effectiveness of fear appeals. The study also reveals that, amongst adolescents, sensation seeking is a personality trait causes adolescents to oppose fear appeals when exposed to PSAs that make use of fear appeals with the intention to prevent the occurrence of undesirable behaviour (Mowen, *et al.*, 2004). Sensation seeking as a personality trait of adolescents also enables them to provide more counterarguments and portray positive attitudes towards topics that make use of fear appeals (Mowen, *et al.*, 2004). The results of this study guide how audience members of the current research study may interpret the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement in terms of its fear appeal and whether the participants accept or disregard it by anticipating that participants might interpret the fear appeal of this advertisement positively by showing an understanding of the dangers of texting and driving.

7.4 Texting while driving

In a study, *Testing the Risk Perception Attitude Framework in the Context of Texting While Driving*, by Dillow, Walsh, Spellman and Quirk (2015), the Risk Perception Attitude Framework is tested in the context of texting while driving, the outcomes of issue importance, behavioural intentions and behavioural effects of texting while driving were reported. The

goal of the study was to identify and isolate key features of persuasive messages (Dillow, Walsh, Spellman & Quirk, 2015).

The Risk Perception Attitude Framework provides a perspective on perceived risk that is consistent with previous findings about risks' inconsistent ability to directly motivate preventative behaviours (Dillow, *et al.*, 2015). There are four attitudinal groups within this framework under which individuals can be categorised: responsive attitudes, avoidance attitudes, proactive attitudes and indifference attitudes. These may be related to those positions proposed by Hall (1973) such as dominant-hegemonic position, negotiated position and oppositional position, as the attitudinal groups have similar characteristics to those of the positions proposed by Hall (1973).

This study reveals that persuasive messages that are important on a more personal level are attended to more closely than those messages which do not concern individuals on a personal level (Dillow, *et al.*, 2015). It has also been found that although attending to a persuasive message is one of the necessary conditions for attitude and behaviour change, it is not sufficient and needs other conditions for attitude and behaviour change to occur (Dillow, *et al.*, 2015). This study is relevant as it links to how audience members will interpret an advertisement, according to Stuart Hall's Audience Reception theory. For example, an audience member may interpret the advertisement by taking a dominant-hegemonic position if texting and driving relates to them on a personal level. A limitation, however, is that this study might reveal that persuasive messages that audience members do not relate to on a personal level do actually affect them. This is a limitation because there is an assumption that persuasive messages about a topic that is not relevant to an individual on a personal level will not be effective in persuading them, which may turn out to be untrue in different scenarios.

To provide credibility for campaigns and advertisements on safe driving and texting while driving, a *meta-analytic comparison of the effects of texting while driving to other substance-induced forms of impairment on driving performance* was conducted by Pascual-Ferrá, Liu and Beatty in 2012. The study involved comparing the effects of texting while driving to drinking and driving as well as marijuana use while driving (Pascual-Ferrá, *et al.*, 2012). This study is relevant as it provides an example of how empirical evidence can be used to provide credibility in advertising campaigns. When applied to the current research study, empirical evidence can be added when encoding an advertisement on the dangers of texting while driving, to make the message credible and allow for audience members to decode the

message as encoded. Results of this study show how the effects of texting while driving are more harmful on driving ability than other forms of substance-induced impairment.

7.5 Fear appeals

Appealing to fear: a meta-analysis of fear appeal effectiveness and theories is a study, conducted in Illinois, which looks at the effects fear appeals have on attitudes, intentions and behaviours (Tannebaum, 2015). This study supports the proposed research study as it mentions that messages which have a higher level of fear, efficacy statements and severity assigned to them, have a higher fear appeal (Tannebaum, 2015). By understanding this result, the level of fear depicted in the *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* (2015) advertisement will be interpreted by participants. This study provides the advantage of having college-aged adults as participants, which the proposed research study will also be researching, therefore providing direction and anticipated interpretations by participants. Based on this research study, the researcher can anticipate how effective the use of fear appeals in the *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement are in describing the symmetry between encoding-decoding and understanding by analysing how participants interpret the advertisement in terms of how participants interpret the advertisement through the visible text, images and the severity of the concern addressed in the advertisement (Tannebaum, 2015).

In addition, although the study, *a meta-analytic comparison of the effects of texting while driving to other substance-induced forms of impairment on driving performance* (Pascual-Ferrá, et al., 2012), looks at the effects of substance-induced forms of impairment on driving performance, the results of this study show how fear appeals can be used when encoding an advertisement such as the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* one.

In contrast, the study by Rhodes (2017), *Fear-appeal messages: message processing and affective attitudes*, emphasises how fear appeals may not always have the desired effect on audience members. This study discusses how fear appeals are used in safe-driving messages which links directly to the *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* (2015) advertisement which aims to convey the message that if you text and drive, you put your life as well as the lives of others in danger thereby hoping that the audience interprets the message as intended (Arrive Alive, 2015). The study looks at messages of varying message sensation value (MSV) and the results show how messages with medium MSV are interpreted by audience members in the way the sender intended. That is, aiming to change the intention of motorists to drive more slowly (Rhodes, 2017). The increased use of fear

appeals in messages resulted in an increase in emotional thoughts concerning safe-driving that are for safe-driving and against dangerous driving (Rhodes, 2017) which can be useful to the current research study if participants interpret the *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* 2015 advertisement as intended. The study states that the use of fear appeals is effective in various healthcare domains however, the effectiveness of fear appeals in texting and driving campaigns has yet to be established (Rhodes, 2017). The study proposes that the effects of fear-inducing messages on young drivers need to be understood more fully (Rhodes, 2017). The current research study aims to answer the research question of how audience members interpret the *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* 2015 advertisement which uses fear appeal. By describing how participants, young motorists between the ages of 18 and 26, interpret this advertisement, the perceived effects of fear-inducing messages on young drivers can be understood better. The current research study will therefore reveal if fear appeals have or do not have the intended meaning on audience members.

