

The Effect of Endorsement Appeals in Advertisement on Food Buyers' Purchase Intention

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ABSTRACT

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Advertising is one of the modes of communication that influences the actions of the targeted market. It is crucial that companies understand the marketing communication tools that best suit their target customers. This study aims to determine the influence of endorsement appeals in advertising on the purchasing intention of Malaysia's food buyers. A quantitative study was conducted on 385 respondents, and Likert-scale survey questionnaires were used to collect the data. Resultantly, attributes such as expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and credibility of endorsement appeals influenced the purchase intention of food buyers in Malaysia. In the present sad and anxiety-driven world, delivering emotional and relatable feelings and conveying messages in an understanding and familiar manner is gaining popularity and mental acceptance among Malaysians. These findings support an underlying conviction that endorsement appeals could influence the purchase intention of food buyers. Apart from watching and enjoying the advertisement, the content also created an emotional advertising appeal, which helped to attract buyers. Surprisingly, the viewers preferred buying the same product or service as a form of achievement which resulted from the emotional advertising appeal. This proves that the marketers prefer the emotional advertising appeal to the rational advertising appeal. Conclusively, this study broadens the knowledge of assessments and impacts of emotional and logical appeals appearing either in print or online advertisements.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Companies have adopted various strategies to aid the promotion of their products. Among the strategies adopted are media advertising and promotional advertising. Grigaliunaite and Pileliene (2016) stated that companies need to identify and focus on the factors that affect advertisement effectiveness in an evolving competition-based market economy. Additionally, conventional marketing and neuromarketing research approaches have been employed to assess the effects of various advertising appeals on advertising effectiveness. Hence, a model for this has been created. Thus, this study aims to identify the endorsement and emotional appeals in advertising that influence the purchase intention of food buyers.

In the food industry, consumer behavior plays an important role in ensuring that funds are raised to meet their needs. This should be seen as a requirement regardless of whether the mechanism of consumption exists. Consumers may acquire their needs by purchasing goods available either in or outside the market. They could also acquire their needs through self-supplying or receiving donations from legal persons or natural persons. This general remark is specifically vital about food. Some issues discussed in this study include the location of food purchase, factors that might influence the decision to purchase the food, purchaser reaction, and purchaser preference in catering services. According to empirical research conducted by Jovanovic et al. (2016), some forms of appeals in creative advertising strategies are either efficient or vice versa. Moreover, marketing professionals accepted that applying creative skills by copywriters and artists when presenting an advert is a form of artistic expression. They also viewed such creative skills as advertising dimensions, where their success and effectiveness are not observable.

In the competitive market, particularly the online market, it is highly recommended to investigate the impacts of advertising appeals on consumer purchasing intention for the online market. This study summarises the influencing consumer actions in the food market. The factors include sensory qualities, nutritional value, and price persistent in some social classes. Based on the findings by various scholars on the purchasing decision determinants in the catering service sector, the most important factors are the quality of food, variety of food, the environment in and outside the local market, and the price of food (Nowicki et al., 2012). There are two types of advertisements namely rational appeal and emotional appeal advertisement. Rational appeal advertisements may not always suit certain goods, especially for products with the same function. A slight difference is observed when compared to competitive items or close substitutes in the sense of functionality, sensory, or technological characteristics. The emotional appeal advertisement method allows the marketers to build emotional connections into consumers' minds regarding the product being marketed using a unique emotional proposition. This method aims to tackle the consumer's psychological or social needs, which means they are attempting to trigger either positive or negative feelings that might contribute to a purchase.

Nowicki et al. (2012) focused on categorizing factors that determine specific behaviors of food purchasers, which included age, sex, education, and psychological factors. The psychological factors included personality, experience, mood, hunger, thirst, health status, and dietary habits. There are also environmental factors, such as price and income, social status, and cultural influences, including traditions or beliefs. This study was designed to assess the influence of Endorsement Appeals on the food buyers' purchase intention. Previous studies demonstrated that entrepreneurs use celebrity endorsement to improve customer buying incentives. Apart from the fact that celebrity endorsement encourages customers to buy goods, the appeal of celebrities' comments could also influence consumer product image (Muhmad Pirus & Zulqahar, 2018). The goals are set so that marketers, promotional organisations, and businesses

could benefit from this research outcome. It is expected that this study will identify the most significant factors from the surveys conducted using intensive questionnaires.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Emotional Advertising Appeals versus Rational Advertising Appeals

Three stages are involved in the individual reaction to advertising, which helps classify the effectiveness of strategies in measuring advertisement (Martin-Santana and Beerli-Palacio, 2013). A model corresponding to the three stages of individual reaction to advertising has been developed. It is directly connected to the three functions of advertising: informing, creating attitudes or feelings toward the advertised object, and initiating a behavior or response in individuals. The model has identified three stages: 1) the cognitive stage, which means the individual’s attention, knowledge, and understanding. 2) the affective stage, which depicts an individual’s attitude, and finally, 3) the conative stage, which involves an individual's behavior.

