The effect of advertising appeal type on Chinese college students’ attitude toward advertising message
- Exploring the moderation effect of brand type -

Chang Man Ren¹, Min Jung Kang²*

Abstract

Through this study, this study wants to confirm the persuasion of guilt-inducing advertisements. Specifically, we demonstrated whether the attitude to advertising messages depends on the type of brand (private brand vs. national brand) and advertisement message causes (guilt-inducing message vs. non guilt-inducing message).

As the market economy develops rapidly, companies look for new marketing methods, among them, convincing advertising messages are important because advertising gives consumers good feelings about a company’s products or services and favorably alters consumers’ attitude toward its brand. Advertisements are classified by type into rational and emotional claims. Advertisements of the type of rational appeal, which values performance, characteristics, etc. and those of the type of emotional appeal, are important to enhance the favorable attitude toward advertising by inducing consumer sentiment and empathy.

There have been studies of the persuasion of guilt-inducing advertising, one of the types of emotional claims, because it causes consumers to feel guilty and changes in behavior to reduce it. Based on existing research, this study aims to reveal the interactive impact of advertising claims types (guilt-inducing advertising versus guilt-free advertising) and brand types (private brands versus national brands) on attitudes toward advertising messages.

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Keywords: Advertising appeal, Guilt-inducing message, Attitude toward advertising message, Private brand, National brand

요 약

본 연구를 통해 죄책감을 유발하는 광고의 설득력에 대해 확인하고자 한다. 구체적으로는 광고매 시지가 죄책감을 유발하는지 여부에 따른 광고매시지에 대한 태도가 브랜드 유형 (유통업체 브랜드 대 제조업체 브랜드)에 따라 달라지는지에 대해 실증 분석하였다.

시장 경제가 급속히 발전함에 따라 기업들은 새로운 마케팅 방법을 찾는데 그 중 광고는 소비자에게 기업의 제품 또는 서비스에 대해 좋은 감정을 갖도록 하여 소비자의 브랜드에 대한 태도를 효과적으로 변화시켜주기 때문에 설득력 있는 광고 메시지는 중요하다. 광고는 유형에 따라 이성적 소구와 감성적 소구로 분류된다. 이성적 소구 유형의 광고는 성능, 특성 등을 중시하는 반면, 감성적 소구 유형의 광고는 소비자들의 정서 및 공감을 유도하여 광고에 대한 호의적 태도를 높이는 것을 중시한다.

감성적 소구 유형 중의 하나인 죄책감을 유발하는 광고의 설득력에 관한 연구들이 있었는데, 죄책 감을 유발하는 광고는 소비자들에 죄책감을 느끼게 하여 이를 줄이기 위한 행동변화를 일으키기 때문이다. 본 연구는 광고 소구 유형(죄책감을 유발하는 광고에 죄책감을 유발하지 않는 광고)과 브 랜드 유형(유통업체 브랜드 대 제조업체 브랜드)과 광고메시지에 대한 태도에 미치는 상호작용적 영향 을 실증적으로 검증하고자 한다.

핵심어: 광고 소구, 죄책감, 광고매시지에 대한 태도, 유통업체 브랜드, 제조업체 브랜드

1. Introduction

Advertisements are divided into rational and emotional submissions according to the type of subdivision. While rational appeal places importance on the product itself, such as the performance and characteristics of the product, emotional appeal focuses on enhancing the consumer’s attitude toward advertising through emotional empathy among consumers. [1] On the other hand, guilt was one of the negative emotions that was an important variable in existing advertising papers. According to previous studies, people feel guilty in as much as 13 percent of their daily lives. [2] Huhmann and Brotherton (1997) reported in their study of more than 2,000 ads that guilt ads accounted for as much as 5 percent of the total advertising. [3] Burnett and Lunsford (1994) first discussed the need to study guilt in business administration.

[4] Coulter and Pinto (1995) argued that guilt can affect consumers’ advertising attitudes and buying intentions. The study of guilt is only in its beginning stage, and more and more scholars are interested in the field and need a multidisciplinary study. [5]

Based on the above theoretical discussions, this study aims to show how guilt-ridden advertising charges and brand-type interactive factors affect attitudes to advertising messages through experimentation and empirical research.

While the existing study focuses on the persuasive effect of guilt advertising, this study aims to focus on the study of modulating variables (brand types) in this guilt advertising effect.
2. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis

2.1 Type of ad appeal

Companies have actively implemented advertising as a means of promoting the sale of products by forming a positive attitude toward them. There is a lot of research into the role of advertising attitudes in relation to these sales advertising effects. Advertising attitude means "the tendency of consumers to evaluate the specific brand product itself being advertised favorably or unfavorably".

According to Lee Chul-young et al. (2010), advertising attitude is a context-limited concept, not an attitude toward advertising stimuli at the time after repeated exposure over time, and can be identified by the communication effect of advertising. [6] Lutz (1985) also defined advertising attitudes as a propensity to respond in a favourable or unfavourable way to a particular advertising stimulus in a particular advertising exposure situation. [7] Advertising attitudes can be seen as a more transient and instantaneous concept compared to brand attitudes or general attitudes toward advertising. [6]

The rational appeal is also expressed in thought-provided, functional, information-oriented claims, and attribute-oriented claims, which are based on rational judgments such as consumers' economic or rationality, which means that the inmates appeal to the functional advantages of the product they are purchasing, the economic benefits associated with the product's use, the reliability of the product, etc. These rational claims are realistic and use goal-oriented terms to present messages. For example, emphasis is placed on the quality, economy, value, and performance of the product. [8]

On the other hand, emotional advertising claims are also called image claims, benefit-oriented ones and value-expressive ones, and are advertising claims related to the psychological, social or symbolic needs or desires of consumers. Therefore, when presenting messages related to these factors, a positive or dishonest form of emotion should be used to facilitate the purchase. These two types of claims are distinct from the message strategy and the persuasion path is also shown to be contrasting. [9]

2.2 Guilty inducing message type

Guilt was presented as a result of "special private perceptions a person has when he or she
violates personal standards". [10] Guilt is defined as an emotion associated with "a person's perception of violating limits on moral, social or ethical principles". Guilt refers to the negative emotions a person feels when he or she believes that he has harmed others by doing or not doing something. [11]

As guilt-based advertising increased, discussion of guilt became active at the marketing communications level. [11] Gingold (1981) looked at consumer responses to guilt-type ads, which, when they inflame consumers' guilt, changed consumers' attitudes and buying tendencies to reduce guilt. [11] Guilt-related messages are important because guilt creates an incentive to modify one's behavior to meet the social or moral standards that one has internally accepted. [12]

Englis (1990) argued that inmates experience a high level of emotion of anger, disdain, disgust and embarrassment, and said that when inmates perceive manipulative intentions by advertisers, they tend to resist the message. This resistance not only negatively affects the attitude toward advertising, but also affects the emotional response of consumers. [13]

Coulter and Pinto (1995) argued that consumers did not feel guilty about high-intensity guilt advertisements and rather expressed anger. [5]

2.3 Brand type (private brand/national brand)

Distribution Brand (PB) means a product that is developed by a distributor on its own, either independently or in partnership with a manufacturer's brand, and sold exclusively in its own chain. [14] These distributor-brand products are referred to as Private Brand (PB) or Private Label (PL) products, and vice versa. Due to this, the distributor brand product has the characteristics of maintaining a lower price than the manufacturer of the same product, including reduction of raw material cost, research and development cost, logistics cost, marketing cost, management cost, and various marketing costs for sales, including advertising in profit, which can be reflected in the price of the product to provide consumers with goods 15 to 20 percent lower than the manufacturer's brand. [15]

In practice, private brands are of lower quality than national brands and have the disadvantage of impeding profits to manufacturers by forcing them to negotiate with manufacturers that manufacture and supply PB products. [16]

Sundel(1974) noted that in a study of consumer attitudes between manufacturer and distributor brands, consumers were negative about their attitude toward distribution brands because of their low perception of the quality of distribution brands. It also pointed to negative retailer brand
image as the cause of low quality perception. [17] Richardson et al (1994) noted that inconsistent quality of the distributor's products or greater quality differences than those of the manufacturer's brand would negatively affect the negative effect on consumers' perception of value. [16]