The relevance of the study, *The use of negative emotions in health care communication messages: study of the effects of fear, guilt, and shame* (2014), lies in its examination of the effects of fear in anti-alcohol messages (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014). The study addresses the link between the perceptions of physical and social threats which create negative emotions such as fear, guilt and shame and how it has an impact on persuasion (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014). The study found that people with a high self-esteem want to maintain their self-esteem by using different strategies and that the effect of self-esteem is insignificant on perceived vulnerability to the threat in scenarios of fear, guilt and shame due to self-esteem being a controversial topic (Becheur & Valette-Florence, 2014). As the proposed research study aims to gain an understanding of how audience members interpret a 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement, this study is relevant in showing how using fear in an advertisement has an effect on the audience. A possible limitation of this study is that the fear effects used in anti-alcoholic messages might differ from those fear appeals used in advertisements against texting and driving thereby yielding different interpretations by audience members.

None of the studies in this literature review analysed how important audience members' interpretations of advertisements are in determining if the advertisement's message was understood as it was encoded. Therefore, this research study attempts to bridge the gap by valuing how audience members interpret advertisements to find out if advertisements are decoded as intended, thereby determining the effectiveness or lack thereof of

advertisements. However, there have been significant contributions made to the current research study by the various literature such as confirming that audience members are active interpreters of mass media messages, the use of strong emotional references (such as fear appeals) can be used as a persuasive technique as well as bringing attention to the possibility that fear appeals may not have the desired affect on audience members.

8 CONCEPTUALISATION

An **advertisement** can be defined as a tool that can be used to persuade or manipulate (Bútorová, 2016).

Defining an advertisement is relevant to the research study because during the semi-structured interviews, participants were shown the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement which was an important part of the study. This concept is important as the researcher needed to understand what an advertisement was as participants were to be asked questions based on an advertisement and not a Public Service Announcement (PSA). A PSA usually aims to inform and educate people without a profit motive (Suggett, 2018) whereas *Arrive Alive* is funded by the Road Accident Fund (RAF) (Azzakani, 2004).

Encoding is a process in which a sender constructs a message for a target audience.

Encoding is important and relevant because participants will have to decode the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement and the researcher will determine whether participants decode the message as it was encoded. The aim of the advertisement is to convey the message of texting and driving puts the driver's and others' lives at risk (Arrive Alive, 2015). This looks at how the advertiser has constructed the advertisement with specific focus on the text, colours and images used, to communicate the dangers of texting and driving. The researcher will ask the participants questions to determine their understanding of how the advertisement has been encoded. For example, as the *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement's aim is to bring awareness to the dangers of texting and driving (Arrive Alive, 2015), the researcher will ask questions to determine if the participants understand the meaning of the advertisement as encoded. Encoding is also a key concept in Hall's Audience Reception theory (1973).

Decoding is the process in which an audience member deconstructs a message to assign a meaning to it.

The decoding process is an important process in this research study as it will determine how participants understand the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement and whether their interpretation is decoded the same as encoded. This process is important to the research study because during decoding, participants will reveal which position of Hall's Audience Reception theory (1973) they take. This concept was especially significant to this research study as the focus of the study was on audience interpretations of an advertisement by describing whether they took the dominant-hegemonic, negotiated or oppositional position as proposed by Hall (1973).

A **dominant-hegemonic position** is defined as a position in which an audience member decodes a message in the same way it was encoded by the sender (Hall, 1973).

Defining the dominant-hegemonic position is relevant and important to the research study as it is one of the three positions that an audience member can take when decoding a media message (Hall, 1973) and will be determined by asking questions which will reveal a dominant-hegemonic position or not. This is the position that audience members should take to interpret the message as encoded. Participants that take this position will interpret that the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement is conveying that texting and driving is dangerous and puts the driver's and others' safety and lives at risk.

A **negotiated position** is a position in which an audience member is capable of decoding the message within the context of the dominant cultural and societal views (Martin, 2007) but incorporates their own interests and experiences into their interpretation of the message (Chandler, 2017).

The negotiated position is the second position that audience members can take when decoding a media message and will be determined by asking questions that will reveal whether participants take this position or not. This position is relevant to the study as participants may interpret the advertisement by providing their own experiences related to the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement.

An **oppositional position** is one which an audience member takes when they decode a message as it was encoded but because they are influenced by their societal beliefs, they produce an unintended meaning within the message which is opposite to that of the intended meaning as encoded (Martin, 2007).

The last position that audience members can take when decoding media messages is the oppositional position and it is relevant as there is a possibility that participants may decode

the message as encoded but may be influenced by societal beliefs to produce unintended meanings. This will also be determined through the answers participants give in response to questions asked by the researcher.

A **fear appeal** is a form of persuasive message that emphasises potential danger that individuals will encounter if they do not follow the message recommendation (American Psychology Association, 2015).

The 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement makes use of fear appeals by equating individuals who text and drive to serial killers or criminals and is therefore vital to define in this research study.

9 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The research study falls within the interpretivism paradigm. In this tradition, the ontological position sees facts as fluid and subjective, created by human interaction (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). The epistemological position views common sense as a source of knowledge and knowledge is what feels right to those being studied (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). The axiological position values uniqueness in research (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

Due to its qualitative nature, this research study falls within the interpretivism paradigm as it aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of how audience members interpreted and understood a 2015 South African *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement on texting and driving by valuing their unique interpretations and experiences (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Within the interpretivist paradigm, the ontological position espouses that facts can be viewed subjectively because it is created through human interaction (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014). The reality of how audience members interpreted the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement was subjective as each audience member interpreted the advertisement in their own way, upon interaction with the advertisement, based on their perceptions, values and attitudes.

