

Persuasion Analysis: Daihatsu Wake Campaign

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Persuasion Analysis

Persuasive Effects

- The primary persuasive effect is to change attitudes to commit to changing a behavior. In this instance it would be to purchase the Daihatsu Wake as one's next car.

Rhetorical Analysis

- Ethos is built from a shared understanding that the typical consumer of an economic but small Kei-style car experiences challenges in working with such a small space; this shared experience builds credibility.
- Pathos is built through the storytelling and with the narrative focus on Anchan's futile struggle to compete with the Daihatsu Wake in a way that is both funny and endearing to the audience.
- Logos is built from the visual demonstration that a larger spaced car is a great thing to have by demonstrating case uses for it.

Audience Attitudes and Beliefs

- The campaign builds on commonplace attitudes that the audience likes and values roominess in their vehicles; it also operates on the commonplace assumption that Kei-style cars are small and that the lower cost of ownership comes at a cost of a lack of utility and comfort.
- Inductive reasoning is used to challenge that commonplace assumption by showing why it is not necessarily the case and how the Wake can help the consumer do more with their car.

Expectations of Attitudes and/or Behavioral Change

- Audiences have been conditioned to believe that economical Kei cars are small and lack utility because of availability heuristics involving their experiences and environment. Making audiences aware to larger roomier Kei cars like the Wake can change these beliefs.
- Because cars have a very high threshold of resource commitment, this campaign may not produce immediate results in behavioral change.

Applying the Elaboration Likelihood Model

- Peripheral processing is encouraged using fast paced audio and visual cues such as the fast cuts accompanied by metallic “bongs” that quickly show highly utilized spaces emphasizing the “Plenty of Room!” The sense of urgency is heightened when compared to the first half of the commercial where it is far slower and dramatic.
- Central processing is encouraged through the audience being left to consider how one could use all that space in their own contexts.

Source Factors

Authority

- The usage of authority is not a key component of the persuasive strategy in the campaign; However, it could be argued that in a collectivist society like Japan, social proof factors could play an authoritative role in what is acceptable and what is not to the society. In this instance, it is more socially acceptable to drive a fully functional car like the Wake versus driving a car that has been modified to fulfill a need. It is unclear if this effect would be an intentionally capitalized one from the advertising team.

Credibility

- Credibility is obtained mainly through expertise and experience about Kei car ownership. Kei cars are a special class of automobile in Japan that are economical and smaller in size and engine power compared to sedans in the United States that are much more efficient to use in urban areas and have lower costs of ownership.
 - Having experiences with the challenges of space in a Kei car and being able to demonstrate that knowledge boosts credibility of the advertisement even though the ads express them in exaggerated ways.
 - A shared understanding of the challenges of owning a Kei car can boost the perception of trustworthiness and goodwill if the advertiser suggests the Wake will address those problems that are collectively understood.

Social Attractiveness

- Anchan is a likable and sympathetic character that is both his own character and an avatar for the average Kei car driver in Japan. The audience of Kei car drivers can identify with Anchan through their own experiences living with the limitations of driving the highly economical but spatially restrictive designs of Kei cars. This can lend to perceptions of authenticity and credibility when Anchan's limitations with his own car validate their own experiences.
 - Anchan has a very distinct visual aesthetic that is reflective of the 1980s bad boy look in Japan with slicked back hair and denim. Anchan would have stood out then and now with an appealing rebellious look and a rebellious spirit of car modification to match.
 - The character design is also influenced by the Japanese love of the tragic hero. Even though he is doomed to failure the notion of perseverance and maintaining honor in the face of certain doom is an admirable quality that is echoed in the literature and culture of Japan.
- Anchan's partner also attains social attractiveness by both being the voice of reason and an abiding source of support despite his failings, telling him in one commercial "I love you, but you have no sense." She is a balance of desirability in a partner that is both supportive and knows when to knock some sense back in.
- Younger brother and his partner are not as fleshed out in comparison and appear either as an expression of the sensible reasonable way of doing things, or to drive the plot.

Message Factors

- The campaign employs a strong use of narrative by creating a story arc that spans several commercial spots that are deployed over the course of weeks and months taking the audience on a journey through Anchan's trials and tribulations in trying to modify his inadequately sized Kei car to compare to his brother's Daihatsu Wake.
 - Each "episode" follows a formula where Anchan and his younger brother are both doing the same task or activity. Anchan "cleverly" finds a way to modify his car in an extreme way to achieve the goal only to be humiliated by his younger brother's Wake that easily handles the same task.

- These situations depicted in the ads can be novel ways of demonstrating how increased car space can impact one's options for activities and experiences in their lives. Credibility of this argument can be obtained if the audience identifies with feeling like their quality of life is limited because of their car's carrying capacity.
- The Campaign uses a two-sided argument model and conclusion drawing to make its point.
 - The two-sided argument model applied demonstrates a case use for a typical car owner and how owners of the average Kei car might handle it versus owners of Daihatsu Wakes. It uses absurdity both as a vehicle for humor and as a persuasive strategy to show what kind of "extreme" modifications must be done to a typical Kei car to fulfill the same task that a Wake handles easily.
 - The use of the inadequate modified car is a framing strategy to imply that the wake is the practical reasonable choice that fills the user's needs that the other car cannot.
 - The campaign draws and expresses the desired conclusion by both visual representation of the car's roominess with text and voice lines stating, "Plenty of Room, Wake!"
- The campaign makes strong use of language, audio, and visual cues to emphasize the message.
 - Music in the form of a dramatic swell is used as an audio cue to signal to the audience that this is a tragic and dramatic moment further emphasized with the use of slow-motion on *Anchan's* melodramatic anguished expression. The juxtaposition of this heavy-handed use of dramatic effect over an everyday experience creates a humorous effect because of its absurdity.

