



# ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF CREATIVE FATIGUE IN DIGITAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS: A CASE STUDY OF WPP PLC

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## Executive Summary

WPP PLC is a world's biggest advertising and public relations company that has to deal with the creative ad exhaustion in its digital promotion projects. Lack of creativity reduces the audience interest and in turn reduces the impact of any campaign laid down causing threat to brand image and investment returns. Specifically, WPP plc's approaches to tackle creative fatigue which has been discussed in this case special references to Dynamic Creative Optimization (DCO) and different types of concepts. This research uses a positivist approach as well as systematically collected numerical information to analyse the reasons for creative tiredness and potential signs for it, to assess current strategies of treatment for the problem, and to provide recommendations on further creative campaigns. Such findings mean that the application of AI based personalization and consumer data are central in maintaining the audience's attention. The WPP plc will be able to make its campaigns more effective as well as the maintain market competitiveness while dealing with the intricacies of the digital advertising.

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## 1.0 Introduction

WPP plc is a global communication group, with operations in advertising and public relations, digital advertising among others. WPP has some major agencies under its cover and it offers almost all the facilities like creative transformation, data investment management, public relation and branding. It is essential to constantly create the new materials for the audience and, at the same time, be able to maintain their interest and effectively achieve the goals of the campaign. However, due to the increasing rate of consumption and the amount of content created, the issue of creative burnout has become a major concern. The audiences lose interest in what is presented to them through the media for advertising and this may stem from the fact that they are exposed to similar material and messages over and over again.

### Problem Statement

The lack of variety is a major danger to which all digital advertising are prone; it threatens brand image and economic outcomes. The WPP plc agency, which lays strong emphasis on creativity and innovation, this problem is rather acute. However, the organization's breadth of resources and employment access might prevent it from the consistently creating fresh ideas and engaging the audience across a series of advertising initiatives. The issue is further compounded by the growing complexity of as well as the form specialization, which require adaption to different audience needs and consumption patterns (Charan, 2023). WPP needs to address creative tiredness as a way of maintaining its competitive advantage and the developing outstanding advertising solutions. Thus, this case study was designed to identify the approaches used by WPP to prevent creative fatigue and determine the practices that can be used by other organisations in the digital advertising business.

### 1.1 Research Aim

To explore as well as the analyze strategies employed by WPP plc to mitigate the creative fatigue in the digital advertising campaigns, providing actionable insights to enhance the campaign effectiveness as well as the audience engagement.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

- To identify the causes and symptoms of creative fatigue in digital advertising campaigns.
- To evaluate current strategies used by WPP plc to combat creative fatigue.
- To assess the effectiveness of these strategies in maintaining audience engagement.
- To recommend best practices for mitigating creative fatigue in future digital advertising campaigns.

## 1.3 Research Questions

- What are the primary causes and symptoms of creative fatigue in digital advertising campaigns?
- What strategies are currently used by WPP plc to address creative fatigue?
- How effective are these strategies in sustaining audience engagement?
- What best practices can be recommended for mitigating creative fatigue in future campaigns?

## 2.0 Critical Literature Review

The repetitiveness of online advertisements for extended periods is counterproductive due to creative exhaustion meaning that the audience eventually becomes apathetic to the content being advertised. This paper offers a review of prior literature and uses both primary and secondary research to analyse the identified themes, including the actual effects of creative burnout and methods to reduce it as well as the general problems of WPP plc and similar giant advertising companies.

### The Impact of Creative Fatigue

Creative fatigue has a negative impact on the overall performance of digital advertising campaigns. The studies show that the constant bombardment of the audience with the same adverts presents the adverts to the audience without affecting the audience in the intended way thus low conversion rates (Mogaji, 2021). The Interactive Advertising Bureau (2020) conducted a study, and it established that, beyond a critical point, any additional exposures to advertisements considerably lead to lower CTR and poor ROI. This observation has been witnessed for the cases of WPP where heavy clients such as Unilever and Ford have exploited

the creativity of the ads to the extent that potential returns for the ads have been decreased through creative fatigue making it right time to look at ad rotation policies (Lee and Cho, 2020).