The epistemological position acknowledges common sense as a source of knowledge as well as what feels right to the audience members (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014). Based on their interaction with the chosen advertisement on texting and driving, audience members expressed their own personal interpretations of the advertisement and this was regarded as

“common sense” knowledge and is used as evidence in the research study to draw conclusions.

The axiological position of interpretivism values uniqueness in research (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014). This means that, although audience members may have had varying interpretations of the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You’re a killer if you text and drive* advertisement, each unique interpretation was valued and recorded.

When looking at metatheory, this study uses Stuart Hall’s Audience Reception theory to create an in-depth understanding of the audience members’ realities (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014) when interpreting the advertisement on texting and driving. This theory provides specific positions that audience members can take when being exposed to mass media messages thereby classifying it as a theory upon which qualitative studies can be based.

This research study made use of qualitative, subjective methods which formed the basis of its methodological position (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, semi-structured personal interviews were used to gather audience interpretations of the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You’re a killer if you text and drive* advertisement.

10 DESIGN

As the aim of this research study was to describe how licensed motorists between the ages of 18 and 26 interpret a 2015 *Arrive Alive: You’re a killer if you text and drive* advertisement, the research study falls within the interpretivist paradigm and was basic research (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). As the researcher collected data from respondents once due to time constraints and only needing a single interpretation of an advertisement, the time dimension of the study was cross-sectional with no repeats (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014). The line of reasoning that this research study followed was deductive reasoning as it involves taking a general assumption, or theory such as Hall’s Audience Reception theory, and then moving towards more specific assumptions (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014). The current research study used Hall’s Audience Reception theory as a theoretical framework to provide three positions that audience members could have assumed when decoding a media message and applying it to the 2015 South African *Arrive Alive: You’re a killer if you text and drive* advertisement which was interpreted by participants.

11 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The population parameters of this research study were licensed South African drivers, between the ages of 18 and 26 as the problem of texting and driving affects younger motorists.

The target population included all licensed South African drivers between the ages of 18 and 26 who were likely to view the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement at least once. This target population was chosen as the issue affects younger motorists (Swanepoel, 2016). The target population includes licensed drivers because unlicensed drivers might be unwilling to participate or provide truthful information.

An accessible population is defined as the respondents that the researcher has access to within the target population (Pascoe, 2014), therefore the accessible population of this research study consisted of licensed South African drivers from the target population, between the ages of 18 and 26, residing in Musgrave, Durban. Musgrave, Durban was selected for research accessibility and convenience of the researcher based on time and mobility restraints.

The research study made use of non-probability, purposive sampling (Maree, 2016) as the researcher chose four participants. Four participants were chosen because qualitative studies focus more on dealing with in-depth answers of each participant's experience than collecting generalisable facts. A possible limitation, however, was that having four respondents would not yield information that is exhaustive. If this had happened, the researcher would have applied snowball sampling techniques. The researcher also made use of convenience sampling as easily accessible (Pascoe, 2014) participants were interviewed. The sample only included licensed South African drivers to avoid ethical issues.

The unit of analysis was the individual motorist. The nature of the population was licensed South African individual drivers between the ages of 18 and 26 residing in Musgrave, Durban, as the issue of texting and driving affects younger motorists (Swanepoel, 2016) who are more prone to texting while driving.

12 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Data was obtained through personal, semi-structured interviews with members of the sample group as the researcher wanted to attain an in-depth understanding of how audience members interpret an advertisement. Personal interviews consisted of showing participants

the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement and then asking various questions related to it from an interview question schedule. The interviewing method was semi-structured (Maree, 2016). This choice of structure was to allow for participants to give answers that could lead to a discussion between the researcher and the participant to gain an in-depth understanding of their interpretations of the advertisement without it being too rigid. Open-ended priori questions were developed before meeting with participants. Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 were constructed to answer the first broader research question whereas Questions 1 and 9 were constructed to answer the second broader research question. The semi-structured interview questions were pre-tested by interviewing an individual that fit the population parameters. One of the challenges of this method was finding suitable meeting times to conduct interviews as participants had busy schedules. Another challenge of this method was noticing some participants being nervous to answer questions initially. This was a challenge as being nervous might have influenced the answers given for the first few questions. A benefit of this method was being able to explain questions that participants did not initially understand.

13 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

As the information collected had to reveal iterative information of how participants decode and interpret the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement, the researcher used a thematic analysis which is the process in which data is reduced by identifying themes (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). A list of themes found in the Audience Reception theory were used to anticipate the data that were to be found in the responses (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). Themes such as 'dominant position', 'negotiated position' and 'oppositional position' were used to anticipate the participants' interpretations and responses. The purpose of using this method to analyse the data was to identify how the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement was interpreted by audience members.

14 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness can be used as the overarching term to determine reliability and validity in a qualitative research study (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014) which is important as those who read this research report can be assured that the results are reliable. For a qualitative research study to be trustworthy, researchers have to consider the four criteria proposed by

Guba (1981), that is, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Maree, 2016).

14.1 Credibility

Credibility was ensured through ensuring that the findings were congruent with reality and having the reader believe the research findings. This was done by having a well-established research method, having the research question fit the research design and a theoretical foundation that aligned with the research question and methods (Maree, 2016).

The research method that was used were semi-structured interviews which allowed for the participants to give detailed responses. The research design was to describe audience interpretations of the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement and fits the research question of how the audience interprets an *Arrive Alive* advertisement on texting and driving. Semi-structured interviews were used to answer the research question of how audience members interpret a 2015 *Arrive Alive* advertisement on texting and driving which aligned with Stuart Hall's (1973) Audience Reception theory which looks specifically at how audience members interpret media messages.

14.2 Transferability

When the findings of a qualitative research study can be applied to a similar situation and deliver similar results, it is seen the findings' ability to be transferable (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014).

