

University of Canberra

Marketing Communication Theory M

Assessment 2: Major Essay

- 4. Discuss the importance of the notion of “involvement” for the purpose of designing a marketing communication campaign.**

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In the essay, I am going to discuss how important the involvement of target audience of a message is in designing marketing communication campaign. To have intensive discussion, I am going to state the meaning of marketing communication and involvement at first. Then literature reviews on this topic will be presented. After that, different points of view on the importance of the notion of involvement for designing marketing communication campaign will be discussed and some case studies will be provided. Lastly, a conclusion will be made.

Marketing communication is a new developed topic thus there are many different definitions from different scholars. Nevertheless, marketing communication emphasizes promotion that is one of the elements of the marketing mix—product, price, place and promotion. Marketing communication includes all promotional tools and other promotional activities. There are five main functions: direct marketing, advertising, public relations, sales promotion and personal selling. According to Delozier 1976 in Fill 2002, marketing Communication is

“The process of presenting an integrated set of stimuli to a market with the intent of evoking a desired set of responses with that market set and setting up channels to receive, interpret and act upon messages from the market for the purposes of modifying present company messages and identifying new communication opportunities.”

The “integrated set of stimuli” is talking about the integrated marketing communication which means coordinating all promotional elements to

communicate with target audiences to send a coherent theme and topic in turn to get an effective marketing communication. Besides, the definition also introduced that there are feedback from the target audience so two way communication. On the other hand, Fill 2002 stated, "It also fails to recognize that it is the context within which marketing communications flow that impacts upon the meaning and interpretation given to such message." Also it cannot draw out that marketing communication can provide value added opportunity through enhanced product and organizational symbolism.

Apart from the above definition, Fill 2002 stated another definition of marketing communication as that

"Marketing Communication is a management process through which an organization enters into a dialogue with its various audiences. Based upon an understanding of the audience communication environment, an organization develops and presents messages for the identified stakeholder groups, evaluate and acts upon the responses received. The objective of this process is to (re) position the organization and/ or its products or services, in the mind of members of the target market, by influencing their perception and understanding. The goal is to generate attitudinal and behavioural response.

This definition focused on the dialogue, positioning and cognitive response. Besides, it introduced that the organization needs to understand the communication process with the audiences before designing a message to influence their responses in terms of attitude and behaviour.

To summarize the above definitions, it is obvious that an organization should communicate with its target audiences through a clarified, consistent message via different marketing communication tools. After setting up right aim, goal and objectives, a good marketing communication campaign should involve an appropriate message design. To design a right message to the target audience, marketers should understand and realize the target audiences' information or communication process via which the audience perceive and interpret the message with reacting responses.