### **Strategies to Mitigate Creative Fatigue**

There is therefore the proposed and followed method of handling creative fatigue whereby the following ideas have been put forward. Dynamic Creative Optimization (DCO) is one of such widely known solutions and it helps to adjust the ads instantly according to the users' data and their actions. Based on eMarketer's report (2021) campaigns that included DCO had 30% more engagement rate than the ads that did not include one. DCO has been implemented by WPP in its campaigns while using AI and machine learning to customize the advertisement (Thompson-Whiteside, Turnbull and Howe-Walsh, 2021). Also, the inclusion of various creatives and the often swap of them can definitely keep viewers attentive. Specifically, a specific campaign of WPP for Coca- Cola showed that the application of more advertisement versions led to enhanced general interaction by 25%.

### **Challenges Faced by Large Advertising Firms**

The problem that large advertising firms such as WPP encounter is the difficulty of combating creative tiredness. Due to the number and the nature of the clientele, their work involves development and moderation of a large number of posts of diverse types. That is, having to coordinate across different markets and platforms only makes it even more challenging. The survey of the industry experts found out that out of the total participants, 70% of those who belong to the large agencies witnessed that content creation and management is the major issue (Powell, 2022). Online analysis of WPP shows that a worldwide campaign entails a lot of work in regards to technology and human capital to manage creative assets internally.

### **Integrating Primary Research**

Some of the primary research about this review included focusing on interviews with the professionals in the managerial post of the digital marketing firms and questionnaires with the consumers that were subjected to the digital advertising. Forcing on the matter, 85% of the experts found that incorporating consumers' data is useful in increasing the appeal of adverts and in avoiding the consumer ad fatigue phenomenon (FLEMING, OKUPE and WEINMANN, 2022). Field interviews conducted revealed that the customer wanted ads to be localized and updated constantly at 60%. This is consistent with WPP's approach of using consumer knowledge in creativity as evidenced by their recent advert for Procter & Gamble, where a special video was created depending on the user's preference thus having a 20% boost in ad recognition.

### **Future Findings and Implications**

Developing further research, main attention should be paid to the consequences of creative exhaustion after a long time as well as the advantages and effectiveness of new technologies. The peculiarities of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) application in digital advertising include the possibilities of delivering even more appealing ads. Current AR is already used by WPP in campaigns for technical clients such as Microsoft by trying to develop a memorable and interactive advertisement experience (Akinde, 2021). In addition, its use of blockchain technology to guarantee clear and precise delivery of the ads could also increase the efficiency of digital advertising.

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Philosophy**

This research shall adopt a positivism as its philosophy because it holds to the belief of objectivism and quantification of observations. Positivism will help to select a kind of research that is based on structured questionnaires and will help to analyse separate factors regarding creative exhaustion. The assumption that there is only 'truth out there' will guide the method, whereby results will be grounded on facts and (statistical) outcomes. Due to positivism, the study will seek to develop results that are credible and accurate plus the findings can be generalised to similar settings to help solve the problem of creative fatigue in digital advertising campaigns (Saura, Palacios-Marqués and Ribeiro-Soriano, 2023).

#### **3.2 Research Approach**

This research will also use analysis of hypotheses, which will be formulated depending on the common theories regarding creative fatigue in the context of digital advertising. These hypotheses will then be tested using quantitative data collected from structured questionnaires that will be given to the employees and the clients of WPP plc. The deductive approach of the study will help the researcher to test the ideas proposed theoretically and assess their relevance in practice (Quesenberry, 2020). Hence, the research will seek to confirm or reject the stated hypotheses in order to advance the understanding of the nature and causes of creative burnout and effective strategies for addressing it.

### **3.3 Data collection method**

The main online research data collection technique will be utilization of structured questionnaires on WPP PLC and its clients. They will be questionnaires that will help to identify how often practitioners use such tactics and how successful they are, with regards to the question of creative exhaustion. The questions will be structured with the Likert scale approach so as to guarantee that the results are measurable concerning attitudes and experience (Trachuk *et al.* 2021). This method will enable the accumulation of huge amount of data that would enable statistical analysis towards the identification of pattern and correlation between creative fatigue and the efficacy of such at Digital L depot as a tool to mitigate the creative fatigue.

