

# Advertising Appeal and Emotional Awakening: The Influence of Rational and Emotional Beauty Advertisements on Consumer Purchase Intention

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## ABSTRACT

In recent years, the advertising industry in China has experienced rapid development and is regarded as an important tool for driving economic growth and brand shaping. The rise of short video platforms has brought new opportunities to the advertising industry. With the increasing importance of consumer attitudes and preferences towards brands in purchase decisions, advertising formats are constantly evolving, with short video advertisements becoming one of the mainstream formats. This paper aims to explore the impact of different advertising appeals on consumer behavior, with a focus on beauty and skincare product advertisements. Through experimental methods and in-depth understanding of consumer responses to emotional resonance in advertisements, this research aims to provide new creative insights for advertising creators, help businesses with market segmentation, and develop marketing strategies that better align with consumer emotional needs, in order to enhance brand image and development strategies.

## KEYWORDS

Advertising Appeals; Rational and Emotional Appeals; SOR Theory; Experimental Method; Consumer Purchase Intention; Consumer Psychology.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In China, the advertising industry plays an important role in the country's "12th Five-Year Plan" and is seen as a positive driving force for guiding consumption, expanding domestic demand, and driving economic growth [1]. Advertising not only provides powerful tools for companies to shape their brands, explore markets, and enhance their ability for independent innovation, but also serves as an important means to enhance brand influence, accelerate the internationalization of national brands, drive the development of related industries, improve resource allocation efficiency, promote industrial structure upgrading, and construct a modern industrial system.

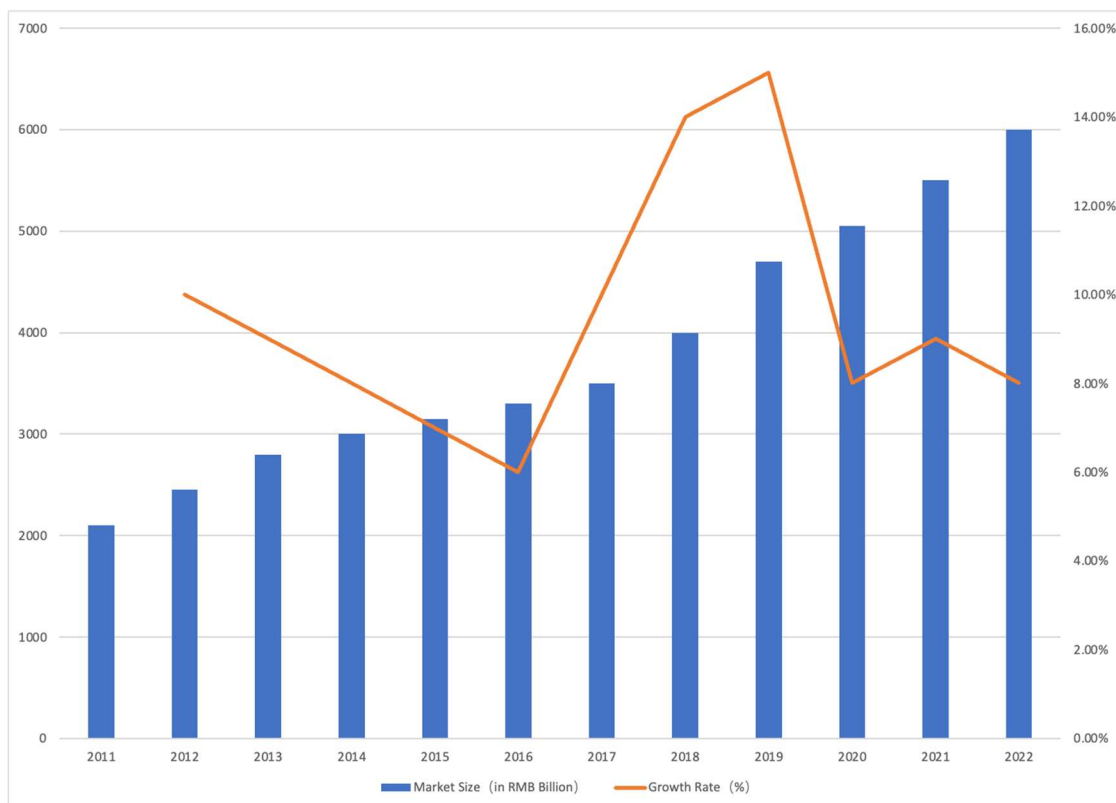
Short videos, as a new media form, have been widely applied in advertising and marketing. As of 2021, the user base of short videos in China has exceeded 900 million people. With its rich content and immersive interactive effects, short videos have become the new favorite of the advertising industry, providing brand promotion and product promotion with new opportunities.