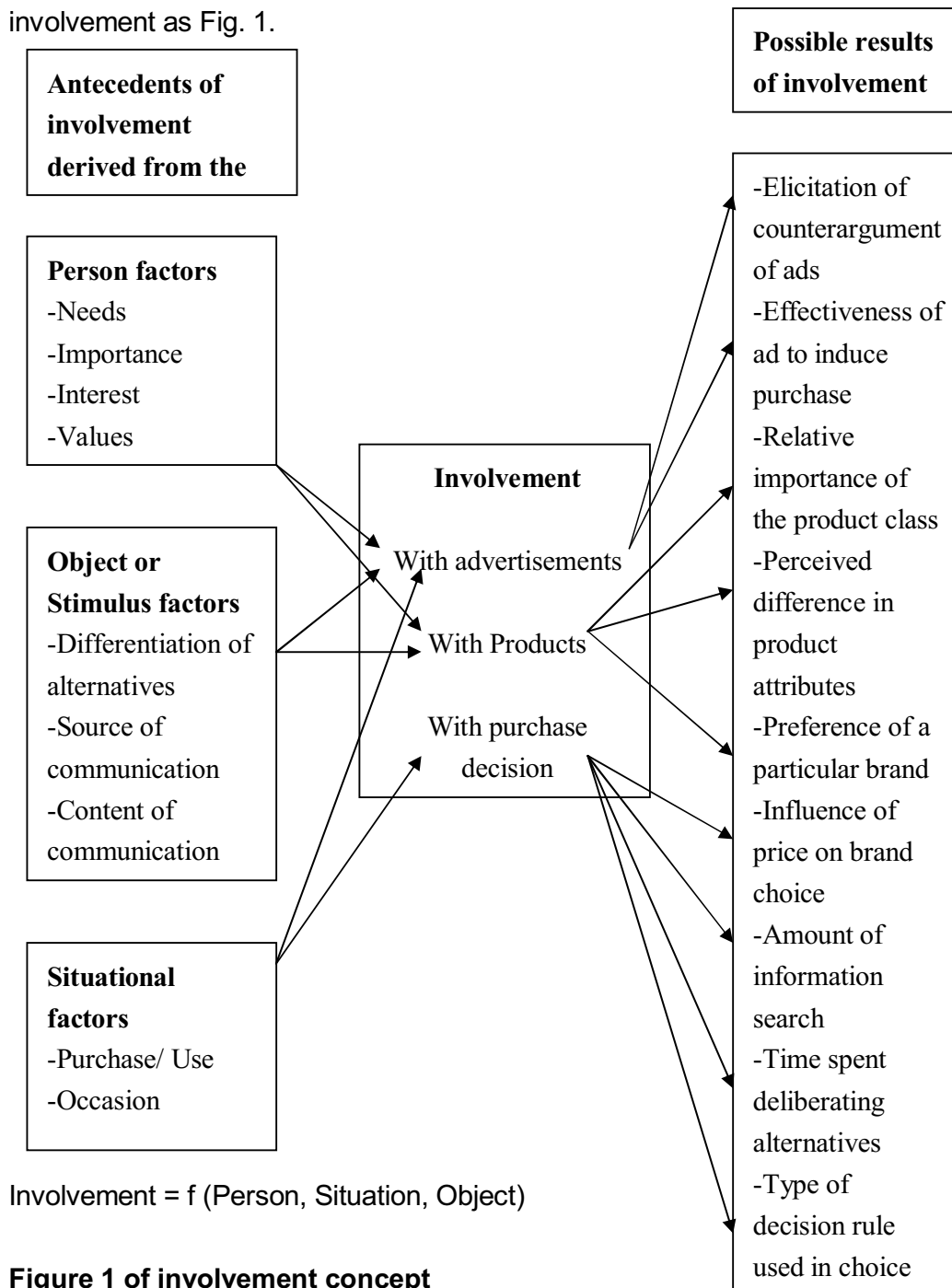
According to Chestnutt, RW 1980, consumer information processing involves three sectors cognitive activities: coding/ perception, conscious evaluation and memory. When these three activities intersect with each other, there are seven sectors formed. The sectors are: preconscious encoding, trace activation, conscious encoding, spectator behaviour, participant behaviour, operational memory and long term memory.

In this essay, the focus is on spectator behaviour in which when the message has been decoded, the audiences have to decide what they will do with the message. In this stage, the audience will select a particular strategy to deal with the message and there are a number of factors affect the audiences to choose the particular strategy. One of the factors is involvement.

The term of 'Involvement' has no common agreement on definition from scholars. Some researchers interpreted it is both interesting and revealing. Kapferer and Laurent (1985) in Fill 2002 argue that involvement involves five different facets: interest, risk importance, risk probability, sign value and

hedonic value. While some just thought involvement about the ego, perceived risk and purchase importance- a cognitive perspectives.

Judith Zaichkowsky (1986) in Belch & Belch 2004 developed an involvement construct that involves three antecedents, or variables proposed to precede involvement as Fig. 1.



Refer to the figure of involvement concept, the level of involvement is affected by one or more factors: person, situation, and object. Besides, interactions among each factor may occur. Moreover, the level of involvement of consumers with advertisements (marketing communication), with products and with purchase decisions will affect consumers' perception of the advertisement (marketing communication) and purchase decision process.

According to Schiffman and Kanuk, 1991, when some thought that involvement is about behavioural perspectives, "the search for and evaluation of product-orientated information is pertinent".

