

# The effects of advertising claims, product type and self-construal on consumer travel intentions

Lei Cheng

*The University of Queensland, The Commonwealth of Australia, Brisbane, 4072, Australia*

**Abstract:** *In today's competitive market environment, advertising, as an important marketing tool, has a far-reaching impact on consumers' purchasing decisions and behaviors. With the booming development of tourism, the role of advertising in promoting tourism products and services has become more and more significant. As the core elements of advertising strategy, advertising appeal, product type and self-construction have a significant impact on consumers' intention to travel. The purpose of this paper is to explore how these three elements work together in consumers' tourism decision-making process and to analyze the mechanism of their influence on tourism intention.*

**Keywords:** *advertising claims; product type; self-construal; consumer travel intention; influence*

## 1. Introduction

With the booming development of tourism, advertising plays an increasingly important role in stimulating consumer travel intention. Through the review of related literature and the analysis of empirical studies, it is found that there are significant differences in the influence of different advertising appeals on consumer travel intention. In addition, the impact of product type (e.g., vacation tourism, adventure tourism, cultural experience tourism, etc.) on consumers' intention to travel should not be ignored. Different types of products can satisfy different needs and expectations of consumers, thus affecting their travel choices. Self-construction theory states that an individual's perception of himself and self-image affects his behavioral choices. The purpose of this paper is to explore the effects of advertising appeal, product type and self-construction on consumers' travel intention.

## 2. Advertising claims, product types and self-constructed definitions

### 2.1. Definition of advertising claims

Advertising appeal is the core of advertising design, which aims to stimulate consumers' purchase desire or behavior through specific message communication. By definition, advertising appeals include two main aspects: emotional appeals and informational appeals. Emotional appeals are designed to touch consumers' emotions, such as happiness, anger, sadness and joy, to establish a connection with the product or service, such as Coca-Cola's classic advertisement, "Turn on the happiness", which successfully triggered consumers' empathy. <sup>[1]</sup>Informational appeals, on the other hand, focus on providing clear information about the product's features or advantages to help consumers make rational decisions. The importance of advertising appeals is self-evident, and effective advertising appeals can significantly influence consumers' purchasing decisions. Take the tourism industry as an example, such as the Maldives travel ads often show the beauty of the blue sea and blue sky, with the slogan "escape reality, enjoy the tranquility", which is the use of emotional appeals, so that consumers produce yearning and relaxation. Some travel agencies will list the itinerary, accommodation standards and other information in detail, which is an information appeal, allowing consumers to understand the details and make a decision on whether to book or not. Therefore, the understanding and effective use of advertising appeals have a significant impact on the promotion of tourism products and the formation of consumers' travel intentions.

### 2.2. The impact of product type on consumption decisions

Tourism consumption decisions are strongly influenced by product type. Different types of tourism products, such as group tours, free trips, adventure tours or leisure tours, cater to diverse consumer

interests and needs. For example, group tours usually provide consumers with convenience and security for those seeking a hassle-free, organized travel experience. Free tours, on the other hand, offer more scope for travelers seeking personalization and freedom to explore, and this product type may be more popular with young people and consumers seeking unique experiences. Product type also affects consumer self-identification. In the case of adventure travel, for example, consumers who choose this type of product may be seeking self-challenge and self-transcendence, and this type of travel experience can reinforce their sense of adventure and independence. <sup>[2]</sup>Conversely, leisure travel may be more popular with consumers who are looking to relax and rejuvenate, which fits with their relaxation and rejuvenation needs.

### ***2.3. The role of self-construal in consumption decisions***

Self-construals play a crucial role in consumer decision-making, especially in this area of tourism consumption. Consumers are often influenced by their self-perception, self-image and desired self-states when choosing tourism products. For example, a consumer who values environmental protection may choose eco-tourism because such a choice is consistent with his or her self-constructed image of environmental protection. Meanwhile, social comparison theory states that people compare their lifestyles with others, and their travel choices may be influenced by others as a result, e.g., seeing a friend's adventurous travel experience shared on social media may inspire the impulse to choose a similar experience to demonstrate one's own adventurousness and open-mindedness. <sup>[3]</sup>In addition, self-construction is reflected in travel as a means of self-expression. Consumers may choose specific travel destinations or activities to express their personalities, values, or attitudes toward life. For example, consumers who choose to travel to Paris may see themselves as seekers of romance and art in their self-construal. This self-expression not only influences travel decisions, but may also affect their behaviors and experiences during the trip, such as a greater tendency to participate in local arts and cultural activities to further strengthen their self-image.