In the internet era, the rapid transmission of information has led consumers to focus not only on the functional value of products but also on their attitudes and preferences towards brands. In a highly competitive market, consumers seek differentiation in brands beyond product functionality and aim to obtain special spiritual values.

The continuous innovation and development of digital technology have also had a profound impact on the advertising industry. Marketing scholar Philip Kotler proposed the concept of Marketing 3.0 in his 2011 book "Marketing 3.0: From Products to Customers to the Human Spirit," which restores consumers from being "targeted groups" in the past to "holistic and diverse individuals" and transforms exchanges and transactions into interactions and resonance. Therefore, an increasing number of studies focus on consumers themselves, starting from their inner needs and paying attention to human emotional values.

In recent years, the Chinese cosmetics market has seen a continuous improvement in consumers' quality of life and demands (as shown in Figure 1). The younger generation pays more and more attention to their external image, regardless of gender. The skincare market in China has shown a continuous growth rate of 23.8% to 41% annually. The skincare market is vast with a wide range of consumer groups, each with different needs and emotional demands when purchasing skincare products. Skincare products, as goods that possess both utilitarian value and spiritual value, are the best choice for research.

The importance of this study lies in filling the research gap in China regarding the impact of advertising appeals on consumer behavior and providing reference and guidance for future related research topics. Through empirical research on advertising appeals in skincare product advertisements, we can better understand the factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions, help companies accurately grasp their target market, develop more targeted brand marketing strategies, and enhance brand competitiveness and market share.



**Figure 1.** Market Size of the Chinese Cosmetics Industry (Unit: RMB Billion, %), 2011-2022

## **2. THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT TYPES (RATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL) OF SHORT VIDEO ADVERTISEMENTS ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION**

### **2.1. In Previous Studies on Advertising Appeals, the Following Conclusions Have Been Drawn:**

Currently, the network audiovisual industry, represented by short video applications, is flourishing, with new scenarios and formats constantly emerging. This not only enriches people's lives but also profoundly changes the ways in which culture is produced, disseminated, and consumed. According to the "2023 Research Report on the Development of China's Network Audiovisual Industry," released recently, as of December 2022, the number of network audiovisual users in China has reached 1.04 billion, making it the largest Internet application. The market size of the broad network audiovisual industry exceeds 700 billion yuan.

Reviewing the existing literature, different types of beauty short video advertisements have been studied in terms of their impact on consumers' purchase intention. Mu Fangmei mainly focused on the visual rhetoric of cosmetic short video advertisements, exploring the visual rhetorical features of cosmetic advertisements from four aspects: the intertextuality of advertising texts and images, the construction of advertising text meaning by social culture, the interaction between the audience and advertising language, and the "rationalization" of consumer desire. One of the main characteristics of short video advertising language is the use of images and audio to persuade the audience. The limited duration of short videos and the effectiveness requirements for the audience demand more concise expression of the theme in advertising language. It is believed that advertising language expresses consumer desire, and the language used in rational and emotional advertisements differs when describing products [2].

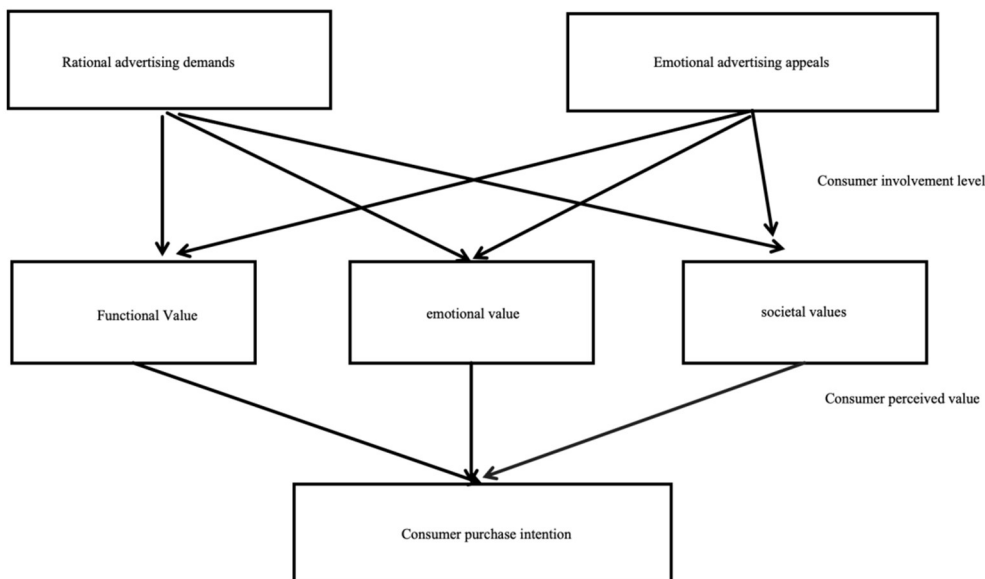
In the research on advertising appeals (rational appeals and emotional appeals), Guo Jia analyzed the impact of advertising appeals and thinking styles on brand preference. The thinking styles of individuals were divided into holistic thinking and analytical thinking, and it was indicated that when advertising appeals to emotions, people with holistic thinking tend to have stronger brand preferences compared to those with analytical thinking, and vice versa. Products were classified into hedonic products and utilitarian products, and the two types of products were studied in conjunction with the two thinking styles. The results showed that when the product type was a hedonic product, the match between emotional advertising appeals and holistic thinking had a more significant impact on brand preference. When the product type was a utilitarian product, the match between rational advertising appeals and analytical thinking had a more significant impact on brand preference [3]. When studying consumer attitudes towards the two different types of advertising, it was found that consumers were more sensitive to product prices in rational appeals advertisements than in emotional appeals advertisements. Advertisements that primarily featured emotional appeals could influence consumers' emotional attitudes towards the brand being advertised [4].