Fill, 2002. There are features associated with involvement concept and can be separated into three phrase as Fig 2. In phrase 1, the degree of involvement which will change with a situational basis and will be influenced by contextual elements, for example: the nature of a person and his experiences, values and expectations. The situational basis is about the purpose of purchase also can affect the degree of involvement. Whether the person has a direct or indirect experience of the object can be considered by the products or services. In addition, the nature of the stimulus to purchase is also a primary factor which may be advertisement, peer or family.

In phrase 2, there are three main factors. The intensity of involvement can reflect the degree of people relevance in term of high or low involvement. The focus of involvement refers to whether the object or the marketing communication surrounding the products or services is important or not. Duration of the involvement is the third factor. The duration can be long lasting

or temporary, which can induce the degree of loyalty or commitment and interest of a products or services.

In phrase 3, the consequence of the involvement an person experienced is described. The attitude and the amount of time in which information is processed will reflect the level of involvement and leads primarily to either the attitude being formed before action (high involvement) or the attitude being formed after action (low involvement).

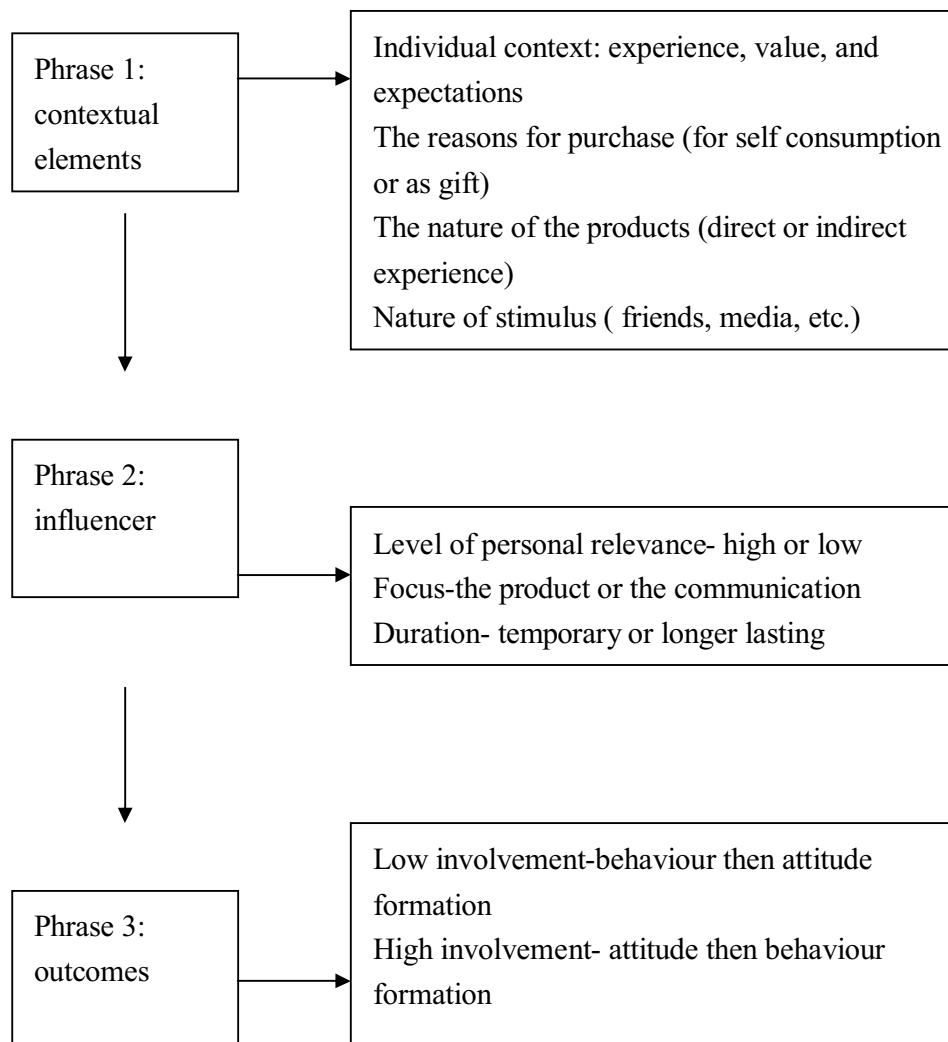


Fig. 2 Three phrases of individual involvement and attitude development

There is no consensus on the definition of involvement but involvement is considered as a variable, which can help explain how consumers process marketing communication information and how the information will influence the consumers. Thus involvement does play an important role for marketers in designing marketing communication campaign. That why many scholars keep on study involvement of consumers and the effect of involvement on information processing and purchase. When marketers realize thoroughly that consumers with different level of involvement have different information process and information needs, the marketers can tailor different marketing communication campaign for their products or services towards their target consumers. Hence, the marketing communication campaign will be more effective.

