

# Effect of subliminal marketing greater than thought

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Marketing statements influence us subliminally more than was ever assumed. Even when you are not aware of being exposed to advertising material, it can still affect your actions. This emerged from research by Marieke Fransen of the University of Twente, Netherlands, who obtained her doctorate from the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences on 19 December.

Marketing seems almost part of the fabric of our society, with branding, advertising and slogans practically everywhere. If you question people, they say they do not think advertisements influence them. The literature on the subject reveals that this is certainly not the case, indicating that the effect is partly subliminal, i.e. automatic.

However, hardly any fundamental research has been done so far into the subliminal effects of marketing communications. This was the motivation for Fransen to delve into the subject. It emerged that the subliminal component was greater than had ever been assumed.

## **Mortality**

One of the PhD candidate's studies supporting the above conclusion involved exposing test subjects to a well-known insurance brand. Possibly because of associations with disasters, illness and accidents, the test subjects were reminded of their mortality. A strategy for reducing death-related anxiety is to spend money. Test subjects exposed to the

insurance brand showed the intention of spending more money in the near future than test subjects who had not been exposed to the brand, although the former were not aware of the influence.

Fransen was able to measure the effect of exposure when the subjects were aware of it, as well as that of subliminal exposure. Subliminal exposure is so short that a test subject does not even see it. The PhD candidate also examined the way in which the exposure to marketing occurs (modality), in other words, whether a brand is presented visually or aurally. Her research revealed that marketing is most effective if a brand is presented twice using the same modality.

Provided by University of Twente, NL

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