

Full Length Research Paper

The impact of advertising appeals and advertising spokespersons on advertising attitudes and purchase intentions

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The first purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of advertising appeals and advertising spokespersons on advertising attitudes and purchase intentions. The second purpose was to compare the effectiveness of the influences of different types of advertising appeals and different types of spokespersons on purchase intentions. A 2*2 factorial experiment design method was adopted. The cell phone industry was selected as the research object, and print advertisements were used in the experimental design. The samples were chosen from five universities in northern Taiwan. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed, 411 effective questionnaires were collected, and the effective response rate was 91%. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), t-test, and regression analysis were used to test the hypotheses. The major findings are listed as follows: (1) advertising appeals have a significantly positive influence on advertising attitudes, and rational advertising appeals are more significant than emotional appeals; (2) spokespersons have a significantly positive influence on advertising attitudes, and celebrity spokespersons are more significant than experts; (3) the influence of the combination of rational advertising appeals and expert spokespersons on advertising attitudes is more significant than the combination of emotional advertising appeals and expert spokespersons; and (4) advertising attitudes have a significantly positive influence on purchase intentions.

Key words: Advertising appeals, advertising spokespersons, advertising attitude, purchase intention.

INTRODUCTION

Advertising has become one of the most important commercial activities in the modern competitive environment. Companies spend a large part of their budget to produce and run advertisements for promotions to communicate information about their company and products. Companies hope that consumers will purchase their products due to the advertisements, which deliver messages about a certain brand and its products. Thorson and Leavitt (1992) stated that the best prophet for purchase is advertising. Technologies progress rapidly day by day, contributing to the constant renewal of and changes in broadcasting forms. Among those forms, advertising media is widely used. Advertisements are useful for the representation of a commodity's image. They also act as announcements for the corporate image and product positioning. Advertisements are a kind of persuasive communication that offers product information to every

consumer via institutions in charge of production or supply. In a complete study of marketing and promotional activities, advertising usually plays the most important role. Therefore, the advertising effect has become a key issue.

Kotler (1997) pointed out in his study that advertising appeal is the theme of an advertisement. To make the audience receive a necessary message, advertisers have to put some driving power into the message. This driving power is appeal. Every advertising appeal represents an attraction, which arouses consumers' desires. What kind of advertising appeal design can attract consumers more easily and effectively? To highlight a commodity image, many companies invite famous stars to be their product spokespersons. It is easier for consumers to identify with celebrities. Expert spokespersons help present product differences more effectively by combining their rich

professional knowledge with reasonably persuasive appeals. The right choice of advertising spokesman is a critical element in successful advertising. Does an advertising spokesperson influence consumers' attitudes or enhance purchase intentions? This is what this paper will explore. Advertising attitudes reflect persuasive psychological effects and act as important indices for measuring advertising effects. Thus, advertising attitudes create a certain influential power on purchase intentions, which is yet another management issue we want to explore in this paper.

Kotler (2003) divided advertising appeal into rational and emotional appeals. Most studies have focused on the impacts of advertising appeal on attitudes or purchase intentions. Few of them have compared rational appeal and emotional appeal and have determined which one creates significant effects on advertising attitude more effectively. This induces the first motivation for this study. Most studies have focused on the direct relationship between advertising appeal or advertising spokespersons and purchase intentions, while few of them have examined the relationship among advertising appeal, advertising spokesperson, purchase intentions, and attitude simultaneously. Moreover, few researchers combined different approaches of advertising appeal with different types of advertising spokespersons to determine which combination of appeal and spokesperson is more effective in creating an impact on advertising attitudes. This is the second motivation of this study.

This study has four purposes: (1) to explore and compare the influence of different advertising appeals on advertising attitudes and purchase intentions, (2) to study and compare the effect of different types of advertising spokespersons on advertising attitudes and purchase intentions, (3) to research the influence of different combinations of advertising spokespersons with advertising appeals on advertising attitudes, and (4) to examine the impact of advertising attitudes on purchase intentions.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The Impact of advertising appeal on advertising attitude

Advertising appeal refers to packaging products, services, organizations, or individuals in a variety of ways that clearly deliver a certain benefit, stimulation, identification, or reason to explain what consumers are thinking about and why they buy products (Kotler, 1991). Berkman and Gilson (1987) defined advertising appeal as an attempt at creativity that inspires consumers' motives for purchase and affects consumers' attitude towards a specific product or service. Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) defined advertising appeal as suppliers' application of a psychologically motivating power to arouse consumers'

desire and action for buying while sending broadcasting signals to change receivers' concepts of the product. Hence, advertising appeal is applied to attract the consumers' attention, to change the consumers' concept of the product, and to affect them emotionally about a specific product or service (Belch and Belch, 1998; Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007).

