

Investigation Effect of the Role of Product Category in Emotional Advertising

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates advertising appeal interactional influences, utilitarian and hedonic influences and involvement toward product on advertisements and brand attitude. In this study 2*2*2 Experimental - Factorial Design was used that consists of product category with mental involvement dimension (high/low) and product type dimension (utilitarian/hedonic) and advertising appeal dimension (emotional/ non emotional). Results indicated that ads should be chosen according to product category and advertising appeal to have the greatest influence.

KEYWORDS: Involvement, Hedonic- Utilitarian, Advertising appeals, Advertisings attitude, Brand attitude-format presentation

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, use of emotional advertising has significantly increased, accompanied by an increment research interest in the role emotions performance in attitude formation (e.g., Allen et al., 2005; Grimm, 2005; Laros and Steenkamp, 2005; Malhotra, 2005; Poncin et al., 2006; Yoo and MacInnis, 2005).

In against to current theories on ad processing, academics and advertising practitioners often assume that the effectiveness of emotional advertising appeals depends on the product category they promote. Several researchers believe, for example, that emotional ads evoke more positive responses for hedonic versus utilitarian products and for low versus high involvement products (e.g., Adaval, 2001; Batra and Stephens, 1994; Johar and Sirgy, 1991; Rossiter et al., 1991).

Product category is an important variable for the choice of advertising strategy, most previous research largely ignores the moderating influence of product type and presentation format, but this study considers role of product type, involvement, presentation format and appeal in advertising. The objective of this study is to contribute to the literature by examining (1) whether and (2) how product category moderates the processing of emotional and non-emotional advertising.

Finally, this paper investigates the moderating effect of high and low involvement products on the one hand, and utilitarian and hedonic products on the other and verbal and pictorial on the responses to emotional and non-emotional advertising appeals.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

This section has presented prior research on the emotional advertising related with role of product category.

Academics and advertising experts can categorize products on the basis of many characteristics. Several researchers recognize between utilitarian and hedonic products/motivations (e.g., Bridges and Florsheim, 2008; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Jones et al., 2006; Overby and Lee, 2006). In combination with this dimension, also an involvement dimension is often used (cfr. the Rossiter-Percy Grid (Rossiter et al., 1991), the FCB-grid (Vaughn, 1986), and the Affect-Reason-Involvement model (Buck et al., 2005)). In view of the popularity of the latter grids, the discussion and studies in this paper focus on low versus high involvement products, and hedonic versus utilitarian products.

Previous study does not account for differences in emotional ad effectiveness for hedonic versus utilitarian products either. However, the results of Pham (1998) can describe the belief that emotional ads work better for hedonic products.

Pham (1998) explain that feelings in ad appeals are effective only if these feelings are representative and relevant for the evaluation of the product. Assuming that consumers are more likely to perceive their feelings as relevant when they have hedonic versus utilitarian motives to buy the product, one can expect that emotional appeals are more effective to promote hedonic than utilitarian products. However, both hedonic and utilitarian products may possess benefits that are hedonic/

Emotional or utilitarian in nature (Lim and Ang, 2008). Even more, Lim and Ang (2008) find that consumers like utilitarian products more when the ad features hedonic rather than utilitarian benefit claims. Therefore, on the condition that a product-congruent emotion is used (i.e., an emotion that is both representative and relevant for the product), emotional advertising may be effective irrespective of the product. The foregoing leads to the following hypothesis:

H1. Emotional ads using product-congruent emotions lead to more positive ad and brand attitudes than non-emotional ads, irrespective of whether the product is utilitarian or hedonic, or a low or a high involvement product.

The part may be different for product-incongruent emotions though. Consumers are not likely to perceive feelings that are incongruent with a product as representative for this product.

The literature on product category effects indicates that product category can really matter. The high correlation between ad likeability and brand attitude in case of low involvement and hedonic products suggests the usefulness of emotional approaches for those products. For high involvement and utilitarian products, on the other hand, researchers typically discourage the use of emotional appeals (Brown and Stayman, 1992; Rossiter *et al.*, 1991; Shiv and Fedorikhin, 1999; Youn *et al.*, 2001). An explanation for these controversial findings may reside in the fact that none of the prior studies compares an emotional and a non-emotional ad promoting the same brand, but instead only compares emotional appeals promoting different products. Therefore, the question is: do certain ads for certain products have less impact, not because of the advertising appeal, but because of the product itself? Several research findings point in this direction.

