

How to avoid the undesirable effects of product related advertising

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Project description:

Advertising, defined as ‘any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor’ (Keller and Swaminathan 2020, p. 218) is an important element of a company’s marketing communication programs that aims to elicit positive reactions from consumers, such as increased purchase intentions and favorable brand perceptions (Keller and Swaminathan 2020). Although companies use advertising as a way of eliciting positive reactions from consumers, undesirable effects are also likely, both at individual level and societal level (Xu 2020). At individual level, evidence exists that advertising creates unhappiness in children (Buijzen and Valkenburg 2003; Goldberg and Gorn 1978); negative effects on people’s self-esteem and self-perceptions (Gulas and McKeage 2000; Martin and Gentry 1997); dissatisfaction with the self (Richins 1991), etc. At societal level, some suggest that marketing strategies create waste by stimulating consumption (Fuller and Ottman 2004), which prompted some research into how advertisements with green demarketing appeals might discourage consumption (Reich and Soule 2016)

Advertising usually takes the form of product and/or corporate related advertising, with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) advertising being a more recent addition to such communication programs. Since the aforementioned undesirable effects were previously documented in the context of product related advertising, the question arises as to whether corporate advertising, and in particular CSR related advertising can help companies avoid such undesirable effects while also maintaining the desirable ones. Reich and Soule (2016) found some evidence that corporate advertisements with green demarketing appeals might discourage consumption, but more evidence is needed about how corporate advertisements might help avoid the undesirable effects of product related advertising.

We welcome therefore PhD projects that aim to investigate this aspect, by adopting a quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods approach for this purpose.

About the Supervisors:

Dr Carmen Mal is a Lecturer in Marketing at the Open University Business School. Her research interests include brand trust and consumer perception formation towards brands.

Professor Gordon Liu is a Professor of Marketing Strategy at the Open University Business School. Gordon's research focuses on the intersection of marketing, strategy and entrepreneurship with particular interest in topics surrounding innovation/new product development, strategic orientation/capabilities, and network/strategic alliance.

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