Now, the followings are the suggested marketing communication strategy implications from various researchers according to different level of involvement of consumers.

Richard Vaughn of Foote, Cone & Belding advertising agency and his associates have introduced FCB grid which is used to analyse communication situation. FCB Planning Model is built on traditional response theories, for example the hierarchy of effects model and its variants, as well as, research on high and low involvement. Besides, dimension of thinking versus feeling processing at each involvement level, by drawing in theories regarding brain specialization, was added in the model. FCB grid outlined four main advertising planning strategies—informative, affective, habit formative, and satisfaction—according to the most appropriate variants of the alternative

response hierarchies. The FCB model also describe the selection of suitable media and visual images in the composition of the messages in the marketing communication program. (Figure 3)

	Thinking	Feeling
High Involvement	<p>1. Informative (thinker) Car-house-furnishings-new products</p> <p>Model: learn-feel-do (economic?) Possible implications: Test: Recall Diagnostics Media: Long copy format Reflective vehicles Creative: Specific information Demonstration</p>	<p>2. Affective (feeler) Jewelry-cosmetics-fashion apparel-motorcycles</p> <p>Model: feel-learn-do (psychological?) Possible implications: Test: Attitude change Emotional arousal Media: Large space Image specials Creative: Executional impact</p>
Low Involvement	<p>3. Habit formation (doer) Food-household items Model: do-learn-feel (responsive?) Possible implications: Test: Sales Media: Small space ads, 10 seconds I.D. s Radio, POS Creative: Reminder</p>	<p>4. Self-satisfaction (reactor) Cigarettes-liquor-candy Model: do-feel-learn (social?) Possible implications: Test: Sales Media: Billboards Newspapers POS Creative: Attention</p>

Fig. 3 The Foote-Cone& Belding (FCB) Model

FCB model suggests that when marketers decided advertising (marketing communication) strategy for high involving products or services, they choose either informative or feeling strategy. For high involving products and services, Krugman stated the following characteristics:

- It has functional importance, for example: cars as a mean of transportation;
- It has symbolic importance, for example: a particular brand and model of car as a symbol of status or masculinity;
- It involves significant risks, either financial or social;
- It has emotional appeal;
- It is identified with the norm of the group, particularly if the consumption of the product or services signifies one as a member of the group. This is known as badge value.

For informative strategy, the high involving products or services likely have significant functional use and financial risk if consumers make wrong purchase decision, as well as appropriate amount of emotional appeal. When consumers decide to purchase such type of products or services, they tend to undertake rational thinking and economic consideration thoroughly. The consumers' response process model is learn-feel-do in general. Thus marketers should put the message emphasis on rational and detailed information of the products or services, especially for the new launched products or services. For example: present the main functions of the products through demonstrations, state detailed information of its differentiation and characteristics on leaflets.

For the affective strategy, the highly involving products are generally involved perceived social risks and related to one's self-image. For the feelers whom undertake feel-learn-do process, the marketers should stress on the psychological and emotional motives when designing the marketing communication theme and message. For example, showing how high social status a pretty lady is while owning a particular leather handbag and model of

watch in printing media. By such strategy, the marketers may change the attitude of the consumers after the consumers receive the visual messages for a long period of time.

The habit information strategy is appropriate to the low involvement products (can food, soft drinks, washing powder) with daily regular consumption patterns in which learning formed often after a trial purchase. The buyers of such products are undertaking do-learn-feel information process model. The aim of the marketing communication program is to primarily increase the sale. To persuade the consumers of such low involving products in turns to achieve the aim, marketers are suggested to deliver message through small space advertisements and points of sale. It is because the consumers will not spend much time and effort for information search and rational consideration, instead of making a quick purchase decision while meeting with the sales or arriving the POS. thus the marketing communication program should be able to be a reminder for the consumers and make sure that consumers can recall a particular brand when they need to buy a particular product category. For example: 3 in 1 coffee, you may think about Nestle or Coke, then you think about Coco-cola.

