CAUSE EXHAUSTION: HOW THE LOSS OF POTENCY AFFECTS BRAND ATTITUDES AND INTENTIONS

Melanie L. Buford

Dr. Paul Bolls, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate if there was a significant relationship between a consumer’s perceived frequency with which a cause is featured in cause-related marketing and brand-related attitudes and intentions. In order to do this an experiment was conducted in which participants viewed cause-related marketing messages and self-reported their attitudes and intentions after viewing each video.

It was hypothesized that cause exhaustion would occur, a new concept that claims that when messages feature causes that are used in cause-related marketing campaigns frequently, they will lose their emotional potency with a consumer. Therefore it was predicted that perceived frequency of a cause would lower attitudes toward the brand, purchase intentions, video forward intentions, audio clip recognition accuracy and levels of evoked arousal.

The results revealed no significant differences between low and high-perceived frequency causes in relation to attitude change and purchase intention. In addition, evoked arousal was actually higher for high-perceived frequency causes than low-perceived frequency causes. By testing a mediation effect, the results indicated a significant effect of perceived frequency on forward intention through evoked arousal with higher levels of forward intention for high-perceived frequency causes. This pattern of results suggest the conclusion that high-perceived frequency causes do not create an environment of cause exhaustion and when high-perceived frequency causes are paired with highly arousing content, they motivate forward intention.