
THE USE OF FEAR APPEAL FOR ANTI-SMOKING ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS: A SURVEY ON TURKISH YOUTH

Aysen Akyuz

Associate Professor, Department of Public Relations and Advertising,
İstanbul Medipol University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Turkish public authorities have been started to use fear appeal advertisements to reduce smoking population for some time now. These advertisements try to change behavior of potential and existing cigarette users by showing negative health consequences of their actions. This research evaluates the effectiveness of public service advertisements among young university students in Turkey. In doing so, fear appeal advertisement theories will be evaluated on the basis of Turkish experience. According to the theories developed about emotional advertisings, it is demonstrated that once delivered properly, they are found to be effective, particularly in humorous advertisement. However, once addictions in use enter into the picture, fear appeal advertisements may not be as successful. In order to be effective to reverse the influence of addictions, delivery methods must be perfected. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of Public Service Advertisings which use fear appeal on smokers and non-smokers.

Keywords: Social marketing, Public service advertising, Fear appeal

INTRODUCTION

Advertisements, as part of the creative process appeal to the consumer's logic and/or senses. Marketing communications benefit from many techniques in order to improve the consumer's information processing. Khan (2006), mentions that marketers use emotions for transferring the benefits of the product and stimulating the senses. Consumers, when emotionally stimulated, attempt to assess the product with a positive or negative manner. Emotions are the main factors of a persuasive advertisement, where the purpose is not just simply to provide real information but also to change the consumer's viewpoint. Under the control of emotions, individuals will not just feel different, but also think different. The possibility of creating changes in beliefs, values, and desires is thought to be much more by the mean of communication efforts emphasizing the emotions when compared to the messages using just the rational appeal (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy, 2004).

'Use of fear', a type emotional advertisement in communication with the consumer, emerges as a very effective technique in improving the motivation of the individual. Consumers have many fears and advertisers use these fears as a tool to speed up the information processing of the individuals and lead them to take action about the specified message. Social Marketing influences the behavior of individuals by using the marketing principles for the benefit of society in different ways. It is most effective when it activates people. Fear appeals are commonly applied in social marketing to discourage dangerous behavior such as smoking or drink driving. Fear appeal uses the potential negative or frightening situations that individuals may face if they do not follow the recommendations or suggestions in the message. In many studies, along with the humor appeal, it is indicated as the most effective communication approach effecting the behavior of individuals.

In recent years, information especially in health issues is often provided by public service advertisings in Turkey. Therefore, fear appeal strategy often adopted by such advertisements has received significant amount of scholarly attention. In our study, effects of anti-smoking Public Service Advertisings in Turkey on smokers, ex-smokers or never smoker individuals were discussed.

SOCIAL MARKETING AND PUBLIC SERVICE ADVERTISING

Social marketing concept is first described by Kotler and Zaltman in 1971. In their study, they had discussed the necessary conditions for effective social marketing, identified the outlines of the planning process of the social marketing and deliberated on the social implications of social marketing (Cheng et al., 2011). Kotler and Zaltman (1971, p.3), defines social marketing as "*the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing communication, distribution, and marketing research*".

Social marketing principles are generally used to provide benefits to the community. There are four main areas of social marketing: health promotion, injury prevention, environmental protection and community mobilization. Health promotion related issues that could benefit from social marketing include tobacco use, obesity, HIV/AIDS, Eating Disorders, immunizations and etc. (Cheng et al, 2011: Kotler and Lee, 2008). Social marketing campaigns are benefiting from a variety of communication tools. One of them is the Public Service Advertising (also called Public Service Announcement)

A public service advertising (PSA) is an advertisement designed for public interest. PSAs are intended to modify public attitudes by raising awareness about specific issues and to inform them about the related issues such as such as, drunk driving, drug abuse, AIDS, health-related issues. PSA, has informational purposes about a social problem for public interest (Evans, 1978). Lynn

(1974), emphasizes that public service announcement is a convincing and highly specialized type of communication that creates awareness about social issues among the public.