Aaker and Bruzzone (1985) and De Pelsmacker and Van den Bergh (1998) discover that consumers perceive some product categories as much more irritating than others, and Raghunathan and Irwin (2001) explain that the pleasantness of the product category substantially influences consumers' evaluations. Also, Lim and Ang (2008) show that (Singaporean) consumers prefer hedonic to utilitarian products. These results are in line with Keller (2008) who argues that consumers automatically transfer their product category associations to a new brand in this category. Therefore, the previously reported higher impact of emotional appeals for low involvement, hedonic products than for high involvement, utilitarian products can perhaps be explained by existing product category associations. In addition, if product associations cause the differences in ad impact, the same differences must emerge for both emotional and non-emotional appeals. The foregoing findings lead to the following hypothesis:

H2. Irrespective of the advertising appeal (emotional versus non-emotional), ads for hedonic as compared to utilitarian products, and for low as compared to high involvement products lead to more positive attitudes.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study uses a 2 (appeal: product-congruent emotional or non-emotional)

× 2 (product: hedonic versus utilitarian) × 2 (product: high versus low involvement) between subjects design. Most previous studies make use of either a sample of existing ads or a set of fictitious emotional ads picturing different product types. None of these studies uses a set of an emotional and a non-emotional ad for the same brand and for brands of different product categories. Therefore, this study manipulates both ad appeal and product category. A warm (good feeling) appeal serves to evoke a product-congruent emotion.

Pretest

Twenty respondents (10 men and 10 women, ranging in age from 23 to 45 years and with different education levels) categorize 20 products according to the involvement and utilitarian–hedonic dimension.

Because all respondents equivocally classify Bank, hand tissues, vacations, and Game console as respectively low involvement hedonic, low involvement-utilitarian, high involvement-hedonic, and high involvement-utilitarian, these four products serve as the different product types in this study.

Advertising stimuli

A professional designer created sixteen fictitious advertisements, varying in product (bank, hand tissues, vacation, and game console) and appeal (emotional, non-emotional). The headlines differ for each product, but are similar across the emotional and the non-emotional conditions. By using children, family, flower as the warm element, the ads show congruency between the evoked feeling and the product because the four product types relate in one way or another to children or to the evoked feeling of warmth. Indeed: game console often target children, the softness of the hand tissues relates to the fragility and softness of children, a picture of children wrapped in a towel shows a link with vacations, and bank companies often focus on family protection. The non-emotional ads consist of

text and a pack shot of the product or product logo. They do not feature other pictures to avoid the elicitation of emotions. In other words, eight pictures designed verbally similarly designed pictorial.

Respondents

Five hundred respondents receive an invitation to come to one of the major Iran universities to participate in the experiment. Four hundred respondents completely filled out the questionnaire (47% males; 53% female). The group is randomly split in four subgroups. Each group sees four ads (two test and two filler ads) in a random order. One of the test ads is emotional and the other is non-emotional, while they promote different product categories.

Measures

A 7-item, 7-point semantic differential measures Aad (pleasant/ unpleasant, likable/unlikable, unfavorable/favorable, persuasive/unpersuasive, informative/uninformative, believable/unbelievable, effective/ineffective) ($\alpha=.915$), whereas a 5-item, 7-point semantic differential measures Ab (favorable/unfavorable, nice/awful, unappealing/appealing, useful/useless, satisfactory/unsatisfactory) ($\alpha=.933$).

RESULTS

A 2 (emotional /non-emotional) \times 2 (high/low involvement) \times 2 (utilitarian/ hedonic) \times 2 (verbal/ pictorial) MANOVA taking ad and brand attitude as dependent variables, tests H1 and H2. In general, the effect of ad appeal ($F(2,791)=$

153.21, $p<.001$), the effect of involvement ($F(2,791)=4.15$, $p=.016$) and all interaction effects are significant (appeal \times involvement: $F(2,791)=4.90$, $p=.008$; appeal \times utilitarian/hedonic: $F(2,791)=4.33$, $p=.013$; involvement \times utilitarian: $F(2,791)=6.22$, $p=.002$; appeal \times involvement \times utilitarian/ hedonic: $F(2,791)=4.43$, $p=.012$). Table 1 shows the univariate F-values and significance levels for both ad and brand attitude.

Regarding the attitude towards the ad, the findings support H1. In fact, a significant main effect of ad appeal appears, but no significant interaction effects emerge between ad appeal and product category. Emotional ads ($M=4.3$, $SD=.06$) lead to a significantly more positive Aad than non-emotional ones ($M=3.1$, $SD=.06$) and this result holds for utilitarian and hedonic, and for low and high involvement products. As far as the attitude towards the brand is concerned, at first sight a different picture appears to emerge. The main effect of ad appeal on brand attitude is similar to the one found on ad attitude: Ab is more positive for emotional ($M=4.7$, $SD=.05$) than for non-emotional ads ($M=4.0$, $SD=.05$). However, in contrast to the findings for Aad, all interaction effects between ad appeal and product type are significant. A significant involvement \times ad appeal interaction effect points to a more pronounced positive impact of an emotional ad for a low than for a high involvement product (Fig. 1).