This research study is transferable as it used tested and scientific methods of investigation such as using convenience sampling and the interpretation of the advertisement is from a well-established theoretical framework from Stuart Hall's Audience Reception theory, therefore leading to the results' ability to be used to inform other studies. The research study made use of a qualitative thematic analysis and semi-structured interviews.

14.3 Dependability

Through the research design and implementation thereof, dependability is demonstrated by providing operational detail of data gathering and reflective appraisals of the research study (Maree, 2016). Integrating the data collection method, data analysis and deductions of the findings will enhance the study's dependability (Maree, 2016). This research study is dependable because it made use of non-probability, purposive sampling as four participants were interviewed by use of semi-structured interviews which the data obtained was then be analysed through a thematic analysis.

14.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the indication of how well findings flow from the data or, in other words, how well the researcher's findings and interpretations are supported by the data collected (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014).

The researcher carefully analysed the data collected through the semi-structured interviews by way of a thematic analysis. By providing the data obtained, the intention was to see a flow from the data to the researcher's findings and interpretations thereof which was incrementally tested throughout. This research study was confirmable as the data analysis includes direct quotes from participants' responses from the semi-structured interviews.

15 PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Question 1: Describe how this advertisement makes you feel?

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE
A	"Concerned. Concerned and also scared because many people do it so it's something to think about."
B	"Like I don't want to text and drive."
C	"It's scary because of the way the guy's face is and it's dark. Also the fact that we know the consequences of texting and driving. We've seen videos and stuff like that. Yeah, it's just scary because we know what can happen if something goes wrong."
D	"I think it's a bit daunting. The whole torch thing. Like I know like when we were kids we'd be like bogeyman with a torch but it's something serious, like texting and driving is serious so I think it's a good advert to capture the meaning."

PARTICIPANT	DOMINANT- HEGEMONIC POSITION	NEGOTIATED POSITION	OPPOSITIONAL POSITION
A	x		
B		x	
C	x		

D	x		
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Participants were asked this question to determine how they decode the advertisement in terms of how it makes them feel to reveal if the use of fear appeals was effective in conveying the message that texting and driving is dangerous and risky. The use of fear appeals in this advertisement was effective as three of the four participants responded with feelings and emotions such as being “concerned” or “scared” thereby taking the dominant-hegemonic position. However, although Participant B indicated that the advertisement makes them feel as though they “don’t want to text and drive”, they have not identified feelings associated with fear appeals like other participants did, therefore they take the negotiated position as they understand the message but have chosen to convey their own interpretation of it. Although Rhodes (2017) emphasised how fear appeals may not always have the desired effects on audience members, the answers provided by three of the four participants reveal that fear appeals do make them fearful or concerned about the topic which the advertisement’s message is addressing.

Question 2: Explain the message that you get from this advertisement?

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE
A	“It’s basically as good as saying don’t drink and drive. You’re obviously a danger to other people if you’re going to be texting because obviously your focus is off the road when you’re texting and anything can happen which can be serious or not.”
B	“Well, that if you text and drive then you’re a criminal because you could kill someone on the road.”
C	“That it’s dangerous to text and drive.”
D	“The message that I get from this advert I’d say like how serious and daunting texting and driving is because you actually could endanger someone else’s life.”

PARTICIPANT	DOMINANT- HEGEMONIC POSITION	NEGOTIATED POSITION	OPPOSITIONAL POSITION
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A	x		
B	x		
C	x		
D	x		

This question focused on participants' interpretations of the advertisement to uncover whether they took the dominant-hegemonic, negotiated or oppositional position as proposed by Hall (1973) when decoding the advertisement. All four participants have taken the dominant-hegemonic position for this question as they responded with answers such as "you're obviously a danger to other people", "if you text and drive then you're a criminal", "it's dangerous to text and drive" and "you actually could endanger someone else's life" which are all answers indicative of the dominant-hegemonic position and therefore understanding of the advertisement as encoded.

Question 3: Explain which element of the advertisement you notice first?

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE
A	"The text. The "you're a killer if you text and drive"."
B	"His face. It's pretty scary."
C	"The text, the scary looking guy."
D	"The picture, definitely. And then, I like that the logo is there, the <i>Arrive Alive</i> thing but I'd definitely say the picture like the eyes and everything."

PARTICIPANT	DOMINANT- HEGEMONIC POSITION	NEGOTIATED POSITION	OPPOSITIONAL POSITION
A	x		
B	x		
C	x		
D	x		

By asking participants which element of the advertisement they notice first, the focal point of the advertisement could be determined thereby contributing to how participants decode and interpret the advertisement. The answers to this question reveal that both the text “you’re a killer if you text and drive” and the image of “the scary looking guy” were the elements of the advertisement that participants notice first. Because the face in the advertisement is “pretty scary”, participants automatically linked the issue addressed to something scary and serious which shows that all four participants took the dominant-hegemonic position. The answers to this question did not corroborate with the findings by Rhodes (2017) that fear appeals may not always have the desired effects on audience members as all participants identified the element of fear in this advertisement.

Question 4: Explain your interpretation of the slogan?

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE
A	“I think I just explained that. Okay basically it’s telling you that you can be very dangerous, you can be a threat to other drivers. You never know what can happen when you take your eyes off the road for even two minutes. There could be a car in front of you or even a pedestrian crossing and you could kill somebody.”
B	“Well, you’re a killer if you text and drive. Yeah, if you are going to be on your phone and if you’re texting while you’re driving, you could get distracted and then potentially cost someone their life. You could crash into them.”
C	“That you’d be taking innocent lives by doing something that you shouldn’t be doing in the first place.”
D	“Well it’s something very short and catchy. Like it’s right there, you can see it straight away and it’s short, to the point and it’s very domineering. It tells you what it is.”