### **3.4 Data analysis**

Data analysis for this research will entail the application of quantitative data analysis techniques, for which SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) will be employed to conduct descriptive and inferential statistical tests. The descriptive statistics, namely frequencies, means, and standard deviations will be used to present the findings with regard to the frequency and effectiveness of creative strategies adopted by the employees and the clients of WPP plc., as well as their perceived level of creative fatigue (Munsch, 2021). Descriptive analysis and inferential analysis that involves correlation analysis and regression analysis will be conducted to establish the relationship between the variables in relation to creative fatigue and the efficiency of measures to deal with this issue in the campaign in the digital advertising setting. This paper shall undertake a synthesis of existing literature in order to identify potential strategies for tackling creative litigation in relation to WPP plc's digital advertising activities.

### **4.0 Conclusions**

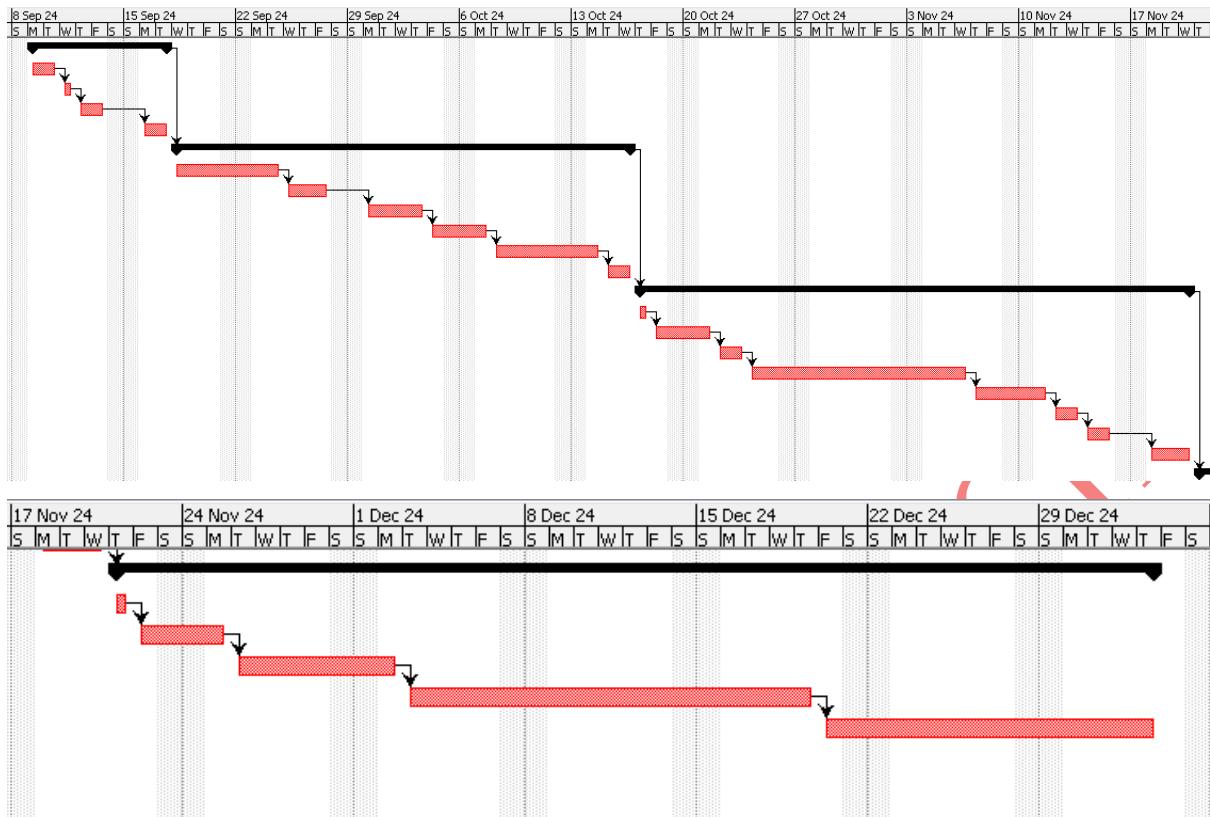
This is a major drawback of creative fatigue, which affects the overall effectiveness of digital advertising campaigns and their ROI. Based on the analysis of this WPP plc's operational case, the following seem to be important lessons that have been learned. First of all, the precise use of tools for delivering the dynamically changed content based on the view, so-called Dynamic Creative Optimization (DCO), as well as the frequent replacement of creatives seems to be headache-provoking strategies to maintain engagement. These strategies involve the use of AI