### **2.2. The Impact of Advertising Appeals on Consumers' Purchase Intention at Different Levels**

Firstly, short video advertisements influence the intention of buyers through the mechanism of information transmission. Within a limited amount of time, short video ads convey key information about products or services in a concise and clear manner, sparking the interest of buyers. The integrated use of rich visuals, sound, and text makes the advertising message more vivid and engaging. Additionally, short video ads create visually compelling effects through screenshots, special effects, and storytelling techniques, capturing consumers' attention and stimulating their desire to purchase. The information conveyed through short video ads directly affects buyers' perception of products or services and further shapes their purchase intention.

Secondly, short video ads shape brand awareness, which impacts buyers' intention. By showcasing elements such as brand logos, slogans, and unique features, short video ads enhance buyers' awareness and memory of the brand. When faced with multiple choices during the shopping process, brand recognition becomes an important factor in decision-making. Short video ads make the brand image more distinct and memorable, thereby increasing buyers' affinity and loyalty towards the brand. Buyers consider brand recognition as a reference point in their purchasing decisions, which in turn influences their purchase intention.

Furthermore, short video ads have an impact on emotional arousal. Consumers' emotional perception and experience of a product play a significant role in their purchasing decisions. Research shows that emotional arousal in consumer purchasing decisions can be influenced by stimulating their emotional needs and satisfaction. In the field of beauty products, emotional arousal can be triggered by inducing feelings of beauty and confidence, thus stimulating consumers' desire to purchase. Emotions are a significant driving force behind human decision-making. Short video ads can arouse emotional resonance by using methods such as triggering emotions and social influence, thereby influencing buyers' purchase intention. For beauty products, short video ads can shape an emotional atmosphere related to the products through visuals, music, and storytelling elements, effectively inspiring buyers' desire to use the products. Additionally, short video ads can leverage social influence by showcasing product popularity and social endorsement, further strengthening buyers' purchase intention.



**Figure 2.** Analysis of the Impact of Advertising Appeals on Consumers' Purchase Intention.

### 3. THEORETICAL MODEL ANALYSIS AND EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

#### 3.1. Theoretical Model Analysis

In the process of how advertising appeals impact consumers' purchase intention, two important factors are consumers' involvement and their perceived value of the advertisement.

Firstly, involvement refers to consumers' level of interest and attention towards the product or category that the advertisement involves. Highly involved consumers are more engaged and attentive to relevant advertisements, and they are more sensitive to the content and information conveyed in the ads. For these consumers, the impact of advertising appeals on their perceived value is greater.

They are more inclined to evaluate the product features, advantages, and scientific evidence presented in the advertisement in a rational manner. Therefore, rational appeals may have a more significant influence on them.

Perceived value has three dimensions: functional value, emotional value, and social value. Functional value refers to the practical utility and efficacy of the product, emotional value refers to the emotional satisfaction and pleasure the product brings to consumers, and social value refers to the social recognition and identity symbol associated with the product's use or purchase. Different advertising appeals may have varying degrees of impact on these three dimensions of perceived value.

### 3.1.1. Functional Value:

Rational appeals are more likely to highlight the product's functional features, ingredients, scientific evidence, and clinical tests, thus directly influencing consumers' perceived value in terms of the product's functionality. For consumers who put more emphasis on the actual effects and efficacy of the product, rational appeals may be more effective in stimulating their purchase intention.