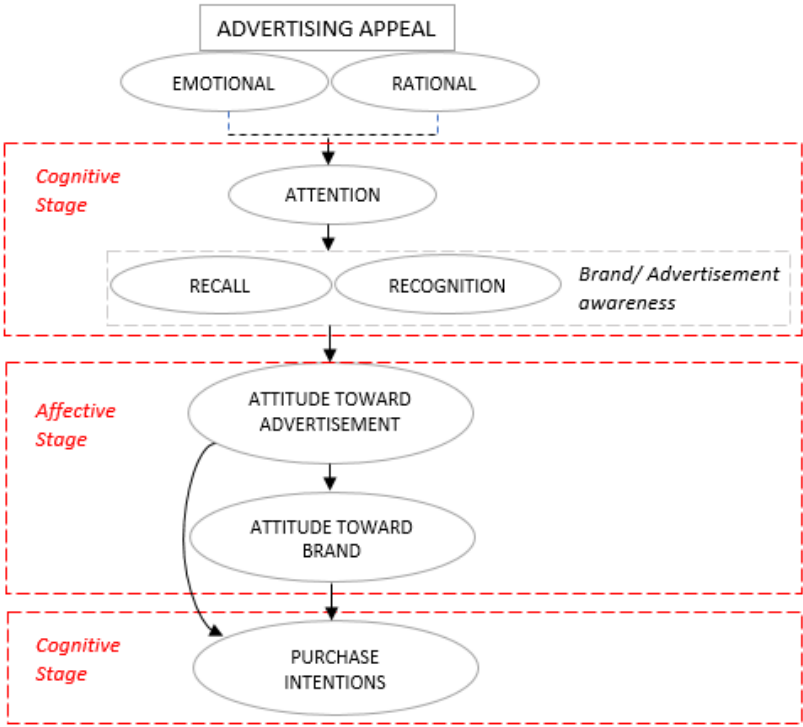


Figure 1. The Influence of Advertising Appeal on the Advertising Effectiveness Model (Source: Martin-Santana and Beerli-Palacio, 2013)

Previous studies have been conducted in investigating attributes related to the best advertising appeal. However, the issues on the types of advertising appeal that can improve the market interest and provide the best promotion for specific goods remain unresolved. Prior research has proven that emotional or rational advertising appeals could be employed in determining the effectiveness of advertising appeal on a customer’s cognitive stage, either regarding a printed or online displayed advertisement for convenience goods. Moreover, the implicit and explicit attitude towards emotionally appealing adverts in the category of comfort goods is more optimistic than the logical advertising appeals. Notwithstanding, a more favorable outlook does not contribute to higher customer purchasing intentions. Further analyses revealed that the

printed or outdoor displayed advertisement efficacy of convenience goods regarding the conative stage of customer reaction to advertising has a higher possibility to be achieved when a reasonable advertising appeal is implemented (Grigaliunaite & Pileliene, 2016).

Emotional appeals are forms of advertising in which the customer or buyer associates a product or service with an emotional connection (Rahman & Pial, 2019). According to Keshari and Jain (2014), emotional appeal is an effort to produce either negative or positive emotions that can motivate purchases. Panda et al. (2013) stated that marketers substitute rational advertising with emotional advertising when the former becomes difficult. Emotion has been suggested as a significant component of the consumer experience. The consumer's view includes positive and negative emotions such as happiness and sorrow. These emotional aspects of consumption affect the quality of life of individuals and humans in general. In consumer behavior, there has been an increasing interest in understanding the role of emotion in advertising appeals. A study revealed that the indicators of emotional appeals are celebrity endorsement, visuals, music, jingle, and slogans (Albers & Stafford, 1999). The present study focused on endorsement appeal, which refers to the entrepreneurs who used celebrity endorsement to improve customer buying incentives. Apart from encouraging customers to buy goods, celebrity endorsement and the appeal of their comments could influence consumer product image (Muhmad Pirus & Zulqahar, 2018).