To meet the varying demands of their target consumers, advertisers commonly use rational appeal and emotional appeal in their advertising in an attempt to influence consumer behavior (Chu, 1996). By rational advertising appeal, the product can be emphasized by its benefits, in which the consumers' self-benefit is the key proposition, and the function or benefit requested by consumers of the product or service is articulately presented in advertising. On the other hand, emotional advertising appeal places stress on meeting consumers' psychological, social, or symbolic requirements, where many purchase motives come from. Kotler (1991) defined rational appeal as rationally oriented purchase stimulated by directly giving explanations of a product's advantages. Rational appeal focuses on the benefits consumers may enjoy. In an advertisement, it emphasize that a product or service could achieve the function and benefits consumers desire. He defined emotional appeal as the stimulation of consumers' purchase intentions by arousing their positive or negative emotions. Positive emotional appeal covers humor, love, happiness, etc, while negative emotional appeal involves fear, a sense of guilt, and so on.

Attitude is an essential concept in psychology, but it is also widely applied in the social sciences and marketing. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) defined attitude as a learning orientation based on which a state of constant like or dislike is generated towards a certain object. Kotler (1991) suggested that attitude refers to an individual's long-lasting perceived evaluation of like, dislike, emotional feelings, and action intention towards an object or idea. Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) stated that attitudes are a psychological tendency accrued from learning and a continual evaluation towards a subject. Lin (2008) defined advertising attitude as a continuously reactive orientation learned from a certain object. Such an orientation represents an individual's personal standards such as like and dislike, and right and wrong. The attitude held by consumers caused by advertising can be classified into two components: cognition and affection. Cognition and affection stand for thinking and feeling, respectively (Vakratsas and Ambler, 1999). Allport (1935) pointed out that the difference between the two components lies in that cognition stands for an individual evaluation towards external stimulation, while affection reflects an individual's internal feelings.

According to Belch and Belch (1998), advertising appeal is applied to attract consumers' attention. Advertising appeal aims at influencing consumers' attitude and emotions about a related product or service. It is

classified into rational and emotional appeals (Chu, 1996; Belch and Belch, 1998). Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) indicated that advertising appeal may change consumers' attitude. By using broadcast messages to trigger consumers' inner momentum psychologically, consumers are likely to echo and recognize the advertising messages and further change their attitude towards the advertised product. Ray and Batra (1983) pointed out that emotional identification comes before rational identification during a cognitive process. Emotional messages are more vivid and thus rational appeal works better than emotional appeal in attracting consumers' attention. Aaker and Norris (1982) found that the advertising attitude created by rational appeal is better than that by emotional appeal. Rational appeal appears to provide information explicitly and directly related to a product, which attracts consumers' attention more easily and generates a better advertising attitude. Based on the above literature review, the first hypothesis for this study is developed as follows:

H₁: Advertising appeal has a significantly positive effect on advertising attitude.

H₁₋₁: Rational appeal has a more significantly positive effect on advertising attitudes than emotional appeal.

The impact of advertising spokesperson on advertising attitude

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) defined spokesperson as advertising with an endorser, taking the advantage of the endorser's identification with a product or service or endorser's cultural representation in an advertisement to establish the consumers' attitudes towards that product or service (Brown and Mowen, 1980). McCracken (1989) indicated that, an advertising spokesperson is an endorser who, through his/her own popularity, presents the benefits consumers can obtain if using a product or service. Such benefits can also be delivered through advertising activities. He revealed that consumers identify with the image of a product due to their identification with the image of the spokesperson at the same time they are dealing with the messages received from an advertisement. Advertising with a spokesperson comes from the idea that consumers' purchase behaviors arise when they identify with an opinion leader. Consumers feel empathic while watching such advertisements and eventually feel good about the product (Wu, 1990). According to Lin (2008), an advertising spokesperson refers to a person who reflects the opinions, trust, and personal experience concerning a certain product or service in an advertisement. By means of a spokesperson's identification with a product or cultural implication, consumers' attitude towards a product is established. A spokesperson takes advantage of his/her popularity to present the benefits to the consumers through advertising activities.

Freiden (1984) proposed four types of advertising spokespersons: celebrities, top corporate managers, experts and typical consumers. Wang et al. (2002) also indicated that top managers, celebrities, experts, and consumers are often seen in advertisements. Celebrities refer to public or famous figures. Companies usually expect consumers to become empathic through the high popularity or attraction of a celebrity and then feel good about the products being recommended (Lin, 2008). An expert is a person with a unique social status due to his/her profession, special training, or extraordinary experience that allows him/her to provide consumer opinions (Lin, 2008). An expert spokesperson has the advantage of his/her own professional field and authority. He/She may have the professional knowledge related to the products being recommended. Knowledge comes from experience, learning and training. The invitation of an expert spokesperson aims at making consumers believe that the expert's identification with a product comes from professional and correct judgment.