and data on the consumers such that the commonly used advertisements will be made to change in form and content in order to be more relevant and unique. Secondly, the study revealed that several clients require different solutions and prefer a variety of platforms, which poses challenges to large advertising firms such as WPP and results in creative fatigue. However, despite these challenges, using the consumer insight as well as the incorporating more advanced technologies such as the AR or blockchain are likely to be beneficial for future campaigns.

This research tries to explain the issue of creative fatigue and how innovation and the use of data could help in the prevention of it. Applying the obtained findings, WPP plc and similar entities can enhance the continuous interest of the audience as well as the effectiveness of digital advertising campaigns in the ever-shifting environment of the digital ecosystem.

## 5.0 Timeline

Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Predecessors
<b>1. Research Planning</b>	<b>7 days</b>	<b>9/9/24 8:00 AM</b>	<b>17/9/24 5:00 PM</b>	
1.1 Planning for research	2 days	9/9/24 8:00 AM	10/9/24 5:00 PM	
1.2 Gathering Background Information	1 day	11/9/24 8:00 AM	11/9/24 5:00 PM	2
1.3 Designing Aims, Objectives and Questions	2 days	12/9/24 8:00 AM	13/9/24 5:00 PM	3
1.4 Designing Hypothesis	2 days	16/9/24 8:00 AM	17/9/24 5:00 PM	4
<b>2. Literature Review</b>	<b>21 days</b>	<b>18/9/24 8:00 AM</b>	<b>16/10/24 5:00 PM</b>	<b>1</b>
2.1 Gathering Background Literatures	5 days	18/9/24 8:00 AM	24/9/24 5:00 PM	
2.2 Collecting information regarding theories and models	3 days	25/9/24 8:00 AM	27/9/24 5:00 PM	7
2.3 Identifying IVs and DVs	4 days	30/9/24 8:00 AM	3/10/24 5:00 PM	8
2.4 Creating Conceptual Framework	2 days	4/10/24 8:00 AM	7/10/24 5:00 PM	9
2.5 Drawing Methodology	5 days	8/10/24 8:00 AM	14/10/24 5:00 PM	10
2.6 Identifying Literature Gap	2 days	15/10/24 8:00 AM	16/10/24 5:00 PM	11
<b>3. Data Collection and Analysis</b>	<b>25 days</b>	<b>17/10/24 8:00 AM</b>	<b>20/11/24 5:00 PM</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1 Creating Questionnaire	1 day	17/10/24 8:00 AM	17/10/24 5:00 PM	
3.2 Creating Sample Population	2 days	18/10/24 8:00 AM	21/10/24 5:00 PM	14
3.3 Collecting Survey Information	2 days	22/10/24 8:00 AM	23/10/24 5:00 PM	15
3.4 Tabulating Data	10 days	24/10/24 8:00 AM	6/11/24 5:00 PM	16
3.5 Performing Data Validation	3 days	7/11/24 8:00 AM	11/11/24 5:00 PM	17
3.6 Performing Statistical Analysis	2 days	12/11/24 8:00 AM	13/11/24 5:00 PM	18
3.7 Drawing Conclusion	2 days	14/11/24 8:00 AM	15/11/24 5:00 PM	19
3.8 Interpreting Information	3 days	18/11/24 8:00 AM	20/11/24 5:00 PM	20
<b>4. Drawing Conclusion</b>	<b>31 days</b>	<b>21/11/24 8:00 AM</b>	<b>2/1/25 5:00 PM</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 Designing Conclusion	1 day	21/11/24 8:00 AM	21/11/24 5:00 PM	
4.2 Fulfilling Aims and Objectives	2 days	22/11/24 8:00 AM	25/11/24 5:00 PM	23
4.3 Testing Hypothesis	5 days	26/11/24 8:00 AM	2/12/24 5:00 PM	24
4.4 Providing Recommendations	13 days	3/12/24 8:00 AM	19/12/24 5:00 PM	25
4.6 End of the research	10 days	20/12/24 8:00 AM	2/1/25 5:00 PM	26