MANOVA results: main and interaction effects of product and advertisement type

Table 1. F-values

F-values	Dependent variable	source
194.92	Ad attitude	appeal
85.20	Brand attitude	
6.87	Ad attitude	involvement
.90	Brand attitude	
3.12	Ad attitude	Product type
.04	Brand attitude	
.28	Ad attitude	involvement * appeal
9.76	Brand attitude	
1.07	Ad attitude	Product type * appeal
8.08	Brand attitude	
12.39	Ad attitude	Product type * involvement * appeal
.33	Brand attitude	
.47	Ad attitude	Product type * involvement
8.70	Brand attitude	

Nevertheless, in line with H1 independent sample t-tests show that in both cases

Emotional ads substantially outperform non-emotional ads (Table 2). A similar significant ad appeal \times utilitarian/hedonic interaction effect is found. Emotional ads significantly outperform non-emotional ads in the case of both utilitarian and hedonic products (Table 2), but unexpectedly the difference is larger for the utilitarian

than for the hedonic products (Fig. 1). Finally, a significant three-way interaction effect (ad appeal \times involvement \times utilitarian/hedonic) (Fig. 2) indicate that emotional ads lead to significantly more positive responses than non-emotional ads for all product types (Table 2), but the difference is most pronounced for the low involvement-utilitarian product. In result, both for Aad and Ab the results support H1. Indeed, irrespective of the product category, emotional ads induce significantly more positive attitudes than their non-emotional counterparts.

Concerning H2, a significant main effect of involvement on ad attitude shows that ads for low ($M=3.81$, $SD=.06$) as compared to high involvement products ($M=3.58$, $SD=.06$) extract a significantly more positive Aad. Further, a significant interaction effect between product involvement and the utilitarian–hedonic product dimension indicates that the ad for the low involvement-utilitarian product evoke

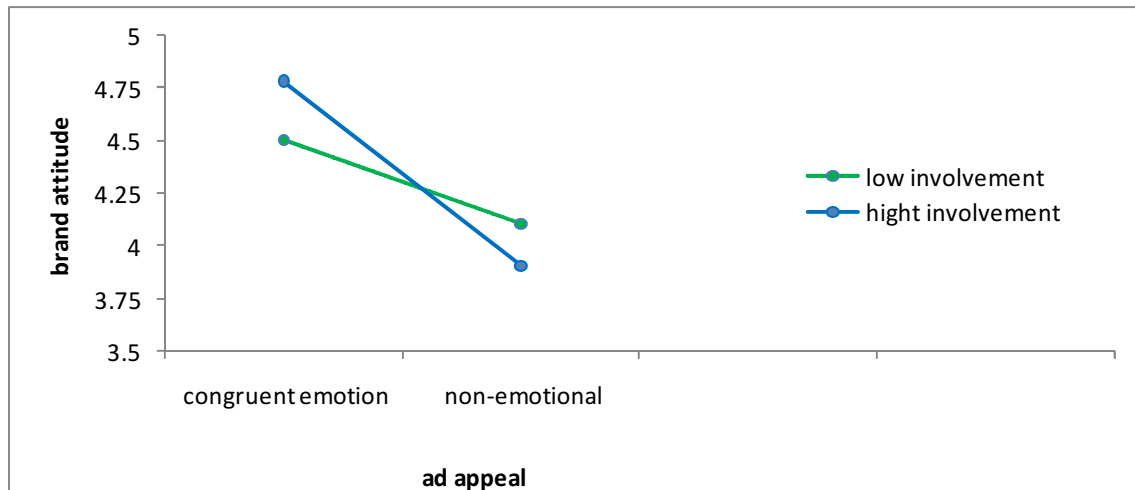
The most positive ad attitude ($M=4.0$, $SD=.09$), followed by the hedonic products ($M=3.6$, $SD=.10$ and $M=3.7$, $SD=.09$ for low and high involvement products respectively) to end up with the high involvement-utilitarian product ($M=3.5$, $SD=.10$) ($F(3,796)=6.10$, $p=.001$). The size of the positive effect for the low involvement-utilitarian product is counterintuitive. Further, in line with H2, for