The latest strategy is self-satisfaction which is for the low involvement / feeling products, such as cigarettes and cigars. As consumers of such products do particularly enjoy sensory excitement or pleasure, they are under do -feel-learn model. To communicate with the consumers effectively, marketers should emphasize the sensory satisfaction with such products in order to induce the imagination of good experience with the products from customers. Besides,

appropriate media for the strategy are billboard, newspapers and point of sale through which the attention of consumers will be drawn. Once consumers are aware of a particular brand of candy, they will go through the information process quickly and then make the purchase decision to purchase from the brand as the consumers will have low involvement in information search and time for making decision and interpretation of message.

Although the FCB model has a significant contribution to depict different marketing communication strategies with various level of involvement from a decided target audience to a particular type of product or service, Rossiter et al. (1991), disagreed some underpinnings of the FCB model. Rossiter claimed that the FCB grid cannot explain “the situations where a person moves from high to low involvement and then back to high, perhaps on a temporary basis, when a new variant is introduced in the market.” (Fill, 2002)

Rossiter et al. thought that involvement is the level of perceived risk present at the purchase time period. The degree of familiarity the purchasers have at the purchase time period is an important component for involvement. Besides, Rossiter identified that the brand awareness is needed to be built into such grid (Figure 4) for attitude development, as well as, the purchase situation is also needed to be differentiated. It is because awareness recall is needed for some brand for which the purchase decision is made before the action of purchase, while some brands just need awareness recognition at POS in which the just-in-time decision of purchase is made. Just like the FCB model, Rossiter also pointed out that different information processing and purchase decision situations should be associated with different marketing communication

strategies.

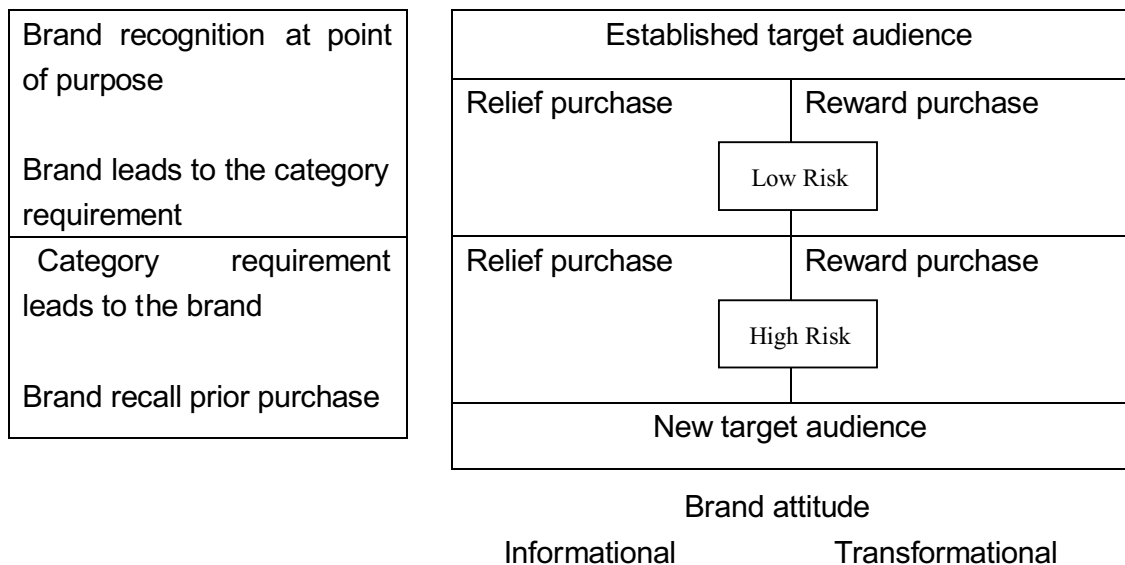


Fig. 4 The Rossiter-Percy grid. (Fill, 2002)

Regard to Figure 4, Rossiter has divided the motives of purchase into informational and transformational ones. Informational motives concerns negatively charged feelings. An individual with informational motives needs information to counter his negative concerns about a purchase decision. Informational motives can also be positively charged, or the level of concern can be reduced considerably, by the obtaining relevant information.

Informational Motives	Possible emotional state
Problem removal	Anger---relief
Problem avoidance	Fear---relaxation
Incomplete satisfaction	Disappointment---optimism
Mixed approach-avoidance	Guilt---peace of mind
Normal depletion	Mild annoyance---convenience

Transformational motives are referred as the promises to enhance or improve the user of a brand. Transformational motives are positively charged as they are related to the user's feelings and able to transforming user's emotional state.

Transformational Motives	Possible emotional state
Sensory gratification	Dull---elated
Intellectual stimulation	Bored---excited
Social approval	Apprehensive---flattered

Apart from that, Rossiter also stated some tactics, for marketing communication program, which are determined by the combination of involvement and motives of the target audience at a particular of time. Fill Charter 21, 2002, when there are low involvement and informational motives from the target audience, a demonstration format should be used to present a product and the likeness of the advertisement is not necessary. Besides, a limited amount of benefits should be shown to the target audiences. The benefits should be easily learnt and understood as the target audiences can make their purchase decision more quickly.

When low involvement associated with transformational motives, emotional authenticity is vital element and the execution or the display of the emotion should be unique. In this emotional claim, the likeability is very important to the success of the message of the marketing communication program.

When dealing with high involvement and informational motives, through

emotional claim, marketers should present a correct emotional portrayal necessarily when a brand is introduced but it is not necessary to make the target audiences like the marketing communication campaign or the message.

When dealing the high involvement and informational motives through rational claim, Rossiter suggested various tactics toward different target audiences and situation. If the initial attitude of the target audiences toward a brand is favourable, the marketers can try their best to present the benefit claims clearly to the audience in order to enhance their likeness and reduce their perceived risks degree toward the products of the brand. However, if the target audiences do not like the brand, marketers should undertake refutational approach in which the characteristics and elements of products or brands should be refuted. When there is a market or brand leader, marketers should use a comparative approach in which the unique features of the products can be differentiated. It is easier for the target audiences to note the differentiation of the products.

When the high involvement and transformational motives exist, marketer can also design the message via emotional and rational claims. For the emotional claims, marketers can try to deliver the message through the format of using emotion in the context of the prevailing lifestyle groups. Besides, the message should present a clear identification of the products. It is as important as the liking the advertisement.

For the rational claim, although transformational motives are related to user's feeling and emotional state, there is including information as well in order to reduce the level of consumer's perceived risks in the purchase of high

involvement products. Besides, the marketing communication program and the message should repeat the benefits of owning or purchase of such products for reinforcement of the awareness of consumers toward the products or the brand.

To conclude the strategy of the marketing communication suggested by Rossiter and Percy grid that there are both emotional stimulus and rational information in varying level and format in the design of message for high / low involvement associated with informational / transformational motives.

After presenting the FCB grid and the Rossiter-Percy grid, as well as, their suggestion of marketing communication strategy for different level of involvement, one point is needed to be reminded that those grids are purely hypothetical, e.g. either high or low involvement. Also, there are no evidences to prove that the grids reflect marketing communication mix correctly and accurately. Thus they may not be reliable in total. But as they have been undertaken empirical tests, the grids can be applied and used confidently.

Apart from consumer information process, to design an effective marketing communication campaign, marketers are required to realize the decision making process of their target audience.

An individual whom is highly involved in a purchase, the high involvement decision making process has been gone through as Figure 5.