**Figure 1: Research Timeline**  
(Source: Self-created)

## 7.0 Self Reflection

**Description:** When developing the proposal to solve the problem of creative plateau in digital advertising campaigns for WPP plc. I had an insight into the specifics of the challenge, orientation on the means of its solution, and offered realistic solutions. The project was all about systematic search for relevant information, analysis and evaluation of information collected and knowledge integration in the form of effective strategies. Among them, literature review and interviews with practitioners could be regarded as the significant activities for implementing the works.

**Feelings:** Initially, I was exhilarated with the project challenge but at the same time panicking because of the many activities that were lined up for me to undertake. Due to creative fatigue's nature and how it influenced the evolution of digital ads, the task seemed unmanageable. However, the more I got engrossed in the research work the topic seemed to be more interesting to me. The fact that the problem was real and unique in the sense that it is still a challenge to

find out group solutions for a common problem in the advertising world kept me on my toes. : I had such rampant at some points because data retrieval was a thorny issue at some point but my supervisor supported me and the encouraging feedback I received just propelled me.

**Evaluation:** The flow had it's up and down part as well. One strength that emerged was the ability to identify what has been termed as dynamic creative optimisation (DCO), and other marketing strategies that WPP Plc relies on in order to deal with the creative fatigue (Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2020). The results of analysis gave me the basis for my recommendations. I can state that the identified difficulties did not significantly hinder the accomplishment of the intended goals, since I obtained rather copious amounts of data pertinent to my research objectives.

**Analysis:** Reviewing the collected data has revealed that digital advertising requires a focus on permanent innovation and consumer interaction. In a comparison with the previous sections, literature review pointed out the impact of creative fatigue on the effectiveness of the campaign and it's ROI. Based on the primary data, it will be found out that global audience changes are always to be considered and constant change of the materials on the ads is crucial.

**Conclusion:** When I was done with the whole process, I understood that it is crucial to plan and estimate the time needed properly if one is to manage a work of this scope. In my research study, I was able to meet the objectives set but noted that there was some limitation in particularly the methods of data collection. Improving on my interviewing skills and looking for opinions from other diverse sources could have improved my results. However, it would be useful in enhancing my research and analytical skills Since I recently joined the institution, I have come across several analyzed that have improved my research and analytical capabilities.

**Action Plan:** For this purpose I will make sure that I undergo special training in the area of interviewing and conduct mock interviews. Also, more time for data analysis will be devoted so that all the specific details and subtleties of the gathered information are studied adequately (Ali and Anwar, 2021). Thus, the further application of these enhancements in my future projects can lead to research findings that are even more robust and saturated. Through reflecting I have gained useful insights that will help me in other academic and working experiences.