As such, consumers feel a lot of regret after purchasing a distributor's brand. Regret is an uncomfortable state in which it is perceived that the value of alternatives other than the chosen alternative would have been higher than that of the chosen alternative. That is, regret is the consumer sentiment that arises when the decision result compares the performance of the chosen alternative with the unselected alternative in an expression of regret or disappointment felt about the object that has taken action. [18]

Guilt is defined as an emotional opponent that includes remorse, conscience remorse and self-criticism experienced after committing future violations of the internalized standards of guilt or proper conduct. [19] Guilt-inducing messages have been highlighted as a way to enhance the effectiveness of messages that help as part of a negative appeal. [20] Guilt can be expressed with shame and threat, remorse with self-blame and negative emotion. It is important to encourage the acceptor to accept messages so that the acceptor does not feel guilty in the particles of the advertiser. Based on the above logic, we expect that the impact of guilt ads on attitudes toward advertising messages will be greater when they are a distributor brand than when they are a manufacturer brand. Therefore, I would like to suggest the following assumptions.

Hypothesis: The impact of guilt-inducing advertising messages on attitudes toward advertising messages will vary depending on brand type (private brand vs. national brand).

3. Empirical analysis

An experimental study was conducted to verify the hypotheses derived from this study. The experimental study consisted of the pre-survey phase and the present stage of the survey. Specific research procedures were first discussed with the advertising practitioners before selecting the experimental artifacts, and the degree of guilt and brand type were properly manipulated through the preliminary investigation. Through the following operation inspection, this survey was conducted on experimental stimulants to verify their effect on the attitude of advertising messages. In this study, the SPSS 19.0 statistics package program was used to analyze established hypotheses, and hypotheses were verified through frequency analysis, average comparison, reliability analysis, factor analysis, binary analysis, and post-verification.
3.1 Configuring of survey questions

3.1.1 guilt-inducing message type

In this study, guilt is one of the methods of appealing to negative emotions, making consumers realize situations where they violate norms and fail to adhere to their standards or beliefs, and encouraging consumers to persuade them by suggesting alternatives (products or services) to avoid negative consequences. Based on this, the study defined 'special recognition that a person has when he or she violates personal criteria'. The measurement scale included 'guilty', 'irresponsible' and 'shame' referring to the questions used in the study of Cotte et al (2005). [1] The scale used a five-point scale.

3.2.2 brand type

The brand types in this study were divided into distributor and manufacturer brands. The questionnaire explained the brand type as follows: Private brands make a lot of profit by making product planning and operating manufacturing operations with the retailers themselves at risk, and are inferior to regular manufacturers' brands in terms of product name and reliability. National brand is a product developed by a large informant, and is provided to consumers by setting the name, mark and quality of its own products, and can be mass-produced to the national market, making it cheaper.

The measurement operation check is designed with the question 'What brand do you think is close to?' It was a five-point scale, and the higher the score, the closer it was to a manufacturer's brand.

3.2.3 The attitude of the advertising message

The attitude of the advertising message in this study to the advertising message in this study was defined as 'the overall response that consumers feel about advertising', referring to what Lutz (1985) defines as the tendency for consumers to respond favorably or unfavourably to advertising stimuli in certain advertising exposure situations. [7] The measurement scale consisted of four questions, referring to the question used in the study by Jeong(2013). [21] The questions are as follows. 'This ad has a positive feeling,' "This ad is good," 'I like it" and "This ad is good." The measurement scale consists of a five-point scale.
3.3 Experimental design

3.3.1 Experimental design

The experiment was conducted with a random allocation of four groups to the general public in Beijing, China. The experiment was conducted for about 10 minutes with information related to the experiment, and then the test questionnaire was distributed and controlled for 15 minutes. A brief greeting was given at the beginning of the questionnaire, as well as instructions and precautions for preparing the questionnaire. The experimental stimulant created four virtual scenarios tailored to the brand type (private brand vs. national brand) and ad appeal type (guilt-inducing message vs. non-guilt-inducing message). The subjects responded to the survey after reading one of the hypothetical scenarios.

