

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282925927>

Persuasion in advertising: When does it work, and when does it not?

Article in *International Journal of Advertising* · February 2015

DOI: 10.1080/02650487.2014.994732

CITATIONS

7

READS

819

3 authors:



Peeter Verlegh

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

55 PUBLICATIONS 2,598 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



Marieke Fransen

University of Amsterdam

43 PUBLICATIONS 428 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



Amna Kirmani

University of Maryland, College Park

38 PUBLICATIONS 4,097 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Packaging design and consumers' product inferences [View project](#)



The Social Sharing of Emotion in Online Social Networks [View project](#)



International Journal of Advertising

The Review of Marketing Communications

ISSN: 0265-0487 (Print) 1759-3948 (Online) Journal homepage: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rina20>

Persuasion in advertising: when does it work, and when does it not?

Peeter W.J. Verlegh, Marieke L. Fransen & Amna Kirmani

To cite this article: Peeter W.J. Verlegh, Marieke L. Fransen & Amna Kirmani (2015) Persuasion in advertising: when does it work, and when does it not?, *International Journal of Advertising*, 34:1, 3-5

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2014.994732>



Published online: 09 Feb 2015.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 3042



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

GUEST EDITORIAL

Persuasion in advertising: when does it work, and when does it not?

At its best, advertising wins the hearts and minds of consumers, swaying or solidifying preferences and producing a solid return on investment. But advertising messages do not always receive a warm welcome. Reactance, distrust and avoidance are common responses to advertising. Advertising messages may irritate consumers, making them switch off their televisions, pay to avoid banners or install software to block them. In the past decades, academics in marketing, psychology, advertising and communication science have shown an increasing interest in the active and passive ways in which consumers defend themselves against the persuasive influence of advertising. The Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright 1994) is one of the most influential theories in this area. This theory provides a framework for understanding how consumers recognize and evaluate persuasive attempts, and develop and employ strategies to cope with those attempts. Such coping is often defensive but consumers may also embrace persuasive attempts as a form of entertainment or a valuable source of information about products and services (Kirmani and Campbell 2004). This special issue includes several studies building on this theory, but also on various other theories on persuasion and resistance, such as message framing (Rothman and Salovey 1997) and reactance theory (Brehm and Brehm 1981). The aim of this special issue was to collect some of the latest research in this area, with an emphasis on research that provides insights into the psychological mechanisms that underlie consumers' responses to persuasive advertising, that helps advertisers to overcome consumer resistance, and that provides policymakers and consumers with insights that help them cope more effectively with (unwanted) persuasion attempts.

The first paper in this issue provides an overview of the different strategies that consumers use to resist advertising. It reviews relevant literature from advertising, marketing, psychology and communication and introduces the ACE typology, which differentiates among Avoidance, Challenging and Empowerment types of resistance. The paper also reviews some of the marketing tactics that can be used to counter these different types of resistance. Given the authors, the paper was handled by the regular editor of the *International Journal of Advertising*.

The second paper in this issue, authored by Chang Dae Ham, Michelle Nelson and Susmita Das, provides an overview of measures that can be used to assess consumers' persuasion knowledge. This review will be a valuable asset for researchers who aim to study persuasion knowledge, since measurement of the construct is lagging behind theory. It presents validated items and scales that can be used to measure almost any aspect of this construct in different contexts and audiences.

This paper is followed by two other papers building on the persuasion knowledge model. Martin Eisend uses the model in the context of the classic third-person effect, which shows that consumers perceive that advertising has a stronger influence on others than on themselves. In an experiment and a survey, the paper shows that these third-person perceptions are stronger when consumers have higher levels of persuasion knowledge. The effect is further moderated by the perceived regulatory competence of the government, which reduces the role of persuasion knowledge. Eva van Reijmersdal, Nienke Lammers, Esther Rozendaal, and Moniek Buijzen examine the role of persuasion

knowledge in children's responses to advergames. The authors show that disclosures that inform children of the persuasive intent of these games reduce the influence of these games on brand attitudes. At the same time, the authors report that the disclosures increase brand recall, suggesting that the net effect of disclosures may not necessarily be negative for marketers.

The fifth paper in the issue is authored by Pablo Briñol, Dereck Rucker and Richard Petty. Their research emphasizes that consumers' naïve theories about persuasion can be positive as well as negative. In two experiments, the authors demonstrate that consumers who have a negative view of persuasion engage in more careful processing of advertising messages, and show more differentiation between messages containing strong versus weak arguments. This research sheds light on the important role of consumers' beliefs about advertising's impact on themselves and others, and provides both a manipulation and a multi-item measure for this construct.

The last three papers all focus on persuasion and resistance in the context of 'green' or 'environmental' advertising. The first of these three papers is authored by Beatrice Parguel, Florence Benoit-Moreau and Cristel Russell. In three experiments, the authors show that consumers perceive brands to be more ecological when they are presented in ads with executional elements that invoke nature (jungle, waterfalls, etc.). This 'executional greenwashing' is most effective when consumers have little knowledge of environmental issues. Importantly, the effect cannot be undone by the inclusion of objective information, unless this information is presented in a format that can be very easily comprehended by consumers (i.e., traffic light type of labels rather than a numeric value). These findings not only provide insights that may help marketers present their products as more 'green', but also provide guidelines to policymakers who seek to prevent unwanted influences of such executional greenwashing. The second paper in this set is authored by Tae Hyun Baek, Sukki Yoon, and Se Eun Kim. It presents a study on the effects of assertive language ('must', 'should', 'ought') in environmental messages. The results can be easily implemented in developing more effective campaigns for promoting pro-environmental behaviours, as they show that assertive language has positive effects on pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours for consumers who are highly motivated to perform these behaviours, but is counter-effective when consumers lack this motivation. The final paper in this special issue is written by Hua Chang, Lingling Zhang, and Guang-Xin Xie. It presents two studies investigating the effect of construal level and message framing on the persuasiveness of green advertising. The paper shows that green advertising is most effective when there is a match between message framing and construal level, such that gain frames work best at high level (abstract) construal, and loss frames work better at low (concrete) construal levels. This finding may help advertisers to tailor their messages to situations where short versus long-term consequences of behaviours are most important.

As guest editors, we would like to thank all the authors who submitted their work for this special issue. We are also indebted to the reviewers who devoted their valuable time to providing constructive comments on the submissions. In addition, we would like to extend our thanks to Charles 'Ray' Taylor, for encouraging us to submit our proposal for this special issue, and for trusting us with the task of editing it.

References

- Brehm, S.S., and J.W. Brehm. 1981. *Psychological reactance: A theory of freedom and control*. Academic Press.

- Friestad, M., and P. Wright. 1994. The persuasion knowledge model: How people cope with persuasion attempts. *Journal of Consumer Research* 21, no. 1: 1–31.
- Kirmani, A., and M.C. Campbell. 2004. Goal seeker and persuasion sentry: how consumer targets respond to interpersonal marketing persuasion. *Journal of Consumer Research* 31, no. 3: 573–82.
- Rothman, A.J., and P. Salovey. 1997. Shaping perceptions to motivate healthy behavior: The role of message framing. *Psychological Bulletin* 121, no. 1: 3–19.

Peeter W.J. Verlegh

VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Marieke L. Fransen

University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Amna Kirmani

Robert H. Smith School of Business, University of Maryland, USA