Public Service Advertisings have basically four sources: 1. Private companies using the public service announcement as a kind of corporate advertising, 2. Associations supporting a particular purpose, 3. Local and national governments, 4. Media, advertising agencies and nonprofit advertising board supported by private companies (Gothoffer and Lancaster,1999).

FEAR APPEAL

Fear can be defined as an emotional reaction against a threat implying or expressing a hazard (Belch and Belch, 2012). Before using the fear element in an advertisement, issues such as how the fear will process, in which level it should be used and the reaction of the target audience should be considered. The reason of using fear appeal in an advertisement is to increase the relevance of an individual about the message and to facilitate the adoption of the arguments. Approach to fear arises in "Social condemnation" or "Physical hazard" formats. For example; disuse of deodorants, toothpaste, etc. issues benefits from fear appeal by "Social condemnation", but drunk driving, unprotected sex issues try to bring into consideration of such states like physical hazards or problems which may occur if the behaviors are not changed (Shimp, 2007).

According to Janis and Terwiling (1962), if the fear is stimulated strongly by a communication message, the individual will avoid the symbolic responses and train of thought, which will make it possible to focus on the contents or results of the argument. Fear appeal is described as "a persuasive communication attempting to arouse fear in order to promote precautionary motivation and self- protection action (e.g. stop smoking). Fear arousal is an unpleasant emotional state triggered by the perception of threatening stimuli" (Ruiter, et al., 2001).

There are 3 components consisting a fear appeal: fear, threat and perceived efficacy. "Fear is a negatively balanced emotion that is usually accompanied by heightened psychological arousal. Threat is an external stimulus that creates a perception in message receivers that they are susceptible to some negative situation or outcome. And, perceived efficacy is a person's belief that message recommendations can be implemented and will effectively reduce the threat depicted in the message" (Williams, 2012 : Gore et el., 1998).

Witte and Allen (2000), in their meta-analysis study states that, a high-threat fear appeal is accompanied by an equally high-efficacy, based on low efficacy messages create stronger fear control responses. Therefore, it should be noted that fear appeal messages would constitute high threat and high efficacy perceptions.

According to Shimp (2007), another important point must to be decided is determining the usage level of the threat. Is using lower levels of threat just to attract the attention of the consumer sufficient or should it be used in a high level to make sure that the consumer absolutely will not

miss the message? Although many studies focused on this topic, a consensus has not been reached on the intensity of the threat. In general, threat level to induce fear in the audience depends on the interest of the audience on the topic. If the interest level is high, needed threat level to create a response will be much lower.

Due to the theory, the relationship between the level of fear in the message and acceptance/persuasion is curvilinear as seen in Figure 1. In figure, two types of factors are assumed to emerge by the increases in fear level. First are the facilitating factors. Accordingly, if fear can mobilize the impulses, more attention and interest to the product and message will be possible. Normal levels of fear can provide the message acceptance by primarily creating an interest towards the advertisement and then proposing a solution for the issue. Inhibiting factors, represented by the lowermost curve in the figure, show possible irrational results that high levels of fear may create. If the fear level is too high, attitudes such as refrain from advertising, denial of the threat, distorting the meaning can be encountered. The non-monotonic curve shows the total effect of facilitating and inhibiting factors. This curve represents the high activity for the fear element used at normal level (Belch and Belch, 2012; Ray and Wilkie, 1970).



Figure 1. Relationship between fear levels and message acceptance

Ray, M.L.; Wilkie, W.L. (1970). "Fear: The Potential of an Appeal Neglected by Marketing". *Journal of Marketing*, 34, p. 56.

Fear appeals have been based on several theories throughout research. A model explaining the fear appeal is Rogers' Protection Motivation Theory (Rogers, 1975). It is a major theory of behavioral change which stems from the threat appraisal and the coping. Due to the theory, four cognitive assessment processes determine the response to the threat of the individual. First is the evaluation of information regarding the importance of the perceived threat, second is the perceived possibilities for the realization of the threat, third is the coping ability to eliminate the threat behavior and the fourth is the ability of the individual to maintain the coping behaviors.