Use of Association

- Symbolism is used heavily throughout the campaign with the usage of dramatic music, video effects, and dramatic facial expressions to demonstrate feelings of tragedy in the narrative to communicate *Anchan's* honorable but futile mission to outwit the Wake. Rapid metallic bongs associated with frame cuts emphasize the "ironclad" authoritative statement of the Wake's roominess.

Recommendations for Improvement

Rhetorical Improvements

- The campaign is completely dependent on size as its unique selling point and would benefit from building an argument that includes other possible selling points.

Functional Approach Improvements

- Improvements could be done to the campaign by leveraging utilitarian and value expressive functions.
 - Utilitarian focused messaging can demonstrate more functional benefits to quality of life when it comes to managing daily tasks, fuel economy, and ease of use. Focusing on more reasons to buy than just size.
 - Value-expressive focused messaging asks people to consider what kind of life they could lead if they had the Wake. Is being active in mountain biking and surfing a part of their ideal best selves that are limited by their non-Wake car?

Source Factors

- The campaign may lack in credibility in a key potential audience: families. The campaign is purely focused on young people living an active lifestyle which may lack resonance with potential consumers with children that would also greatly benefit from its unique selling point.

Message Factors

- The overall impact of the campaign was potentially hampered by its single focus on size as its unique selling point. Making the campaign more diverse in showing additional desirable features such as fuel economy would capture audiences where space is not the greatest consideration.
- The consistent formula of using a certain musical piece to create the sense of dramatic impact was deviated on by using a less impactful piece later in the campaign with no narrative justification for the change. Ideally that should have only been changed when the narrative justified it necessary.
- Ending the advertisement with “What will you do with your wake?” would encourage more central processing.

Elaboration Likelihood Model

- The advertisers may assume that central processing may occur after watching the commercial but asking the audience to directly consider the possibilities would be an effective trigger for central processing.

Association

- The advertising team spends several commercials in the campaign building a persistent pattern in its use of dramatic music to highlight the feeling of tragedy. Half-way into the campaign this music was changed from a dramatic swell to a track that felt more meandering in feeling and disrupted the conditioned expectation of the storyline and lost the punctuational impact that the original music previously had. It would have been better to have stuck to the original track and only changed to something equally or more intense once the narrative timeline calls for it.

Contextual Analysis

Cultural Analysis of the Primary Audience (Drivers in Japan)

The primary audience for this campaign is the public in Japan who can buy and drive vehicles. Japanese cars are classified into three categories: 3-number (Large cars), 5-number (Small or mid-sized cars) and Keijidosha, an economy class car also known as “Kei” cars. Kei cars are very popular in Japan for their efficiency in a country where space is at a premium and for the cheaper cost of ownership compared to a 3 or 5 numbered car that costs significantly more in taxes. The Wake has the potential to fill a need to this audience that both needs more space without having to buy a car that would cost them heavily in taxes and be harder to store in larger cities. The design of the Wake would not be off-putting to this audience due to Japan being the originator of Kawaii (cute) culture that has become widely accepted in culture and media. Japanese culture also has an affinity for stories about the underdog and the tales of tragic heroes that are honorable and determined to see things through to the bitter end. Anchan is a representation of that determined but doomed spirit that can be identified with on a cultural level.

Cultural Analysis of a Secondary Audience (Drivers in the United States)

Because the Wake is not sold outside of Japan and Southeast Asia, a United States audience to this campaign would be more tertiary in nature. Americans are more likely to see and evaluate the campaign for its narrative efforts since Americans are not able to buy or rent these cars unless they go abroad to Japan. Americans would be able to appreciate the melodramatic narrative storytelling with similar experiences and exposure to soap

operas and telenovelas and the underdog is also a commonly understood and valued trope in American storytelling. But hypothetical sales of the product itself would possibly be difficult in the United States where economy is not as highly valued and its unorthodox shape challenges typical attitudes of cars as an aggressively masculine product. Similar cars in the United States such as the Toyota Scion xB were not as successful at penetrating the American market's strong expectations of auto design.

Ethical Analysis

In analyzing the advertising campaign's ethical components through Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative, Daihatsu's *Anchan* campaign passes the first formulation of universality and reversibility. The campaign used honest and straightforward messaging to consider the product and brand through means of humor and did not rely on deceptive or manipulative tactics to achieve those ends. This form of persuasive messaging is universal in its appeal and could be fairly and effectively applied back to the advertising team that created the campaign.

The second formulation of the categorical imperatives focuses on ensuring the respect and dignity of all publics involved in the production and execution of a campaign. The *Anchan* campaign fails this test in one commercial where the protagonist is crying and lamenting that he is unable to defeat the Wake's utility and his partner chastises him and yells at him "You're a man, don't cry!". This disconfirming messaging perpetuates harmful cultural attitudes about masculinity that restrict men from being emotionally expressive. This issue could be easily fixed by changing the script to say, "You're not a baby, don't cry!" which would just as effectively communicate the same frustration without reinforcing harmful expectations on gender roles.

The third formulation of the categorical imperative focuses on considering the intent and goodwill of the campaign. Without access to internal documents assessing intention and goodwill is difficult to accurately assess; However, from the persistent messaging shown throughout the campaign the primary intent of the campaign is to persuade audiences to purchase the Daihatsu Wake as their next car of choice on the virtue of its larger than average size compared to other Kei-style automobiles on the market. The use of narrative storytelling with humor that reinforces the simple message "It has plenty of room!" implies an honest straightforward intent that the creators of the campaign can be assumed they are acting with good will.