In practice, travel companies can design products and services that match the self-image of different consumers by gaining a deeper understanding of their self-construction. For example, some travel companies have begun to launch customized travel itineraries that allow consumers to plan journeys based on their interests, values and even their ideal self-image. This strategy not only improves consumer satisfaction, but also helps to enhance the resonance between the brand and the consumer, thus increasing consumer loyalty and willingness to recommend.

## **3. The effect of advertising appeals on travel intentions**

### ***3.1. Emotional appeal***

Emotional appeals are a powerful strategy in tourism marketing, which aims to touch consumers' inner experience and trigger their emotional resonance, thereby influencing their travel decisions. For example, instead of merely showcasing the beauty of a destination, a travel advertisement may psychologically connect consumers with the destination by telling a touching story, such as depicting a heartwarming moment of family reunion or an adventurous journey of self-discovery that creates a deep emotional connection with the destination. This use of emotional appeals has successfully combined the country's natural beauty with people's desire to pursue a pure and serene life, and has touched the hearts of countless travelers around the world. In addition, emotional appeals can be reflected in the portrayal of the travel experience. For example, a resort may emphasize the relaxing and stress-reducing environment it offers by depicting a relaxing beach sunset scene or a serene forest yoga session that allows consumers to mentally rehearse a perfect vacation away from everyday stress. This strategy not only enhances product appeal, but may also lead consumers to develop a deeper loyalty to the brand because they believe it understands and fulfills their emotional needs.

When using emotional appeals, tourism marketers also need to take into account the personal values and life experiences of target consumers, touch the deep emotional triggers, and create a tourism experience that resonates with the consumers' inner world, so as to stimulate their travel intentions.

### ***3.2. Information claims***

In tourism marketing, information appeals play a crucial role, and they provide a rational basis for consumers' tourism decisions. When choosing a tourism product, consumers often base their choice on

understanding and comparing information about the destination, services, prices, and so on. For example, information such as itinerary, accommodation standards, and transportation modes detailed in tourism advertisements can help consumers rationally assess the cost-effectiveness of tourism products, thus influencing their choices. In addition, the provision of authentic user reviews and third-party certified data can also enhance the credibility of the information and further influence consumers' decision-making process.

#### **4. Influence of product type on travel intentions**

##### ***4.1. Diversity of tourism products: meeting individual needs***

In the current travel market, consumers are becoming increasingly diverse and personalized, requiring diversity in travel products to meet the specific needs of different groups. For example, millennials and Gen Z travelers are more likely to seek out unique, experiential travel programs, such as exploring local cultures, engaging in outdoor adventures, or opting for themed trips. On the other hand, with the popularization of the concept of sustainable tourism, green tourism products, such as eco-tourism and eco-friendly travel, are also favored by more and more environmentally conscious consumers.<sup>[4]</sup> In addition, some tourism enterprises have launched "experience" programs, which give travelers the opportunity to live with local residents and experience the customs of the destination in depth, which is a direct response to the demand for personalization. Therefore, tourism product development should take full account of market segmentation and provide diversified choices through innovative design and customized services in order to stimulate consumers' travel intentions and enhance their satisfaction.

##### ***4.2. Product innovativeness: stimulating consumers' desire to explore***

In tourism marketing, product innovation plays a crucial role, which can effectively stimulate consumers' desire to explore and thus drive the development of the tourism market. Innovative tourism products are not only limited to providing fresh destinations, but also include unique tourism activities, service modes and in-depth integration with local culture. For example, the "Star Wars" theme park launched by Disneyland has successfully attracted a large number of loyal fans and tourists looking for fresh experiences by introducing popular IPs and creating an unprecedented immersive experience for visitors. In addition, some tourism enterprises have innovated their products through technological means, such as virtual reality (VR) travel previews, which allow consumers to experience their destinations before they actually travel, and this novel way of experiencing the destinations has greatly enhanced their willingness to make reservations. Furthermore, innovation in sustainable tourism products is also an important way to stimulate consumers' desire to explore. For example, some travel agencies have launched environmentally friendly travel programs, such as eco-hiking and marine conservation, etc. These activities not only satisfy consumers' demand for nature exploration, but also echo the growing global awareness of environmental protection, making travel activities a combination of personal growth and social responsibility.

