

DOCTORAL THESIS

Effects of advertising self-disclosure, message appeal and regulatory orientation: a field experiment on private retirement schemes in Malaysia

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**Effects of Advertising Self-disclosure, Message Appeal and Regulatory
Orientation: A Field Experiment on Private Retirement Schemes in Malaysia**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Principal Supervisor: Professor Kineta Hung

Hong Kong Baptist University

August, 2015

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work which has been completed after registration for the degree of PhD at Hong Kong Baptist University, and has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation submitted to this or another institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

Signature: *Thanaseelen*

Date: August, 2015

Abstract

This dissertation examines the impact of advertising self-disclosures (present versus absent) and advertising message appeals (hard sell versus soft sell) which is moderated by innate personal traits within the context of financial services advertising. In particular this study investigates the impact of self-regulatory focus (i.e. innate personal traits) on self-disclosures and advertising message appeal with regards to cognitive (knowledge), affective (attribute evaluation) and conative (buying intention) responses of retail investors. The industry concerns private retirement schemes (PRS). The theoretical framework is based on Higgins (2012) regulatory focus theory on chronic personal disposition inherent in an individual (i.e. prevention/promotion), and how this disposition might mitigate with self-disclosures and message appeal contained in advertisements in terms knowledge, attribute evaluation (i.e. attitude) and buying intention. ANOVA results from a between subjects experiment indicated that the individual regulatory orientation interacts with the effects of advertising self-disclosures and message appeals. Specifically, when exposed to hard sell advertisements with self-disclosures (soft sell advertisements with self-disclosures) perceived knowledge, attribute evaluation and buying intention towards the PRS is favorable to prevention oriented investors (promotion oriented investors). In addition the effect is greater on prevention subjects in comparison to promotion subjects. This study proposes theoretical, managerial, public policy implications and future research directions.

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When I first started my PhD sojourn, I was full of trepidations. Coming from an industry practice background after almost 28 years and being separated from my beloved family, I was full of uncertainties coming to study as a fulltime student in Hong Kong. But somehow, God has been kind to me and has guided each and every step that I had undertaken – from start till the finish. He has been within me, guiding me silently the ups and downs that I had faced. That journey has now come to fruition, and without the love, grace and blessings from him, I would not have completed this amazing journey.

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