According to this model; both the cognitive assessment of the information contained in the message that has fear elements and the emotional reactions contribute to the persuasion of the individual (Belch and Belch, 2012).

Extended Parallel Process model is the improved form of Leventhal's parallel response model. Leventhal (1970), states that emotional or adaptive responses such as fear are arranged in a parallel manner unlike the serial form of drive theory. Here, situational stimuli exist and fear and coping behaviors are activated by the help of them. According to Leventhal (1970), parallel response model is related to the interest of the individual towards the different sources of information. For example, when an individual is warned about a danger or exposed to danger, he faces with the information obtained from the outside world and from his own emotional world and faces with the coping reactions. Under certain circumstances, individual will react to danger, and will move to control the outside world and will not mind own fear. Indicated problem solving activity is called as danger control. On the other hand, individual can also respond to inner signals arise from his or her own feelings. This behavior is called as fear control. To trigger danger control, individual should believe to the presence of a threat. Parallel model suggests that individual can distinguish the needed information for the assessment of the knowledge and danger creating the fear. If she/he can distinguish it, also can maximize danger control and prevent avoidance and despair which appear as parts of fear control process.

In year 1992, Kim Witte extended the previous literature about fear appeal (Witte, 1992 : Rogers, 1975) and suggested the Extended Parallel Process model (EPPM). According to Witte's study, threat leads to action; but perceived efficacy shows whether the action controls the danger (protectionist behavior) or fear (protectionist behavior prevention) (Witte, 1992). Threat is an external stimulus variable as environmental cue which exists independent from person's awareness.

According to EPPM, when individual was exposed to fear appeal including components of threat and efficacy (i.e. self-efficacy), individual evaluates the perceived threat of danger. If the perceived threat is moderate to high, fear will arise. After then individual goes into another evaluation process. Thus, this is called as evaluation of the efficacy of the recommended response. If both perceived threat and perceived efficacy are high, danger control process is activated. However, if individual faces a significant threat, and perceives a response to eliminate the threat, this would lead to danger control process. In danger control process, individual responses to danger, not to fear. However, if the perceived threat is high but perceived efficacy is low, fear control process activates and respond begins against the fear (Witte, 1992).

Schwarzer (1992), states that, quitting unhealthy actions or behaviors like smoking, depends on three conditions. First, the behavior must be detrimental; second, perception of behavior changes will lower the threat; and third, the confidence of having ability to perform favorable behavior

and leave unfavorable behavior. Witte and Allen (2000), suggest that strong fear appeals work when supported by strong efficacy messages. Efficacy messages should persuade target market that they have the ability to demonstrate the recommended response and that recommended response would work in minimizing the threat. Messages should always be carefully pretested to ensure they are producing high threat and high efficacy perceptions. If fear appeals are disseminated without efficacy messages, they run the risk of backfiring.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Questionnaire was used in this study in order to collect data. It was prepared in a single form with a total of six sections. During the preparation of the survey questions, care had been taken in terms of being clear and easily understood by respondents. For the convenience in answering the questions and also in the analysis, questions were prepared as the form of closed-ended, dual choice and due to 5-point Likert scale. Participants assessed the appropriateness of the statements due to 5- point Likert scale. The data collection phase of the study was performed between 4 November - 11 November 2014. The selection of respondents was made by simple sampling method. Sampling group was selected among university students. Within the time specified above, a total of 436 questionnaires were filled but 40 of them were not taken into account because of being incomplete or filled incorrectly, and analyzes were performed on 396 surveys. Survey covers both the smoker and non-smoker individuals. It was composed of six sections and starting from the fourth section non- smokers were required to not to answer the questions. Students answered the questions after watching two Public Service Advertisings, themed with “Smoking is regret” provided by Turkish Health Ministry. The questions were developed based on the extensive review of the existing Fear Appeal literature.