2.2 Food Purchase Intention

In the food market, there is diversification in terms of consumers' expectations for specific foods. From healthy food such as vegetables, fruits, meat, and poultry to convenience food products and fast food, the consumers may involve in the purchase intention. Food Purchase Intention refers to consumers' attitudes concerning food, which depends on various attributes affecting their preferences in several ways, contributing to the acceptance and selection of certain items and rejecting others (Nowicki & Sikora, 2012). A customer's taste and desires should be considered when a company is creating an effective marketing plan. One of the critical aspects of consumer behavior in the food industry is to improve funds in line with consumers' needs. This is essential even without having the mechanism of consumption. The process of acquiring a particular product might occur either in or outside the market. A consumer may engage in self-supply or acquire a product in the form of donations from legal persons or natural persons. These elements, as mentioned earlier, are recognized in some social classes as part of influential factors in shopping. The summary of the research conducted by various scholars proved that the quality and variety of the food, the environment in and outside the local market, and the price of food are considered the most important factors influencing food buyers' purchase intention (Nowicki & Sikora, 2012). Several steps are taken to fulfill the objective of this study. Firstly, gauging the range of purchase intention due to the stimuli of advertisements' emotional appeals. Then, collecting, analyzing, and finally, presenting the emotional appeals that would influence the purchase intention of food buyers.

2.3 Impact of Endorsement Appeal on Purchase Intention

Advertisement appeals to customers' purchase intention are very lucrative and generate more sales to the companies. It communicates the details of products and entices customers to buy, creating a purchase intention for the customers. A study by Jovanovic et al. (2016) confirmed that marketing practices might affect the outcome of every creative strategy informing advertising appeals. In this study, endorsement appeals were considered potential factors influencing emotional appeals in advertisements of various food products that could attract food buyers' purchase intention. Whether positively, as an encouragement to buy or in a negative

direction, this appeal is a disincentive to the purchase intention. Advertising plays a vital role in creating ideas and suggestions for a potential buyer. Prior research has proven that attributes such as expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, product image, and credibility of endorsement appeals, which are emotional appeals, could influence the buyer's purchase intention while attracting more customers for companies and increasing their sales.

An endorsement can be provided by a single person or a group of people, celebrities, influencers, athletes, experts, media reviewers, or product users to endorse a particular product. On the other hand, some advertising strategies employed the endorsement by recognized boards or associations such as Professional Associations, Safety Boards, Environmental Agencies, and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) (Finkle, 2019). Undeniably, celebrities can capture their followers' or fans' attention for new products or products that people would otherwise ignore. It is crucial to observe if the attention promotes the products and increases their sales. Elberse and Verleun (2012) found that paid endorsers reflect a positive impact on firms. Hence, it was concluded that endorsements are linked to the increase in sales with specific endorsement appeals attributes such as expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and credibility.

Expertise is described as an individual's level of knowledge in terms of experience, knowledge, and problem-solving skills that a person has in a specific area. Becoming an expert requires practice, experience, and long-term training (Wiedmann et al., 2021). An expert can perform at a higher level in a specific domain. Additionally, Trustworthiness addresses the question of whether an individual could be considered believable (Goldsmith et al., 2000). It also refers to consumers believing the endorser is honest and has integrity. The influence of endorsement appeal through attractiveness aligns with consumers' belief that they have a similar attractiveness to the endorser. In other words, physically attractive celebrities influence consumers' behavior and attitudes favorably compared to less-attractive celebrities (Gong, 2017). Carroll (2008) explains that credibility could be defined as the extent to which a source is perceived as possessing significant knowledge or enough experience to offer an unbiased judgment. Therefore, credibility outlines whether an individual recognizes a true, unbiased, and honest claim.

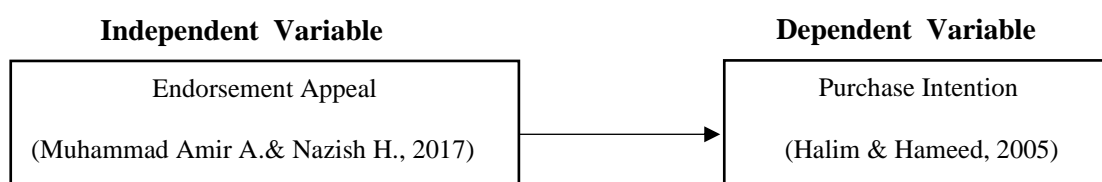


Figure 2. Research Model

3. METHOD

The study was based on a quantitative approach, which means that it was primarily data-driven. The data were collected by distributing Likert-scale survey questionnaires to the target respondents. The questionnaire was structured based on the research topic and adapted from measurement items used in previous studies. The research location covered several wet market areas in the state of Terengganu, Malaysia namely Dungun, Paka, and Kuala Terengganu. The