

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

Wan Nazriah Wan Nawawi^{1*}, Noorazlin Ramli², Jazira Anuar³, Malina Hanum Mohd Kamal⁴ and Azahar Adzmy⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5}Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu, Malaysia

*Corresponding author: ¹wanna035@uitm.edu.my

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.

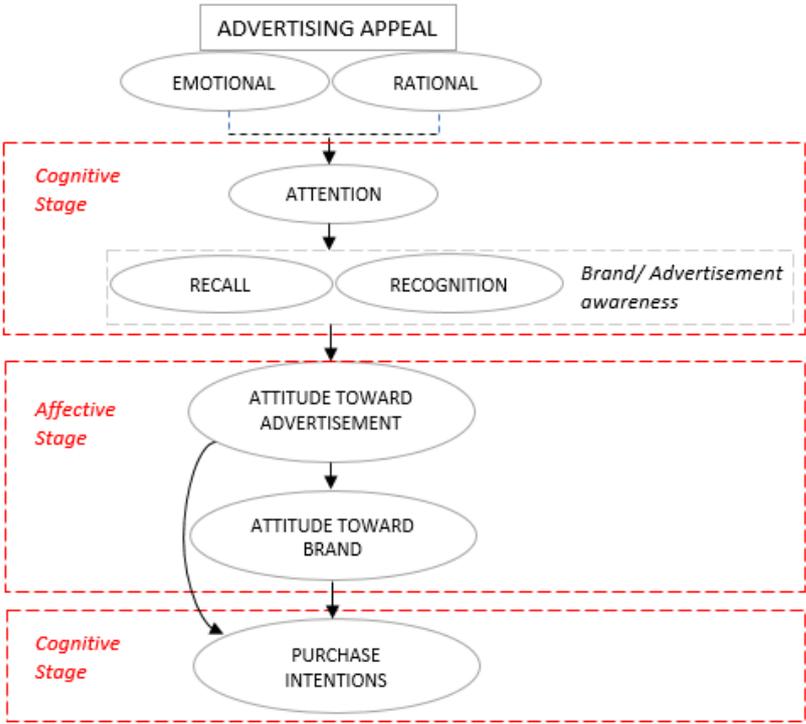


Figure 1. The Influence of Advertising Appeal on the Advertising Effectiveness Model (Source: Martin-Santana and Beerli-Palacio, 2013)

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.

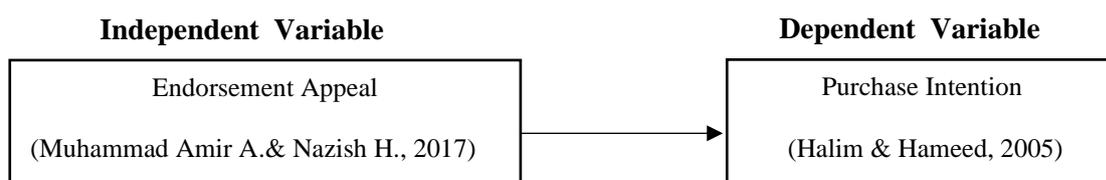


Figure 2. Research Model

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

questionnaire was distributed to the respondents face-to-face by following a strict operating procedure (e.g., wearing a face mask, hand sanitizer was used regularly, and a 1-meter social distance). For respondents who prefer to answer online, an online survey created using a Google form was provided. It is cost-effective as they eliminate the need for a paper to list all the questions. It eases the distribution of questionnaires to society and respondents. The accuracy of research findings is ensured as many respondents were approached using a convenience sampling method. Based on the estimation of Malaysia's population size of people aged between 15 and 65 years old (22.8 million), 95% confidence level, and a margin error of 5%, the number of respondents for this study was calculated as 385 respondents (Kajidata.com, 2018). The data were analyzed upon retrieving the completed questionnaires from the respondents. Reliability and validity were proven by using Cronbach's Alpha in the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 23. Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship's degree, strength, and direction between endorsement appeal and purchase intention.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

A total of 385 respondents participated in this survey. A higher proportion of the respondents were females (55.8%) than males (44.2%). Respondents aged between 14 and 24 years old accounted for 62.1% of the studied population, while only 2.3% were 45 to 54 years old. A higher proportion (52.5%) possessed bachelor's degrees, 36.9% attained a diploma level, 6.2% had SPM/STPM, whereas 4.4% had a Master's degree. For marital status, most of the respondents were married (85.7%), 13.8% were single, and 0.3% were married without kids.

