

The Application of Framing Effect in Marketing and Advertising

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Abstract: In a market environment that is still highly competitive, the main task of advertising and marketing is to adopt and applying various approaches for increasing the purchase rate. Meanwhile, in people's daily life, the way language is presented often plays a role in guiding individuals' decision-making behavior, which finally influences the consumption behavior. This paper aims to demonstrate and highlight the proper use of the framing effect of language as a psychological factor in the development of marketing programs. Specifically, this article clarifies the definition of marketing and framing as well as elaborates on three related applications, which include the framing effect in electronic word-of-mouth markets, processed organic food markets and health persuasion advertising. The last part of this paper will discuss the unignorable role of psychological factors in consumption behavior and economic decision-making. Consequently, the application of framing in marketing and advertising mentioned in this paper proves the necessity of studying it in the process of analyzing people's consumer behavior, which will provide marketing inspiration and ideas for marketers. At the same time, this paper provides evidence for the importance of psychological factors in the field of business.

Keywords: marketing & advertising, framing effect, consumer behavior

1. Introduction

Determining the type of information that people are attracted to and use as a reference before they engage in consumer behavior, or the underlying factors related to a product or service that leads to a consumer's purchase behavior is the basic premise for marketing. Specifically, the core of marketing is the identification and understanding of consumer needs and motivations, creating product value through the advertising and marketing process to meet consumers' demands in order to attract potential consumers and reinforce the loyalty of existing customers [1]. Currently, in a market environment that is still highly competitive, the main task of advertising and marketing is to differentiate the product or brand from other products of the same type, emphasizing its unique advantages, and thus to increase the purchase rate [1]. Therefore, managers are actively learning and applying various advertising and marketing techniques for improving the competitiveness of their services or products, and the use of language in the marketing process is certainly an element that managers must utilize. One of the most important reasons for the extensive applications of advertising or marketing language is the fact that, in people's daily life, the way language is presented often plays

an advantageous role in guiding individuals' decision-making behavior, which then influences the final decision. In particular, the framing effect of language is then utilized by marketers.

With the development of economy and technology, from the traditional to the present, marketing is constantly updated and changed. Previously, the medium of communication between consumers and marketers was mostly TV commercials or paper media, and it was obvious that traditional marketing messages were one-way and inefficient [2]. At the present time, there has been a shift in promotion and place in 4Ps, which means that online sales and marketing have largely replaced traditional physical sales and advertising [2]. For example, the emergence of online shopping applications such as eBay and Amazon has greatly facilitated the targeted search and browsing of electronic information, simplifying the purchasing process and leading it easier for consumers to make purchases [3], while the relatively cumbersome traditional "shopping in store" has become less popular. Meanwhile, the development of digital media has led to digital marketing. It provides managers with a number of efficient ways to obtain information about consumer needs [4], such as cross-screen marketing, which refers that marketers can track consumers' multiple electronic devices to identify the users of different screens as the same person and then cross-screen advertising them according to their interests [1]. Forecasts show that from 2019 to 2024, U.S. marketers will increase their expenses on mobile advertising by nearly \$80 billion [5]. Evidently, modern marketers have significantly shifted their major marketing investment focus from traditional marketing to digital advertising and marketing.

However, no matter how innovative marketing techniques become, the use of language by marketers is an irreplaceable presence in advertising and marketing strategies, and is even being given higher priority in an era of electronic information. Since electronic information is faster and more widespread than traditional advertising media, language as the primary tool for carrying information should be fully utilized in digital marketing. For example, the electronic word-of-mouth marketing strategy that will be mentioned later in this paper is a valid example. Moreover, as research in the field of marketing and psychology has been further and research methods have increased, it has become impossible to edit advertising language using only seemingly "conventional" and common-sense ideas. Instead, marketers are realizing that only down-to-earth scientific research and data calculations can lead to effective marketing programs, as will be evident later in exploring how the framing effect works best in processed organic food and health advertising.

