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Persuasion

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Persuasion Final

In life, persuasion attempts are unavoidable. Whether it be a close friend trying to get you to do something, or a brand trying to convince you to buy their product, persuasion attempts occur on a daily basis. I myself have taken note of several persuasion attempts in my life recently, including a close friend who wanted me to visit the bars with him, and an advertisement for Fender guitars. In this paper, I will be covering the interpersonal persuasion attempt using the concepts of ethos, pathos, and logos, attitudes, values, and beliefs, and social judgement theory, and I will cover the advertising and marketing persuasion attempt through the concepts of message characteristics, source characteristics, and mere exposure and association.

The interpersonal persuasion attempt took place on Wednesday November 25th, the day I returned home from school. Upon my arrival, I was contacted by a close friend of mine. He congratulated me on finishing the semester, and suggested I blow off some steam by visiting some of the local bars.

His attempt to persuade me benefitted from ethos, pathos, and logos. His ethos as a close friend of mine was very beneficial for him. Seeing him as a close friend makes me place more trust in him, and makes me more likely to listen to him. As for pathos, he appealed to my emotional state by mentioning how difficult of a semester it had been. It certainly has been a difficult semester, and visiting the bars would indeed have been a nice relief. As far as logos goes, he made the argument that since the coronavirus began, I had not yet been out to any bars

despite turning 21. It is true that my birthday was this past summer, but due to the state of the world, I had not been able to take advantage of that fact.

Despite his attempts to persuade me, I did not go out to the bars with him, due in part to my attitudes, values, and beliefs. My attitude towards the coronavirus is that it is a serious issue, and risking my own health along with the health of my friends and family is not worth a jaunt to the bars. I also value being a person of high moral standing. I strive to be a good person in everyday life, and I would consider it immoral to go out and visit bars during global pandemic in order to fulfill my own sense of pleasure. It is also a belief of mine that visiting bars will only exacerbate the ongoing pandemic and cause it to go on longer. Even though it has been a while since I have been to a large social gathering, visiting bars will only cause the issue to drag on longer, so it would be counterproductive as a whole; and, of course, I believe that my actions could cause people to become seriously ill or even die, and that is not something I want to take a part in.

Finally, my rejection of my friend's persuasions attempts can be explained through social judgement theory. Had I been in a latitude of acceptance to start out with, I could easily have been persuaded by him. For example, if I believed that the coronavirus was not as bad as people were making it out to be and that there was no real harm by having a night out, then it is likely that I would have been persuaded by his attempts. Even if I were in a latitude of noncommitment, it is possible that he could have persuaded me. For example, if I were concerned about the coronavirus, but figured I would likely be fine because I do not have an underlying condition, then he may have swayed me enough to come and join him at the bars. However, in reality I fall into a latitude of rejection. I take the ongoing pandemic seriously, and it did not matter that he is a close friend of mine. At the end of the day, he could have made any

argument he wanted to, but it was very unlikely that he would have been able to persuade me otherwise.

Persuasive attempts also come from advertising and marketing. Case in point: on Friday November 27th, I saw a YouTube ad for Fender guitars. Usually I am inclined to skip ads I see on YouTube videos, but it just so happens that I am planning on getting an electric guitar for Christmas, so I decided to see that it was about. In the ad, a narrator outlines the “rules” necessary to follow in order to be a great guitarist, while clips play of people doing the exact opposite. In the end the narrator states that the rules exist for a reason, and you need a guitar to break them with. The ad also calls Fender the “one for all”, and this is backed up by clips showing people supporting the Black Lives Matter movement and people from around the world playing Fender guitars.

The advertisement uses message characteristics in order to be persuasive. One example is how it uses conclusion drawing. By stating the “rules” of being a guitarist and how Fender guitars will help you break them, it makes Fender seem like a brand used by innovators and people who are breaking conventions and pushing the medium forward. The evidence is the video clips playing in the background. For example, after stating that you need to hit the road to garner an audience, it shows clips of people on social media playing the guitar who are garnering an audience. Another example is when the narrator says not to expect to change the world, while a girl holds up a guitar with “fight racism” written on the back of her guitar. This all plays into the narrative of the message: that Fender guitars are made for forward thinkers. By painting the picture that the guitars are used by people who push the art form forward and by people punching for social justice, how can one not be intrigued?

The ad is also persuasive through the brand's source characteristics. Fender holds a certain authority in the music industry as one of the top guitar brands in the world. As a result, there is a certain allure of reward to buying a Fender guitar; by buying the best brand, you can ensure that you will play your best with it. Fender is also a very credible brand. They have been making guitars since the 1940's, and it stands to reason that they would not be around so long if they did not make good guitars. Furthermore, Fender guitars have been the go-to for some of the best guitarists in music history, such as Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, and Pink Floyd's David Gilmour.

Finally, the ad is influential through mere exposure and association. Before I ever began learning the guitar or even had an interest in music, Fender was one of the few guitar brands I knew. By this fact alone, I am more likely to purchase a Fender guitar because it is a brand that I am familiar with. While there are certainly more brands out there that make high-quality guitars, it is easy to go with a Fender because it is what I, and likely many others, know and are familiar with. Fender also benefits from association. Going back to the point from before, some of the greatest guitarists ever preferred Fender guitars over others; the ad itself also features some incredibly talented guitar players. It is very easy to watch these talented individuals and imagine yourself in their position, effortlessly playing the guitar. The ad creates this association and makes its audience more likely to pick up a Fender.

Persuasion attempts are a common part of everyday life. Whether it be a friend trying to convince you to visit the bars with him, or a guitar company swaying you to purchase their instruments, it is something that is largely unavoidable. However, having knowledge of the persuasive process can arm you with the ability to see through these persuasion attempts and decide for yourself whether or not you want to be persuaded.

Work Cited

Perloff, R. M. (2014). *The dynamics of persuasion*. Routledge.