Private brands and guilt-inducing messages are as follows. Retailer brand milk is forced to reduce the quality of its products by forcing manufacturers to lower the unit price of their products by forcing small and medium-sized manufacturers to cut supply prices. M’s own brand of 1A milk (30,000 bacteria per milliliter) was found to be a distribution brand of 1A milk (10,000 bacteria per milliliter).

The following are messages that are private brands and do not cause guilt: Private brands are low in price, not because they use bad materials but because they reduce unnecessary functions. Distribution brands have a high competitive edge in quality as well as price.

The scenario message for a national brand and a guilt-inducing virtual advertisement is as follows. Manufacturer-brand milk is priced higher than distributor brands because there is a limit to price discounts compared to distribution brands. Manufacturer’s brands tend to have high prices and low caustic ratios.

On the other hand, the scenario message for an advertisement that is a national brand and does not cause guilt is as follows. The reason why distribution brands are low in price is because of their low quality. Manufacturer brand ensures high quality.

A preliminary survey was conducted to increase the validity of this study. Pre-survey is in the process of verifying that the stimulants were properly manipulated, and an operation inspection was conducted on 30 subjects. The results of the pre-survey are as shown in [Table 1] and [Table 2] below. Pre-survey has shown significant differences in the effectiveness of the bleed type and guilt-inducing message type on attitudes toward messages. Thus, the manipulation of advertising stimuli proved well done.
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[Table 1] Results of manipulation check of ad appeal type (pre-test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>guilt-inducing</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>6.035*</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non guilt-inducing</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

[Table 2] Results of manipulation check of brand type (pre-test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>private brand</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>7.87**</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>national brand</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

3.3.2 Manipulation Check

It was confirmed that the test stimulation was successful. The independent sample t-test found that there were statistically significant differences between guilt-inducing messages (M=2.95, SD=0.84) and non guilt-causing messages (M=2.75, SD=0.95), (t=2.375; p<0.05). That is, the manipulation was successful [Table 3]. It was measured on a five-point scale, and the higher the score, the higher the level of guilt.

To determine whether the brand type was manipulated, the subjects were asked about the brand type. The higher the score, the closer it is to the manufacturer's brand type(national brand). Independent sample t-testing found that there were also statistically significant differences between distributors (M=2.55, SD=0.67) and manufacturers (M=3.49, SD=0.85) (t=12.488, p<0.001). Therefore, the manipulation was successful.

[Table 3] Results of manipulation check of ad appeal type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>guilt-inducing</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>2.375**</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non guilt-inducing</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td></td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

[Table 4] Results of manipulation check of brand type (pre-test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>private brand</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>12.488**</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>national brand</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td></td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
3.3.3 Hypothesis verification

To measure the effectiveness of guilt advertisements, an independent variable is a brand type and guilt-inducing message, and a dependent variable is an attitude to an ad message, so 2*2 factor design was carried out.

The hypotheses are as follows. The impact of the type of advertising appeal on attitudes toward advertising messages will vary depending on the type of brand. In other words, it was assumed that the type of advertising appeal (whether or not it caused guilt) would not have a different effect on the attitude of advertising messages if they were a manufacturer's brand.

For a retail brand, it was assumed that the attitude to advertising messages for non-guilt messages would be higher than the attitude to advertising messages for guilt-provoking messages. The analysis shows that the two-way interaction effect between the brand type and ad-message type on the attitude of the ad message are significant \( F=7.502, \ p<0.01; \) see [Table 5], [Figure 1]. As a result of difference analysis, in the case of a private brand, attitudes toward non-guilt advertising messages were higher than attitudes toward guilt-provoking advertising messages \( (M=2.8018, M=3.1378, F=8.82, \ p<0.01). \) However, in the case of a manufacturer's brand, there was no difference between attitudes toward non-guilty advertising messages and guilt-inducing advertising messages \( (M=3.1217, M=3.0685, F=0.19, \ p<0.7). \) Thus, the hypothesis was confirmed to have been supported.

