

Introduction. embarked on various relevant issues regarding

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INTRODUCTION.

This model majorly focuses on how attitudes are formed and changed through persuasion. In this study we discussed on the tenets of elaboration likelihood model, its weaknesses as highlighted by critics and practical examples how this communication theory can be used to shift attitudes.

HISTORY OF ELM.

The model was developed by Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo in the 1980s. Elaboration Likelihood Model argues that persuasion is a dual-process. Which takes a central and peripheral route. According to this model, people choose to manage information either systematically or heuristically.

According to the theory's developers, the model intended to provide a general " framework for organizing, categorizing and understanding the basic processes underlying the effectiveness of persuasive communications.

The study of attitudes and persuasion began as the central focus on social psychology, featured in the work of psychologists Gordon Allport (1935) and Edward Alsworth Ross (1908). Allport described attitudes as " the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary social psychology". Considerable research was devoted to the study of attitudes and persuasion from the 1930s through the late 1970s. These studies embarked on various relevant issues regarding attitudes and persuasion, such as consistency between attitudes and behaviors and the processes underlying attitude/behavior correspondence. However, Petty and Cacioppo noticed a major problem facing attitude and persuasion researchers to the effect that there was minimal agreement regarding " if, when, and how the

traditional source, message, recipient, and channel variables affected attitude change". Noticing this problem, Petty and Cacioppo developed the elaboration likelihood model as their attempt to account for the differential persistence of communication-induced attitude change.

Petty and Cacioppo suggested that different empirical findings and theories on attitude persistence could be viewed as stressing one of two routes to persuasion which they presented in their elaboration likelihood model. KEY ELEMENTS OF ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL. Central Route of persuasion This is the route in elaboration likelihood model where an audience receives the information presented to them, thinks about it critically and considers changing their attitude, way of thinking or behavior.

It is influenced mainly by their elaboration of the information presented to them, understanding and consideration of the facts, ideas or content of the message. The success of this route of persuasion is highly dependent on;

- 1) The motivation to think about the message which is influenced by the receiver's interest of the message.
- 2) The ability to think or elaborate the message. Is the receiver capable of thinking or brainstorming on the message. It is depended on the audience's capability to think soundly.

Advantages of central route of persuasion

- 1) persuasion, attitude or behaviour change resulting from central processing lasts longer. This is because there have been sound or active involvement by the audience to elaborate the content of the message before arriving to a point of attitude change.
- 2) The behaviour of the message receiver is

predictable. Peripheral route of persuasion In this route of persuasion, the message receiver is influenced by general impressions.

These are inclusive of perceived expertise, credibility, outward attractiveness, art of message presentation and general appeal or appearance. Elaboration of the message is low. The audience have very little interest or none at all and are not able to process the message. Thus, easily swayed by external factors.

In this case, the audience lacks motivation and ability unlike in the central route of persuasion. Message receivers in this context are likely to be persuaded even before a presentation is made because the presenter looks appealing or is considered of higher credibility. Change of attitude or behaviour does not last long. Where there is need for the listener to stick to their changed attitude, there would be need to reinforce this decision making by frequent appearances or reminder by the source of the persuasion message. APPLICATION OF ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL

(ELM). In the health sector. ELM can be used in the health sector to create awareness like on matters pertaining family planning.

A case of 2 women, Cara and Laura. Cara comes across information on various family planning methods while visiting a relative of hers at the hospital. She gains interest in the matter and even does further research on the same once she gets home. After further research and analysis, she is persuaded to use 'The pill' as her choice of family planning method. In this case, she used the Central Route of Persuasion. On the other hand, Laura who

is not sure which family planning method to use, visits her long-time friend to seek advice from her. Her friend informs her that she uses 'the coil' as her family planning method and it has turned out to be effective. Since Laura trusts her friend a lot, she decides that she's also going to start using 'the coil', just because her friend has persuaded her to do so, not putting in mind that there might be side effects.

In this case, she has used the Peripheral Route of

Persuasion. In Marketing and Advertising, ELM can be used when an organization is trying to persuade its prospective customers to purchase a certain product or services. With ELM, Advertisers research on products and give vivid descriptions on the use of such products to customers. In most cases, clients will only use a product after in depth study of the product. The motivation to use the product will only come after a keen analysis of the said product. I.

e. its nutrients, composition and its side effects. In this case, he embraces central route of persuasion. A perfect example is an advert on body creams. However impressive an advert praises a body cream; consumers need to have good knowledge on how compatible the cream is to their skin.

This is to mean that central route is the most applicable mode of persuasion. Peripheral route can come in handy, when dealing with fashion and beverages to persuade consumers. With these industries advertisers mostly use celebrities as brand ambassadors to influence how prospective

consumers associate with a product without a need to think any further about it.

For example, a clothing line with new trendy clothes will bestsell its new designs by having celebrities and video vixens use its product to entice viewers about a new trend in town. Since celebrities set standards to what is trendy and fashionable the market will swing with the wave to use the trendy products without analyzing the effectiveness of the product. They are persuaded to use the products by celebrities. RESEARCH QUESTIONS The Elaboration likelihood model takes persuasion in only two angles; Central and peripheral routes. We came up with three objective questions to understand the scope of persuasion.

· To what extent does ELM influence decision-making? · What is the role of experts in persuading individuals in attitude change? · What is the effectiveness of ELM in enhancing persuasion in the field of advertising? CRITICISM OF ELM. Perloff R. M (2003) argues that the theory has two main limitations: first, the theory fails to elaborate how messages can influence people, resulting in them changing their minds. Second, he says that most people's thoughts are overridden by persuasive messages such that most decisions they make are a result of 'mental shortcuts'. Gotlieb and Swan (1990), argue that consumers lean towards affordability as a motivation to deal with a message but very little evidence justifies the motivation level. Their argument also posits that the ELM model does not adequately foresee the 'dispute effects' of the message.

Cole, Etterson, Reinke and Schrader (1990), claim that the three experiments the ELM models were based on gave ' conflicting results'. This was because; some forms of advertisements used very limited information compared to others. For example, billboards contained just a few words compared to other forms such as TV commercials. In such cases, the ELM model does not specify which the central route is and which the peripheral route is. From the above, it can be seen that the model limits itself by looking at two approaches to persuasion, which is inadequate when trying to determine internal stability and doubt in consumers of a message.