PARTICIPANT	DOMINANT-HEGEMONIC POSITION	NEGOTIATED POSITION	OPPOSITIONAL POSITION
A	x		
B	x		

C	x		
D		x	

By asking participants to explain their interpretation of the slogan, 'you're a killer if you text and drive', the researcher determined what position each participant took when decoding the advertisement, in accordance with Hall's (1973) Audience Reception theory. As participants' answers included phrases such as "you can be a threat to other drivers", "you could kill somebody", "potentially cost someone their life" and "you'd be taking innocent lives", it shows that they took the dominant-hegemonic position, thereby interpreting that one can equate to a serial killer in the sense that they would be guilty of committing a serious crime, that is, killing someone. However, Participant D has taken the negotiated position when answering this question as their answer consisted of "it's something very short and catchy" and "it tells you what it is" which does not link directly to the message of the slogan but shows understanding that the slogan is effective.

Question 5: Do you think this advertisement is relevant to you and why?

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE
A	"Okay, to be honest, sometimes it is. Sometimes, especially when it comes to work and stuff you, if you're on the road you have to reply to certain things urgently so sometimes you can be guilty of this."
B	"Well, it's not relevant to me because I don't text and drive but I'm sure it's relevant to people my age because a lot of people do text and drive."
C	"I think it is because sometimes I do this. But I don't realise the risk involved. But we do it anyway because we think it's more important to reply or look at your phone rather than concentrating on what you're doing."
D	"I definitely think so because I know I tend to sometimes message while I'm, like if I hear my phone beep, but it's a reality that you can't just think that it's not going to happen to me but it could. So I think it's very relevant. To myself and probably everyone I know."

PARTICIPANT	DOMINANT- HEGEMONIC POSITION	NEGOTIATED POSITION	OPPOSITIONAL POSITION
A		x	
B		x	
C		x	
D		x	

All four participants have taken the negotiated position when answering this question as their answers required each participant to show an understanding of the advertisement and then explain the relevance to themselves thereof, which consisted of their own experiences and interests. The relevance of this advertisement to participants also reflected the current perception, attitudes and beliefs of the issue of texting and driving amongst young motorists. Based on the answers given by participants, the issue of texting and driving was relevant to three out of the four participants. For those that this advertisement was relevant to, it was revealed that it was only sometimes that they would text and drive and that their reasons for texting and driving included replying to certain messages that were “urgent” and work-related. Participant C raised the fact that they “don’t realise the risk involved” with texting while driving and therefore continue to do it.

Participant B, on the other hand, was the only participant to mention that the advertisement was not relevant to them because they do not text and drive but were sure that it was “relevant to people my age because a lot of people do text and drive”. This supports the assumption that texting and driving is mostly prevalent amongst young motorists (Hesse, 2016) because this participant falls within the age group of 18-26 and is therefore aware that other young motorists are guilty of texting and driving.

Question 6: Explain what you think Arrive Alive’s aim is by producing this advertisement?

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE
A	“It’s to make the road a better place. Not only for other drivers but pedestrians. Like a safer environment to be on, basically. So you’re

	not going to be faced with unnecessary troubles of accidents and etcetera.”
B	“Okay, well, I think it’s to shock people, obviously because it’s quite intense saying you’re a killer if you text and drive so I think it’s just to shock people into realising that they could actually kill someone if they get distracted.”
C	“It’s probably to create awareness and stop people from using their cell phones as much as they do, especially while driving. And save lives.”
D	“Obviously to, firstly to create a little bit of fear in people that you could actually end someone else’s life by your silly mistake. Basically, just how serious the situation is of driving and texting.”

PARTICIPANT	DOMINANT- HEGEMONIC POSITION	NEGOTIATED POSITION	OPPOSITIONAL POSITION
A		x	
B	x		
C	x		
D	x		

Participants were asked what they thought *Arrive Alive*’s aim was by producing this advertisement to uncover how they decode and interpret the message. This required participants to look deeper into what they thought the aim of the advertisement was from the perspective of the advertiser, thereby allowing the researcher to determine an understanding of participants’ deeper analysis. From participants’ responses to this question, three of the four participants took the dominant-hegemonic position when interpreting this advertisement, thereby showing understanding of the intended meaning, as encoded by the sender. This can be determined through responses such as “to shock people into realising that they could actually kill someone if they get distracted”, “to create awareness and stop people from using their cell phones”, “to create a little bit of fear in people” and also to show “how serious the situation is of driving and texting”. All these responses show understanding of the use of a fear appeal to convey the message that texting and driving is dangerous to both the driver and others around them.

On the other hand, Participant A took the negotiated position as they understood the advertisement but gave an answer that was reflective of their own experiences such as, “it’s to make the road a better place. Not only for other drivers but pedestrians”, “a safer environment to be on” and “you’re not going to be faced with unnecessary troubles of accidents”. This participant interpreted that texting and driving is dangerous and has therefore stated that *Arrive Alive*’s aim is to make roads safer to travel on, essentially.

Question 7: Explain any elements of this advertisement that you do not understand?

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE
A	“It’s quite clear. I think I understand most of it.”
B	“No, I think I get everything.”
C	“There are none, I don’t think there’s any.”
D	“I understand all of it.”

PARTICIPANT	DOMINANT- HEGEMONIC POSITION	NEGOTIATED POSITION	OPPOSITIONAL POSITION
A	x		
B	x		
C	x		
D	x		

By stating that the advertisement was “quite clear” and that participants understood all of it, it shows that all participants have taken the dominant-hegemonic position. If participants did not understand any elements of this advertisement, it would have influenced their interpretations and therefore their positions of either negotiated or oppositional (Hall, 1973). If any participants said that they did not understand any of the elements within this specific advertisement, there would have been an issue with their decoding and interpretation.

Question 8: How would you change this advertisement to improve its understandability?

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE
A	"Maybe the actual person, not just looking straight ahead but actually somebody looking at their phone and showing, like, you obviously do take your eyes off the road when you text."
B	"Maybe make it more apparent that he's in a car. Like, make that part more visible. You can see the lines, the shadows but I think maybe make that a little bit more visible, the fact that it's a car."
C	"Maybe make it less frightening. And add more people so that people can understand it better. Like for instance, it's dark, not like, it just looks a bit scary."
D	"I don't think I'd change any bit of it. No, I wouldn't change it."

