

Should Warnings and Side Effects Be Made Clear in Advertisements?

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Statement: As cognitive psychology suggests that warnings and side effects increase the sales of a product, adding warnings in advertisements will play an effective role in promoting harmful attitudes.

Warnings and side effects should not be made clear in advertisements of products that are harmful to individuals. The argument states that advertisements of harmful products such as drugs or cigarettes that come with side effects are ineffective in scaring consumers. It suggests that these products must avoid warnings. The argument states that harmful products must not include warnings for consumers as they fail to inform viewers about the perceived health risks. Selling harmful products with advertisements is not appropriate as it convinces viewers to buy products. Through warnings, the states play a responsible role by educating the audience about the harmful effects, but in reality, it fails to discourage people from its consumption. The argument also states that warnings are insignificant as the purchase made by customers with complete knowledge of the risks makes them responsible for their actions. Though the purpose of adding warnings in advertisements is to discourage consumers, it does not eliminate the urge to purchase harmful products.

Warnings and side effects work to improve consumers' opinions about the product. The psychologist Ziv Carmon identifies the negative impacts of the warnings displayed in advertisements. The weaknesses of the warnings are apparent in the contradicting opinions of the consumers. Carmon states, "Messages that warn consumers about potentially harmful side effects, presumably with the intent to nudge them to act more cautiously, can ironically backfire" (APS). Carmon recognizes backfire as the confirmed outcome of these advertisements. The warning of potential side effects does not discourage viewers due to their inability to perceive the information correctly. The concept of backfire reflects how warnings play an adverse role in promoting the buying attitudes of consumers. Though harmful effects inform the audience about the potential health risks that could deteriorate consumers' health on the consumption of alcohol, they act in the opposite manner. The claim also states that the scary images of diseases, such as liver cancer, associated with excessive consumption of alcohol do not prevent consumers from purchasing it.

Advertisements containing warnings inform about the risks to the consumers, thus leading to informed decisions. Warnings are insufficient to keep consumers away from the use of harmful products. Stautz and Marteau identify, "tobacco counter-advertising is effective at promoting smoking cessation. Few studies have evaluated the impact of alcohol warning advertising on alcohol consumption and possible mechanisms of effect" (Stautz and Marteau). To support the argument, the research suggests that no significant literature confirms the role of warnings in discouraging people from giving up their consumption of drugs. If the advertisement shows the potential harm of using

drugs, the viewers will be inclined to act in an alternative manner and purchase the commodity.

The supportive claim provided by the researchers reflects that the role of the mechanism effect is minimal and fails to develop the sense of recognizing the harms of the product, thus convincing audiences to consume it. Warnings in advertisements of alcohol and drugs increase the urge to use harmful products in people. The potential effect modifier develops from the advertisement risks that motivate viewers to purchase the product. The argument also reflects that warnings educate the viewers about the harms associated with the use of alcohol or drugs, but it leads to informed decisions. Alcohol and drug warnings are insufficient to keep the audiences away from the purchase of harmful products. The decision to purchase a product, irrespective of the knowledge of risks, makes the consumer more responsible for the purchase.

Warnings in advertisements allow viewers to overcome short-term fears. The claim identifies the practical implications of the advertisements with side effects. Viewers, when they see harmful effects such as the impact of excessive drug or alcohol use on human health, will develop the strength to overcome fears. The empirical evidence supports the main argument, “while increased graphicness of a single threat (increasingly graphic depictions of oral disease) may exhibit a linear fear response, it is conceivable that both moderate and highly graphic types of threat at times may engender a more similar pattern of responses” (Davis and Burton). The intimidating response is timely and does not threaten individuals about the risks associated with the use of alcohol or drugs, thus increasing their desire to purchase the product.

The argument states that the graphical message does not necessarily evoke the emotions of fear and intimidation that could eliminate the persuasion. The response mechanism explains how warnings provoke viewers to buy a product due to the displayed harms. The academic literature also supports the relationship between threatening stimuli and persuasion. The concept states that the threatening stimuli generate persuasive impacts that are sufficient in the purchase of the commodity, including alcohol and drugs. Making warnings part of advertisements is an ineffective tool to prevent its consumption. People are able to overcome the fear developed by warnings, which limits their ability to make rational choices. The individual, after viewing the content on television, develops a timely response that does not quit their decision of purchasing alcohol (Davis and Burton).

