

Support me or Force me - The Role of Communication Style in Short-Form Fitness Advertising

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Abstract

Short-form digital fitness advertising often relies on brief video messages delivered by fitness coaches, yet little is known about how specific communication styles influence consumer responses in these rapid encounters. This paper examines the effects of empathic versus authoritarian communication on motivation and purchase intention in a pre-registered 2×2 experiment (N = 114), manipulating both communication style and the coach's muscularity. The results show that empathic communication significantly increases motivation and directly strengthens purchase intention, whereas an authoritarian tone produces no comparable effects. Motivation functions as a central psychological mechanism, mediating the influence of communication style on purchase intention. We also test the moderating roles of muscularity and gender. These findings extend research on self-determination theory and cue congruence to short advertising contexts and highlight practical implications for designing effective digital fitness promotions.

Track: Digital Marketing & Social Media