Kamins et al. (1989) deemed celebrities to be more persuasive than non-celebrities in advertising. When negative messages become less important and appear earlier, customer trust and purchase intention increase. A spokesperson facilitates the consumers' positive attitude towards an advertisement. In past empirical studies regarding advertising spokespersons, it was found that advertising spokespersons were mainly celebrities and experts. Tsai (2001) classified advertising spokespersons into celebrities and consumers to explore the effect of the advertising spokesperson and appeal on advertising effectiveness. It was found that stars created the best effectiveness in advertising attitudes and purchase intentions. Peng (2000) conducted a study by combining cell phones or beverages with celebrities, experts, and consumers to examine advertising effectiveness. She revealed that celebrities have the effect of increasing opinions of attraction and reliability on advertising attitudes regarding products with high involvement. Regarding products with low involvement, spokespersons that are more attractive and professional influence advertising attitude. Referring to the above literature review, the second hypothesis for this study is developed as follows:

H₂: Advertising spokespersons have a significantly positive effect on advertising attitudes.

H₂₋₁: Celebrity advertising spokespersons have a more significantly positive effect on advertising attitudes than expert advertising spokespersons.

The impact of the combination of advertising appeal and advertising spokesperson on advertising attitude

Tung (1998) pointed out in her study that the combination

of advertising appeal and spokesperson significantly interact with advertising attitude, commodity attitude, and purchase intention. Rational appeal combined with an expert spokesperson works best in advertising effectiveness. Tsai (2001) found in her study on the impacts of combining an advertising spokesperson with advertising appeal on advertising effectiveness, that a celebrity spokesperson combined with emotional appeal creates the best advertising attitude and purchase intention. Referring to the afore literature review, the third hypothesis for this study is developed as follows:

H₃: The combination of advertising appeal and spokesperson has a significantly positive effect on advertising attitudes.

H₃₋₁: The combination of emotional appeal and celebrity spokesperson has a more significantly positive effect on advertising attitudes than the combination of rational appeal and celebrity spokesperson.

H₃₋₂: The combination of rational appeal and expert spokesperson has a more significantly positive effect on advertising attitudes than the combination of emotional appeal and expert spokesperson.

The impact of advertising appeal on purchase intention

According to the definition given by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), intention refers to a subjective probability for an individual to engage in certain behavior. The same concept extends to purchase intentions and consumers' willingness to come up with purchase behavior. Hsu (1990) proposed that purchase intention refers to certain transactional behaviors that occur after the consumers' make a general product evaluation and an emotional reaction reflecting their attitude towards an object. When consumers hold positive feelings for an advertisement and a product, their purchase intention will be strengthened. Dodds et al. (1991) even reported purchase intention as the possibility of consumers' willingness to purchase a specific product.

Advertising appeal refers to the direct or indirect delivery of certain benefits or incentives or the explanation why consumers should consider buying a product in an advertisement. Consumers are attracted and show interest due to the communication of advertising messages. Advertising messages aim at influencing consumer behavior, product attitudes, and even purchase intentions (Chu, 1996; Belch and Belch, 1998; Kotler, 2003). Advertising appeal is classified into rational and emotional appeals (Chu, 1996; Belch and Belch, 1998). Gloden and Johnson (1983) proposed that rational appeal covers more product information and practical content thus, attracting consumers and creating better purchase intentions than emotional appeal. They believed that rational appeal works better in arousing consumers' interests than emotional appeal. Coulson (1989)

concluded that compared with emotional appeal, rational appeal stimulates and enhances consumers' purchase intentions more effectively. Referring to the above literature review, the fourth hypothesis for this study is developed as follows:

H₄: Advertising appeal has a significantly positive effect on purchase intentions.

H₄₋₁: Rational appeal has a more significantly positive effect on purchase intentions than emotional appeal.

The impact of advertising spokesperson on purchase intention

According to previous empirical research regarding the impact of advertising spokespersons on purchase intentions, celebrity and expert spokespersons are used most of the time. Wang (2002) classified spokespersons into celebrities, experts, and typical consumers to explore consumer involvement, product types, and the effect of communication through advertisement with a spokesperson. In his study, celebrities created the best effect according to advertising recall rates, advertising attitudes, attitude towards spokespersons, and purchase intention. In the study comparing celebrities, experts, and typical consumers, Lian (1990) pointed out that celebrities create a positive effect on advertising recall, advertising attitude, product attitude, purchase intention, and so on at an extraordinarily significant level compared with experts and typical consumers. Based on the above literature review, the fifth hypothesis for this study is developed as follows:

H₅: Advertising spokespersons have a significantly positive effect on purchase intentions.

H₅₋₁: Celebrity spokespersons have a more significantly positive effect on purchase intentions than expert spokespersons.