Table 1 shows the reliability and validity of the instrument used for this study. The Cronbach's Alpha value was above 0.6, considered moderate but acceptable (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

Table 1. Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	No. of Items
0.671	0.688	15

The analysis revealed that the independent variable (emotional appeal) influences the dependent variable (purchase intention of food buyers). Table 2 shows the descriptive analysis for the dependent variables in this research. The dependent variables: intention to purchase the products and preference for endorsement appeal, recorded a mean (\pm standard deviation) of 3.0617 (\pm 0.71889) and 3.3779 (\pm 0.72412).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rate of intention to purchase the products being advertised	385	3.0617	0.71889
Rate of preference of endorsement appeal	385	3.3779	0.72412

Table 3. Correlations of the Variables

		Endorsement Appeal	Purchase Intention
Endorsement Appeal	Pearson Correlation	1**	0.687**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	0.000
	N	385	385
Purchase Intention	Pearson Correlation	0.510**	1**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	385	385

***Correlation is significant at 0.01 ** level (2-tailed).*

Table 3 presents the correlation between endorsement appeal and purchase intention. There was a significant positive correlation between endorsement appeal and purchase intention. This result is consistent with a previous study in which emotional appeal influenced the purchasing intention among buyers (Rahman & Pial, 2019). The present study revealed that the elements of endorsement appeals could influence food buyers' purchasing intent. Furthermore, people have different attractions from endorsement appeals that could affect their purchasing intention.

5. DISCUSSION

The study findings reinforce an underlying conviction that endorsement appeal can have a significant influence on food buyers' purchase intention. An enjoyable advertisement should have content that can foster emotionally charged desire and action to purchase food products. The findings of this study could help food marketers to design better advertisements that appeal to the current generation. Furthermore, with the help of experts and market strategies in advertising, companies can know the tricks and tips to attract more customers to buy their products. The greater the demand for food products created through advertising methods is a good reason why more advertisements should be effectively designed to entice food buyers.

6. CONCLUSION

Developing an effective advertisement is a goal for every marketer. This ensures they remain competitive in the market and that people are persuaded to purchase their products. Designed wisely, advertising can be a powerful instrument to attract potential and existing customers. A stronger emphasis is made on advertising and other marketing strategies since they have effectively achieved the desired financial targets. Consumers are attracted to specific advertisements depending on their preferences. The findings of this study demonstrate that marketers prefer the emotional advertising appeal instead of the rational advertising appeal as it influences consumers' purchase intention in Malaysia. The study has several limitations that can be improved by future researchers. As the current study only focused on food buyers at wet markets at Terengganu, future researchers may include a broader sample and have other types of products. This would expand our understanding of the effects of emotional-based advertising on different types of household products such as home electrical appliances and furniture. Considering the popularity of online advertisements among food buyers, future researchers could consider the role of social media in creating emotional-based advertising.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

WNWN, NR, and JA contributed to the introduction, literature review, and methodology sections. MHMK and AA refined the data and performed the data analysis. Together, they wrote the findings, discussion, and conclusion sections. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Wan Nazriah Wan Nawawi is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu. Her research publications cover Hotel Service Operation, Human Resources, Food Waste, and Entrepreneurial. In 2017, she was awarded *Anugerah Akademik Negeri*, UiTMCT for her achievement in publications. She received several university and national grants such as Research Collaboration Fund and Fundamental Research Grants.

Noorazlin Ramli is a Senior Lecturer with over 12 years of teaching experience in the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu. She has been involved in publications including Food Waste, Food Waste Recycling, Food Security, Food Crisis, Food Quality, Food Safety, and Management of Foodservice operation. Received several university and national research grants in Food Quality and Food Waste.

Jazira Anuar is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu. She published several papers on Hotel Customer Service and Behavior, Quality Management Practices, Hotel Technology Adoption, Disability Facilities and Food Safety hazards. In 2019, she was awarded *Anugerah Akademik Negeri*, UiTMCT for her achievement in publications. Currently, she is pursuing her Ph.D. in Hospitality Operation Management.

Malina Hanum Mohd Kamal is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu. Her research interest includes Hospitality Operation Management, Financial Management, Consumer Behaviour, Sustainable Practices and Quality of Life. Currently, she is pursuing her Ph.D. in Hospitality Operation Management. She possesses a wonderful personality and constructive and effective financial and service management teaching methods.

Azahar Adzmy is a lecturer at the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu. His research interests include Hotel Customer Service, Hotel and Restaurant Operation. He has more than 17 years of teaching experience in Food Cost Control and Restaurant Service Operation, among others.