During the evaluation of the data obtained in the study, the Statistical Package Program was used for the statistical analyses. In evaluating the data of the study, the supplementary statistical methods (Frequency, Percentage, Average Values, and Standard Deviation) were used. In case there were two groups, we used the Independent Samples Test in comparisons between the groups.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

		Smokers		Non-Smokers (n=218)		Total	
		N	%	n	%	N	%
Gender	Women	75	% 42,1	134	%61,5	209	% 52,8
	Men	103	% 57,9	84	% 8,5	187	% 47,2
Age	18 and below	3	% 1,7	4	% 1,8	7	% 1,8
	Between 19-30	173	% 97,7	213	% 8,2	386	% 98,0
	Between 31-40	1	% 0,6	0	% 0,0	1	% 0,3

Table 2. Findings on Watching the Public Service Advertisings

	Smokers (n=178)		Non-smokers (n=218)		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
I watched the PSAs with interest	3,316	1,410	4,066	1,125	-5,436	0,000**
I watched the PSAs casually.	2,671	1,486	1,699	1,183	6,625	0,000**
I changed the channel when the PSAs were on.	2,962	1,497	1,773	1,192	8,087	0,000**
I could not concentrate on the PSAs.	2,673	1,477	1,485	0,945	8,715	0,000**

**p<0,01

Responses to questions highlighting the interest / disinterest towards the Public Service Advertisings (PSAs) exhibit significant differences between smokers and non-smokers. Smokers, compared to non-smokers, show clear signs of disinterest towards advertisements like not watching them with interest or watching them only casually, zapping when the advertising is on and inability of concentrating on the advertising.

Table 3. Findings of the effects of PSAs in terms of characteristics

	Smokers (n=178)		Non-smokers		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Effective	3,903	1,097	4,243	0,958	-3,263	0,001**
Realistic	3,926	1,099	4,451	0,759	-5,370	0,000**
Exaggerated	3,189	1,266	2,185	1,084	8,306	0,000**
Boring	3,286	1,356	2,241	1,111	8,206	0,000**
Repulsive	3,486	1,367	2,373	1,282	8,268	0,000**
Decisive	3,814	1,049	4,126	0,858	-3,145	0,002**
Tense	3,798	1,126	3,306	1,290	4,014	0,000**
Funny	1,445	0,990	1,296	0,699	1,671	0,096

**p<0,01

There are significant differences between non-smokers and smokers regarding the effects of the Public Service Advertisings. While non-smokers qualify the advertisings rather effective, realistic and decisive, smokers find it exaggerated, boring, repulsive and tense.

Table 4. Findings on the Knowledge Level on the Harms of Cigarette

	Smokers (n=178)		Non-smokers (n=218)		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
I watch the programs on TV that tell the harms of cigarette.	2,369	1,371	2,991	1,371	-4,464	0,000**
I have information on the harms of cigarette more than everyone else.	3,335	1,184	3,241	1,215	0,775	0,439
I find it boring to think on the harms of cigarette.	3,295	1,424	1,856	1,182	10,730	0,000**
I like having information of the harms of cigarette.	2,206	1,297	2,866	1,396	-4,798	0,000**
I feel depressed when I listen to someone talking about the harms of cigarette.	3,617	1,397	2,032	1,348	11,331	0,000**

**p<0,01

In order to find out whether the average agreement level of the participants in the item “I have information on the harms of cigarette more than everyone else?” had a significant difference

according to the variable of cigarette use, the t-test was applied; and according to the results, the difference between the average values of the groups was not found to be statistically significant. The agreement levels of the smokers on the item “I find it boring to think on the harms of cigarette” were found to be higher than the agreement levels of the non-smokers on the item “I find it boring to think on the harms of cigarette” The agreement levels of the non-smokers on the item “I like having information of the harms of cigarette” were found to be higher than the agreement levels of the smokers on the item “I like having information of the harms of cigarette”. The agreement levels of the smokers on the item “I feel depressed when I listen to someone talking about the harms of cigarette” were found to be higher than the agreement levels of the non-smokers on the item “I feel depressed when I listen to someone talking about the harms of cigarette” .

Smokers don't like to think about and be reminded of the harms of cigarette while non- smokers show higher awareness on that subject.