### 3.1.2. Emotional Value:

Emotional appeals are skilled at conveying the emotional value of a product through emotional means, such as beautiful visuals, pleasant music, and emotional storytelling, to resonate and connect with consumers. In the beauty and skincare industry, consumers often value the emotional satisfaction and positive experiences that products provide. Therefore, emotional appeals are more likely to trigger their purchase intention.

### 3.1.3. Social Value:

Social value also plays an important role in the beauty and skincare industry. Consumers purchase beauty and skincare products not only for personal needs but also to showcase social recognition and identity symbols. Emotional appeals are more effective in conveying the social value of products through brand image, celebrity endorsements, and social media, thus influencing consumers' purchase intention.

In summary, consumers' involvement and their perceived value of the advertisement are crucial factors in determining the impact of different advertising appeals on purchase intention. Rational appeals are more suitable for influencing consumers who pay more attention to the content of the advertisements and emphasize product functionality and effects. On the other hand, emotional appeals are more effective at triggering consumers' emotional resonance and social identity, thereby affecting their purchase intention and decision-making.

## 3.2. Analysis of Chart: The Impact of Rational Advertising on Consumer Purchase Intention

### 3.2.1. Analysis of the Role of Emotional Value on Purchase Intention Using Perfect Diary as an Example:

Perfect Diary is a cosmetics brand targeted towards young women, and its short video advertisements often focus on emotional expression and storytelling to resonate with consumers. This emotional appeal plays a significant role in consumers' purchasing decisions. Their short video advertisements often use emotional awakening techniques to influence consumers' purchase intention. In a Perfect Diary advertisement, the visuals may show a female protagonist with a joyful and confident expression while using Perfect Diary cosmetics. The advertisement might focus on the eye makeup segment, demonstrating how Perfect Diary eyeshadow and eyeliner products create captivating eye makeup effects.

In this short video advertisement, emotional awakening plays a key role. Firstly, the advertisement may present through close-ups and vivid colors, responding to consumers' emotional desires for

pleasure and confidence when using beauty products. The female protagonist in the visuals may exhibit a confident attitude and a happy expression, conveying these emotions to the audience.

Secondly, the advertisement may enhance emotional awakening by highlighting the features and advantages of Perfect Diary products. For example, the advertisement may emphasize the pigmentation, long-lasting effect, and ease of use of Perfect Diary products, evoking excitement and joy in consumers. This emotional awakening stimulates consumers' desire to purchase, making them want to try and achieve similar makeup effects as the protagonist in the advertisement.

Furthermore, Perfect Diary's short video advertisements may also evoke consumers' emotional needs for shared growth with the brand by showcasing the process of using the beauty products. By showing real users' participation in the advertisement, the brand strengthens the emotional connection with consumers and establishes a sense of shared experience and growth. In Perfect Diary's short video advertisements, emotional awakening through joy, confidence, and shared growth conveys emotional value and stimulates consumers' purchase intention. This emotional awakening can establish an emotional connection between the brand and consumers, motivating them to purchase and try Perfect Diary products.

### 3.2.2. Analyzing the Impact of Rational Advertisements on Purchase Intention Using Winona as an Example

In the beauty and skincare industry, rational advertising appeals emphasize the product's features, benefits, and scientific nature, with the aim of influencing consumers' purchasing decisions through rational thinking and information acquisition. This article will explore the impact of rational advertising appeals on consumers' purchase intention using Winona, a well-known beauty brand, and its short video advertisement as an example. Winona is a beauty brand with a focus on scientific skincare. Its short video advertisements often highlight the product's ingredients, technology, and the scientific research behind them. They mainly emphasize the product's features and benefits, presenting a sense of scientific and professionalism, and citing user reviews as supporting evidence.

Winona's advertisements convey the unique value of the product to consumers by clearly highlighting its features and benefits. The advertisements often introduce the product's ingredients, scientific technology, and the stories behind their research and development to prove their effectiveness and reliability. For example, the advertisement may highlight the latest research findings shared by Professor He Li, the Executive Dean of the Department of Dermatology at the First Affiliated Hospital of Kunming Medical University and the leader of the Ministry of Education's innovation team. The findings may state that one of Winona's ingredients, Qingci fruit, a unique plant from Yunnan, can improve keratotic foam in the stratum corneum, increase intercellular substance, precisely target Claudin-5 in the granular layer, and comprehensively repair the skin barrier [5]. This rational information enables consumers to have a better understanding of the product and develop trust in its performance.

