

A double-edged sword? The role of consumer advocate television shows (CATS) in enhancing consumer performance and biasing brand attitudes

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Abstract

Consumer advocate television shows (CATS) aim to educate consumers not only about the specific brands they feature but also about business practices in general. Their goal is to reduce the imbalance of information that exists between companies and consumers, and to improve consumers' performance in business-related decisions. In this article we address the impact of CATS from the perspective of "mind-sets" and "self-efficacy". Our results show that exposure to CATS improves consumers' ability to manage business-related tasks. Additionally, consumers that have watched CATS have a more negative attitude towards brands that are completely unrelated to the brand featured in the CATS than do a control group. We discuss these results in terms of whether CATS are therefore something of a double-edged sword: They empower consumers to solve decision tasks better. However, CATS may also lead to biased beliefs that result in consumers penalizing unrelated, "innocent" brands.

Keywords: *consumer advocate television shows; mind-sets; self-efficacy*

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