

The Short and Long-Term Effects of Female Offensive Advertising: The Role of Reactance and Empowerment in Shaping Consumer Responses

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Abstract

Offensive ads can hinder women's short-term purchase intentions, but their long-term effects have received limited attention. Leveraging the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping (TTSC) alongside Reactance Theory and using a longitudinal experiment with 319 participants, we examine the effect of offensive ads targeting women on both short- and long-term consumer responses, suggesting an explanatory mechanism and showing a buffering effect. We found that those who felt highly discriminated against on account of their gender group (mostly women) demonstrated a reactance motivation toward the brand that offended them, increasing their purchase intentions over time. Empowering women mitigated this effect, reducing purchase intentions compared to non-empowered women exposed to women-offending ads. This research underscores the long-term effects of offensive advertising and the mitigating role of empowerment, calling for a shift towards advertisements that respect and empower women.

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics