

An Analysis of Consumer' Complaint Intentions and Complaint Responses Towards Unethical Advertisements

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Abstract

This study analyses the link between consumers' complaint intentions and complaint responses towards unethical advertisements. Specifically, this study explores why the consumers who intend to complain about the unethical advertisements, ended up complaining privately, directly to the advertisers, to the third parties or did not complain at all. In-depth interviews were conducted amongst eighteen highly educated consumers. The findings postulate that the complaint responses are different depending on the sense of responsibility, involvements with the advertised products, experiences regarding the effects of unethical advertisements, the complaint procedures, time constraints, and knowledge on complaint channels as well as rights as the consumers. Fundamentally, this study explains why individuals did not behave according to their intentions.

Keywords: Consumers, Complaint Intention, Complaint Responses, Ethical Decision-Making, Unethical Advertisements.

Introduction

Unethical advertisement has been discussed extensively in several previous studies (Mostafa, 2011; Zimmerman & Dahlberg, 2008; Waller & Deshpande, 2013; Akhter, *et. al.*, 2011; Shabbir & Thwaites, 2007). In most of these studies, advertisers are the ones blamed for producing unethical advertisements. However, advertisers intentionally incorporate unethical elements to attract the audiences. Nevertheless, advertisers' decisions are based on situations, which they can hardly control. One of the situations is when the advertisers had actually experienced ethical lapse whereby they were unable to perceive the ethical problems associated with the advertisements.

In September 2010 for instance, a controversial television public service announcement named *Sinari Lebaran*, produced by TV3 from the Media Prima Berhad Group has caused chaos among the Malaysian Muslims because of its insensitivity in portray if more liberalised version of Islam, Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism. In this particular *Hari Raya Aidilfitri* advertisement, there were portrayals of other religions through symbols such as the lotus flowers, a white-haired old man hovering a trishaw, and the illuminated lotus which represent Buddhism, Christian, and Hinduism respectively. The Malaysian public especially the Malays argued that the advertisement did not portray *Hari Raya Aidilfitri* as it was supposed to be. The advertisement was broadcasted only a few times on the television but the impact was huge when the public uploaded the advertisement on *YouTube* and shared it on *Facebook*. Consequently, the advertisement was withdrawn.

Responding to the advertisement, the group's former chief executive officer, Datuk Seri Farid Ridzuan apologised to all Muslims for the faux pas. He asserted, "As the person who is responsible to approve the advertisement, I actually see it as the director's creativity and never meant to hurt anyone" (Muzlina Abu Bakar, 2010). This case can be categorised as an ethical lapse as he did not recognise the unethical aspects of the advertisement. However, once TV3 received numerous complaints from the public, the advertisement was withdrawn despite the high production cost. This incident had indirectly shown that

complaints could make a change. The researcher therefore postulates that complain could be a way for the consumers to be ethical.

Ideally, consumers should complain directly to the advertisers or to the third parties because they could get official response regarding the perceived unethical advertisements. The third parties that the consumers could approach are the self-regulatory bodies such as the Advertising Standards Authority Malaysia (ASA), for print advertisements and the Communication and Multimedia Content Forum (CMCF) for digital media. These bodies have their own guidelines to educate the industry players as well as the consumers on how the media content should be and this includes the advertisements. Both self-regulatory bodies have also clarified the complaint procedures on their websites. Nevertheless, the Malaysian consumers often write about dissatisfactions regarding unethical advertisements on their personal *Facebook* and blogs even though there are other means for them to lodge their complaints. ASA Malaysia for instance has yet to receive complaints from the consumers regarding unethical advertisements (Mahpar, 2014).

Other than the ASA and CMCF, the consumers could also lodge their complaints to the an organisation *Facebook's* administrator because advertisers usually use *Facebook* pages to sell their products and services. When they use the *Facebook* pages, they are bound with terms and conditions. One of the terms for *Facebook's* page content is, 'pages must not contain false, misleading, fraudulent, or deceptive claims or content'. Through this term, the consumers could always complain to the *Facebook's* administrator in order to combat the unethical advertisements. However, the researcher believes that the best way to complain about unethical advertisements is by complaining to the advertisers themselves. Nowadays, most advertisers have their own *Facebook* pages and this will allow the consumers to write any feedback through private messages and posts on *Facebook* walls. However, before individuals could decide on complaint responses, they have to be able to recognise the questionable act, judge the questionable act as unethical, and have the intention to behave according to their intention (Rest, 1986). Figure 1 illustrates Rest's ethical decision-making model.

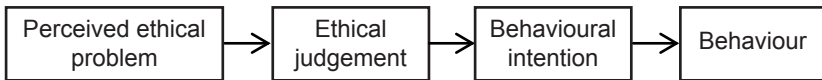


Figure 1: Ethical decision-making model (Rest, 1986)

In studying consumer complaint responses towards unethical advertisements, the link between intention and behaviour is very important because individuals, who intend to complain, might not complain at all since their complaint responses are influenced by various factors (Volkov, 2003). This is especially when the complained matter is about unethical advertisements which most of the time do not involve physical effects.

Rather than just blaming the advertisers, the public and consumers could make some efforts by lodging official complaints in order to control the unethical advertisements. This is important to prevent advertisements to continue portraying the unethical elements. Since individuals are influenced physically, psychologically and sociologically by advertising, it is possible that the audiences might see the unethical elements as ideal and might also imitate the acts they saw (Mohd. Helmi Abdul Rahim, 2009). Thus, consumers' ignorance to lodge their complaints regarding unethical advertisements will put the society into unconscious mind towards the idea of right and wrong values. In the long run, this will reconstruct their inclination of moral philosophies, change how they perceive unethical elements in advertisements and leads to the fracture of local cultures, beliefs and norms.

Since the individuals' behaviour depends a lot on behavioural intention, therefore, the present study aims to analyse factors influencing the link between consumers complaint intention and complaint responses regarding unethical advertisements. The researcher therefore put forward the following research questions:

- a) What kind of advertisement that the consumers intended to complain?
- b) Why they intended to complain about the advertisements?
- c) How the consumers responded to their intention?
- d) Why the consumers ended up responding that way?

The ethical decision-making process

Previously, ethical decision-making studies focused more on understanding why the business practitioners end up with unethical behaviour (Husted & Allen, 2008; O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005). However, because consumers are also deemed as important in the business dyad, consumers are also being studied for their ethical decision-making but more related to ethical purchasing behaviour, social, and environmental issues (Vitell, 2003; Low & Davenport, 2007; Chiu, Hsieh, Chang, & Lee, 2009; Ding *et. al.*, 2009). Despite the different groups, the basis of ethical decision-making process is similar.

Basically, the ethical decision-making process includes recognition of the questionable act, ethical judgement, behavioural intention and behaviour (Rest, 1986). Jones (1991) postulates that these elements are influenced by moral intensity. In other words, the higher the moral intensity, the higher possibility for an individual to recognise a questionable act, to evaluate the questionable act as wrong, the lower the intention to perform the unethical act and eventually will not perform the unethical act. Moral intensity includes magnitude of consequences, social consensus, proximity, probability of effects, temporal immediacy and concentration of effects (Jones, 1991).

Therefore, the present study expects that the higher moral intensity, the higher possibility for individuals to recognise the questionable advertisements, to evaluate the questionable advertisements as unethical, the higher the intention to complain about the unethical advertisements and the higher possibility that they will complain. Though, individuals' behavioural intentions and behaviours depend a lot on their ethical judgement.

Ethical judgement

Although recognising the questionable act appears first in that process, ethical judgement seems to be the crucial one since it will determine the behavioural intention and behaviour. This is because individuals,

who recognised an act as questionable, could only decide whether the act is right or wrong when they consider various aspects while making ethical judgement.

Drawing from the literature, ethical judgement is defined as evaluation of the appropriateness of questionable acts (Reidenbach & Robin, 1990). Likewise, Pan and Sparks (2012) define ethical judgement as evaluation of an action whether it is ethical or unethical. Through these definitions, ethical judgement is clearly a mental process in evaluating the extent an act is regarded as right, wrong, acceptable or unacceptable. However, ethical judgement of each individual is distinct from one another as everyone is influenced by various factors such as moral philosophy, moral intensity, religiosity and issues recognition (Bass *et. al.*, 1999; Singh *et. al.*, 2007; Jones, 1991; Rottig *et. al.*, 2011; Valentine & Bateman, 2011; Spark & Siemens, 2014). In the present study, the participants' ethical judgement will be represented by the advertisements that they intended to complain. In other words, these advertisements are the ones that have been pre-evaluated by the participants as unethical.

Unethical advertisements and complaint intention

An advertisement is labelled as ethical depending on its acceptability by the public. Culture, religion, moral intensity and value system are among factors that could determine the extent something is ethical or unethical (Clow & Baack, 2009; Jones, 1991). Generally, unethical advertisements are those that misled the information, deceptive, offensive, using fear appeals and socially irresponsible (Harker *et. al.*, 2001; Shabbir & Thwaites, 2007; Arthur & Quester, 2003). Advertisements using humour elements are also deemed as unethical since they mask deceptive advertisements (Shabbir & Thwaites, 2007). In other words, unethical advertisements are those that negatively affect the society. Principally, those with unjust feelings and dissatisfactions will end up with complaint intention (Volkov, 2003).

Complaint Responses

Once individuals intend to complain, they are expected to complain (Rest, 1986). However, intention does not guarantee that individuals will end up complaining. At this stage, each individual could result in numbers of complaint responses namely exiting, private voicing, direct voicing and amplified voicing (Kolodinsky, 1995; Volkov, 2003). Unfortunately, they might also end up with the non-complaining behaviour because all responses are triggered by individuals' demographics, psychographics, social, cultural and situational factors (Corrigan, 1990; Kolodinsky & Aleong, 1990; Kolodinsky, 1993; Singh, 1989; Volkov, 2003). Among factors influencing complaint responses are time constraints, experiences with complaint processes, education, availability of alternative products, expectation of resolutions and the perceived benefit of complaining (Fornell & Didow 1980; Kolodinsky & Aleong, 1990; Richins, 1982; Singh, 1989).

Exiting is an act of boycotting the brand's product (Volkov, Harker & Harker, 2002; Hirschman, 1970). Individuals exit because they are disappointed with the brand and at the same time, they realize that the brand is not the market leader. Therefore, through exiting, they expect decline in business profit which would possibly lead to policy intervention (Volkov, Harker & Harker, 2003). Conversely, when dealing with market leaders' brands, boycott would not work because these brands are powerful and would not be affected by boycott actions (Kolodinsky, 1993). In this case, voicing is more appropriate. Through voicing, individuals will be able to verbalize their dissatisfactions and call for change and improvement (Kolodinsky, 1993; Volkov, Harker & Harker, 2003).

Direct voicing is an act to complain directly to the advertisers. Usually, those consumers with higher education have higher possibility to complain to the advertisers (Volkov, *et. al*, 2003; Ishak & Zabil, 2012). This might be influenced by the ability of this group to search for information regarding complaint channels. Nevertheless, when individuals failed to get the expected resolutions from complaints that they lodged against to the advertisers, they will end up with amplified voicing.

Amplified voicing is the act complaining to the third parties in order to fight for their rights. In amplified voicing, individuals do not deal directly with the advertisers whereby they will complain to other channels such as writing to newspaper and report to the self-regulatory bodies (Volkov, 2003). This is influenced by the intensity of the dissatisfactions, past complaint outcomes, and sense of responsibility towards the society (Volkov, 2003; Liu & McClure, 2001; Singh, 1989).

Individuals would also complain their dissatisfactions privately to family and friends through negative words of mouth especially when all complaint channels did not produce positive outcomes (Singh, 1990; Broadbridge & Marshall, 1995). Though, Kolodonsky and Aleong (1990) indicated that individuals who obtain higher education prefer not to engage in private complaints (Kolodonsky & Aleong, 1990). Nevertheless, at some points, individuals will end up being the non-complainants when they have negative perception of their past complaint actions and time constraints (Volkov, 2003; Kolodinsky & Aleong, 1990).

In the present study, the ethical decision-making model is applied accepting that a person who perceives a questionable advertisement, and judges the advertisements as unethical, will have the intention to complain regarding the advertisements and will complain. Figure 2 illustrates the research framework adapted from Rest (1986), Jones (1991) and Volkov (2003).

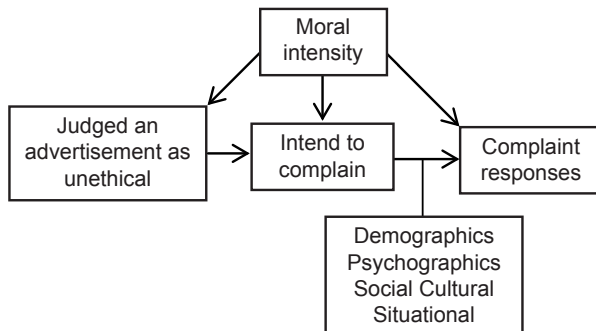


Figure 2: Research framework adapted from Rest's (1986), Jones (1991) and Volkov (2003)

Methodology

In order to get the findings, in-depth interviews have been conducted to 18 working consumers, men and women who obtained at least bachelor's degree, exposed to the media frequently, regardless of age, ethnicity and religion. They are selected because they admitted that they have seen unethical advertisements. The rationale of purposively choosing the highly educated consumers is because previous studies indicated that individuals with higher education tend to complain more compared to others (Volkov, Harker & Harker, 2003; Ishak & Zabil, 2012). Before the interview starts, the participants have been told about the purpose of the interview and the fact that their personal and career information would not be disclosed to the public. Semi-structured questions have been used in all interviews.

The interview starts with this question, "Have you ever complained about unethical advertisements?". It was just a precautionary act merely to avoid the participants changing their mind during the interview after answering several questions. This is also a strategy to differentiate participants who complain privately, direct to the advertisers, complain to the third parties, ignore the advertisement and exit. Then, the researcher asked the participants who complained privately and who ignored the advertisement whether they had the intention to lodge official complaint regarding unethical advertisement to the advertisers and the third parties. Only the ones who answered yes are allowed to participate in this study. This is because the purpose of this study is to investigate factors influencing the link between complain intention and behaviour. The data are transcribed every time the interview was completed and the participants have been contacted after the transcription process in order to verify their claims during the interview. Once all participants verified the data, the data were analysed line by line using Atlas.ti through constant comparison technique.

Findings and Discussions

A total number of 18 participants have been interviewed. These participants are highly educated but their professions are kept

confidential in this research as requested by them before the interviews started. Table 1 illustrates details of the participants and complaint responses. The interviews have been conducted to 12 female and only six male participants. The difference between both groups occurred because of the willingness to participate in this research. Seemingly, the females were more likely to share their views about the research topic. Most of the males approached who did not want to participate as they felt uncomfortable talking about ethical issues. Apart from that, there were Bachelor degree holders compared to Master and PhD holders. The age range of the participants is 28-40 year old.

Advertisements that the participants intended to complain

Each participant was asked to describe about one of the advertisements that they intended to complain. Apparently, most of them talked about advertisements that appeared on Facebook. Among products related to these advertisements are the breast enlargement cream, sanitary pad and women's clothing. As for the breast enlargement cream, the participants explained that they did not like the copywriting style in the advertisements which includes words that are not suitable to be published. They felt embarrassed with the words used in the breast enlargement cream advertisements such as '*montok*', '*kendur*' and '*leper*' and they felt really stressed when they saw testimonials uploaded by the advertisers. According to them, the testimonials were in the form of *Whatsapp* conversations between the advertiser and the buyer. Participant 3 stated, 'I certainly cannot accept the fact that the buyer actually tells the advertiser about the effectiveness of the product in detail. I mean, you know, from B to C, pinkish and so on.' Other than that, the participants also despised with advertisements that represented women's breasts with nasi lemak, balloon, fruit such as papaya, and vegetable such as gourd.

Table 1: Details of the participants and complaint responses

No.	Gender	Age	Education	Unethical advertisement	Complaint responses
1.	Female	28	Master	Breast enlargement cream	Private
2.	Female	28	Master	Deodorant	Private
3.	Female	31	Bachelor degree	Breast enlargement cream	Private
4.	Female	34	Bachelor degree	Sanitary pad	Direct
5.	Male	29	Master	Loan shark	Amplified
6.	Female	32	Master	Beauty product	Non-complainant
7.	Male	28	Bachelor degree	Deodorant	Private
8.	Female	29	Bachelor degree	Women's clothing	Amplified
9.	Male	30	Master	Beauty product	Private
10.	Female	33	PhD	Sanitary pad	Non-complainant
11.	Male	29	PhD	Shaving cream	Non-complainant
12.	Male	28	Bachelor degree	Loan shark	Non-complainant
13.	Female	35	PhD	Breast enlargement cream	Direct
14.	Male	29	Master	Job vacancy	Non-complainant
15.	Female	28	PhD	Breast enlargement cream	Amplified
16.	Female	30	Bachelor degree	Deodorant	Private
17.	Female	31	Bachelor degree	Loan shark	Non-complainant
18.	Female	40	Bachelor degree	Breast enlargement cream	Direct

Participant 4 on the other hand commented about a sanitary pad advertisement. She believed that the advertisement was extremely offensive and leads to unintended fear. According to her, the advertisement did not have the approval from the authorities but yet it claimed that by using the sanitary pad, cyst can be removed from women's body. The advertiser also used real picture that clearly show the blood colour which has made the participant experienced anxiety.