PARTICIPANT	DOMINANT- HEGEMONIC POSITION	NEGOTIATED POSITION	OPPOSITIONAL POSITION
A		x	
B		x	
C			x
D		x	

Three of the four participants have taken the negotiated position when providing suggestions on how to improve the advertisement's understandability as this involved the participants having an understanding of the advertisement and then providing their own ideas to enhance the meaning of the message.

Participant A has demonstrated that the light visible on the driver's face in the advertisement is not clear enough as their suggestion to improve the advertisement was to have "somebody looking at their phone". Participant B was aware that the driver is in a car but thought that it needed to be "more apparent that he's in a car, like, make that part more visible".

However, Participant C stated that the understandability of this advertisement could be improved by making it "less frightening and add more people so that people can understand it better" thereby taking the oppositional position. This is indicative of not understanding the use of a fear appeal to convey the message that texting and driving is dangerous. Based on

this participant's response, it is evident that the use of fear appeals did not have its intended effect on this audience member, thereby corroborating with Rhodes (2017) study that reveals that fear appeals may not always have the desired effect on individuals. In addition to this participant's response, it can be described that the participant only understood the 'text' part of the advertisement, that is, the slogan that reads 'You're a killer if you text and drive'. They did, however understand that the 'dark' colours were related to fear as they responded with "it just looks a bit scary".

Question 9: After viewing this advertisement, explain how your view on texting while driving has or has not changed?

PARTICIPANT	RESPONSE
A	"My view has changed a bit. It does make you wonder and it does make you think a lot because you could be at a risk of endangering other people and getting into unnecessary trouble. You could knock a pedestrian or have an unnecessary accident. So it's something to be concerned about and obviously something to be taken into consideration."
B	"It hasn't changed because I always thought that texting while driving was bad."
C	"To be honest, like, I think I'm still probably going to do it, but I will think about this more often now when I do it. But it's not going to change much."
D	"No, I think it has changed just because that guy looks very scary, which is what a killer looks like. You might not think someone is innocently driving, messaging is a killer, which you literally are if you are, it's your fault, you shouldn't have been doing that. It's against the law. And I like that he's in a car, like a dark car that looks scary."

PARTICIPANT	DOMINANT- HEGEMONIC POSITION	NEGOTIATED POSITION	OPPOSITIONAL POSITION
A	x		
B	x		

C			x
D	x		

As this study focused on audience interpretations of a 2015 South African *Arrive Alive: "You're a killer if you text and drive"* advertisement, by asking participants how their view on texting and driving has or has not changed allowed the researcher to determine if the advertisement was interpreted as encoded and intended, that is, to bring attention to the dangers and risks associated with texting and driving. Whether or not participants' views on texting while driving changed does not influence their interpretation of the advertisement. This means that, some participants said that their views on texting and driving have not changed whereas others said that their views have changed but overall, they did interpret the dangers associated with texting and driving.

Participant A said that their view has "changed a bit" and that it is "something to be concerned about and obviously something to be taken into consideration" which indicates the dominant-hegemonic position. Participant B "always thought that texting and driving was bad", therefore their view has not changed but still took the dominant-hegemonic position.

Although Participant C will "think about this more often now when I do it" they answered that they are "still probably going to do it", therefore indicating taking the oppositional position. Based on the answer given by Participant D, their view on texting while driving has changed because "that guy looks very scary, which is what a killer looks like". The impact of the use of fear appeals in this advertisement on Participant D was effective as they have mentioned how "scary" the advertisement looks and linked it to "messaging is a killer". Participant D has, therefore, taken the dominant-hegemonic position.

16 CONCLUSION

To conclude this research study, the research objectives and questions will be analysed, the implications of the findings of the study discussed and the research problem addressed.

16.1 Research Objective and Question Analysed

16.1.1 Research Objective and Research Question

The objective of this research study was to describe the interpretations of a South African *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* (2015) advertisement through a thematic analysis of participants' responses obtained during semi-structured interviews as well as to

describe what behaviour the interpretations of this advertisement motivated. This was done by using Stuart Hall's Audience Reception theory (1973).

The research objectives, therefore, led to the research questions of, 'how do licensed motorists between the ages of 18 and 26 interpret a 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement?' and 'what behaviour does the interpretations of the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement motivate?'.

16.1.2 Implications of Findings

The findings of this research study have achieved the first research objective of describing participants' interpretations of a South African *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* (2015) advertisement by successfully answering the research questions of 'how do licensed motorists between the ages of 18 and 26 interpret a 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement?' and 'what behaviour does the interpretations of the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement motivate?'.

The second research objective of describing what behaviour the interpretations of the 2015 *Arrive Alive* advertisement motivates was also achieved. The findings show that the participants do decode, interpret and understand the *Arrive Alive* (2015) advertisement as the sender intended and encoded the message with slight variation in interpretations but overall decoding by taking the dominant-hegemonic position. This is evident as all participants were able to interpret the advertisement to reveal its message of texting and driving being dangerous, not only to a driver but to other people who could be near them. Participants' interpret the message that texting and driving is a serious crime that can be equated to that of the crimes of a serial killer. All participants were able to interpret and understand the use of a fear appeal in this advertisement, however, one participant would have preferred a less scary advertisement whereby the use of dark colours would be reduced. This research study has answered the research questions and achieved the objectives, successfully.