The warnings boost the viewers rather than detract them from purchasing the product. The claim states that the audience is more likely to test the actual implications of products displayed on television with harmful impacts. Carmon presents his concerns as “this effect may fly under the radar since people who try to protect the public – regulatory agencies, for example – tend to test the impact of a warning shortly after consumers are exposed to it. By doing so, they miss out on this worrisome delayed outcome” (APS). The role of advertisements is not effective in controlling the desires or behaviors of consumers. The psychologist further suggests that there is a distance between consumer perceptions and the advertisement. The power of ads is limited and may not be sufficient to control the actions of consumers. Potential warnings remain uninfluential when viewers are previous consumers of the product. The claim further states that the ad becomes insignificant in controlling the

decisions. Warnings act more negatively on the people who dare to take challenges and test the product. Very few people rely on the information disclosed in ads.

Prior behaviors have a vital role in controlling the emotions of the viewers. The claim supports the main argument that adding warnings does not produce any valid outcomes. Past behavior plays a dominant role in defining the future actions of consumers. Dossou et al. (2017) recognize the ineffectiveness of warnings, “warnings were considered to be informationally vague, lacking in credibility and ineffective in terms of making participants feel concerned and influencing consumption habits” (Dossou, Gallopel-Morvan, and Diouf).

The results obtained from the study reveal the negative implications of warnings. Warnings are often vague, lack credibility, and become ineffective in convincing the audience about the product’s harmful effects. The claim stresses the fact that irrespective of the health implications displayed on television, the audience is unable to change their attitudes. Prior behaviors are stronger and more capable of controlling the actions of individuals. The past attitudes of viewers make the role of warnings less significant. Viewers doubt the credibility of the information and are more likely to use their prior information regarding the product. Warnings are less efficient in making audiences thoughtful about their actions. Changing the previous attitudes of individuals is not possible, according to the claim.

When advertisements present information that is contradictory to the beliefs of viewers, they will reject the warnings. People are unable to change their attitudes when advertisements include warnings about the use of products because viewers doubt the reliability of information. Empirical findings reflect, “When people are exposed to information that challenges their beliefs or behavior, instead of changing, they often react defensively by strengthening their current beliefs. Moreover, contrary to intuition but consistent with evidence from cognitive dissonance studies, when people believe that disconfirming evidence is valid, they tend to reinforce their prior beliefs more fervently” (Green and Armstrong).

The claim supports the central argument as consumers have strong preferences towards the product and are unwilling to change their perceptions. The findings reveal that viewers will stick to their old beliefs and habits rather than relying on the disclosed content. The argument states that viewers, in making decisions, rely on their prior attitudes and beliefs. In such cases, the role of warnings in highlighting side effects becomes insignificant. Changing the attitudes of viewers through informed warnings in ads is not possible. The claim also confers the idea that beliefs are more influential than advertisements. Displaying opposing warnings threatens the beliefs of the viewers regarding the purchase of products, which promotes attitudes toward buying products (Green and Armstrong).

Warnings in advertisements encourage people to pay double attention to the content that makes the product more attractive. The argument promotes the belief that warnings are inadequate for removing risky attitudes toward buying harmful products. People who are not concerned about alcohol or drugs will watch the ad with a keen interest that often develops a desire for its

consumption. The fact claims that including warnings in advertisements gives more selling power to the companies. Firms involved in selling alcohol and cigarettes will use warnings as a tool to convince the audience about the ethics. The claim states, "The design of e-cigarette warnings also shows the optimal combination of design features to ensure consumers view e-cigarette warnings, cognitively process their content, and are informed about potential product risks remains to be developed" (Mays, Villanti, and Niaura). The cognitive information allows viewers to stick to their prior perceptions when the advertisements challenge their beliefs through warnings. Warnings act more negatively on young people, as when they challenge their habits of consumption, they will act in an alternative manner. It is not possible for all viewers to assess the reality of the harmful impacts identified in the ad.

The overall analysis of the argumentative synthesis depicts the adverse impacts of warnings in advertisements. The ads that include warnings regarding harmful effects fail to prevent risky behaviors in audiences as they backfire. The response stimuli do not always act in favor of the ad. Warnings promote risky attitudes in audiences as they encourage them to challenge the credibility of information. The argument also states that showing warnings in advertisements is ineffective for controlling risky behaviors because such ads create more attraction for young people. Prior knowledge and beliefs of individuals have a dominant impact on their decision-making. The previous habits of consumption remain more powerful compared to the message of warning displayed in advertisements for alcohol or cigarettes.

Work Cited

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