As shown in table 5, in order to find out whether the average agreement level of the participants in the item “Cigarette relaxes my nerves” had a significant difference according to the variable of having tried to quit smoking before, the t-test was applied; and according to the results, the difference between the average values of the groups was not found to be statistically significant

.In order to find out whether the average agreement level of the participants in the items “Cigarette will eventually cause me get cancer.”, “Cigarette causes difficulty in breathing and similar pulmonary and heart diseases.”, had a significant difference according to the variable of having tried to quit smoking before, the t-test was applied; and according to the results, the difference between the average values of the groups was not found to be statistically significant.

Table 5. The Considerations of the Smokers on the Effects of Cigarette

	Those who do not think quitting smoking (n=91)		Those who think quitting smoking (n=71)		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Cigarette relaxes my nerves.	4,033	1,069	4,300	0,953	-1,646	0,102
Cigarette will eventually cause me get cancer.	3,593	1,192	3,451	1,131	0,773	0,441
Cigarette makes my image become stronger.	2,133	1,153	1,958	1,292	0,909	0,365
The financial burden caused by cigarette is important for me.	3,132	1,431	3,592	1,369	-2,067	0,040*
The smell of the cigarette that is left on me is important for me.	4,022	1,135	4,408	0,950	-2,307	0,022*
My teeth and nails becoming yellow due to smoking is important for me.	4,132	1,118	4,704	0,641	-4,097	0,000**
The decreasing attraction due to cigarette is important for me.	2,462	1,508	3,338	1,594	-3,580	0,000**
Cigarette causes difficulty in breathing and similar pulmonary and heart diseases.	4,407	0,856	4,563	0,788	-1,197	0,233
The contribution of cigarette in controlling my weight is important.	2,934	1,511	2,457	1,510	1,985	0,049*

The agreement levels of those who think of quitting smoking on the item “The financial burden caused by cigarette is important for me.” were found to be higher than the agreement levels of those who do not think of quitting smoking on the item “The financial burden caused by cigarette is important for me.” In order to find out whether the average agreement level of the participants in the item “Cigarette makes my image become stronger.” had a significant difference according to the variable of having tried to quit smoking before, the t-test was applied; and according to the results, the difference between the average values of the groups was not found to be statistically significant. The agreement levels of those who think of quitting smoking on the item “The smell of the cigarette that is left on me is important for me.” were found to be higher than the agreement levels of those who do not think of quitting smoking on the item “The smell of the cigarette that is left on me is important for me.”

The agreement levels of those who think of quitting smoking on the item “The contribution of cigarette in controlling my weight is important.” were found to be higher than the agreement levels of those who do not think of quitting smoking on the item “The contribution of cigarette in controlling my weight is important” The agreement levels of those who think of quitting smoking on the item “The decreasing attraction due to cigarette is important for me.” were found to be higher than the agreement levels of those who do not think of quitting smoking on the item “The decreasing attraction due to cigarette is important for me”. The agreement levels of those who do not think of quitting smoking on the item “Cigarette makes it easier for me to control my weight.” were found to be higher than the agreement levels of those who think of quitting smoking on the item “The smell of the cigarette that is left on me is important for me.”

Mainly there are two points encouraging those who consider quitting smoking: financial burden of smoking and the belief that smoking deteriorates attractiveness (yellow teeth and nails, smell, general perception of people). Those who don't consider quitting smoking use cigarette for weight control. In general, smoking habits are closely related to the importance given to general looks. For those who don't consider quitting smoking, smoking is important for weight control, whereas those who consider quitting think that way because smoking has bad effects on their looks.