#### **5. The effect of self-construal on travel intentions**

##### ***5.1. Self-expression: tourism as a demonstration of self-identity***

Self-expression is a dimension that should not be overlooked in tourism marketing, and it relates to how tourism becomes an arena for individuals to showcase their identity and values. With the popularity of social media, more and more consumers are choosing destinations and activities that reflect their personalities and attitudes. For example, Instagram's "Netflix" has taken the world by storm, with people sharing photos of their travels not only to record their experiences, but also to show the outside world their aesthetics and taste in life. In addition, travel brands can understand consumers' self-expression needs and design products and services that fit specific identities. For example, luxury cruise lines may launch themed itineraries, such as "art discovery trips" or "environmental adventures," to attract high-end consumers who seek cultural cultivation or environmental awareness. This strategy not only meets the individual needs of consumers, but also reinforces the value resonance between them and the brand.

## **5.2. *Self-actualization: the value of tourism for personal growth***

Tourism is not only a simple leisure activity, but also an important way of self-realization. Through tourism, people are able to gain access to the rich resources and unique experiences necessary for personal growth. In the process of exploring new cultures and environments, travelers have the opportunity to step out of their comfort zones and face a variety of challenges, thus enhancing their adaptability and innovative thinking.

For example, those travelers who participate in volunteer programs gain valuable cross-cultural communication opportunities while providing services to local communities. This experience not only enhances their communication skills, but also broadens their global perspective. These gains have a profound impact on the diversification of one's career. Through traveling, people can not only enrich their life experience, but also gain more opportunities and possibilities in their career path. Therefore, the value of tourism as a means of self-realization cannot be underestimated.

## **6. Integrated impact strategies**

### **6.1. *Integrate advertising claims and product types to create a unique travel experience***

In tourism marketing, integrating advertising appeals and product types is key to creating a unique travel experience. For example, tourism brands can use emotional appeals, such as the use of cozy family photos or romantic background music, to touch consumers' emotions and allow them to psychologically connect with the destination. At the same time, combining information appeals with informative travel information, such as the history and culture of the destination and culinary specialties, helps consumers make rational travel decisions. The integration of product types is equally important. By providing diversified tourism products, such as adventure travel, cultural exploration or eco-tourism, it meets the individual needs of different consumers. In addition, the introduction of innovative products, such as virtual reality previews or experiential tourism programs, can stimulate consumers' desire to explore and make them look forward to their trips more intensely. For example, in Disney's tourism marketing, they not only touch consumers through emotionally-rich advertisements showing families' happy times in the park, but also continuously introduce new rides and themed activities to satisfy consumers' demand for exploration. Meanwhile, Disney emphasizes the sustainability of its products, such as environmentally friendly facilities and community give-back programs, which further enhances the appeal of its tourism products. Therefore, tourism companies should have a deeper understanding of the process of consumers' self-construction and how to help them express themselves and achieve personal growth through tourism experiences. For example, designing theme-specific travel itineraries allows consumers to showcase their unique tastes and attitudes toward life when sharing them on social media. At the same time, social media platforms are utilized to encourage user-generated content, creating a community effect that enhances the influence of self-construction and thus influences travel decisions.

In conclusion, integrating advertising claims and product types to create unique travel experiences not only enhances consumers' travel intentions, but also strengthens the brand's competitiveness in the market. This requires tourism enterprises to continuously innovate and adjust their marketing strategies to meet the increasingly diverse and personalized tourism needs of consumers.

### **6.2. *Self-constructed customized tourism marketing programs***

Considering self-construction in tourism marketing means understanding and respecting consumers' personal values, identity, and the way they express themselves on social media. Modern consumers buy products or services not only to satisfy their basic needs, but also to realize their self-worth and express their individuality. Therefore, customized tourism marketing programs should be consumer-centric to create tourism experiences that match their self-image.

