

The Level of Acceptance Towards Public Service Announcement (PSA)

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ABSTRACT

The Public Service Announcement (PSA) is an effective short message made via media that offered values, campaigns, programs, and community interests by providing information to the public. The footage consists of a powerful information to help viewers realize that this life is precious enough to be wasted. The aim of this study is to explore the acceptance towards PSA among Malaysians. There were 300 respondents of different demographic background was involved in this study using convenience sampling method. All of the data were used and analysed by using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 26.0. The findings have revealed that averagely respondents agreed that Public Service Announcement (PSA) can influence people thought (M=4.27), create awareness on the important message delivered (M=4.30) and leading to action taken by people as required by the message (M=4.19). PSA is proven to be accepted by respondents in this study (M=4.23).

Keywords: acceptance, awareness, public service announcement, short messages, effective messages

INTRODUCTION

Public service announcement (PSA) is a noncommercial advertisement that tries to modify public attitudes and behavior by raising awareness about specific issues such as blood donation, obesity, and suicide and it communicates information by using traditional and new media tools to publicize an issue of relevance or interest to the public (Klimes & Lee, 2010). In recent years, PSA has been started to being broadcasted on Internet as an alternative advertising media. For example, in order to reach young audience, the U.S government's National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign's 100 million USD budget contained significant funding for Internet advertising (Walther et. al., 2010). If produced correctly and broadcasted on the appropriate media tools, PSA is very important in creating awareness, educating, informing and motivating various target groups for critical issues (Toncar et. al., 2007).

PSA qualifies as strategic communication because they influence and shape audiences' attitudes and judgements through words, images, and symbols, (Farewell, 2012). However, in the case of Malaysian PSA, the strategic communication messages always aim to serve the interest of the ruling elite (John, 2015). By definition, this contradicts the purpose of PSAs by ignoring the "P" for public in PSA that implies communicating messages that benefit public interest matters such as health or social welfare (Kareklas et. al., 2015). In Malaysia, PSA refer to Government's advertisement used to communicate not only certain specific messages for people's awareness but also to build the culture and identify of Malaysian people (John, 2015). That is the purpose of this research; to move beyond traditional study and produce a more insightful way of examining a specific topic but from dual (using elite and audience frame) perspectives.

The issues regarding in public service announcement (PSA) are quite serious because it includes the advertising industry. The problems that can be discovered is in targeting audience when doing some of the public service announcement needs to recognize our target audience once we recognize then we will manage to build up one public service announcement that suits with every age of audience. The system that has been developed to these more straight-forward content types are leading the way in online audience metrics – but the complexity of news consumption means that these metrics do not yet meet the needs of scholars interested in better understanding how news consumption takes place, how it flows in society, and the influences of news on opinion (Ofcom, 2014). Actually, before the advertising industry collapse the future digital about the public service announcement needs to take initiative by build up their advertising skills, digital skills, social media skills and other. Hence the objectives of the study are to identify the level of PSA acceptances among Malaysians and the level of factors that may increase the PSA acceptance (influence, awareness and action).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Influence: Many PSAs, advertisements, and campaigns either from governments or corporate companies have begun to multiply using various types of media including billboards, magazines, radio, television and the Internet to communicate 'national unity' to the people (Hashim & Mahpuz, 2011). For example, other than the Government organisations, corporate

companies such as Petronas, Telekom Malaysia™, Tenaga Nasional Berhad, and Astro communicate the importance of societal ‘unity’ through TV and other advertising (Lean, 2011). Organisations that using PSAs are not only attempt to inform, but also influence and persuade people to accept an idea, policy, or courses of action (Halloran, 2007). Through the use of “coordinated action, messages, images, and other forms of signalling or engagement” (Paul, 2011). A study conducted by Kiwanuka-Tondo, Hamilton, & Katz Jameson (2009) found that well-planned strategic communication campaigns were essential to successfully addressing health issues through the strategies applied in designing and communicating the campaign messages. The finding also revealed that a greater number of the target audience is interested and attracted to the campaign messages because they were supported by attention getting devices such as background music, specific voices, axioms, themes, colour design, and choice of words (Kiwanuka-Tondo et al., 2009).