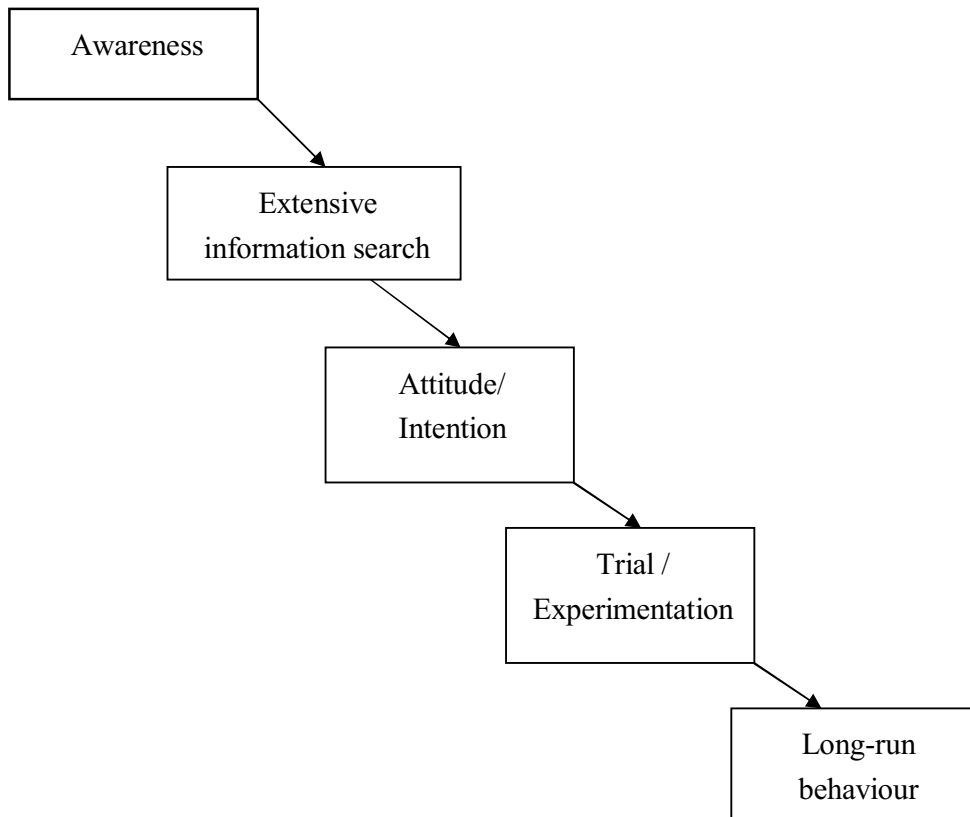


Figure 5. High-involvement decision-making process (Fill Chapter 4, 2002)

When there is a high-involvement decision-making process, that means an individual has high perceived risks and concerned about intended purchase. Thus the individual will undertake an extensive information search in order to reduce the level of perceived risks both financial and social. After studying and comparing the relevant information of the purchase, the attitude and the intention toward products are developed. After that, the individual will have trial intention if the experience is positive, then a commitment and long-run purchase behaviour is formed.

In the high-involvement decision-making process, the process of information search is particularly important. Individual in such decision-making process will

actively search information from different channels and evaluate. To satisfy the need of extensive information search, marketers of the high involvement products should deliver the message of marketing communication program via various media, say mass media, point-of-sales and even word-of-mouth communications. Furthermore, as a great deal of information is required, print advertisement is more appropriate for delivering the message which includes a large volume of detailed information. Then the individuals can study and digest the information at their controlled time and speed. But, of course the content of the message should be balanced by the visual and informative elements, otherwise the effectiveness of the message will be reduced as the message readers will be dull to read a whole text and then throw the print ads away. Moreover, owing to information plays an important role in the consumers' decision process, marketer should present the information from a credible information sources, at least the consumers think that the sources are trustful. Information from trustful sources can enhance the effective of the message. That the reason that many cosmetics print ads has showed that the cosmetics products has been taken tests and after-use product researches has been done, a particular percent of user is high satisfactory, etc.

Apart from advertisement in mass media, personal selling with some degree of demonstration and trial is also a marketing communication strategy for consumers with high-involvement decision-making process. Through personal selling, the consumers can have a close contact with the high involving products as there will be demonstration and intense learning to happen. For example, there are driving trial when we are going to buy a car. Through the trial, we can test the functional quality of car engine, and perceive safety level and so

on. Besides, we can also compare the information gathered before and the trial experiment, whether they are consistent and coherent. If the expectation of the consumers generated from the gathered information and their trial experimentation are match, there will be a great chance for having long -run behaviour.

On the other hand, when marketers plan a marketing communication program toward a group of target audience with low-involvement decision-making process (Figure 6), the strategy is greatly different from those for high involvement.