For example, travel brands can use big data to analyze consumers' social media behavior to understand their interests, lifestyles and travel preferences. For example, if the data shows that a consumer is keen on environmental protection activities, an eco-tourism itinerary can be designed to emphasize the sustainability of the product while providing opportunities to share environmental protection experiences. In this way, the tourism product not only meets consumers' practical needs, but also helps them create a positive image of nature-loving and environmentally-conscious consumers in their social circles. In addition, tourism marketing can incorporate levels of self-actualization by

providing experiences such as cultural immersion and personal growth. For example, customizing in-depth historical and cultural tours for tourists who are passionate about history and culture allows them to achieve knowledge accumulation and spiritual sublimation during the trip.

### **6.3. Innovative dissemination methods**

In the current tourism marketing environment, innovative communication methods play a crucial role, especially the use of new media to enhance the influence of self-construction. New media, such as social media and short video platforms, provide a broad stage for tourism marketing. For example, by sharing their unique travel experiences and perspectives, "travel bloggers" in Jieyin not only demonstrate the attractiveness of a destination, but also help users construct and express their self-image in virtual experiences. In addition, travel brands can use big data and algorithms to accurately push travel products that meet users' personal tastes and values, further strengthening users' self-construction.<sup>[5]</sup> For example, through a personalized room recommendation system, each user is provided with a unique accommodation experience, thus satisfying their needs for self-expression and self-realization. This customized marketing strategy can effectively stimulate consumers' desire to travel and increase the conversion rate.

In short, innovative communication lies not only in utilizing new media platforms, but also in how to stimulate users' intrinsic needs through these platforms and help them construct an ideal self-image, so as to stand out in the fierce competition in the tourism market. This requires tourism marketers to continuously explore new communication strategies to adapt to and lead the trend of changing consumer behavior.

## **7. Findings of the study**

There is a significant difference in the influence of different advertising appeals on consumers' intention to travel. Compared with rational advertising appeals, emotional advertising appeals are more likely to trigger consumers' intention to travel. In the early stage of tourism, tourists generally pay more attention to low price and high cost performance, ignoring the importance of "experience" in the process of tourism; with the improvement of people's quality of life, consumers are less sensitive to low-priced tours, and pay more attention to emotional compensation in the process of tourism, thus weakening the market attractiveness of the low-priced zero-negative tours in the past. In the future, tourism advertisements can adopt more emotional advertisement appeal design, focusing on emotional compensation and humanized services for tourists.

There is no interaction between advertising and self-construction on consumers' intention to travel. Tourism products can be marketed using the same type of promotional strategies and paths as everyday pleasures.

Self-construal plays a moderating role in the influence of product type on consumers' intention to travel. Similar to other products, tourism products also have matching optimization characteristics, which is reflected in the different preferences for tourism product types among travelers with different self-construals. Specifically, independent self-constructors tend to separate themselves from the social environment and prefer nature-based tourism products, while dependent self-constructors emphasize the integration of the self with the social environment and the connection between the individual and others, and prefer humanistic tourism products.

In the model of the influence of advertising appeals on consumers' intention to travel, emotional response plays a fully mediating role and arousal of interest plays a partially mediating role. In the models of advertising appeal to emotional response to arousal of interest and finally to intention to travel, and product type to emotional response to arousal of interest and finally to intention to travel through self-constructed regulation, different advertising appeals can stimulate different emotional responses and arousal of interest, and thus generate different intention to travel; at the same time, different product types can stimulate different emotional responses and arousal of interest for different self-constructed individuals, and thus generate different intention to travel. At the same time, different product types can stimulate different emotional responses and arousal of interests for different self-constructed individuals, thus generating different travel intentions. At the same time, different product types can stimulate different emotional responses and interest arousal in different self-constructed individuals, thus generating different tourism intentions. When designing tourism products, it is necessary to pay attention to the matching of the target group and take their emotional

responses into account in order to enhance the tourists' experience.

## 8. Conclusion

To summarize, the influence of advertising appeal, product type and self-construction on consumers' intention to travel is multifaceted. Enterprises should take these factors into consideration and develop marketing strategies that can accurately reach target consumers. Through effective advertising and product design, enterprises can not only enhance consumers' intention to travel, but also strengthen brand loyalty and market competitiveness. In the future, with the development of science and technology and the changing needs of consumers, enterprises need to continuously innovate and adjust their marketing strategies to adapt to the changes in the market and meet the diversified needs of consumers.

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