Awareness: According to (Penn State, 2017), PSA is a short message or a reminder with main purpose which to spread the awareness about an important issue in community. In one open forum of medical (Patrick, 2012) was stated that advocates and social marketers have used substantial resources to develop PSA as lead strategy in public education and awareness campaigns meant to eliminate stigma associated with mental illness. As part of prevention of the Prevention Across America campaign the Prevent Cancer Foundation (2015) has commissioned a short clip of PSA designed to entertained and increasing awareness to people about preventable cancers. PSAs may include interviews, dramatizations animation and many other types of video and audio content. PSAs are draw without taking any profit and advantage in general. The production maker aims to motivate, influence attitudes and changes actions. This can be supported by (Krishna & Anuragh, 2017) also found that PSA is the most effective components in informing public about safety, health, social, environment and behavior of the people. The scale of possible topics has grown up time to time. Another opinion from (Wilcox & Cameron, 2009) the purpose of PSA messages is to disseminate to the targeted audiences in order to serve public interest, increase awareness and knowledge the people. Based on studied by (Marcelo, 2007), internet as an advance platform that can provide various benefit in order to raise awareness levels, building message recall, and influencing behavior changes among college students. It is because the technology has the capability to reach the large number of viewers. Credibility, personality, reputation and image of the spokesperson-issue match will affect the PSA success all. However, this does not mean using non-celebrity or famous people may lead to success at least they can capture the attention of the public (Shead et al., 2011). Meanwhile, research by (Imma et. al., 2013) said many PSA uses animated characters in order to create high awareness and attract the interest among people. As technology develops animation become most used techniques in new media. (Jazri, 2010) was qouted in a media release saying that at this point in time we all live in “digital cities” where the community combines broadband communication infrastructure and innovation services to meet the needs of government, business and the public.

Action: Research has found that communication in the form of general-interest messages, or public service announcements can help achieve these goals. People can see or hear a PSA once and may not be fully convinced to take action. If the message is reinforced through other channels, viewers are more likely to have confidence in the messaging and follow through with the call to action. Experiences have been linked to promoting responsible behavior because PSA can be personally relatable if they experienced it. For example, research on organ donation has found that people are more likely to donate when they are cut off from narrative messages, than non-narrative messages (Morgan et. al., 2009). Similarly, people are more likely to donate money to charity organizations when exposed to narrative appeals than non-narrative appeals (Barraza et al., 2015). PSA can make people change their opinions, values, attitudes, and action taken to solve the problem (Theories of Mass Media, 2009). Recent experimental research using narrative (non-narrative) health education materials has found that participants exposed to narratives show higher levels of acceptance, as well as greater knowledge gain than non-narrative materials (Kreuter et al., 2007). This shown that people with experiences are more likely to react after they listen to PSA

Acceptance: PSA Beneficial in Providing Essential Information. Research has found that communication in the form of general-interest messages, or public service announcements can help achieve these goals. PSA is announcement made in the service of the general public and are aired or printed without charge. They aim to create awareness, influence attitudes and change actions (Hardip, 2015). In an experimental study conducted in 2010 involving young audiences, Klimes & Lee (2010) examined the use of a stimulated PSA billboard with messages aim to help prevent people with depressive tendencies to turn to suicide behaviours. In fact, the results were more positive because the respondents perceived this PSA messages as beneficial in providing essential information on how to overcome depression and prevent suicide compared to the billboard messages (Klimes & Lee, 2010).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed the quantitative study approach to identify the level of acceptance towards Public Service Announcement (PSA) among Malaysians. An online survey link was distributed to the respondents through social media platforms (Ridzuan, Ridzuan and Ridzuan 2018). Furthermore, it is even easier to reach the sample through social media as the respondents were students, people from the industry, and public. There were 300 respondents of different demographic background was involved in this using convenience sampling method. A self-developed questionnaire was designed and formulated according to the research objectives. The questionnaire consists of five sections of demographic, influence, awareness, action and acceptance towards PSA. All questions except for demographic section were developed in Likert scale of 1 to 5 from strongly disagree to strongly agree. All of the data were used and analysed by using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 26.0.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic profile of 300 respondents is shown in Table 1 below. Majority of respondents are female (69.0%), age between 16 to 25 years old (70.3%), Malay (89.0%), and stay in urban state (62.0%). About half of respondents are degree holder (55.5%) and still studying (55.7%).