More specifically, in the process of decision-making, how a problem and option is framed or presented will have an impact on the outcome of an individual's decision, that is, an individual may hold completely different choices about the same problem due to the way it is framed. This phenomenon is known as the "framing effect" [6]. This heuristic as a psychological factor has been proven by many studies in the field of marketing and psychology for its wide impact [7]. Obviously, in marketing, learning the concept of framing effect will help marketers understand the important role played by this psychological factor in consumption behavior, and thus provide a way of thinking for analyzing and predicting consumer decision-making behavior.

According to Higgins, the regulatory focus theory describes two types of regulatory strategies, which result from people's different achievement motivations when pursuing goals, including prevention focus (i.e., the preference for an aversion strategy in order to avoid negative outcomes or failure) and promotion focus (i.e., a desire for positive outcomes or success and to adopt strategies or approaches that help to achieve goals) [8]. In marketing, combining it with the framing effect may increase the persuasiveness of the marketing message, thus reaping positive marketing results.

Hence, exploring how individuals' purchase behavior is guided by the framing language in marketing and advertising through definition clarification, and reviews of previous studies or research is the central task of this essay. At the same time, the last part of this paper will discuss the not ignorable role of psychological factors in consumption behavior or economic decision-making.

2. Application

2.1. Framing in eWOM Marketing Strategy

With the development of internet information technology today, the most popular and mainstream word-of-mouth communication method has gradually changed from the traditional WOM (i.e., face-to-face information exchange) to the web-based eWOM, which involves the exchange of negative or positive reviews of services or products between unfamiliar peer consumers in the network [9].

Moreover, as the digital economy is evolving rapidly, the improvement of e-commerce has increased the channels of competition among brands or products, and also made the dissemination of customer feedback more rapid and extensive, consequently, utilizing framing messages on the internet is crucial in eWOM marketing strategy. Currently, according to Cheung and Thadani, consumers' purchasing behavior is more likely to be influenced by online reviews or information rather than traditional media campaigns or advertising [10]. Clearly, marketers need to pay close attention to the customer's product experience and encourage electronic feedback, while maintaining eWOM that is beneficial to sales, which will be a sufficient and necessary step to increase the competitiveness of their products or services now and in the future.

Accordingly, in Hsu and Yang 's research, they examined the impact of both framing electronic information and consumers' regulatory focus on their purchase intentions and final decisions [11]. They hold that when consumers are confronted with a variety of electronic messages, their inherent internal preferential strategies in processing the information interact with the way the electronic information is organized and framed, ultimately influencing consumption decisions [11]. On this basis, by assessing participants' type of regulatory focus and providing positive and negative framed internet information, Hsu and Yang finally measured participants' purchase intentions and perceived credibility of eWOM and concluded that: if consumers belong to the prevention focus group, they will trust negative words in eWOM and thus reduce purchase desire [11]. Noticeably, positive evaluations of customer experience, product quality, price, etc. in eWOM have the effect of increasing purchase intentions for both types of regulatory focus groups. In general, whether the individual differences of consumers in the regulatory focus are considered or not, positive messages about service quality and product value online will effectively guide consumers and increase their propensity to purchase and consumption behavior. Hence, according to eWOM marketing strategy, merchants who invest their marketing budgets mainly in digital marketing should follow up on their customers' shopping experiences to guide them to make positive online reviews and reduce the rate of bad product reviews, which will significantly contribute to the product promotion.

2.2. Framing in the Marketing of Processed Organic Food

In the advertising and marketing of processed organic foods, the way that the product description is framed also significantly influences consumers' perceptions of the benefits and harms of the product. Compared to natural organic food products, which have been steadily labeled as "healthy food" by people due to long-term "health-friendly" marketing [12], processed organic foods (e.g., organic pizza, burger, or ice cream) seem to have difficulty marketing health as an advantage [13]. However, in the current market, there is a greater variety of processed organic food brands and packaging available to consumers than there is for natural organic food, which makes it important to enhance the competitiveness of this kind of products through appropriate and innovative advertising and marketing strategies [14]. Therefore, Anghelcev et al. explored how consumers' perceptions of the healthiness of processed organic foods are influenced by advertising framing messages [13]. The results of the study showed that consumers would perceive processed organic foods as healthier if the product's flavor-related (i.e., vice-framed advertisements) characteristics were emphasized or framed

in the advertising messages compared to conventional processed foods (non-organic); in contrast, if advertising messages are organized around the health value of processed organic foods (i.e., virtue-framed advertisements), there is little difference in consumer perceptions of the healthiness compared to conventional processed foods [13]. Evidently, Managers who want to differentiate their processed organic food products from competitors of other brands should try to focus on the vice-related attributes of the products in their advertising messages, for the purpose of increasing the perceived health value and purchase behavior of potential consumers.