The impact of advertising attitude on purchase intention

Shamdasani (2001) revealed that purchase intentions are the possibility of a consumer buying something or the degree to which he/she makes a recommendation of a product. Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) elucidated purchase intention to be the decision-making process consumers exhibit in their request for information, purchase, evaluation, use, and disposal of a product or service to meet their demands. Blackwell et al. (2006) perceived purchase intention as people's direct participation in obtaining and using economic goods, including various decision-making procedures before purchase.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) pointed out that attitude can influence purchase intentions. In appropriate scenarios,

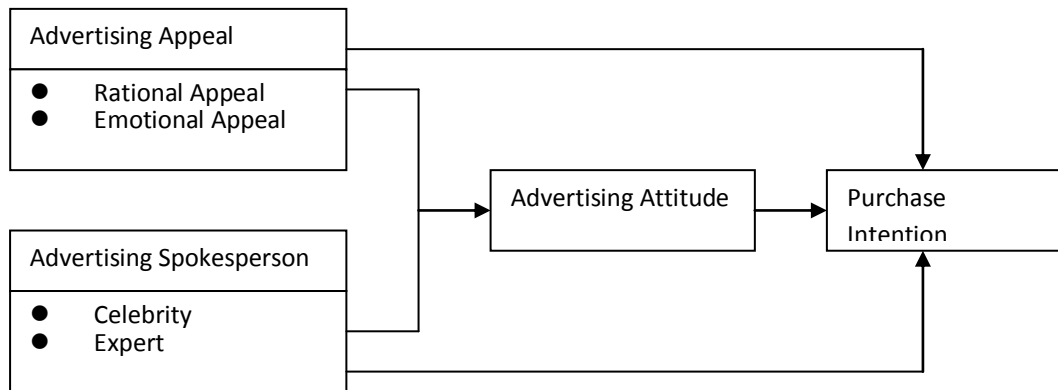


Figure 1. Conceptual structure of the study.

attitudes further affect consumers' practical purchase behaviors. They reflect consumers' preferences for something. When consumers hold good attitudes towards an advertisement and happen to need such a product, purchase intentions are formed through the variable of requirement. Kotler (2003) suggested that consumers' advertising attitudes stand for the cognitive evaluation, emotional feelings, and action orientation that represent long-lasting likes or dislikes towards a product brand or general feeling in an advertisement. The afore observation explains that advertising attitude is closely associated with purchase intention. Based on the literature above, the sixth hypothesis of this paper is developed as follows:

H₆: Advertising attitudes have a significantly positive effect on purchase intentions.

METHODOLOGY

Conceptual structure

This study aims to discuss the effects of different types of advertising appeal adopted by advertisers to increase advertising attitudes and purchase intentions. It also tries to explore the effects of different types of advertising spokespersons on advertising attitudes and purchase intentions and discuss whether or not advertising attitudes make any contribution to purchase intentions. The conceptual structure of the study is shown in Figure 1.

Variable definition and measurement

Advertising appeal

By adopting references from Belch and Belch (1998) and Schiffman and Kanuk (2007), this paper defines advertising appeal as the degree of drawing consumers' attention and enhancing their desire to increase their product purchase intention. Advertising appeal is categorized into rational appeal and emotional appeal (Belch and Belch, 1998; Chu, 1996). In this paper, rational appeal is defined as the degree of rational appeal focusing on rational purchase. The appeal delivers consumers' interests by giving reasons. It emphasizes that a product or service is able to achieve a function or

interest which a consumer desires. In this paper, emotional appeal is defined as the degree of stimulating consumers' purchase intention by arousing their positive or negative emotions. This study refers to Lee (1996), Liu (1998, 2001) and Lin and Tu (2006) in measuring advertising appeal. Four questions are used to measure if the objects are clearly aware of the rational and emotional appeals being manipulated in empirical advertisements. A seven-point Likert scales is adapted to measure advertising appeal.

Advertising spokesperson

McCracken (1989) defined an advertising spokesperson as an advertising endorser who uses his/her own popularity to present the benefits that consumers can enjoy through advertising activities. While Freiden (1984) proposed four types of advertising spokespersons, this study adopts two types of advertising spokespersons, celebrities and experts, for further discussions. This study refers to Freiden (1984) and Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) for the definition of celebrities in reference to public or famous figures. Companies usually expect consumers to become more empathic through the high popularity or attraction of a celebrity and then feel good about the products being recommended. An expert refers to a person who is an authority in his/her own professional field. He/she may have professional knowledge in relating to the products being recommended. In this paper, the celebrities being measured refer to famous local and foreign movie or TV personalities. An expert is an advertising spokesperson who has professional knowledge and authority in relating to a product being recommended. This study refers to them as individuals with professional knowledge of and experience in cell phones.

To measure the effects of advertising spokespersons, an experimental method is adopted. Famous TV and movie personalities are selected as celebrities. Persons who have professional knowledge and experience are selected as experts.

Advertising attitude

Advertising attitude is defined in this study as the degree of a consumer's preference formed by subjective perception towards a commercial. As to the measurement of advertising attitude, this paper refers to Buchholz and Smith (1991) and Schlosser et al. (1999) in classifying cognitive attitude and affective attitude. A total of 14 questions were used to measure advertising attitudes and a seven-point Likert scale was adopted. These questions were formed by referring to Machenzine and Lutz (1989), Buchholz and Smith (1991) and Mehta and Sivadas (1995).

Purchase intention

In this study, purchase intention is defined as the degree of future behavioral orientation reflected by a consumer in purchasing a product presented in an advertisement. This paper refers to Zeithaml (1988) and Dodds et al. (1991) in the measurement and design of the questions for measuring purchase intention. A total of 5 questions were proposed and a seven-point Likert scale was adopted.

Experimental design

This study applies an experimental design and four experimental variables for research. Two determinants are considered. This first determinant is advertising appeal, which is classified into rational and emotional appeal. The second determinant is advertising spokesperson, which is classified into celebrity and expert. As there are two types determinants, $2 \times 2 = 4$ experimental groups are developed.

Students from five universities were chosen as research subjects for the experiment. Cell phones students are quite familiar with were chosen as the advertising products. An innovative and virtual brand presented in an advertisement was selected as the variable in the advertising message. The cell phone brand was determined as "QG".

Before conducting a formal survey, 50 questionnaires were distributed as a pre-test. The purpose of this pre-test is to confirm advertising spokespersons and the important properties of the product and its functions. As to the selection of celebrities, 10 celebrities the subjects are most familiar with in Asia were selected. Fifty students from Aletheia University ticked the most ideal cell phone spokesperson. As to the selection of expert spokespersons, photos of experts who suitable for representing cell phones were chosen based on their overall image, including appearance, temperament, and clothing. The results showed that Lo Chih-Hsiang was the most popular among the 10 celebrities, and thus he was selected as the celebrity spokesperson in the experimental advertisement. The pre-test was conducted to ensure that the cell phone selected for this study had the attributes of an effective utility and the social identification suitable to all types of appeals and advertising spokespersons. After confirming that the experimental product had multiple attributes, the relative importance of the product attributes was explored to serve as the content for rational and emotional appeal.

Data collection and analysis method

This study took university students in Taiwan as subjects. Among many universities, five in north Taiwan were selected: National Chengchi University, Aletheia University, Tamkang University, Chung Yuan Christian University, and Hsuan Chuang University. The convenience sampling method was adopted for conducting the questionnaire survey. Instructors were present for the distribution and collection of questionnaires. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed. Eighty questionnaires were distributed in each university.

The collected data was analyzed and compared with SPSS17.0. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed to find out basic information from the sample population. Reliability and validity analyses of the samples were also performed. Correlation analysis was used to explore the correlations between variables. Two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and regression analysis were adopted to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS

Sample description

A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed in this study, 411 effective questionnaires were collected, and the effective return rate was 91%. Among the collected questionnaires, female subjects (63.02%) accounted for most of the sample population than males (36.98%). Freshmen accounted for most of the sample population, totaling 31.39%. The average amount of pocket money managed by the students fell between two ranges: from NTD 5,001-10,000 and below NTD 5,000 accounting for 48.42 and 36.50% of the money received by the sample population, respectively. Most students (55.7%) lived at home, and about 98.78% of them owned a cell phone. Students with pre-paid phone lines accounted for 94.89% of the sample. About 26.01% of the students received information about cell phones from TV commercials, and 36.45% of the students used the cell phone brand Sony Ericsson.

Reliability and validity analysis

The results of the reliability analyses determined that the Cronbach's α values for advertising attitudes were 0.908 and 0.930 for the pre-test and formal test, respectively. Cronbach's α values for purchase intention were also determined at 0.889 and 0.923 (pre-test and formal test, respectively). These figures are all higher than 0.7, meeting the requirement suggested by Guelford (1965). Thus, we conclude that the questionnaire used in this study have high reliability.

The variables used in this study have been referred to in relevant theory and literature reviews. The questions asked in this study met the research purpose and were revised many times. Before conducting the formal survey, we ran a pre-test to ensure that the respondents truly understood the questions. Thus, we believe that the questionnaire used in this study meets the research requirement of content validity.

The results of construct validity analysis are shown in Table 1. According to the data obtained, the factor loading values were all higher than 0.5 for all the questions, the Eigenvalues were all higher than 1, and the variances were all above 50%. Therefore, the questionnaire used this study meets the requirement of construct validity (Chiou, 2006).