Winona's advertisements usually adopt a tone of scientific and professionalism by showcasing images of laboratories, research teams, and professionals, emphasizing the product's research process and scientific background. This rational presentation style instills confidence in consumers regarding the product's quality and reliability. Consumers often associate scientific and professional aspects with product effectiveness and safety, thus increasing their trust in the brand and product. Additionally, Winona cites user reviews and evidence to support the product's effects and quality. These reviews and evidence can be genuine feedback from consumers, certifications from professional organizations, or results from clinical trials. By referencing this information, the advertisements convey the product's reliability and effectiveness, making consumers more confident in making a purchase.

In addition, rational advertising appeals often include purchase recommendations and demonstrations of advantages compared to competing products. Winona's advertisements may provide specific usage advice, such as application methods, frequency, and target audience, to help consumers make wise

purchase decisions. Furthermore, the advertisements may compare the product with competing products, highlighting its advantages and differences to enhance consumers' purchasing motivation.

It can be seen that for consumers who engage in rational thinking and information acquisition, they tend to evaluate a product's performance and value in a rational way. Rational advertising appeals may have a greater impact on them. However, due to the lack of emotional value in rational advertising appeals, they may somewhat weaken consumers' degree of involvement, thus affecting their purchase intention.

## **4. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS OF SOR THEORY**

Understanding consumer behavior and the factors that influence their response to advertising is crucial for marketers in the field of advertising. The SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) theory can explain how individuals respond to various stimuli. The following content will explore the concepts and principles of SOR theory, the connection between advertising appeals and the SOR model, the impact of rational and emotional appeals on the elements of the SOR model, and provide a case study of the application of the SOR model in beauty advertising.

SOR theory suggests that individuals' perception of external stimuli (S) influences their internal processes or psychological states (O), which then lead to observable responses (R). These internal processes include perception, interpretation, cognition, and emotional reactions. SOR theory provides insights into how individuals respond to stimuli.

### **4.1. Connection between Advertising Appeals and the SOR Model:**

Advertising appeals are persuasive techniques that influence consumer behavior and elicit desired responses. Advertising appeals can be divided into two categories: rational appeals, which persuade consumers through logical reasoning, and emotional appeals, which evoke emotions and feelings to stimulate consumer response. The SOR model provides a framework for understanding how different advertising appeals trigger consumers' cognitive and emotional reactions, ultimately influencing their behavior.

### **4.2. The Impact of Rational and Emotional Appeals on Elements of the SOR Model**

The SOR model consists of three key elements: stimulus, organism, and response. Rational appeals mainly target the organism's cognitive processes by providing logical arguments, facts, and product features to persuade consumers. They aim to persuade consumers based on the product's benefits and rational judgments. In contrast, emotional appeals attempt to evoke emotional responses from the organism, emphasizing sensations, desires, and cravings. They leverage consumers' emotions to establish an emotional connection with the brand/product in the advertisement.

Rational appeals are more likely to influence the organism's cognitive interpretation and evaluation of stimuli. They persuade consumers by appealing to their logical reasoning and providing factual information. Emotional appeals, on the other hand, primarily target consumers' emotional reactions to stimuli. They aim to establish an emotional connection between the brand/product and consumers, eliciting positive emotional responses and increasing the likelihood of desired reactions.

### **4.3. Case Study: Application of the SOR Model in Beauty Advertising**

Taking a beauty advertising as an example, rational appeals may highlight the product's scientific research and effectiveness to trigger consumers' cognitive processes, such as perception, attention, and evaluation. They may emphasize the product's unique ingredients, advanced technology, and recommendations from dermatologists to persuade consumers of the product's efficacy.

Conversely, emotional appeals in beauty advertising may showcase a confident and charismatic woman using the product, eliciting viewers' desires and aspirations. Emotional appeals may focus on the transformative effects of the product, such as enhancing beauty, boosting self-esteem, and fostering confidence.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the theoretical analysis and examples provided earlier, although emotional advertising holds more advantages in the beauty skincare industry, rational advertising can still influence consumers' purchase intention to some extent. For consumers who engage in rational thinking and seek information, they are more inclined to evaluate the product's performance and value in a rational manner. Therefore, rational advertising may have a greater impact on them. In emotionally-driven advertisements, it is beneficial to incorporate relevant empirical data to increase consumers' trust and decision-making basis by providing more product information and scientific evidence. Conversely, when designing advertisements with a focus on rational appeals, it is possible to include elements of emotional appeals to prevent the advertisement from becoming dry and uninteresting. This can stimulate consumers' emotional responses while watching the advertisement, leading to positive attitude changes and further influencing their purchase intention.

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