Apart from those advertisements, participant 8 intended to complain about misleading advertisement. She said that she often saw

advertisements which did not tell the whole truth. For instance, women's clothing especially about the materials.

'I always see advertisers tried to mislead the consumers by claiming the material of the clothes is cotton when it actually looks like *lycra*. When I ask the advertiser about why the photo does not look like cotton, she said, that was jersey cotton. Well, jersey cotton is totally different with cotton.'

(Participant 8)

Other than *Facebook*, other participants intended to complain about deodorant and beauty product advertisements on the television, shaving cream video advertisements on *Instagram*, job vacancy advertisements on the newspapers and loan shark advertisements.

Overall, advertisements that the participants intended to complain can be categorised as indecent, prohibited, misleading, deceptive and using fear appeal.

Consumers' complaint intention

After the participants shared about advertisements that they intended to complain, they were asked about why they intended to complain in the first place. Those who talked about indecent advertisements mostly intended to complain because they are worried if children are exposed to the inappropriateness. According to them, children are easily influenced, curious and imaginative. If these advertisements appear frequently, the children will treat them as normal and would probably imitate the inappropriate words. At the same time, the participants were also worried if their children ask them questions very much related to the advertisements.

Regarding the misleading and deceptive advertisements, the participants believed that if the consumers buy the advertised product and they did not get the same result, the product will be considered as underperform which will lead to consumers' loss.

Whilst unintended fear and approval become the main reasons for the participants to evaluate the advertisement using fear appeal as

unethical, element of force was something to be associated. The participants asserted that the advertisers seemed to make use of consumers' anxiety to sell their products. The participants added that the real pictures have led them to experience emotional burden which affects their moods and thoughts. Hence, they intended to complain.

'After I saw that advertisement, the pictures often appear in my mind. It was disgusting but it was scary until at one time, I unconsciously thought of buying the advertised product. I mean, I felt like I was forced to think about what I should not think about.'

(Participant 10)

As for the loan shark advertisements, the participants intended to complain because they are worried on the increasing crime cases associated with loan sharks especially with the recent unpredictable economic status. They were concern about people who earn less than them. They mentioned that people with financial problems possibly will do anything to solve their problems including to borrow from the loan sharks since the formal ones apply strict procedures.

Consumers' complaint responses

Although the participants intended to lodge their complaint officially, most of the participants did not behave according to their intention. Apparently, six participants really complained to the advertisers and to the third parties. Another six participants complained privately whereas the rest totally ignored the advertisements. None of the participants were involved in exiting.

Private voicing

Primarily, the private complainants complained about unethical advertisements to their family members and friends through *Facebook* and through daily conversation. They actually intended to complain to the advertisers. However, they were too busy to find the advertisers' contact information because of their job demands. Nevertheless, some of the private complainants emailed and sent private messages to the advertiser's *Facebook* page but they did not get any reply.

Since there was no reply, they became upset and they wrote about the advertisement as their *Facebook* statuses. The participants also felt that the social networking sites are the most convenient ways to educate others about right and wrong as well as to encourage their *Facebook* friends who have ample time to complain about the matters to the right channels since they did not have the time to make proper complaints.

Direct voicing

The participants who complained directly to the advertisers mostly believed that the advertisers always need the consumers' feedbacks in order to improve. The reason for complaining directly to the advertisers was because the participants understood that some mistakes are unintentional and the advertisers have to be given another chance. The participants also hoped that through direct voicing, the advertisers could attend to their complaints more seriously.

'If the advertiser makes mistake, tell them directly. Don't forget that the more polite we tell them about their mistake, the higher possibility that they will take our complaints into consideration.'

(Participant 13)

Another participant stated about her emotional involvements with the advertised product's brand. She loved the brand. So she did not want the brand to make mistake in the future. In the end, the complainants complained directly to the advertisers because they felt that they are responsible to protect themselves, the brand and other consumers.

Amplified voicing

From one perspective, it is good if individuals could complain directly to the advertisers and got feedbacks. However, it is undeniable that there are circumstances which have led the participants not to complain to the advertisers but to complain to the third party. One of the circumstances was when the advertiser cannot be contacted. Other than that, the participants complained to the third party because of the effects associated with the advertisements. Participant 15 for

instance has experienced the bad effect of the unethical advertisement particularly related to her daughter. She stated, 'my standard 4 children asked me when her breast will become big as the balloon while showing the advertisement on Facebook. That makes me so angry and immediately complains to the authorities'.

Besides that, there was a participant who complained to the third party because she was not satisfied with the response given by the advertisers regarding her complaint.