Table 6. The distributions on the considerations of the smokers on the effects of cigarette

	Women		Men		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	p
Cigarette relaxes my nerves.	4,187	0,982	4,110	1,024	0,499	0,619
Cigarette will eventually cause me get cancer.	3,667	1,119	3,420	1,182	1,397	0,164
Cigarette makes my image become stronger.	2,000	1,205	2,120	1,192	-0,654	0,514
The financial burden caused by cigarette is important for me.	3,320	1,416	3,220	1,440	0,458	0,648
The smell of the cigarette that is left on me is important for me.	4,453	0,890	3,890	1,180	3,601	0,000**
My teeth and nails becoming yellow due to smoking is important for me.	4,589	0,863	4,214	1,038	2,574	0,011*
The decreasing attraction due to cigarette is important for me.	3,219	1,609	2,602	1,531	2,550	0,012*
Cigarette causes difficulty in breathing and similar pulmonary and heart diseases.	4,575	0,762	4,388	0,857	1,483	0,140
The contribution of cigarette in controlling my weight is important.	3,028	1,574	2,520	1,445	2,178	0,031*

*p<0,05 **p<0,01

The agreement levels of the women participants on the item “The smell of the cigarette that is left on me is important for me.” were found to be higher than the agreement levels of the men on the item “The smell of the cigarette that is left on me is important for me.” The agreement levels of the women participants on the item “My teeth and nails becoming yellow is important for me.” were found to be higher than the agreement levels of the men on the item “My teeth and nails becoming yellow is important for me.” The agreement levels of the women participants on the item “The decreasing attraction due to cigarette is important for me.” were found to be higher than the agreement levels of the men on the item “The decreasing attraction due to cigarette is important for me.” The agreement levels of the women participants on the item “The contribution of cigarette in controlling my weight is important.” were found to be higher than the agreement levels of the men on the item “The contribution of cigarette in controlling my weight is important.”

Women are more concerned about the look-deteriorating effects of smoking (smell, yellow teeth, etc.) than men. In regards to health-related problems and financial burden of smoking, there isn't any significant difference between women's and men's attitudes.

Table 7. The Distribution of the Effect of the Public Service Advertisings on Quitting Smoking according to gender

	Women		Men		t T	p p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
The PSAs created the consideration of quitting smoking.	3,014	1,307	2,732	1,295	1,398	0,164
I am considering of quitting smoking after watching these PSAs.	3,041	1,348	2,526	1,191	2,638	0,009**

*p<0,05 **p<0,01

The agreement levels of the women participants on the item “I am considering of quitting smoking after watching these PSAs.” (x=3,041) were found to be higher than the agreement levels of the men on the item “I am considering of quitting smoking after watching this advertisement film.” (x=2,526)

Table 8. The Effect of the Public Service Announcements on Quitting Smoking

		n	%
The PSAs created the consideration of quitting smoking in me.	I totally agree	36	21,2
	I agree considerably	29	17,1
	I am indecisive	50	29,4
	I don't agree	34	20,0
	I don't agree at all	21	12,4
I am considering of quitting smoking after watching these PSAs.	I totally agree	42	24,7
	I agree considerably	22	12,9
	I am indecisive	61	35,9
	I don't agree	27	15,9
	I don't agree at all	18	10,6

The distribution of the participants according to the question “The PSAs created the consideration of quitting smoking in me.” is examined in Table 8. According to this, 50 (% 29,4) of the participants answered as “I am indecisive” and 36 (% 21,2) of the participants answered as “I totally agree”. The distribution of the participants according to the question “I am considering of quitting smoking after watching these PSAs” is examined in Table 8. According to this, 61 (% 35,9) of the participants answered as “I am indecisive” and 42 (% 24,7) of the participants answered as “I totally agree”.

CONCLUSION

In summary, research findings discussed above demonstrates that addiction makes cigarette users color-blind toward negative health consequences. Although they are aware of the health risks associated for cigarette use, they don't like to be reminded about them. Thus, fear appeal advertisements are not effective to stimulate quit behavior among cigarette users. These advertisements would be more motivating for quit behavior if they emphasize deteriorations in attractiveness, particularly among females, rather than emphasizing negative health considerations. On the other hand, for potential young cigarette users, the emphasis on negative health consequences may be more relevant to create avoidance to start cigarette use. The important policy recommendation that comes out of this study is to segregate people as potential and existing users, then, deliver fear appeal advertisements accordingly. Health-fear appeal advertisements should be delivered to potential groups in appropriate media. If delivered to existing user, they should focus on unattractive attributes and financial burden aspects. On the other hand delivery to potential users, fear appeal should come forward.

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