16.2 Research problem addressed

The research problem of this study was to find out if audience members, or participants, decoded the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement as encoded by the sender by describing their interpretations of it. The importance of finding out if participants decoded the advertisement's message was to analyse if the dominant-hegemonic position, as proposed by Hall (1973), was taken by all participants to determine their understanding, or lack thereof, of the advertisement. It was important to research

whether participants interpreted and understood the message as encoded because the issue of texting and driving is a prevalent issue amongst young motorists, worldwide. If participants interpreted the message of the advertisement as the sender intended, which they did, one can conclude that the advertisement was effective in conveying its message of texting and driving being dangerous. *Arrive Alive*'s aim in producing this advertisement was to show drivers that by texting and driving, the lives of the driver as well as other drivers are at risk (Arrive Alive, 2015). Based on the results obtained from this research study, *Arrive Alive* can be assured that their aim was achieved as participants all interpreted the dangers associated with texting and driving when they viewed the advertisement. However, although all participants understood the advertisement's message, there was still one participant who revealed that they would most likely continue texting and driving but are more aware of the consequences after seeing the advertisement.

16.3 Implications of findings

By describing audience interpretations of this advertisement, advertising organisations, such as *Arrive Alive*, benefit from the results as they are able to see whether their target audience understands the messages they have sent or if not, they can work on constructing better advertisements with clearer messages that will have a greater impact on their target audience. In this instance, *Arrive Alive* can use the findings of this research study as a form of feedback on interpretation of their advertisement to determine its effectiveness. As all participants interpreted and understood the dangers of texting and driving, not only to themselves but to others, *Arrive Alive* can consider this advertisement effective. *Arrive Alive* can, however, use the feedback from participants on how the understandability of the advertisement could be improved for future advertisements or campaigns.

16.4 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues can affect both the participants and the researcher in various ways. Throughout this research study, the researcher has maintained ethical by consideration of the following aspects in relation to both the participants and the researcher.

16.4.1 For the participants

When it came to the participants, the researcher ensured that there was informed consent from the participants. In the case of this research study, during the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked for their consent to participate in the research study as well as for voice recording their responses. This was finalised through the signing of consent forms by participants to provide legitimacy. The avoidance of harm was assured as participants were not harmed at any stage of the research process. They were given the

opportunity to withdraw from the interviews if they experienced any discomfort or had to leave due to any possible emergencies. (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014).

16.4.2 For the researcher

In terms of the researcher, there was no falsifying of information. This means that all the information provided in this research study has been gathered from interviews with participants that have consented to partaking in this research study. The researcher did not create any fake participants, and this is assured through evidence of signed consent forms of all participants. The researcher avoided distortion of results by leaving results obtained through interviews unedited thereby avoiding distortion of results to depict an anticipated outcome or more favourable results. The researcher refrained from bias of imposing their views of the 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement on participants by constructing and asking interview questions that did not lead participants into giving answers that aligned with or mirrored the views of the researcher. In doing so, the researcher's views on this advertisement did not persuade or guide the interpretations of the advertisement by participants. There was no misuse of information gathered from participants during this research study as the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews with participants was transcribed and analysed to be used solely for answering this study's research question and achieving its objective. The use of semi-structured interviews ensured that there was no inappropriate use of research methods by allowing a flexible interview structure whereby participants were able to have a discussion with the researcher about their interpretations of the advertisement.

This research study also adhered to the Independent Institute of Education's Intellectual Integrity Policy which was previously known as the Plagiarism Policy provided on the Varsity College Student Portal. Specifically, this research study adhered to upholding this Policy through ensuring that respect for persons, beneficence and justice were adhered to. This research study did not focus on a sensitive topic thereby avoiding the generation of any concern over issues considered private, stressful or sacred. The research study did not cause any stigmatisation or insight into any areas that were subject to controversy or social conflict.

16.5 Limitations of the study

Some of the limitations of this research study included having a small sample size, time constraints and shifts in conditions in society. The sample size only consisted of four participants which was not an accurate representation of the population but due to the answers given by participants being similar, this indicated that there was an understanding

of the advertisement amongst its audience. The time constraint of this research study was that it had to be completed in less than a year therefore the researcher was unable to interview more people to add more credibility to the study's results. A major shift in the condition of society that was related to this research study was the introduction of technology because if there was limited technology, cell phone use while driving might not be as great an issue as it currently is. By the introduction of and expanded use of technology around the world, audiences are constantly interpreting media messages in various locations while simultaneously attempting to do other tasks, for example, texting and driving. This study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of audiences' interpretations of a South African 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement and although all participants gave answers that were shorter than expected, they did answer the questions adequately.

16.6 Recommendations for further study

Although this research study was successful in describing audience interpretations and understandings of a South African 2015 *Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement, there are suggestions for further studies which can be done for the benefit of the field as well as society or, in this case, practice.

16.6.1 For the field

A recommendation for further study to benefit the field would be to conduct a research study like this one but use a different advertisement that uses other tactics, such as humour for example, to describe whether audience members are able to decode, interpret and understand that advertisement as it was encoded and intended by its sender. This will also add to the field by providing evidence that supports Hall's 1973 Audience Reception theory. Further study may also add to the existing theory.

This research study could be conducted again but by using a different theory such as the Active Audience theory.

16.6.2 For society and practice

A recommendation for further study would be for other organisations who carry out large-scale advertising or campaigns to conduct a study like this one to decipher whether their advertisements are also being interpreted and understood as they intended.

Arrive Alive and other advertising organisations might want to add empirical evidence to their advertisements to improve credibility and persuasive ability of advertisements.

16.7 Closing statement

In conclusion, this research study was successful in achieving its objective and answering its research questions thereby contributing to the field of communication as well as providing *Arrive Alive* with evidence that their 2015 *You're a killer if you text and drive* advertisement was successful and effective as audience members did interpret this advertisement as encoded. Participants were all able to interpret that texting and driving is dangerous to both drivers and other people thereby confirming that audience members do take one of the three positions as stated by Hall (1973) and particularly in this case, the dominant-hegemonic position.