Hypotheses testing

Effect of advertising appeal and spokesperson on advertising attitude

The ANOVA results of the effect of advertising appeal and spokesperson on advertising attitude are shown in Table 2. Advertising appeal was found to be $F = 4.798$, $P =$

Table 1. Results of validity analysis of the questionnaire.

| Variable | Question | Factor loading | Eigenvalue | Variance explained (%) |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|------------|------------------------|
| Advertising attitude | 1 | 0.60 | 7.2661 | 51.900 |
| | 2 | 0.65 | | |
| | 3 | 0.65 | | |
| | 4 | 0.72 | | |
| | 5 | 0.80 | | |
| | 6 | 0.76 | | |
| | 7 | 0.72 | | |
| | 8 | 0.74 | | |
| | 9 | 0.83 | | |
| | 10 | 0.81 | | |
| | 11 | 0.81 | | |
| | 12 | 0.60 | | |
| | 13 | 0.66 | | |
| | 14 | 0.68 | | |
| Purchase intention | 1 | 0.87 | 3.838 | 76.768 |
| | 2 | 0.89 | | |
| | 3 | 0.85 | | |
| | 4 | 0.90 | | |
| | 5 | 0.87 | | |

Table 2. ANOVA of the effects of advertising appeal and spokespersons on advertising attitudes.

| Source of variance | Freedom | F value | P value |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Advertising appeal (A) | 1 | 4.798 | 0.029* |
| Advertising spokesperson (B) | 1 | 4.376 | 0.037* |
| A * B | 1 | 4.864 | 0.028* |

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

0.029<0.05, indicating statistical significance. The results show that advertising appeal has a significantly positive effect on advertising attitude. Therefore, H₁ is supported. As to the effect of advertising spokespersons on advertising attitudes, we obtained values of F= 4.376, P= 0.037<0.05, which shows statistical significance. These results reveal that advertising spokespersons have a significantly positive effect on advertising attitudes. Therefore, H₂ is supported. In addition, the interactions between advertising appeal and spokespersons led us to obtain values of F= 4.864, P= 0.028<0.05, also showing statistical significance. This result shows that combinations of advertising appeal and spokespersons have a significantly effect on advertising attitude. H₃ is thus supported. Next, t-tests were conducted on independent samples, the results of which are shown in Table 3. The average presented by rational appeal was 59.114, which is greater than that by emotional appeal (56.206). This means that rational appeal resulted

in better advertising attitudes in this study. As P= 0.029<0.05, this result has statistical significance. Consequently, H₁₋₁ is supported. Regarding advertising spokespersons, celebrity spokespersons had an average of 59.034. This figure is greater than that for expert spokespersons (56.256). Celebrities created better advertising attitudes in this study. As P= 0.037<0.05, this result has statistical significance and supports H₂₋₁.

The averages obtained from different combinations of advertising appeal and spokespersons are shown in Table 4. The combination of emotional appeal with a celebrity spokesperson showed an average of 59.038. This is greater than the average of 59.030 obtained for the combination of rational appeal with a celebrity spokesperson. The value of P= 0.997>0.05, however, does not show statistical significance; thus, H₃₋₁ is not supported. The average of the combination of rational appeal with an expert spokesperson was 59.196, which is greater than the average of 53.400 obtained for the

Table 3. Comparison of the averages of the effects of advertising appeal and advertising spokespersons on advertising attitudes.

| Source of variance | Type | Average | Standard deviation | Sample | P value |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|--------|---------|
| Advertising Appeal | Rational | 59.114 | 12.252 | 202 | 0.029* |
| | Emotional | 56.206 | 14.525 | 209 | |
| Advertising Spokesperson | Celebrity | 59.034 | 14.330 | 204 | 0.037* |
| | Expert | 56.256 | 12.549 | 207 | |

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table 4. Effects of combinations of advertising appeal and spokespersons on advertising attitudes.

| Advertising spokesperson | Advertising appeal | Average | Standard deviation | Sample | P value |
|--------------------------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|--------|---------|
| Celebrity | Rational | 59.030 | 1.334 | 100 | 0.997 |
| | Emotional | 59.038 | 1.308 | 104 | |
| Expert | Rational | 59.196 | 1.320 | 102 | 0.001** |
| | Emotional | 53.400 | 1.301 | 105 | |

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table 5. ANOVA of the effects of advertising appeal and spokespersons on purchase intentions.

| Source of variance | Freedom | F Value | P Value |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Advertising appeal (a) | 1 | 0.100 | 0.752 |
| Advertising spokesperson (b) | 1 | 0.438 | 0.508 |
| a*b | 1 | 4.197 | 0.041* |

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

combination of emotional appeal with an expert spokesperson. As $P=0.001<0.01$, the results show statistical significance, and thus H_{3-2} is supported.

Effect of advertising appeal and spokespersons on purchase intentions: The ANOVA results of the effects of advertising appeal and spokespersons on purchase intentions are shown in Table 5. The results obtained with regard to advertising appeal were $F=0.100$, $P=0.752>0.05$, showing no statistical significance. In effect, advertising appeal does not have any significantly positive effect on purchase intentions. Consequently, H_4 is not supported. The results obtained with regard to advertising spokespersons were $F=0.438$, $P=0.508>0.05$, also showing no statistical significance. In other words, advertising spokespersons do not have any significantly positive effect on purchase intentions. Thus, H_5 is not supported. Advertising appeal and advertising spokespersons have no positive effects on purchase intentions. We were unable to compare the effects of different advertising appeals and different advertising spokespersons on purchase intentions, and thus H_{4-1} and H_{5-1} could not be

adequately supported.

