

CIGARETTE SMOKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF FEAR-APPEAL ADVERTISING

BY

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents, whose support, love and understanding during this year was unconditional.

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A huge thank-you goes to firstly my parents, as well as my close friends and immediate family, to my supervisors and wonderful colleagues at Markinor:

Your words of encouragement and compassion gave me strength;

Your experience and knowledge kept me on the right track - and most of all,

Your ever-strengthening belief in me gave me peace of mind...

ABSTRACT

The question of whether or not advertising is effective has been a topic of research for decades. This specific research project poses the question whether the use of a method of advertising known as 'fear-appeal advertising' could effectively promote anti-smoking sentiments. Due to the nature of this study, attention and focus are placed on the affective and emotional aspects of this type of advertising and it aims to understand the perceptions that smokers have of anti-smoking advertisements.

Fear-appeal advertising is supposed to have a greater impact on health-risk behaviours such as smoking than other types of advertising do; the 'milder' anti-smoking campaigns – with little or no fear-appeal – currently used in South Africa have no impact on the smoking population. This research aims to explain and describe fear-appeal advertising, focusing on smoking as a health risk-behaviour.

The respondents recruited for this study all classified themselves as smokers, and were selected to constitute a representative sample of the South African population, ranging between the ages of 24-49 years. The perceptions of these smokers are discussed against the backdrop of literature on the topic, in an attempt to highlight the effectiveness of such advertising campaigns and ultimately suggest a way forward.

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