

## **Employing Humour to Improve Passengers' Recall of Material in the Pre-flight Safety Announcement**

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Airlines are employing a variety of tactics to improve passengers' recall of the information presented in the pre-recorded pre-flight safety announcement on-board commercial aircraft. The most notable involves including humour in the safety announcement. However, while humour may be effective in directing individuals' attention to the material being presented, it can interfere with the way the material is processed, thereby negatively affecting the storage (i.e., memory) and subsequent recall of this information. In contrast, humour is widely known to positively affect individuals' mood, and it is often found that a positive relationship exists between mood and performance. Therefore, the main aim of the present research was to test three different pre-recorded pre-flight safety announcements (no humour, with humour, and use of celebrity) in terms of their memorability for the key safety messages. A secondary aim was to test changes in participants' mood as a result of being exposed to different safety announcements (i.e., videos). 61 participants completed the study and were tested at two different intervals for recall of key safety messages (post video exposure and 2 hours follow-up), and at three different intervals for their mood (pre-exposure to video, post and 2 hours follow-up). Participants exposed to either the humorous or the celebrity endorsed pre-flight safety video were able to recall more key safety messages than participants who watched the non-humorous video. The humorous video was also found to be the most effective in positively manipulating participants' mood immediately following exposure. However, the results of a follow-up test two hours post video found that any positive changes to mood identified directly following the video had dissipated. In summary, these results suggest that the entertainment value of providing a pre-flight safety announcement/video that is humorous facilitates in obtaining the attention of the passengers, but can detract from the educational value of the announcement. In other words, there is a trade-off between entertainment and education. For airlines, these results suggest that they need to pay particular attention to the design of the pre-flight safety announcement to ensure the use of humour to attract the attention of the passengers does not detract from the educational value of the announcement.

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