



## The Role of Clothing Involvement in Evaluating Fair Trade Advertisements

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Consumers' concern over labor and the environment has contributed to the growth of Fair Trade as one of the largest ethical markets in the world. As this practice of ethical consumption grows, big retailers such as Wholefood, Hershey, and Starbucks have emphasized ethical values in their advertising campaigns: that their products meet relevant environmental, labor and developmental standards of Fair Trade norms. While it is critical for FT businesses to adopt effective advertising strategies that positively affect consumer behavior, there is a paucity of research examining this issue. Prior consumer and advertising research verifies advertisement effectiveness by employing two types of hope (promotion hope and prevention hope). Furthermore, evidence supports that consumer responses to perceived FT advertisement may vary by individual characteristics (e.g., involvement, and ethical concern). This study is designed to explore whether advertisements depicting promotion hope and prevention hope and the corresponding attitudes influence purchase intention of a clothing product depicted in FT advertisements. To this end, this study will (1) identify whether purchase intention is influenced by perceived hope and attitude toward the advertisement; (2) examine whether fashion clothing involvement and ethical concern moderate the relationship between perceived hope and attitude toward the advertisement; and (3) determine whether type of perceived hope (i.e., promotion hope and prevention hope) differentiates its effect on purchase intention.

Regulatory focus theory states that hope may stem from the attainment of promotion or prevention self-regulatory goals. Building on regulatory theory, hope theory suggests that situational context decides different types of hope associated with self-regulatory goals (Mello et al., 2007). In an already satisfactory condition, promotion hope is experienced in order to enhance a positive state (Snyder, 2002), whereas in an unsatisfactory condition, prevention hope is experienced to terminate a negative state (Lazarus, 1991; 1999). Kim & Kang and Mattila (2011) find that corporate social responsibility (CSR) ads presented in two types of hope (promotion hope vs. prevention hope) positively influence purchase intention. Likewise, the FT advertising that generates promotion hope and prevention hope may also influence other important consumer responses. Furthermore, there is ample research showing that the advertising effectiveness varies by the level of ethical concern and consumer involvement (Zhang & Buda, 1999). Ethical concern is buyer behavior that reflects concern toward the environmental and societal problems, and the Third World (Strong, 1996). The results of several studies found that individuals with higher levels of environmental/ethical concern are more likely engage in pro-

social consumption behavior (Karna et al. 2001). Fashion clothing involvement refers to the perceived personal relevance of fashion clothing products based on their needs, interests, and values (Engel et al., 2005). A number of studies consistently confirmed that consumers with high involvement show higher consumption behavior compared to those with low involvement (Cucchiara et al., 2015).

A self-administrated online experiment using FT advertisement presented in promotion hope and prevention hope as stimuli was used to conduct this study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two advertisement conditions. After viewing the FT advertisement, participants completed the questionnaire including measures of perceived hope (2 items), ethical concern (6 items), fashion-clothing involvement (9 items), attitude toward the ad (5 items), and purchase intention (3 items) and demographic questions. All measures are previously validated with a 7-point Likert-type scale. A total of 321 usable data was collected from MTurk (*promotion hope*=155, *prevention hope*=166, *M*=35.5 years, *female*=43.3%, *male*=56.7%). Manipulation checks for stimuli were successful, and regression analysis was conducted each for promotion and prevention advertisement to accomplish the objectives.

The results indicate that perceived prevention hope ( $\beta=.090$ ,  $t\text{-value}=2.012$ ,  $p=.045$ ) and attitude toward the ad ( $\beta=.549$ ,  $t\text{-value}=11.835$ ,  $p=.000$ ) significantly contributed to predicting consumer's intention to purchase. Perceived promotion was not a significant predictor in purchase intention ( $\beta=-.035$ ,  $t\text{-value}=-.664$ ,  $p=.507$ ). The test of moderating effects of fashion-clothing involvement and ethical concern revealed that only fashion-clothing involvement significantly moderated the relationship between perceived hope and purchase intention ( $\beta=.276$ ,  $t\text{-value}=-5.308$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Similarly, the interaction between perceived prevention hope and fashion-clothing involvement was positively significant ( $\beta=.252$ ,  $t\text{-value}=5.621$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Taken together, when consumers are highly involved in fashion clothing items, both perceived promotion hope and perceived prevention hope had a stronger impact on purchase intention than their counterparts.

The findings from this study offer valuable implications for the FT industry. They provide useful information in selecting target markets and offer appropriate advertising strategies. FT advertisements can be effective for FT retailers targeting consumers who are highly involved with fashion clothing items. By way of attracting highly involved consumers, FT retailers should incorporate promotion hope and prevention hope in the advertisement. A promotion-hope ad may include how many FT producers benefit from FT activities. In contrast, by utilizing prevention-hope, marketers can emphasize poor living conditions of workers that can be improved through FT activities. *References are upon request.*