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Appendix A – Originality report



A cross-sectional, qualitative study describing interpretations of a South African Arrive Alive (2015) advertisement: an audience reception analysis

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Supervisor: **1** Marchant van der Schyff

Research Methodology RESM8419 The IIE Bachelor of Arts Honours in Communication

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Activity 5.3.2: Submitting your final report

Chérise Nepaul on Fri, Oct 26 2018, 11:05 AM

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Citations (13/13)



1 Another student's paper 

Appendix B – Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive 2015 advertisement



Arrive Alive. 2015. *You're a killer if you text and drive.*

Appendix C – Research report summary table

Addendum C – Research Report Summary

A cross-sectional, qualitative study describing interpretations of a South African *Arrive Alive* (2015) advertisement: an audience reception analysis

Research Purpose/Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
To describe the interpretations of a South African <i>Arrive Alive</i> advertisement on texting and driving and driving motivated by interpretations. In-depth interviews. Thematic analysis. Stuart Hall's Reception Theory	How does the audience interpret an <i>Arrive Alive</i> advertisement on texting and driving?	Interest in the <i>Arrive Alive</i> advertisements on texting and driving as they were creative and innovative which led to the importance of researching whether the <i>Arrive Alive</i> advertisement on texting and driving is interpreted in the way the sender intended to understand the message.	Stuart Hall – Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse	Theme 1: Encoding and decoding Theme 2: Audience reception Theme 3: Advertisements on safe driving Theme 4: Texting while driving Theme 5: Fear appeals	Interpretivist paradigm. Epistemology Audience's unique and subjective interpretations of the <i>Arrive Alive</i> advertisement on texting while driving. Ontology Social construction of reality whereby interpretations, based on audience's own perspectives, of the advertisement determine how audiences view texting and driving. Axiology Value audience's interpretation of the advertisement.	Qualitative	Semi-structured interviews and a pretesting of the semi-structured interview questions prior to conducting the research study.	Participants: Informed consent, avoidance of harm, and anonymity. Researcher: No falsifying information, distortion of results, bias or misuse of information.	All participants decoded and interpreted the advertisement to reflect their understanding of the message conveyed by <i>Arrive Alive</i>. All participants interpreted that texting and driving is dangerous to both the driver and other people on the road. Key Contribution	To use the same questions used in this research study in another research study using an advertisement that makes use of humour, for example, to determine whether audience members still interpret the message as encoded or not. For other advertising companies' research teams to conduct similar studies to determine if their advertisements are effective in conveying messages that their target audiences decode and understand as intended.
Research Problem	Secondary Questions/Objectives	Key concepts	Key theories			Population	Data Analysis Method	Limitations		
Increase in accidents caused by texting while driving lead to advertisements showing the dangers of the action and the problem lies in finding out whether audience members decode a message as encoded by the sender.	To describe the interpretations of a 2015 South African <i>Arrive Alive</i> advertisement, <i>You're a killer if you text and drive</i> , through a thematic analysis of the responses obtained through semi-structured interviews and by using Stuart Hall's Audience Reception Theory. To describe what behaviour the interpretations of the 2015 <i>Arrive Alive: You're a killer if you text and drive</i> advertisement motivates.	- Interpretation - Advertisement - Encoding - Decoding - Dominant-hegemonic position - Negotiated position - Oppositional position	Stuart Hall's Audience Reception Theory (1973)			Parameters: Adults (18-26) and licensed South African drivers Sampling Non-probability sampling, purposive and convenience sampling, 4 licensed South African drivers residing in Durban.	Thematic analysis of the audience's interpretation of an <i>Arrive Alive</i> advertisement on texting and driving.	Smaller sample size, time, shifts in conditions in society such as the introduction of cellphones, which are the major contributor to the issue, restricted in scope	This research study supports Hall's Audience Reception theory by providing evidence that audience members do take one of three positions when decoding media messages. <i>Arrive Alive</i> has benefitted from the results of this research study it shows that their advertisement was encoded as intended.	

Appendix D – Interview questions schedule

1. Describe how this advertisement makes you feel?
2. Explain the message that you get from this advertisement?
3. Explain which element of the advertisement you notice first?
4. Explain your interpretation of the slogan?
5. Do you think this advertisement is relevant to you and explain why?
6. Explain what you think *Arrive Alive*'s aim is by producing this advertisement?
(participants will be given a few minutes to view the advertisement and think about its aim).
7. Explain any elements of this advertisement that you do not understand?
(participants can ask the researcher if they do not understand what the word 'element' means).
8. How would you change this advertisement to improve its understandability?
9. After viewing this advertisement, explain how your view on texting while driving has (or has not) changed?

Appendix E – Explanatory information sheet and unsigned consent forms for interviews and audio-recording

ANNEXURE C: EXPLANATORY INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

To whom it may concern,

My name is **Chérise Nepaul** and I am a student at Varsity College. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of **Marchant van der Schyff** about **audience interpretations of an Arrive Alive 2015 advertisement on texting while driving**. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of **audience interpretation and decoding advertisements**.

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

What will I be doing if I participate in your study?

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because **your interpretations will provide invaluable information to the study**. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to **ask questions based on an Arrive Alive advertisement that I will provide during the interview**.

You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.

Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your interpretations and understanding of an advertisement. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at **Varsity College**, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my **Honours in Communication**. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:
Chérise Nepaul

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows: **Marchant van der Schyff**

Consent form for participants

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by **Chérise Nepaul** about **audience interpretations of an *Arrive Alive* advertisement**.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

1. I agree to be interviewed for this research.
2. My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
3. My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
4. I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
5. I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature

Date

Consent form for audio-recording/ video recording

I, _____, agree to allow Chérise Nepaul to audio record my interviews as part of the research about audience interpretations of an *Arrive Alive* advertisement.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

1. My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
2. The recordings will be stored in a password protected file on the researcher's computer.
3. Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.

Signature

Date

Appendix F – Proposal Approval and Ethical Clearance Letter