Individuals tend to use their right brain to store, think about, and interpret information they received passively. In addition, as they purchase low involving products associated with low personal relevance and low degree of perceive risks, they are not keen on gathering a great deal of information via different possible channels instead of receiving information involuntarily.

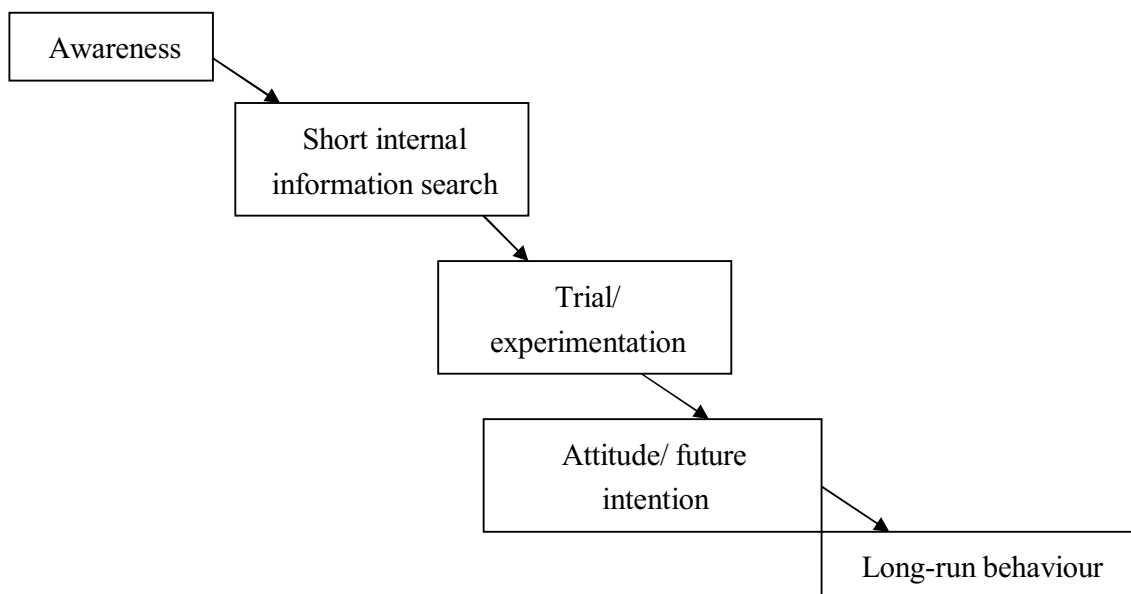


Fig. 6 Low-involvement decision-making process (Fill Chapter 4, 2002)

As the consumers of low involving products are passive problem solver, the strategy of marketing communication program should assist to arouse their awareness of problem which can be solved by a particular brand of product. Besides, the content of the message should be less informative and the length should be short.

To deal with passive receivers, repetition of the message via different message vehicles is needed and important as the receivers have little or even little motivation to learn and study the message and their perceptual selection process will filter out the unimportant and meaningless information and messages. Thus, repeated message just can create a short term memory in the consumers' brain. Thus delivering message effectively needs the assistance of Point-of-sale displays in which the consumers can be remind the message received via repeated advertisements from broadcast media. As it is a low involving product, consumers tend to a prompt decision of purchase at POS.

More to the point, the low involving products are lack of differentiation from the others. As a result, other marketing mix is an important factor to affect the decision of purchase. The price, package and other promotional efforts can stimulate the consumers to buy and try the products. After trial, the attitude of the consumers toward the products is formed. If the attitude is positive, there will be long-run behaviour. However, promotional messages are needed to be continued and repeated in order to maintain the loyalty and awareness of the consumers toward the product of a particular brand.

To sum up, involvement is a theory about people's interpretation of the way in which information is processing and the way in which consumers make decision of purchase.

It is mainly instituted that there are two main kinds of involvement: high and low involvement. Consumers with different involvement will carry out different information process and decision-making process. Therefore marketers are required to recognize the degree of involvement of their target groups and then formulate different promotional tactics, as discussed before, to influence the decision of purchase and long run loyalty of target groups towards their brand. Hence involvement plays an important role in strategy of marketing communication program.

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