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of demographic profile and acceptance on PSA

Characteristic	Category	Frequency, <i>n</i>	Percentage, %
Gender	Male	93	31.0
	Female	207	69.0
Age	15 years old and below	5	1.7
	16-25	211	70.3
	26-35	35	11.7
	36-45	17	5.7
	46 years old and above	32	10.7
Ethnicity	Malay	267	89.0
	Chinese	11	3.7
	Indian	9	3.0
	Others	13	4.3
State	Rural	114	38.0
	Urban	186	62.0
Level of Education	SPM	46	15.3
	Diploma/Matriculation/Foundation	71	23.7
	Degree	167	55.7
	Master/PhD	9	3.0
	Others	7	2.3
Occupation	Student	167	55.7
	Working at Private Sector	51	17.0
	Government Servant	43	14.3
	Self-employed	20	6.7
	Unemployed	19	6.3
Total		300	100

Descriptive statistics for each item are shown in Table 2 below. On average, respondents agreed that Public Service Announcement (PSA) can influence people thought ($M=4.27$), create awareness on the important message delivered ($M=4.30$) and leading to action taken by people as required by the message ($M=4.19$). PSA is proven to be accepted by respondents in this study ($M=4.23$).

Specifically, into items in each variable, the most important item in influencing section is that people actually easy acquaint the PSA by using the video message techniques ($M=4.37$) because they easily understand the message delivered by the that the authority ($M=4.31$). The best way to create awareness using PSA is by using the animation characters to attract the interest among people ($M=4.42$) especially on social and health issue ($M=4.34$). People action based on message delivered by PSA depends on the content ($M=4.26$) and positive attitude towards PSA ($M=4.24$). PSA contents related to education for people right and responsibilities

have high potential to be accepted (M=4.32), as well as safety and welfare improvement (M=4.23), especially when it focused on importance to people and delivered with a sense of comedy, shock value and emotion (M=4.23).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of each item and variable

Section	Variable	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
B	Influences	4.27	0.620	
B1	PSA can influence people's attitude through sight and hearing	4.17	0.816	0.877
B2	Auto distributed PSA easily be available to the public.	4.20	0.823	
B3	Through the PSA people can easily understanding towards the message that the authority wants to tell people	4.31	0.705	
B4	People actually easy acquaint the PSA by using the video message techniques	4.37	0.718	
B5	Appropriate and useful PSA make people can easily understand and influenced by the message	4.29	0.730	
C	Awareness	4.30	0.610	
C1	PSA makes viewers aware of the surrounding problems	4.24	0.759	0.718
C2	PSA is a short message to raise awareness in community	4.28	0.752	
C3	Other than social issues, PSA were also made to raise awareness on healthy (Prevent Cancer Prevention, 2015)	4.34	0.744	
C4	PSA use animated characters in order to create awareness and attract the interest among people	4.42	0.734	
C5	PSA through internet is the most effective tool in increasing the awareness of PSA	4.23	0.758	
D	Action	4.19	0.620	
D1	The PSA value positive judgement and negative thinking towards the message target through emphatic processing, linking the audience to take action.	4.15	0.746	0.851
D2	Participants exposed to narratives show higher levels of acceptance, as well as greater knowledge gain than non-narrative materials	4.09	0.779	
D3	The action taken is influenced in some way by positive attitude towards PSA.	4.24	0.721	
D4	PSA can make people change their opinions, values, attitudes, and action taken to solve the problem (Theories of Mass Media, 2009).	4.20	0.751	
D5	The content of PSA is an important predictor of message persuasive.	4.26	0.731	
E	Acceptance	4.23	0.640	
E1	Many PSA campaigns have educated the public or contributed to social change.	4.19	0.745	0.841
E2	PSA can grab attention because of its comedy, shock value, emotionality, or importance to the audience	4.23	0.760	
E3	PSA are great templates for advertisements, and often occur alongside commercials on TV, on radio, or in print	4.20	0.794	
E4	PSA help people improve their safety and welfare	4.23	0.735	
E5	PSA able to educate the public concerning rights and responsibilities	4.32	0.716	

CONCLUSION

The findings have revealed that averagely Malaysians accept the Public Service Announcement (PSA). Overall, higher PSA acceptance can be achieved by focusing on the content and delivery of the message. Ultimately, content should be important to people, focusing on social and health issue leading to safety and welfare improvement. Second, the message delivered through PSA should be designed to be simple, easy to understand, recorded in video with animation characters with a sense of comedy, shock value and emotion.

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