2.3. Framing in Health Advertising

Time orientation in decision-making behavior can be interpreted as the extent to which individuals consider and are affected the potential consequences that may result from their current decisions [15]. In practice, Studies have shown that future-orientated people will pay more attention to the possible adverse outcomes of present decisions and take risk-averse precautions than present-oriented people [15].

In the health advertising, framing information with a specific temporal reference, which theoretically called temporal framing effect, will have an impact on the health-related decisions made by people who are present-orientated. As is mentioned before, individuals who are orientated by the present will give less consideration to the possible adverse consequence of their current decision [15]. Thus, when addressing decisions about future health, present-orientated individuals tend to underestimate the health risks associated with his/her current behavior, then leading to unhealthy decisions [16]. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a very high percentage of people in the United States are overweight or even obese, and such conditions can put people at risk for cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and cerebrovascular disease [17]. The public health losses resulting from such phenomena can be attributed to individual's unhealthy decision making. Necessarily, the way how the information provided in health persuasive advertising is organized or framed in order to increase individual consideration of future health risks and make health beneficial decisions is becoming a significant issue for public health. In conjunction with the above, it could be seen that the key to reducing the number of decisions, which are harmful to their health, individual make is to motivate people to spend more time or mind on considering about the future negative health consequences. According to KEES, when health advertisements contain information that presents long-term adverse health risks or consequences with short time references, it increases consumers' consideration of decision consequences and increases the propensity of presentment-orientated individuals to engage in health defensive behaviors [16]. For instance, consumers who receive advertisements containing information about the number of new cancer cases per month will pay more attention to consider the possible adverse consequences than those who receive information describing only the number of new cancer cases per year, and will also increase their beneficial health behaviors and decisions. Accordingly, to promote public health, health advertising managers should provide and promote powerful persuasive health messages to consumers, which means making appropriate use of temporal frame effects in their messages to provide consumers with short time reference messages, motivating them to consider potentially harmful consequences and take precautionary measures. Surely, health promotion relying on the framing effect is conducive to raising people's awareness and behavior of health consumption.

3. Discussion

The analysis of this article supports that in electronic word-of-mouth marketing strategies, positive or favorable language about a product or service will increase consumer buying behavior. Moreover, in a competitive market for processed organic food, focusing on the taste of the food as a promotion

will help increase consumer purchase intent. Otherwise, in health persuasion advertising, framing the message with a short time reference can help to increase consumers' healthful decisions and thus maintain and promote public health. Based on that, this review helps to advance the understanding of the current state of the framing effect in marketing. Nevertheless, the discussion in this article is limited by the type of markets analyzed. A more comprehensive and extensive investigation may be needed to determine the effectiveness of the framing effect in various markets.

Furthermore, applying research findings from the field of psychology to the exploration of economic-decision behavior is no longer a new idea. In the context of the increasingly broad scope of psychological research, economists no more believe that people are perfectly rational when making decisions about economic behavior. In the future, with economists having a more open attitude to the scrutiny and questioning of psychological theories, and with more interdisciplinary discovers taking part in related research such as utilizing artificial intelligence to analyze the behavioral pattern and purchasing preferences, more studies and innovations will emerge and lead to more accurate learning and predictions about people's consumption decisions [6].

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, as market researchers, economists, advertising practitioners, and business analytics all devoted to determining the factors that drive people in making consuming behaviors, the significant influence of the framing effect, especially in the choice of words, has become more and more nonnegligible. By clarifying the definition of marketing and framing as well as elaborating on three related applications, which include the framing effect in electronic word-of-mouth markets, processed organic food markets, and health persuasion advertising, this paper aims to demonstrate and highlight the proper use of the framing effect as a psychological factor in development of marketing programs. This suggests that the presence of specific framing language to consumers in advertising language and marketing communications will help to increase the purchase rate of services or products.

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