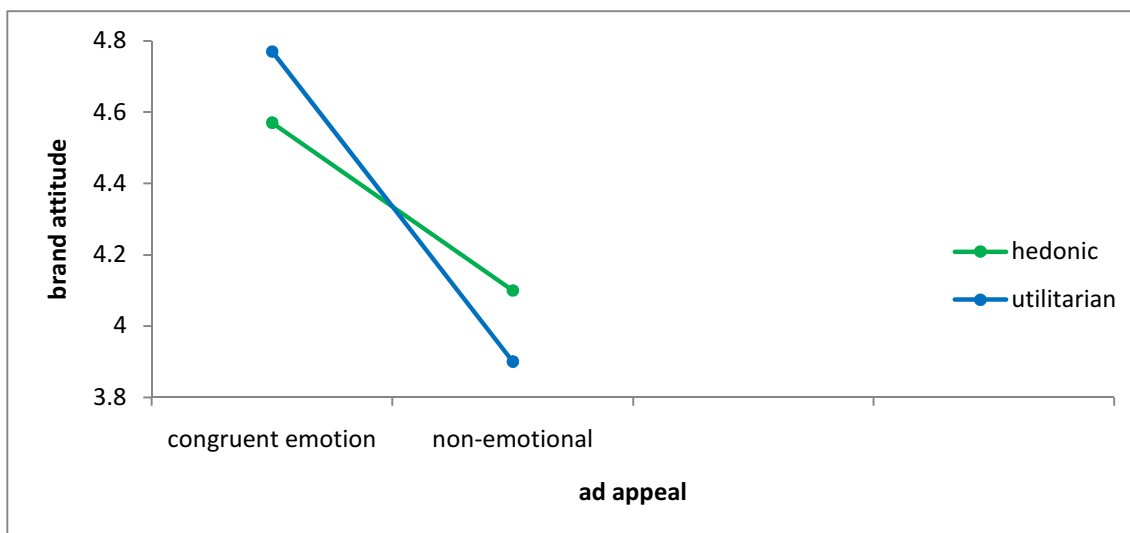
Aad, no significant interaction effects between ad appeal and the product category dimensions occur. For brand attitude, the product category dimensions do not show main effects, but, as discussed above, two significant interaction effects with ad appeal emerge. As mentioned above and shown in Fig. 1 the interaction effects do not show that emotional ads are not effective for either of the products, but point to the fact that ad appeals matters more for low than for high involvement products, and for utilitarian versus hedonic products. All in all, the results partially confirm Hypothesis 2. The results support H2 in the sense that the product itself leads to a different ad attitude. As predicted, low involvement products elicits higher ad likeability than high involvement products, but surprisingly Aad is most positive for the low involvement-utilitarian product.

Furthermore, the two product dimensions do not have a significant main or interaction effect on brand attitude.

Table 2. Impact of advertisement type on brand attitude

Product category Emo- Non emo	brand	attitude	t- value
Low involvement	4.8	3.9	8.81
High involvement	4.5	4.1	4.21
Utilitarian	4.8	3.9	9.72
Hedonic	4.6	4.1	4.01
Low involvement-utilitarian	5.0	3.7	10.77
Low involvement-hedonic	4.6	4.2	3.03
High involvement-utilitarian	4.5	4.1	3.48
High involvement-hedonic	4.5	4.1	2.65





Conclusion

This paper investigates advertising appeal interactional influences, utilitarian and hedonic influences, involvement and presentation format toward product on advertisements and brand attitude. In this study 2*2*2*2 Experimental - Factorial Design was used that was consist of product category with mental involvement dimension (high/low) and product type dimension (utilitarian/hedonic) and advertising appeal dimension (emotional/ non emotional) and presentation format (pictorial/ verbal).

The results indicate that, in general, emotional ads outperform non-emotional ones in terms of the attitude towards the ad and the brand.

Because respondents usually consider feelings and they can understand emotional advertising better non emotional.

Emotional advertising is compatible for utilitarian and low involvement product and increase attitude toward of brand and advertising.

Similarly, pictorial format is suitable for low involvement product in emotional advertising.

At the same time the results show that emotional ads do work better for some than other product types. An explanation for why many practitioners and researchers believe emotional appeals are not suited for high involvement and utilitarian products may reside in the less positive associations consumers hold with

The latter products. Only comparing an emotional ad across products does indeed lead to the conclusion that emotional ads do not score well for high involvement and utilitarian products.

Therefore, Hypothesis 3 assumes that hedonic as compared to utilitarian products, and low as compared to high involvement products lead to more positive communication effects, both for emotional and non-emotional ads.

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