[Table 5] Results of a two-way analysis between ad appeal types and brand types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>dependent variable</th>
<th>sum of squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>mean square</th>
<th>F value</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brand type (A)</td>
<td>attitude to advertising messages</td>
<td>1.648</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.648</td>
<td>3.111</td>
<td>0.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ad appeal type (B)</td>
<td>attitude to advertising messages</td>
<td>2.098</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.098</td>
<td>3.961</td>
<td>0.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A*B</td>
<td>attitude to advertising messages</td>
<td>3.974</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.974</td>
<td>7.502</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>attitude to advertising messages</td>
<td>4314.875</td>
<td>439</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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![Graph showing the effect of advertising appeal type on attitude toward advertising message]

[Figure 1] Results of a two-way interaction between ad appeal types and brand types

4. Conclusion

Through empirical research, this study looked at the impact of advertising claim type (guilt-inducing advertising message vs. non guilt-inducing advertising message) and brand type (private brand vs. national brand) on attitude to advertising message.

The impact of the type of advertising appeal on the attitude of advertising messages has been shown to vary depending on the type of brand type of the brand. If the brand type is a manufacturer, it has been shown that the type of ad appeal does not differ on the attitude of the ad message. However, if the brand is a distributor's brand, the attitude toward non-guilt advertising messages appears to be higher than that of guilt-inducing advertising messages, showing more favor.

The implications of this study are as follows:

First of all, this study is meaningful in that it confirms the persuasion of guilt-inducing messages. As a marketing tool, the more persuasive the message is, the more likely it is to achieve the marketing goal. It is meaningful to study persuasive messages because the more persuasive they are, the more reputable or reliable the company can be. [22] In addition, while previous studies had many studies on emotional and rational claims, studies on specific types of emotional claims were rare. Although there has not been much research on emotional claims...
of guilt in particular, this study has theoretical significance in that it discusses the research of emotional claims. Although consumers are exposed to the same message, the degree of persuasion depends on the sensitivity, situation, and judgment they feel about the message. This study confirmed that the influence of guilt messages may vary depending on the contextual variable of the brand type. In addition, traditional advertisements related to guilt and shame focused only on public ads. [23]. However, the study found that commercial advertising could also be effective.

The study confirmed that guilt-inducing messages have led consumers to undervalue retail brand messages. Specifically, the study compared private and national brands at the level of guilt-inducing message attitudes by consumers, confirming that guilt-inducing attitudes are significantly lower when the attitude is private.

This still shows that consumers are not favorable to private brands compared to national brands. [16] This can be inferred that Chinese consumers also have a price-competitive attitude toward distribution brands, but still have an unfriendly attitude toward distribution brands. Through this process, distribution brands need to consider active marketing strategies through quality improvement and positive partnerships among manufacturers’ brands to reduce consumers’ guilt about purchasing distribution brands. An example is the National Provider Brand (NBP) development, which is developed by famous manufacturers and large discount outlets together and exclusively supplied to the retailers concerned.

In addition, although there has been conflicting studies of satisfaction and regret with traditional retail brands, this study still shows that consumers are more sensitive to guilt-inducing messages when exposed to private brands than when exposed to national brands. This suggests that consumers are feeling guilty as well, in addition to feeling sorry and negative about the retailer’s brand. In doing so, private brands need to redefine their marketing strategies so that consumers don’t feel guilty about private brands.

The limitations of the study and the future direction of the study are as follows.

First, since most of the participants in the study are students, there is a limit to generalizing this study as a whole because it can produce distorted results in terms of demographics. Therefore, future studies need to complement the demographic proportions to diversify the subjects.

Second, the experimental advertising used in this study is a hypothetical creation of guilt-inducing ads and is not an existing one. Therefore, future research will require the production of the same ads as the actual ones and exposure them to the subjects of the experiment.
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Finally, this study was conducted on non-purchasers as well as groups with experience in purchasing private brands. In the future, it is necessary to re-verify differences between the type of advertisement message and the effect of the brand type on the attitude to the message by setting the attitude associated with the private brand as the control variable.

In future studies, we want to find out which groups are more meaningful, especially in the message effects that induce guilt. Guilt is the subjective sensibility felt when violating one's beliefs or values, but community values or norms work in that judgment. [24] Thus, in the future, the study suggests that the effects of guilt messages will be higher in groups where community values are important.

References