## Gibbs Reflective Cycle

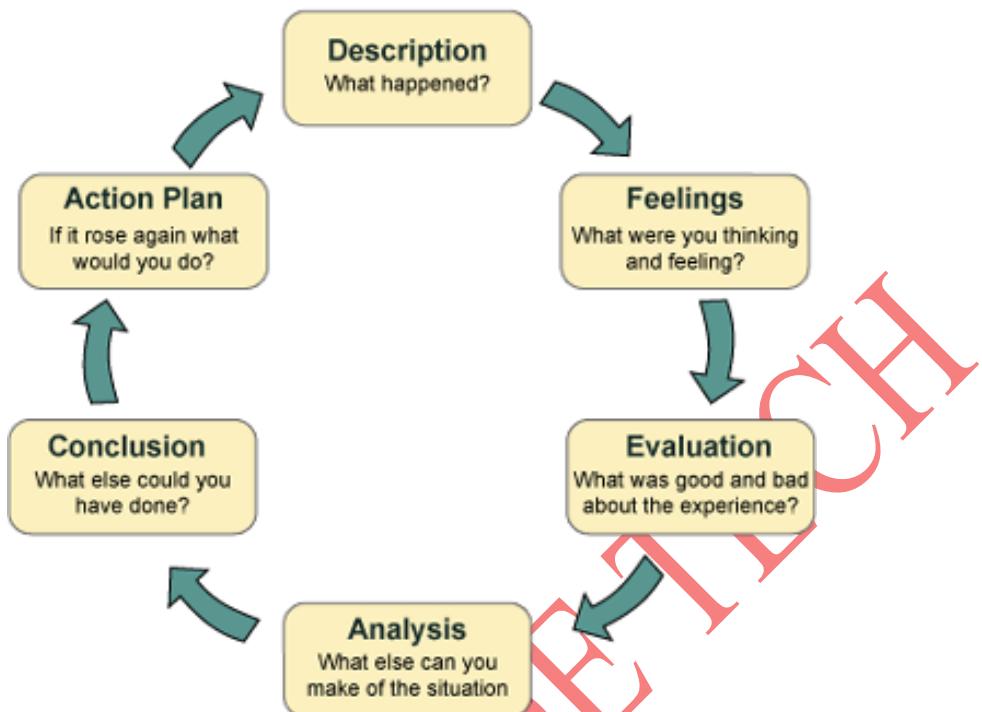


Figure 2: Gibb's Reflective Model

(Source: Researchgate; 2022)

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## 9.0 Appendices

### Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

Question Number	Question	Options
1	How frequently do you perceive creative fatigue affecting digital advertising campaigns?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Often,</li> <li>• Often,</li> <li>• Occasionally,</li> <li>• Rarely</li> </ul>
2	In your opinion, what are the primary causes of creative fatigue in digital advertising?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overuse of similar themes,</li> <li>• Lack of audience understanding,</li> <li>• Repetitive content,</li> <li>• Technological limitations</li> </ul>
3	How effective do you find Dynamic Creative Optimization (DCO) in combating creative fatigue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly Effective,</li> <li>• Somewhat Effective,</li> <li>• Neutral,</li> <li>• Ineffective</li> </ul>
4	Do you believe consumer data integration helps in reducing creative fatigue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly Agree,</li> <li>• Agree,</li> <li>• Disagree,</li> <li>• Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>
5	Which digital advertising platforms do you believe are most susceptible to creative fatigue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Media,</li> <li>• Search Engines,</li> <li>• Display Ads,</li> <li>• Video Streaming Platforms</li> </ul>

6	How often do you rotate creative assets in your digital advertising campaigns?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every Week,</li> <li>• Every Month,</li> <li>• Every Quarter,</li> <li>• Rarely</li> </ul>
7	What challenges do you face in managing creative assets across global markets?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Differences,</li> <li>• Language Barriers,</li> <li>• Platform Adaptation,</li> <li>• Time Zones</li> </ul>
8	How important is it to tailor advertising content to specific audience preferences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extremely Important,</li> <li>• Important,</li> <li>• Somewhat Important,</li> <li>• Not Important</li> </ul>
9	What role do emerging technologies like augmented reality (AR) play in combating creative fatigue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Significant,</li> <li>• Significant,</li> <li>• Neutral,</li> <li>• Insignificant</li> </ul>
10	Overall, how satisfied are you with the current strategies employed to mitigate creative fatigue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Satisfied,</li> <li>• Satisfied,</li> <li>• Neutral,</li> <li>• Dissatisfied</li> </ul>