'I tried to say cotton is cotton, jersey cotton is something else but she responded to me sarcastically. She said that her customers will understand even though cotton is written there. So, I was like okay fine. I complained to the Facebook administrator. But I don't really remember Facebook's response to this complaint because I often complain about unethical advertisements to the Facebook's administrator. So, I got confused. But, complain to the Facebook administrator is easy because it involves the close-ended question. Unfortunately, we do not have the opportunity to explain more about matters we complained about.' (Participant 8)

After all, these complainants seemed to believe that the consumer rights should be protected, no matter how difficult the procedure was. Throughout the interviews, the participants mentioned consumer association, Facebook's administrator and CMCF as the third parties involved with unethical advertisements.

Non-complaint behaviour

The non-complainants on the other hand have different thoughts about complaining regarding unethical advertisements. Specifically, they felt that no action will be taken if they only complain about advertisements. Other than thinking of no action will be taken, there were participants who believed that other individuals have already complained about the advertisements which have made the participants, the non-complainants. Among the non-complainants too, there were participants who do not know exactly where to address their complain.

Another group of the non-complainants was among those who do not have the time to complain. These participants were the ones who disliked the complaint procedures which require them to provide so many details about the unethical advertisements. Since they too, have time constraint, they chose not to complain at all.

The unique thing was, the participants who said that they felt no action will be taken, who thought that other individuals have complained and those who have no time to lodge the complaint had actually gathered information about what to complain and where to complain. Participant 14 for instance showed the researcher the newspaper cutting of the perceived unethical job vacancy advertisement and said, 'Look at this. I already cut it. What's left is to complain to the ASA. But I really don't have the time to write the email or to complain on the website. Every time I plan to lodge the official complaint, I suddenly got to do other things'. Nevertheless, some non-complainants were unable to gather information about the complaint channels because of their job commitments.

The findings postulate that the participants' intention to complain is led by their evaluation of the related consequences just like what Jones (1991) theorised. Though, only participants who looked at the consequences of the advertisements more seriously had higher intention and eventually complained to the advertisers and to the third parties. Besides that, those who experienced the bad effects of unethical advertisements seemed to react according to their intention. They chose the responsible bodies to lodge their complaints as they felt responsible towards the society (Volkov, 2003; Broadbridge & Marshall, 1995).

The non-complainants on the other hand did not complain because they were influenced by their time constraints and had the perceptions that their complaints will not be attended (Volkov, 2003). In some ways, this instance shows that the non-complainants may be vague in terms of their understanding of the consumer rights because in reality, every consumer has the rights to complaint whenever relevant. The things that the consumers have to focus on are to choose the right

complaint channel and to know what to complain. Unfortunately, not all participants know where they have to lodge their complaints, which makes them the non-complainants. In this instance, those who have higher education do not necessarily will complain like what has been stated by Ishak and Zabil. (2012).

Conversely, the private complainants had put some effort to contact the advertisers but were disconnected. Instead, they wrote their dissatisfaction publicly through their social networking sites in order to influence others to make the official complaint regarding the unethical advertisements as they do not have time to do so (Liu & McClure, 2001; Singh, 1990).

Although there are various factors influencing complaint responses, the most important ones in this study are the moral intensity, psychographics and the situational factors. Whether they complain privately, to the advertisers, to the third parties, or they did not complain, it all seemed to depend on the participants' sense of responsibility, involvement with the advertised product, experience regarding the effect of unethical advertisement, the complaint procedure, time constraints, and knowledge on complaint channels as well as their rights as consumers.

Conclusion

Overall, this study tries to explain why consumers who intent to complain about unethical advertisements, end up with private voicing, direct voicing, amplified voicing and non-complaining behaviour. Essentially, complaint intention will not simply end up with complaint actions because each individual is influenced by moral intensity, psychographics and situational factors which could shift from complaint intention to complaint inaction. Inadequate knowledge on complaint channels and consumer rights for instance will complicate the consumers' proficiency to respond especially when they have to acquire further information while making decision on their complaint responses. Consumers' lacking in these knowledge indirectly illustrate problems in the communication process between the authorities and

the consumers. The participants in this study for example confessed that they were inattentive towards information because of their job commitment. Though, there is also the possibility that information regarding complaint channels disseminated by the authorities was not enough to capture the attention. This study eventually signifies that the authorities need to investigate further on the Malaysian consumers' awareness regarding complaint channels as well as consumer rights due to the facts that individuals with higher education also experienced unresponsiveness because of these factors.

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