Effect of advertising attitudes on purchase intentions: Regression analysis was applied to test the effects of advertising attitudes on purchase intentions, the results of which are shown in Table 6. The model of advertising attitude explained 60.4% of the variances in purchase intentions ($\bar{R}^2=0.604$, $D-W=1.95$, $F=623.683$, $p=0.000<0.001$). This value shows that there was no autocorrelation between variables. In addition, the β of advertising attitudes on purchase intentions was 0.776, where $t=24.974$ and $p<0.01$, showing statistical significance. The result shows that advertising attitudes have a significantly positive effect on purchase intentions. Therefore, H_6 is supported.

DISCUSSION

H_{3-1} is not supported

From the results of the ANOVA in Table 4, the average of

Table 6. Regression analysis of the effects of advertising attitudes on purchase intentions.

| Independent variable | β | t value | P value |
|----------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Intercept (constant) | -1.045 | -1.333 | 0.000*** |
| Advertising attitude | 0.776 | 24.974 | 0.000*** |

* $p < 0.05$; **, $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$. $R^2 = 0.777$; $\bar{R}^2 = 0.604$; D-W=1.95; N=411; F=623.683.

the combination of a celebrity spokesperson and rational appeal was 59.030. This value is almost the same as the average of the combination of a celebrity spokesperson and emotional appeal (59.038), with $P = 0.997 > 0.05$ in this case. It is very possible that although celebrity spokespersons influence advertising attitudes, the influences of rational and emotional appeals are not significantly different. Celebrity spokespersons with high levels of awareness are also likely to attract more consumers. For a virtual brand, the combination of emotional appeal and a celebrity spokesperson can attract consumers but only because of the celebrity's status. The real contents, functions, and benefits of the product may not encourage much confidence from consumers. Thus, a significant positive influence on advertising through the combination of emotional appeal and a celebrity spokesperson is not supported.

H₄ was not supported

The research results may lie in the nature of TV commercials. As TV commercials are often very attractive, printed advertisements may pale in comparison. Advertising companies work very hard to design special appeals for a product. The advertisement used in this study was not designed by a professional advertising company, which could have led to the very low purchase intentions of the students for that particular cell phone. Cell phones often have a wide variety of functions and designs in today's competitive environment. The sample population used in this study included university students who pursued fashionable, new, and fancy cell phones with famous brand names. Not many students are likely to try or buy cell phones from a virtual brand and without public comment. It seems that the print advertisement used to promote the cell phone in this study failed to attract students to buy it.

H₄₋₁ is not supported

It is very possible that the experimental advertisement, with both rational and emotional appeal, was less attractive than TV commercials and actual print advertisements. Even if the experimental advertisement was printed in color, it was not attractive enough to convince students to buy the cell phone advertised. The cost of a cell phone, a kind of high-involvement product, is usually

expensive for many students. The purchase of a cell phone requires rational thinking. Thus, consumers are more willing to spend time to collect, analyze, and make judgments based on the phone's related information prior to the purchasing process. They will try to buy a long-lasting and high-quality cell phone. No recommendations or related information was included with the cell phone that had a virtual brand. The students might have seen something new and novel in the advertisement, but the purchase intention was still low.

H₅ is not supported

A male spokesperson may not be able to attract male students. According to the sample description of this study, male students totaled 152, which is less than the total of 259 for female students. Male students may be influenced by a spokesperson while considering buying a cell phone. In the pre-test, the spokesperson was selected by only 50 students from Aletheia University. Such results cannot reflect the real spokesperson favored by other university students. Some students did not agree with the choice of spokesperson selected for the study. Thus, the spokesperson used in this study might have had no effect on the students' purchase intentions for the cell phone. This situation may be likened to an acclaimed film with a poor box office record. Consumers only remember the actors in a film but ignore the plot. Sometimes, a person who makes a recommendation for something may override the product itself.

H₅₋₁ is not supported

A spokesperson, whether a celebrity or an expert, has to be very persuasive to facilitate a consumer's purchase intentions for a brand new cell phone covered in an advertisement. As such, the spokesperson selected must be someone whom consumers trust before their purchase intentions are affected. As mentioned earlier, the celebrity spokesperson and expert spokesperson were selected by only 50 students from Aletheia University. We were unable to prove that the students of the four other universities would select the same spokespersons.

Conclusions

The important findings in this study were as follows:

(1) Advertising appeal has a significantly positive influence on advertising attitudes, and rational advertising appeal is more significant than emotional appeal, (2) spokespersons have a significantly positive influence on advertising attitudes, and a celebrity spokesperson is more significant than an expert, (3) the influence of the combination of rational advertising appeal and an expert spokesperson on advertising attitude is more significant than the combination of emotional advertising appeal and an expert spokesperson and (4) advertising attitudes have a significantly positive influence on purchase intentions.

MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Comparison of the effects of different advertising appeals on advertising attitudes

Different advertising appeals affect consumer thoughts on product and purchase decisions (Belch and Belch, 1998). According to the literature review, consumers have certain impressions of different advertising appeals. Some research revealed that rational appeal has a more significant effect on advertising attitudes (Lin and Tseng, 2008), while some found that emotional appeal creates more significant effects on advertising attitudes (Ting, 1999). The results of this study show that rational appeal works better on consumers' advertising attitudes than emotional appeal in a cell phone advertisement does. Such a result clarifies the question on which type of appeal creates better effects on advertising attitudes.

Provision of a more complete structure of the use of advertising spokespersons

Previous literature pointed out that celebrities work better in recommending highly socialized products. Cell phones were the objects studied in this paper. It was found that celebrities are still more effective than experts in recommending a cell phone product. Compared with an expert, a celebrity is more attractive to and favored by consumers. While consumers can easily identify with the professionalism shown by an expert, expert spokespersons are still less attractive in making recommendations on cell phones in practical situations.

The results of this study found that a celebrity creates a better effect than an expert in promoting a cell phone.

Clarification on the relationship among advertising appeal, advertising spokespersons, and advertising attitudes

Consumers often remember well-known spokespersons and ignore advertised products when companies employ advertising spokespersons in their advertisements

(Ogilvy and Raphaelson, 1982). Different advertising appeals induce different advertising attitudes (Laskey et al., 1995). Tin (1999) found in his study that, the impact of advertising appeals on advertising attitudes is limited. From the literature review, we found that there is an obvious lack of consistency in the relationship among advertising appeals, advertising spokespersons, and advertising attitudes. This study clarifies that these three variables have a significant relationship with each other. Furthermore, this study also reveals that a combination of advertising appeals and advertising spokespersons will have a significantly positive effect on advertising attitudes.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATION

Adopting different advertising appeal strategies

This study verifies that rational appeal creates a more significant effect on consumers' advertising attitudes than an emotional appeal, further revealing that rational appeal is an important factor in the decision-making process for purchase. Companies may refer to the results obtained in this study for their future considerations in developing an advertising appeal strategy.

Extension of the research results to high involvement products

This study selected cell phones as the experimental product covered by an advertisement. Generally, cell phones are high involvement products. Thus, the conceptual structure proposed in this study can also be extended to other high involvement products. The same theory can be applied to customers who substantially buy products and used to analyze consumers' views on the combination of advertising appeals and spokespersons with regard to products introduced to the market. The complete information covered in this study can also be used as a reference for advertising companies or marketing managers as they develop their marketing strategies.

LIMITATIONS

The design of this study was made as impartially and carefully as possible. Explicit conclusions for the study were also obtained. However, some limitations became evident while conducting the investigation. These limitations include the following: (1) Sampling coverage - The sampling source only came from the students in the five universities in Northern Taiwan. The samples might not be generalized and not have fully display the general characteristics of the consumers, (2) limited time for advertising presentation - The respondents only read the

advertisements for a short period of time. The respondents should watch the same advertisement repeatedly on TV during the same period of time before any advertising effect could be produced, (3) limitation on the responses to an advertisement after reading - This study focused on the respondents' immediate response to the experimental advertisements. The respondents' responses might have been different if they had repeatedly watched the same advertisement for a longer period of time and (4) limitation on the types of advertising appeal and advertising spokespersons - This study does not cover all types of the two variables mentioned above. This might have caused the consumers failing to recognize the cell phone, which could be mostly due to the lack of advertising appeal and spokesperson focus. These limitations may have caused deviations in the conclusions obtained from this study.

SUGGESTIONS

Cell phone companies

The following suggestions are made for cell phone companies: (1) Select appropriate approaches for advertising appeal. First, the company has to determine the type and attributes of a product instead of immediately emphasizing consumers' dependence on emotions. Companies need to make good judgments on consumers' needs and interests for a specific product. The practical functions and benefits of a product should be presented in related advertisements and (2) carefully select an advertising spokesperson. Companies should carefully choose and evaluate if a more popular celebrity could properly identify with the product being promoted. The costs and benefits achieved by a spokesperson for some product should be considered so the spokesperson could create maximum effects for the product.

FUTURE STUDY

The following suggestions are made as reference for researchers who are interested in conducting subsequent investigations in this field of study: (1) Expand the range of objects being surveyed. Surveys can be conducted in schools in more areas. Such surveys can also be conducted on respondents from different age groups to generalize the results, (2) use newly marketed brands as the promotion target. Researchers may use a newly marketed product as the promotional target in the future. As such, the results obtained will be more practical. Researchers can add real brands and make comparisons between products with and without brand names, (3) select different types of products. Researchers can also choose other types of products for study and make comparisons in the advertising effects between different

types of products and (4) use other advertising approaches. Researchers may choose media other than printed advertisements and make related comparisons.

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